



Department
for Education

Post-16 Pathways Webinar Q&A

October 2026

Contents

Summary	3
Who this publication is for	3
Implementation timetable, specifications and transition	4
V Levels: design, size, combinations and assessment	7
T Levels: delivery, assessment and industry placements	9
Funding, staffing, estates and provider readiness	13
Level 2, Foundation and Occupational Certificates	15
English, maths, level 1, SEND and adult provision	16
Creative and specialist provision	18
Progression, higher education and qualification recognition	19
Communication, materials and professional development.....	21
Reform durability, devolution and system-wide issues	21

Summary

This document brings together questions and answers from the ministerial webinar '*Working together to deliver our post-16 pathways reforms*', held on 12 October 2026. It provides a consolidated reference to the issues raised by participants, including implementation timelines, qualification design and transition, T Levels delivery and industry placements, funding and provider readiness, level 1 pathways, English and maths, support for learners with SEND and adults, creative and specialist provision, progression, communications and wider system issues.

Readers are recommended to read this Q&A alongside the [Post-16 Pathways: implementation plan](#) and the accompanying [support materials](#), which provide the full implementation timetable, further detail on the reforms and practical resources for providers.

Who this publication is for

This publication is for: schools and colleges; training providers; awarding organisations; higher education providers; representative bodies and other stakeholders involved in planning or delivering post-16 technical and vocational education.

Implementation timetable, specifications and transition

Q: When will providers receive specifications, course information and professional development support?

A: The subject content for qualifications that will be first taught in September 2027 is currently available for [V Levels](#), [Foundation Certificates](#) and [Occupational Certificates](#). The first draft specifications are expected to be made available by awarding organisations from November 2026, with accreditation and approval activity from December 2026 to spring 2027. Final specifications, teaching materials and assessment support are expected in spring 2027. The September 2026 [implementation plan](#) confirms the qualifications planned for 2027/28 and 2028/29.

Content for 2028 subjects is being developed with awarding organisations, providers, higher education institutions, employers and professional bodies, with consultation planned between November 2026 and January 2027. The fully funded [Technical and Vocational Professional Development programme](#) (TVPD) provides subject-specific training, employer-led industry upskilling, peer networks and transition support for leaders.

Q: What is the transition process from AAQs to V Levels?

A: AAQs and TOQs went into delivery from 2025 and 2026. Awarding organisations may opt to retain these so that they are available for delivery until we introduce new V Levels in those areas. AAQs and TOQs will have funding removed when the relevant V Level in that subject is introduced ([see implementation plan timeline](#)). Students who are already enrolled on these qualifications will be able to complete their qualifications. For example, providers will not be able to enrol learners on AAQs in Computing, Information Technology, Data Analytics or Early Childhood Development from 2027, as these will have public funding removed for 16 to 19-year-olds when the new V Levels in Digital Systems and Data and Education become available. Health and Social Care, Science, Engineering and Construction AAQs and TOQs will be replaced with V Levels in 2028.

Q: What is the timeline for all qualifications including Applied Psychology, Health and Social Care and Sport?

A: The full timeline is set out in the implementation plan: [Post-16 pathways: implementation plan - GOV.UK](#).

Applied psychology: Existing applied psychology qualifications will continue to be funded in 2027. We continue to consider applied psychology and how to ensure relevant content is covered, working closely with stakeholders and the sector. Existing qualifications in applied psychology will remain in place until further decisions are made. We will provide more details

on applied psychology in early 2027, following further engagement with stakeholders and subject scoping.

Health and Social Care: In the [implementation plan](#), we confirmed the planned introduction of the [Social Care T Level](#) for first teach in September 2028. We will also introduce V Levels in both Health and Social Care from 2028 which can be combined to form part of a study programme.

Sport: In the [implementation plan](#), we confirmed the planned introduction of the [Sport, Physical Activity and Health T Level](#) for first teach in September 2028.

Q: What happens to learners who start a qualification in 2027 and need to re-sit after its funding approval is removed?

A: Removing funding approval applies to new starts. Learners who are already enrolled on a qualification will continue to be funded until they complete their programme. Arrangements for any re-sits required after completion would need to be considered in line with the relevant funding and awarding organisation arrangements.

Q: What is the recommended route for students on elite or academy programmes (e.g. football and rugby academies, sporting excellence), who currently rely on a large single-subject programme that fits around training?

A: For students who want to pursue a large, in-depth programme focused on the sport sector, the new [Sport, Physical Activity and Health T Level](#), planned for first teach from September 2028, will provide the large technical route. We published the content for this T Level in October 2026 following public consultation.

T Levels will be the only large qualification for 16 to 19-year-olds at level 3 in the reformed system and are designed for students who know the broad career area they want to pursue.

We recognise that flexibility in delivery will be important for different students and providers. We are making further changes to T Level content and assessment to improve accessibility and manageability, while maintaining quality, and all new T Levels will be no greater than 1,080 guided learning hours (GLH) alongside the minimum 315-hour industry placement.

The updated industry placement framework also gives providers greater scope to tailor placements to their local context and students' needs, including more innovative approaches to how placements are delivered.

Q: Will a sport V Level combined with A Levels (e.g. PE or Biology) be recognised for progression to sport science degrees?

A: V Levels are specifically designed to support progression to further study. They will be the same size as an A Level and can be combined with A Levels and other V Levels to create a broad and coherent study programme, giving students flexibility to choose subjects that support their intended progression. The planned Sport and Exercise Science V Level is due to be available from 2028, subject to final content development.

We are working with the higher education sector as the new qualifications are developed. V Levels are being designed with input from higher education providers, alongside providers, awarding organisations and employers, to ensure they support progression, including into higher education. To further support progression to HE we have established the Technical and Vocational Qualifications Higher Education network, and wider subject-content development involves engagement with higher education institutions (HEIs). The intention is therefore that a V Level will be able to form part of a programme that supports progression to higher education, and V Levels will attract the same UCAS points as A Levels at grades A*-E. Individual universities will, however, determine their own entry requirements for specific courses, so students should check the requirements for the sport science degree they are considering.

Q: Will we be able to feed into the tranche 2 subject content? If so, when will that happen?

A: Tranche 2 subject content is already being developed in collaboration with awarding organisations, providers, HEIs, employers and professional bodies. We will consult on the subject content for 2028 qualifications between November 2026 and January 2027 and we welcome contributions through this process.

Q: What practical or financial support will allow providers to release staff for planning, preparation, CPD and set-up between publication of specifications and first teaching?

A: From September 2026, the Technical and Vocational Professional Development programme ([TVPD](#)), worth £17m, will support schools and colleges to prepare for, implement and deliver technical and vocational qualifications to a high and consistent standard.

The programme combines subject-specific training aligned to qualification requirements, employer-led industry upskilling and structured opportunities for collaboration through peer networks. Alongside strengthening teaching practice, it provides targeted transition support for leaders, helping them to plan and implement new qualifications effectively in line with local needs.

[TVPD](#) is a key part of the Department's commitment to supporting the technical and vocational education workforce and ensuring learners have access to high-quality technical education and training. We will continue to monitor provider readiness and use future Implementation Plan updates to target support where risks are greatest.

Q: How will providers manage staffing, timetabling, recruitment, staff wellbeing and other practical challenges, such as possible Ofsted inspection, during transition?

A: We have received nearly 2,000 Strategic Transition Planning Statements from providers. These have identified workforce capacity, subject expertise, recruitment, learner demand, industry placements, equipment, facilities, timetabling, learner support and English and maths as key implementation challenges. The Department will use this evidence to target professional development and practical support while continuing to monitor readiness and risks. We are working with providers to support them to build workforce planning, CPD and recruitment into their transition plans. We will also work with Ofsted to ensure that the inspection regime takes into account the reformed qualifications landscape in a proportionate way.

Q: How workable will the reforms be for very small 16 to 19 providers?

A: Implementation will look different according to provider size, local context and learner needs, and we are not expecting every provider to offer the same mix. Providers will have the flexibility to construct study programmes that work for their learners and local contexts, rather than being subject to national rules of combination. For smaller providers, collaboration may be particularly important, including working with other providers to support mixed study programmes and deciding where partnership makes most sense locally.

V Levels: design, size, combinations and assessment

Q: Can you combine A Levels with V Levels?

A: Yes, we are not implementing rules of combination. V Levels and A Levels can be combined to form part of a study programme.

Q: How will the A* to E, P and U grading model work in practice?

A: Detailed assessment and grading arrangements will be determined through qualification development and the Ofqual regulatory process. V Levels will attract the same [UCAS tariff points](#) as A Levels at grades A* to E.

Q: Can the Department clarify which existing level 3 qualifications will remain funded until a relevant V Level is available, including subjects such as animal management and animal science?

A: The [implementation plan](#) sets out the phased subject timetable. As we introduce new qualifications, we will remove public funding approval from existing qualifications.

For existing animal management and animal science qualifications this will depend on their size. Large qualifications (three-A-Level-sized, or 1,080 GLH+) will have funding removed if they overlap with an existing T Level in 2027 or after that when new T Levels are introduced. Other qualifications will have funding removed when we introduce new V Levels in land-based subject areas in 2029.

Q: Will a smaller V Level equivalent to half an A Level, around 180 GLH, be available?

A: We will not introduce V Levels equivalent to the same size as an AS Level. V Levels will be the same size as one A Level (360 GLH). This is to enable the V Level to cover the breadth of content needed, and to allow V Levels to be studied alongside other V Levels or A Levels to form a full study programme.

Q: How will V Levels allow vocational skills to be contextualised for different sectors while remaining broad qualifications?

A: V Levels will feature applied teaching, learning and assessment designed to develop real-world skills. Their nationally set content will relate to an employment sector and be linked to occupational standards, while awarding organisations will develop detailed specifications within that national framework. This is intended to retain vocational relevance while ensuring consistency across providers and qualifications.

Q: Why are V Levels smaller than some existing large vocational qualifications, and how will this affect programme depth?

A: V Levels are 360 GLH, the same size as one A Level, to enable breadth and flexible combinations with other V Levels and A Levels. Students who wish to have an in-depth, sector-focused programme should take a T Level, which is equivalent in size to three A Levels. The recent version of the [implementation plan](#) confirmed that the DfE is not planning to implement rules of combination on which qualifications can be combined to form the qualification element of a study programme. This gives providers the flexibility to deliver a coherent study programme for their students and they can combine V Levels with other V Levels and A Levels.

Q: Where a T Level and V Level cover a similar subject, will providers be able to co-teach shared content?

A: V Levels and T Levels are different types of qualification and have been designed with different purposes and structures in mind. While there is an overlap with the subjects, it is unlikely that there will be enough similar content to enable co-teaching.

Q: Will the introduction of related A Levels and V Levels be aligned so providers can make coherent curriculum decisions?

A: The policy principles for V Levels as set out in the [Government Response](#) to the Post-16 pathways consultation, require that V Levels must support system coherence. All V Levels are therefore designed to ensure there is significant differentiation from A Levels. This means that if a student chooses a coherent mixed study programme of both A and V Levels, we aim to minimise duplication of content.

Q: What is the plan for Criminology as a level 3 qualification?

A: We will work with the sector to consider options and update the [implementation plan](#) with more details in early 2027. Existing qualifications in this subject area will not have funding approval removed before 2029/30.

Q: Unlike existing qualifications, there is no 'nesting' with the new qualifications. Will consideration be given to allowing partial achievement so learners who leave after one year can receive recognition?

A: We will work with awarding organisations to explore how existing certification and results-notification arrangements within Ofqual's Conditions of Recognition can be used to recognise students' progress and achievements during their studies. Awarding organisations already have scope within the regulatory framework to recognise learning, attainment and progress. We will work with them to promote greater awareness and consistency in the use of the approaches available. We will keep this area under review, exploring consistency and providing guidance where appropriate to support 2027 implementation.

Q: Can coursework or examinations be completed in the first year, or must all examinations be taken in the second year?

A: Ofqual's rules do not prohibit students from taking all V Level assessments in one year, but V Levels are designed and expected to be delivered over two years. An awarding organisation must not award a V Level in the first academic year in which it makes that subject available. Detailed assessment timing will be set through qualification development and the regulatory process.

Q: How will V Levels remain vocational, and will they include mandatory work experience or an industry placement?

A: V Levels will use applied teaching, learning and assessment, with content linked to occupational standards and the core knowledge and skills of an employment sector. An industry placement will not be a requirement of the qualification. However, work experience

remains an important part of [16 to 19 study programmes](#) and, where possible, can be linked to the qualifications a young person is studying.

T Levels: delivery, assessment and industry placements

Q: How will sufficient high-quality industry placements be secured across sectors and geographical areas, while addressing employer capacity and competition for placements?

A: Nearly all T Level students complete their industry placements: 97.2% of those receiving T Level results in summer 2026 had completed their placement by results day. The updated industry-placement framework gives providers more scope to tailor delivery to local circumstances, including collaboration between employers, remote hours, small-team projects and skills hubs. T Level providers remain responsible for sourcing placements, supported by campaigns, funding, guidance, digital tools, the Connect service, the T Level Ambassador Network and targeted sector support.

The [T Level Industry Placement Support Service](#) offers workshops, webinars, continuing professional development, practical guidance, engagement tools and peer learning. The Employer Support Fund assists with essential hosting costs for placements in health T Levels and SMEs, and funding is available for Construction placements. These measures are intended to widen the employer base and reduce competition between T Levels, 14–16 provision and wider work experience.

Q: T Level Science: What help is available to enable us to find industrial placements, or to persuade local employers that T Level placements are possible in labs?

A: Employers can access guidance, workshops, webinars, CPD, engagement tools and peer learning through the [T Level Industry Placement Support Service](#), plus the digital Connect service linking them with local providers. We also promote take-up through Skills for Life, more than 1,400 T Level Ambassadors, targeted SME outreach and work with Skills England and employers to address barriers. More information is available at [Industry placements – T Levels support for schools and colleges](#).

We have published case studies from [The Francis Crick Institute](#) and [The Sainsbury Laboratory Norwich](#), setting out how T Level industry placements have benefited them, and how they've overcome barriers. The Gatsby Foundation has also worked with leading science institutes including the Royal Societies of Biology and Chemistry to produce a guide for science employers on [Securing technical talent for your business: How T Level Science can deliver the skilled workforce your business needs](#). This includes positive quotes and case studies from leading science employers.

Q: Will there be a T Level in entrepreneurship?

A: There are no plans for a T Level in entrepreneurship. However, the knowledge and skills developed through the [Management and Administration T Level](#) can also be useful to students interested in starting or growing a business. Understanding how organisations operate, communicating professionally, managing projects and improving business processes can help provide a foundation for that ambition. The 45-day industry placement also offers an opportunity to see how these skills are applied in an organisation.

We set out more detail in the [implementation plan](#) on specific subjects that will be rolled out in 2027 and 2028. 2028 subjects are still subject to final confirmation following further content development. For subjects to be rolled out in 2029 and 2030, we have listed the routes and subject areas that will be developed further, working with the sector. The full list of subjects for 2029 and 2030 will be confirmed following further subject testing, scoping and when we know the full extent of occupational standards that will be available. This will be by January 2027 for qualifications due for first teach in 2029, and by September 2027 for qualifications due for first teach in 2030.

Q: How have T Level industry placements been working out since they were introduced?

A: Nearly all T Level students complete their industry placements: 97.2% of those in receipt of T Level results in summer 2026 completed their placement as of results day. Industry placements are important in preparing T Level completers for work and study. Of those completing in 2024, 74% said their industry placement helped them feel prepared. Of those who progressed to study, 86% said their industry placement prepared them well. Student satisfaction with industry placements is high: 79% of those completing T Levels in 2024 who completed an industry placement were satisfied with their experience. And around a quarter of T Level students who progress directly into employment or apprenticeships do so with their industry placement employer.

Q: When can we expect the outcome of the T Level Sport and T Level Social Care consultations?

A: Details of the two new T Levels, the Sport, Physical Activity and Health T Level and the Social Care T Level, planned for first teaching in September 2028, were [published on GOV.UK](#) on Monday 19 October 2026. These new qualifications will broaden the T Level offer and support more students to access high-quality technical education that prepares them for progression into employment, apprenticeships and higher-level study.

Q: How will T Levels remain broad enough for learners who are interested in a sector but do not yet want to specialise narrowly?

A: T Levels are designed for students who know the broad career area they want to pursue and want to focus their studies in that area. Each T Level includes a broad core that supports underpinning skills and knowledge across the broader occupational area, as well as occupational specialist content. These equip students for a range of further pathways, including employment, apprenticeships and higher education. Students who want a broader or mixed programme will be able to choose V Levels, A Levels or a combination.

Q: What DBS, safeguarding and regulated-activity requirements apply to staff supervising 16- and 17-year-olds on work experience or T Level industry placements?

A: Under-18s can be accommodated safely in most workplaces with appropriate support, adjustments and risk assessment, and existing employers' liability insurance where the insurer is an ABI or Lloyd's member. Regulated activity does not apply to supervising young people aged 16 or over on work experience or industry placements, and there is no change to DBS requirements for staff supervising T Level students aged 16 or over. As noted in paragraph 409 of [Keeping children safe in education 2026](#), schools and colleges cannot request that an employer obtains an enhanced DBS check with children's barred-list information for staff supervising 16- and 17-year-olds on work experience. Providers and employers should also follow the published industry-placement guidance.

Q: How will the Department ensure fair geographical access to high-quality placements, including through virtual, hybrid, provider-based or employer-engagement models where workplace placements are difficult to secure?

A: The new [industry placement delivery framework](#) allows providers to tailor placements to local circumstances through more than one employer, remote hours, small-team projects and skills hubs. This flexibility can also help small sixth forms organise classroom delivery when students attend placements at different times. Placements must still be overseen by an external employer or employers, last at least 315 hours and have clear objectives supporting qualification outcomes. Providers must consider students' travel arrangements and support needs, including help with travel costs, local transport schemes and collaboration with other providers. Eligible costs may be met through T Level industry-placement funding or the [16 to 19 discretionary bursary fund](#).

Q: How will placements and study programmes work for specialist or safety-critical occupations, and can T Levels be combined with additional qualifications?

A: The phased [implementation plan](#) sets out new and prospective T Level subjects, with further testing and scoping of occupational standards for later years. Providers will not be subject to national rules of combination, so additional qualifications may be included where they form a coherent study programme. Placements must be high quality, overseen by an external employer or employers, last at least 315 hours and have clear objectives supporting

qualification outcomes. In regulated or safety-critical settings, providers and employers should use appropriate risk assessment, support and reasonable adjustments. They may also use framework flexibilities, including collaboration between employers, remote activity, small-team projects on provider premises where appropriate, and skills hubs, where suitable for the occupation and student.

Q: Why would a review of one learner's T Level core component require the whole cohort to be remarked?

A: T Level core components are assessed through written examinations and an employer-set project, with post-results services managed by the relevant awarding organisation. A review requested for one learner requiring a wider cohort review is an awarding organisation assessment process and the relevant awarding organisation would need to explain the circumstances in which it applies.

Q: When will the new rules on resitting individual T Level core examinations take effect, and which learner cohort will first benefit?

A: Ofqual consulted on allowing students to retake individual core examinations rather than a full set where one core element has not been achieved. Responses were overwhelmingly supportive, and the Department is working with Ofqual and awarding organisations to implement the change. More information on when the change will be implemented will be set out in due course.

Q: Could public sector bodies be expected to provide placements across functions such as administration, finance, legal and marketing?

A: Public sector bodies can support T Level industry placements across a range of relevant functions. The Department supports employers and providers through guidance, workshops, webinars, the T Level Industry Placement Support Service, the Connect service and the T Level Ambassador Network. Decisions on the placements an organisation can offer will depend on its functions, capacity and ability to provide a high-quality experience.

Q: How will transport barriers, particularly in rural areas, be addressed?

A: Providers must consider the student's travel arrangements for accessing their placement and what support they might need. This might include help with travel costs, accessing local transport schemes and working with other providers to secure economies of scale in approaches to travel. Providers can use their T Level industry placement funding, or the [16 to 19 discretionary bursary fund](#), to fund individual expenses for eligible students. Further information is available in the [Industry Placement Delivery Guidance](#).

Funding, staffing, estates and provider readiness

Q: From a provider perspective, what is the most urgent decision colleges need to make, and what would a manageable transition from AAQs to V Levels look like?

A: Our Qualification Pioneer, Newcastle and Stafford College group, recommended mapping the available information across the next three years and modelling qualification combinations, staffing, faculty and learner impacts now, rather than waiting for every detail. The college is initially retaining some AAQs in 2027 while planning for V Level programmes from 2028 onwards.

Q: What implementation, marketing and subject-specific funding and support will providers receive, including for facilities, equipment, staffing, timetabling and different learner groups?

A: Providers will receive transition guidance, practical resources, exemplar pathways, awarding organisation specifications and assessment materials, support through Qualification Pioneers, and the funded [TVPD](#) programme. Qualification design will consider students with SEND and others facing barriers, while V Levels and level 2 pathways will allow tailored support. V Levels, Foundation Certificates, Occupational Certificates and T Levels will be eligible for Adult Skills Fund support in non-devolved areas, with decisions in devolved areas resting with strategic authorities. Capital funding beyond 2026/27 is under review and no decisions have been made.

Q: What is happening for funding for large level 3 Applied Science qualifications and what progression route will replace them for learners seeking entry to higher education?

A: We expect students who wish to take a large science qualification to take the Science T Level from 2027 onwards, as the existing three-A-Level-sized qualifications in applied science will have public funding approval removed.

V Levels in Science Research and Technology, Health, and Healthcare Science and Technology are due to be introduced in 2028, subject to final content development. Funding approval for existing qualifications will be removed in line with the phased timetable as replacement qualifications are introduced.

Q: Does the 40% timetabled assessment requirement mean formal examinations, and what forms of assessment can make up the remaining 60%?

A: Detailed assessment arrangements will be determined through qualification development and Ofqual's regulatory process. The first draft specifications setting out what assessment may

look like for the first V Levels will be made available from November 2026. Ofqual has set out in its guidance that timetabled assessment does not necessarily mean formal written examinations.

Q: Can independently funded providers continue to offer an existing AGQ after public funding approval is removed?

A: Removal of public funding approval determines whether a qualification can be funded for eligible students who are funded through the study programme. Continued availability of existing qualifications that are funded privately will depend on the awarding organisation continuing to offer that qualification.

Level 2, Foundation and Occupational Certificates

Q: Will existing level 2 courses be removed next year with the arrival of Foundation and Occupational Certificates? Where can we find out the details for changes to level 2 funding approvals?

A: Level 2 qualifications will have public funding approval removed when planned Occupational Certificates and Foundation Certificates both come on stream in a subject area. Further detail can be found in the [implementation plan](#).

Q: What will happen to specialist heritage craft qualifications currently offered as level 2 and 3 diplomas, such as stonemasonry, and how will they fit into the new occupational pathways?

A: We are exploring options for stonemasonry. We will update the [implementation plan](#) with more details by September 2027. Existing qualifications in this subject area will not have funding approval removed before the 2030/31 academic year.

Q: Will Occupational Certificates include licences to practise where relevant?

A: Yes, where necessary. For example, the Early Years Practitioner Occupational Certificate will need to show full occupational readiness.

Q: How can Foundation Certificates support progression to A Levels or V Levels, including through a three-year Key Stage 5 programme?

A: Foundation Certificates will normally form a one-year Further Study pathway within a wider programme that includes English and/or maths where required, enrichment, employability and pastoral support. They are designed to give students more time to develop the knowledge, confidence and practical skills needed for level 3 study, including exposure to level 3 learning.

A Foundation Certificate can support progression to V Levels, T Levels or A Levels, including in a different subject, but does not guarantee entry because providers set their own entry criteria. DfE does not prescribe how a school sixth form should structure a three-year Key Stage 5 programme. Under 16 to 19 funding rules, a student would usually be able to progress to a funded two-year level 3 programme if they start it by age 18, unless they have an EHC plan; providers should consider carefully whether an additional Foundation Certificate year is needed.

Q: Will later tranches of Occupational Certificates allow more flexible assessment design?

A: Occupational Certificates will use nationally specified content based on occupational standards, normally combining a broad introductory core with occupation-specific content. Awarding organisations will have some flexibility in developing the occupation-specific content, provided mandatory content is covered.

Q: Will Foundation and Occupational Certificates be available in schools, or only through providers that also deliver level 3 programmes?

A: Foundation Certificates and Occupational Certificates are post-16 qualifications. It is a decision for post-16 providers as to whether they wish to offer Foundation and Occupational Certificates. Providers will need to consider staff capacity and CPD, estates and facilities, learner demand and local skills needs in their transition planning.

For pre-16 pupils, the Government has set out its intention to introduce vocational GCSEs from age 14, which will be designed to provide coherent progression into the reformed post-16 landscape. There will be a public consultation on this before the end of the year.

English, maths, level 1, SEND and adult provision

Q: What pathways and English and maths support will be available for learners working below level 2, including those unable to achieve level 2 immediately?

A: DfE is committed to ensuring that students at entry level and level 1 have access to high-quality qualifications that support progression into further study, employment and essential life and work skills. We will consider in due course whether wider reforms to entry-level and level 1 qualifications are required.

New 16–19 level 1 English and maths qualifications are planned for students with prior GCSE attainment at grade 2 or below, helping them consolidate foundational knowledge before taking GCSE examinations when ready. Functional Skills will remain appropriate for some students.

Foundation and Occupational Certificates will sit within wider study programmes that include English and/or maths where required. The two-year Occupational Certificate can allow a student to take a level 1 stepping-stone qualification in year one before progressing to GCSE in year two.

Q: Could individual V Levels be taken as one-year qualifications so learners can progress at level 3 while continuing English and maths study?

A: V Levels are generally designed to be taken as part of a two-year study programme. Students are able to continue studying English and maths alongside V Levels. Alternatively, students could take a Foundation Certificate with English and maths study in year one and then move on to a full V Level programme.

Q: What pathway will be available for learners with grade 4 GCSE profiles or SEND who cannot meet T Level or level 3 entry requirements but are above Foundation Certificate level?

A: Entry requirements are set by individual providers, not by DfE. At level 2, students can take a Foundation Certificate to prepare for level 3 or an Occupational Certificate to prepare for skilled employment. V Levels are being designed to allow flexible mixed programmes, and the wider study programme can include tailored support, adapted delivery or extended teaching time for students with SEND.

Q: How will the reforms support learners with SEND at entry level or level 1, including Preparing for Adulthood outcomes?

A: The Department is committed to ensuring that entry-level and level 1 qualifications support progression into further study, employment and essential life and work skills. It will continue to consider how these qualifications can best support learners with SEND and promote Preparing for Adulthood outcomes such as independence, employment, community participation and good health. Occupational Certificates are designed to be accessible to a broad range of learners, including some who might previously have started at level 1, with appropriate support throughout their study programme. More broadly, qualification and pathway design will consider young people with SEND, those at risk of becoming NEET and others facing barriers to participation.

Q: What will the reforms mean for adult learners, disabled learners and vulnerable adults, and will suitable qualifications continue to attract funding?

A: V Levels, Foundation Certificates, Occupational Certificates and T Levels will be eligible for funding through the [Adult Skills Fund](#) in non-devolved areas. This will support integration of adult and 16 to 19 provision and progression opportunities for young adults in particular. We

are making T Levels available for young adults who do not already have a level 3 qualification from autumn 2027, and will provide further detail on eligibility and funding in the near future.

Other adult qualifications will continue to be funded as they are today. The Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper published in October 2025 includes a commitment to review our adult essential skills offer.

Tailored Learning is flexible and wide-ranging non-qualification-based provision, which is part of the Adult Skills Fund (now funded by the Department for Work and Pensions).

Tailored Learning helps adult students engage in learning, build confidence, and/or develop skills for further learning or employment. It supports students who are not ready for formal accredited learning. It also includes employer-facing provision that has been designed in collaboration with employers.

Creative and specialist provision

Q: How will the reforms support specialist creative practice, learner choice and credible progression routes, and what programmes will providers be able to offer?

A: Creative qualifications have distinct requirements, including sustained specialist practice, technical mastery, experimentation and portfolio development. Creative V Level subjects have not yet been confirmed and are planned for rollout from 2030. A Post-16 Pathways Creative Qualifications Policy Group of sector experts will advise on how the reformed offer can support specialist disciplines, effective skills development and progression into and through the creative industries, in a model of A Levels, V Levels and T Levels at level 3, and Foundation Certificates and Occupational Certificates at level 2.

Q: Why was art removed from the proposed Foundation Certificate subjects?

A: The planned level 2 offer is reviewed against learner and employer need, viability, sector engagement, occupational standards and whether the qualification is the most effective route. Beyond 2027, all of the subjects and subject areas are indicative, and will be confirmed following content development. The Post-16 Pathways Creative Qualifications Policy Group will advise on how the reformed offer can support specialist practice and progression.

Q: How will placement and employer-engagement models work in creative sectors dominated by freelancers and small businesses, and how will they support specialist creative provision?

A: The updated T Level industry placement framework allows more flexible delivery, including collaboration between employers, remote hours, small-team projects and skills hubs. This may

help sectors with many freelancers and small businesses. The Creative Qualifications Policy Group will advise on how T Levels and V Levels can reflect the distinctive nature of creative disciplines and support progression.

Q: How will creative providers plan before the 2030 rollout when final qualification detail is not yet available?

A: We will say more about the timelines for 2030 as part of updates to the [implementation plan](#). Alongside these updates, the Post-16 Pathways Creative Qualifications Policy Group will advise on how the reformed post-16 qualifications can enable effective skills development in creative subjects and progression into and through the creative industries, meeting current and future sector needs.

Q: How will creative pathways connect with Art Foundation study?

A: As creative T Levels and V Levels are developed for introduction from 2030, the Department will consider how existing qualifications and pathways fit together so that students can continue to progress into further and higher study. The Post-16 Creative Qualifications Policy Group will advise on how the reformed offer supports specialist practice and progression through the creative industries.

Q: What evidence compares Creative T Level enrolment with participation in existing Extended Diplomas and A Levels?

A: As part of the work on creative provision we will be looking to see how the reformed post-16 landscape works together to meet the needs of the creative sector. The Craft and Design T Level and Media, Broadcasting and Production T Level are still at an early stage of delivery, with the first students receiving their results in [summer 2026](#), compared to established extended diplomas and A Levels. As part of the reforms we are exploring expanding T Levels into art, performing arts, creative and design.

[Progression, higher education and qualification recognition](#)

Q: What work is underway with universities to allow progression from new qualifications such as T Levels?

A: Over 200 higher education providers across Britain accept T Levels for at least one course, including the majority of Russell Group universities. We work closely with the sector to ensure that T Levels are understood by providers as a high-quality offer. 81% of T Level students who applied to higher education in the 2025 admissions cycle were placed. This compares with the 76% overall acceptance rate across all UCAS applicants.

Q: Will universities accept V Levels in science for entry to health-related courses such as pharmacy and optometry?

A: We have set out our ambition that, once all V Levels are introduced and in steady delivery, a student will be equally as likely to progress into level 4 and above study whether they take A Levels or V Levels. We have worked with Universities UK, UCAS and a range of higher education institutions as part of the content development process for the first tranche of V Levels to be taught from September 2027, and we are engaging with them on content for V Levels to be taught from September 2028.

We have established a technical and vocational qualifications higher education network, made up of Universities UK, UCAS, higher education institutions and awarding organisations. It meets quarterly to support the recognition of V Levels and continue to drive the recognition of T Levels. UCAS has announced that [V Level tariff points](#) at grades A* to E will be equal to those of A Levels. Higher education institutions will set their own entry requirements, and progression to science-related courses will depend on the course and institution. We are working with higher education institutions through content design and the higher education network to support progression from V Levels.

Q: How will accountability measures recognise a positive sustained-employment destination where a learner leaves after the first year of a T Level?

A: Students who do not complete the full T Level can receive a Statement of Achievement showing the components they achieved, and partial achievement may attract UCAS points where the industry placement and either the core or occupational specialism are completed.

Q: How will universities, employers, apprenticeship routes and parents recognise T Levels and the new qualifications?

A: 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 maps](#) aim to give learners greater confidence in planning their next steps and understanding a range of opportunities that these new qualifications can unlock.

We continue to work with UCAS, Universities UK and higher education providers to improve understanding of T Levels as a high-quality route, including by providing [online guidance](#) to support higher education institutions considering T Level applicants.

Q: Have higher education institutions agreed to accept different combinations of V Levels and A Levels?

A: V Levels have been designed to be the same size as an A Level (360 GLH), so that they can be combined with A Levels and/or other V Levels. In September, UCAS additionally announced that [V Level tariff points](#) at grades A* to E will be equal to those of A Levels. Universities such as the University of York have already stated that they expect to accept V Levels in combination with A Levels for many of its undergraduate courses. See [Qualification reform: Undergraduate, University of York](#).

We have also established a technical and vocational qualifications higher education network, made up of Universities UK, UCAS, higher education institutions and awarding organisations, to ensure the recognition of V Levels in the sector.

Communication, materials and professional development

Q: Can you please share the pathway images with providers?

A: Here is a link to the [support materials](#).

Q: How will the Technical and Vocational Professional Development programme and Technical Excellence Colleges work together to build subject, sector and local delivery capacity?

A: The [TVPD programme](#) will provide subject-specific training, employer-led industry upskilling, peer networks and transition support for leaders and teachers.

Q: How will the reforms be communicated and marketed to learners, parents, employers and schools, and what support will providers receive?

A: National activity will include the Skills for Life campaign, T Level promotional moments, webinars, newsletters, case studies and careers resources, alongside work with the Careers and Enterprise Company. The [Post-16 Pathways support pack](#) provides pathway examples, presentations, explainers, flyers, posters, videos, editable templates and resources for learners, parents, employers, staff, careers professionals and higher education providers. Providers can tailor these national materials for local use.

Reform durability, devolution and system-wide issues

Q: What confidence can providers have in the durability and ongoing support for the reforms, and how will national standards work alongside greater devolution?

A: We will work on improving outcomes and designing reforms with the sector, strategic authorities and employers. National qualification standards would protect consistency and portability, while local areas could tailor provision, employer engagement, placements and work experience to regional priorities.

Q: When will the reformed Progress 8 measure be confirmed so providers can plan post-14 pathways that connect to post-16 provision?

A: The Government's response to the consultation on key stage 4 performance measures and the extension of Targeted RISE will be published in due course. Existing accountability arrangements remain in place and schools and colleges should continue to plan on that basis.

Q: How will the Department identify and address unintended gaps, ensure viable routes for every learner and encourage local collaboration?

A: The phased [implementation plan](#) will be updated as further information becomes available. The Department will continue to engage providers, representative bodies, employers, strategic authorities, stakeholder groups and Qualification Pioneers to support delivery for all students. The system is intended to provide clear level 3 pathways through A Levels, V Levels and T Levels, and level 2 pathways through Foundation and Occupational Certificates, with qualification design considering learners with SEND, those at risk of becoming NEET and others facing barriers. Providers will retain flexibility to collaborate, build coherent programmes and reduce unnecessary local duplication.

Q: Why are apprenticeships not being considered alongside A Levels, T Levels and V Levels, particularly following changes to higher-level apprenticeship funding?

A: This Government is transforming the apprenticeships levy into a new growth and skills levy in England, backed by £1 billion of additional investment, which will support 50,000 more young people into apprenticeships, give employers greater flexibility to develop the workforce they need, and support the industrial strategy.

A Levels, V Levels and T Levels are classroom-based level 3 choices, while apprenticeships are work-based programmes that students may progress into. V Levels are intended to support progression to higher-level study or work-based training such as an apprenticeship, and T Levels also provide a route into apprenticeships, employment or further technical study.



Department
for Education

© Crown copyright 2026

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0, except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3.

Where we have identified any third-party copyright information, you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

About this publication:

enquiries www.gov.uk/contact-dfe

download www.gov.uk/government/publications

Follow us on X: [@educationgovuk](https://twitter.com/educationgovuk)

Connect with us on Facebook: facebook.com/educationgovuk