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Guidance

T Levels: next steps for providers

Information for post-16 providers on the next steps towards delivery of T Levels.

Published 6 March 2018

Last updated 27 May 2018 — [see all updates](#)

From: [Education and Skills Funding Agency](#)

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T Levels are 2 year technical study programmes for 16 to 19 year olds that include a qualification and a

industry placement. They will give students the knowledge and practical skills needed to progress into skilled employment at level 3 and above, or higher levels of technical training.

T Levels are central to the reforms we are making to our technical education system, and are rigorous, classroom or workshop-based technical study programmes, which will be available alongside apprenticeships as one half of a high quality technical education offer.

T Levels and apprenticeships will be based on the same set of employer-designed standards, approved and managed by the Institute for Apprenticeships.

The report of the [Independent Panel on Technical Education](#) recommended a new system of technical education to provide a high quality technical option alongside an academic option for students aged 16 to 19. In the [Post-16 Skills Plan](#) we committed to these recommendations, and the development and implementation of T Levels is a central part of that commitment.

We recognise that these reforms will be challenging for education and training providers to deliver, but we are committed to working with you to shape their implementation.

The Department for Education published the [T Level Action Plan](#) on 11 October 2017 and set out plans for implementing T Levels. It confirmed that:

- the first teaching of 3 T Levels by a small number of providers would start from September 2020
- further T Levels would be delivered from September 2021 introduced in annual waves

This guidance sets out information and next steps on the development and implementation of T Levels for post-16 education providers. Read an introduction to T Levels for more detail about T Levels.

T Level consultation

The Department for Education issued a [consultation](#) in November 2017 to obtain views on the major aspects of our proposals for implementing T Levels, and this consultation closed on 8 February 2018.

We received 430 responses from a wide range of organisation types and individuals, and we also held a series of ten consultation events around the country. We have analysed and taken full account of all the responses received, and the government's [response to the consultation](#) has now been published.

Consultation on occupational maps

The Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA) issued a consultation in December 2017 on the [Occupational Maps](#), which closed on 8 February 2018.

One of the recommendations of the Independent Panel on Technical Education, was for a framework of 15 routes to skilled employment. These routes group together occupations with similar knowledge, skills and behaviours, and each route is further broken down into pathways, which provide further groupings of occupations with similar requirements within each route, giving an indication of possible career progression. Each T Level programme will sit under a pathway.

Each route has an occupational map, which details the skilled occupations in each area. The occupational maps consultation ran alongside the T Level consultation, to ensure that the maps captured the relevant occupations in each route and that these are grouped coherently.

The IfA published the [response to this consultation on the IfA website](#) on 27 May.

Outline content

Groups of employers have been developing the content of the new T Levels, setting out the knowledge and skills a student needs to have acquired upon completion of the programme.

The draft content for the [first 3 pathways has been published on the IfA website](#) for comment.

Providers delivering T Levels in the 2020 to 2021 academic year

The [T Level action plan](#) announced that some T Levels from 3 technical routes will be delivered by a small number of providers from September 2020. Those T Levels are as follows:

- Digital route: Software applications design and development T Level
- Construction route: Design, Surveying and Planning T Level
- Education and Childcare route: Education T Level

(Please note the change in the Construction route T Level from Building Services Engineering to Design, Surveying and Planning. See below for more information).

We invited providers who met a set of published criteria to express an interest in delivering T Levels in the 2020 to 2021 academic year, and we received over 200 expressions of interest.

We have now published the [list of successful education and training providers](#).

We'll make sure these providers have the support they need to deliver successfully in 2020 and will give them the opportunity to work with us to develop the new programmes.

Change to the Construction route T Level for the 2020 to 2021 academic year

We are keen to ensure that T Levels are a high quality option for young people, and creating high quality outline content is the first part of that challenge.

In addition to the formal review of the outline content by Ministers and by the Institute for Apprenticeships' Route Panels, the outline content that T Level panels have created has been tested with other employers, providers, and higher education providers.

We tested outline content for both the Building Services Engineering T Level, and the Design, Surveying and Planning T Level within the Construction route, with a view to choosing the most advanced pathway for delivery in 2020.

That review of content has highlighted that Design, Surveying and Planning is most advanced, and we have consequently selected that T Level for 2020 delivery. Building Services Engineering will follow for first delivery in 2021.

Those providers who submitted an Expression of Interest to deliver the Building Services Engineering T Level in 2020, and are successful, will be asked if they wish to deliver the Design, Surveying and Planning T Level instead. If they choose not to, they can still offer the other pathways they applied to deliver as part

of their Expression of Interest.

The ESFA will issue a new Expression of Interest process on 30 May for any provider who wishes to deliver the Design, Surveying and Planning T Level which will be rolled out in 2020 as a result of the construction pathway change.

They must meet the same published criteria set out in the original Expression of Interest – they can only apply to deliver the Design, Surveying and Planning T Level. The process will conclude by the end of October 2018.

Providers delivering T Levels in the 2021 to 2022 academic year

The criteria for delivery of T Levels in the 2021 to 2022 academic year and beyond have not yet been agreed and we will publish more details later this year.

Selecting providers to deliver the first T Levels in September 2020 is just the first step on our journey to successfully implement T Levels as part of a high-quality technical education offer, and we are keen to continue to work positively with all providers as we prepare for their roll out.

Surveys to help us improve our understanding of post-16 education providers

As the government looks to reform further education provision, more will be asked of the FE sector itself, and we want to work with you to understand how best we can support you in responding to these reforms.

We're asking you to help us by completing the following 3 surveys over the coming months. Each survey will ask you different, but linked, questions about your:

- current teachers and leaders
- current plans around T Level delivery
- views on a number of post-16 issues

We really appreciate your time and effort in responding to these surveys.

2018 FE college staff survey of teachers and leaders

All general and specialist FE colleges in England are being invited to take part in the College Staff Survey 2018 which began in April. Kantar Public and RCU are conducting this survey on behalf of the department. The survey is short to minimise the time that it takes you and your teaching staff to complete it.

This will help us to learn more about staff routes in and out of the sector. To ensure that policies, and the support developed to implement them, are relevant and sensible, they must be based on high-quality accurate data. To achieve that, we need to ensure that our evidence is current, and sourced directly from individuals and providers affected by the changes.

The survey will close on 10 June, and we'll publish the findings of this work. The results will inform our work to develop the support FE teachers and leaders need to continue improving and getting the best results for learners.

Data collection on provider readiness to deliver T Levels

We encourage you to [complete a data collection by 6 July 2018](#) about plans to implement T Levels in your organisation.

The data collection will ask you questions about:

- which routes you think you will deliver and to how many students
- what support you think your teachers will need to get ready to deliver the new programmes
- your facilities and equipment

We recognise that all post-16 providers will be at an early stage of their T Level planning and understand that responses will be very much an estimate.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency will contact a sample of providers to follow up on the data collection responses.

The information you give will help us to plan a support programme for providers tailored to your needs and help you deliver T Levels. In the autumn 2017 budget, the government announced an investment of up to £20 million to help the teaching profession prepare for the implementation of T Levels. We want to ensure this funding is spent in the way that best supports you to deliver successfully.

Post-16 omnibus survey

The Post-16 providers Omnibus Survey has run since 2015, and has recently moved from a bi-annual to an annual survey. The purpose of this survey is to gain a better understanding of post-16 providers views on, and future plans for, post-16 education. Questions have recently covered:

- reforms to A levels
- introduction of new technical education courses (tech levels, technical certificates and applied general qualifications), apprenticeships
- careers education, including the promotion of careers related mentoring to build links between students and employers

The survey allows us to gauge the scale of certain issues facing the sector. We value the time you take to respond to this survey.

We expect the next post-16 omnibus survey to run from spring 2018. It will start with independent learning providers and schools with sixth forms, and will move to general FE colleges from September.

Thank you

We acknowledge that asking you to engage in these activities will take up some valuable staff time. However, co-creating T Levels with you and other key delivery partners is crucial to their success. We are incredibly grateful for your commitment to the reforms.

Queries

If you have any queries about anything in this update, do get in touch with us by using our online contact form:

ESFA enquiries

Contact form

<https://form.education...>

For all enquiries for the Education and Skills Funding Agency

Published 6 March 2018

Last updated 27 May 2018 [+ show all updates](#)

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