Implementation of T Level programmes

Government consultation response

May 2018

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Foreword by the Secretary of State for Education

I want everyone in this country to have access to a world-class education – no matter where they are from or what their background is. It is only when we achieve this that we will have a more productive economy, in which everyone has the chance to reach their potential and live a more fulfilled life. This consultation response takes us a step closer to achieving this – by building a first-rate technical education system.

The standard of education for school children in this country is higher than ever before. This Government has improved the National Curriculum and introduced more rigorous GSCEs to bring them in line with standards in countries with high performing education systems (such as Finland and Canada); we have also changed A levels so they better prepare students for undergraduate study. We are making sure that every student receives a good grounding in the core EBacc subjects of maths, science, English, languages and the humanities. These subjects best prepare them for the next phase of their education, whether they choose the academic or technical route. Thanks to our reforms and the hard work of teachers, 1.9 million more children are in good or outstanding schools than in 2010.

For young people who want to continue their academic studies when they turn 16, there is a clear path for them, through world-class A levels and into one of our excellent universities. But this is only half of the story. Academic routes are not the only path to success, but for too long our technical education system has not provided a good enough alternative.

We have let down those young people who want to move onto learning technical, practical skills and get a skilled job. There are thousands of technical qualifications available for students post-16, but they are not all high quality or rated by businesses. This has meant that some young people have put their time and energy into courses that did not provide them with the knowledge and skills they needed to get a skilled job in their chosen sector. This is unacceptable and I am determined to offer our young people a much better deal.

This is why we are introducing T Levels as a high quality, technical alternative to A levels. T Levels are a central part of the greatest shake-up of technical education for 70 years and build on the recommendations made by the Independent Panel on Technical Education, chaired by Lord Sainsbury. T Levels are just one part of our new technical education offer. They will be available alongside reformed apprenticeships, which allow people to learn and earn. And, just as our reforms to apprenticeships draw on lessons from Germany, Austria and Switzerland, T Levels are informed by high-performing systems such as those found in Germany, the Netherlands and Norway.

As T Levels are rolled out, we will also simplify our complicated qualifications system. We will withdraw funding for qualifications that are not truly necessary in the new simplified system, not of good quality, lack a distinct purpose and do not equip young people to take the next step into employment or further study.

T Levels present a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reform our technical education system for the better. Our wide-ranging consultation sought views from across the world of business and education, as well as young people themselves. There is resounding support for T Levels, a genuine desire to make them work and an excitement around the difference they will make.

Our T Level panels, led by employers, are currently designing outline content for the new qualifications, and we are working with the Further Education colleges and other providers that will be delivering the first T Levels in 2020 to co-design the programmes. Any education system is only as good as the quality of its teaching, and we know that T Levels can never be a success without the hard work of our teachers. That is why we are also investing £20 million over the next two years to upskill the FE workforce.

The inclusion of industry placements in T Levels will provide a significant opportunity for students to put into practice what they've learnt as part of their T Level.   However, we are clear about the challenge that this represents for providers and employers, which is why we're putting in place support and investment to help build capacity within the system ahead of the introduction of T Levels. In the 2017 Spring Budget, we announced additional funding, rising to £500 million a year, to cover the additional taught hours and industry placement requirements for T Levels. As part of this, last year we announced the Capacity and Delivery Fund, with nearly £60m already allocated to providers to help them build capacity to deliver high quality industry placements over the coming years.

This consultation response is the first step in establishing what T Levels will look like. We need the continued support of employers to improve the quality of outline content and to offer substantial industry placements. We need education providers to create and teach stretching T Level courses. And we need schools and careers services to explain the benefits of choosing a technical education to all students.

We need to make sure our young people have the skills they need to get the jobs of tomorrow – this is at the heart of our modern Industrial Strategy. Ensuring we have more outstanding schools, world-leading universities and the technical skills that will drive our economy are key to this. We will keep listening to the views of employers, providers, students and parents. Together, we will create the world's finest technical education system.

Rt. Hon. Damian Hinds MP

Introduction

The report of the Independent Panel on Technical Education[1] (the Sainsbury Report) 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 and the Technical and Further Education Act 2017, we committed to these recommendations.

Establishing a technical education system that rivals the best in the world is a core part of the Government's ambitious Industrial Strategy. The Industrial Strategy sets out a long-term plan to boost the productivity and earning power of people throughout the United Kingdom. T Levels are central to the reformed technical education system. They are rigorous, classroom-based, technical study programmes at level 3, designed to support entry to skilled employment in technical occupations at level 3 and above. T Levels will be available alongside apprenticeships as one half of a high quality technical education offer, with both based on the same set of employer-designed standards, approved and managed by the Institute for Apprenticeships (referred to as 'the Institute' throughout this document).[2] T Levels will not be available in all areas for which qualifications currently exist. This might be because some occupations are more suitable for delivery through an apprenticeship. However, our review of level 3 qualifications will be comprehensive and will ensure that there is continued provision where there is a genuine need for a qualification.

We ran a public consultation from 30 November 2017 to 8 February 2018 to obtain views on the major aspects of our proposals for implementing T Levels. We published our proposals online, alongside a survey for respondents to complete. The consultation generated 430 responses from a wide range of organisation types and individuals, spanning educational institutions (all levels), industry, awarding organisations (AOs), representative bodies, local authorities and others. We also held a series of ten consultation events, with over 500 people attending. This document outlines the Government's response to the consultation.

A summary of the analysis of responses to the consultation is included in Annex A. A full list of respondents is included in Annex B. A summary of the changes and decisions relating to the questions set out in the consultation is included in Annex C. A glossary of terms used throughout this document is included in Annex D. An example of what a T Level certificate could look like is included in Annex E. We have published separately a technical annex, which sets out further details of the Technical Qualification for AOs.

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[1]https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/536046/Report_of_the_Independent_Panel_on_Technical_Education.pdf

[2] The Institute for Apprenticeships will soon be renamed 'the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education' on commencement of the relevant legislative provisions.

Summary of the consultation responses received

The consultation generated 430 responses. Of these, 398 were received via the online questionnaire and 32 were received by email. We commissioned Pye Tait to conduct an analysis of these responses to make sure we took full account of all the responses received. Annex A provides a summary of this analysis. A breakdown of respondents by category is presented in Table 1 below.[3]

Table 1: Total consultation respondents by category

Category	Count
FE College	130
Employer representative body/agency	86
Employer	55
Awarding organisation	28
School	26
University	25
Non-Profit organisation	22
Independent learning provider	12
Individual/other	12
Provider representative body	12
Local authority/LEP	11
Sector Skills Council	7
Government organisation	4

Base: 430 respondents
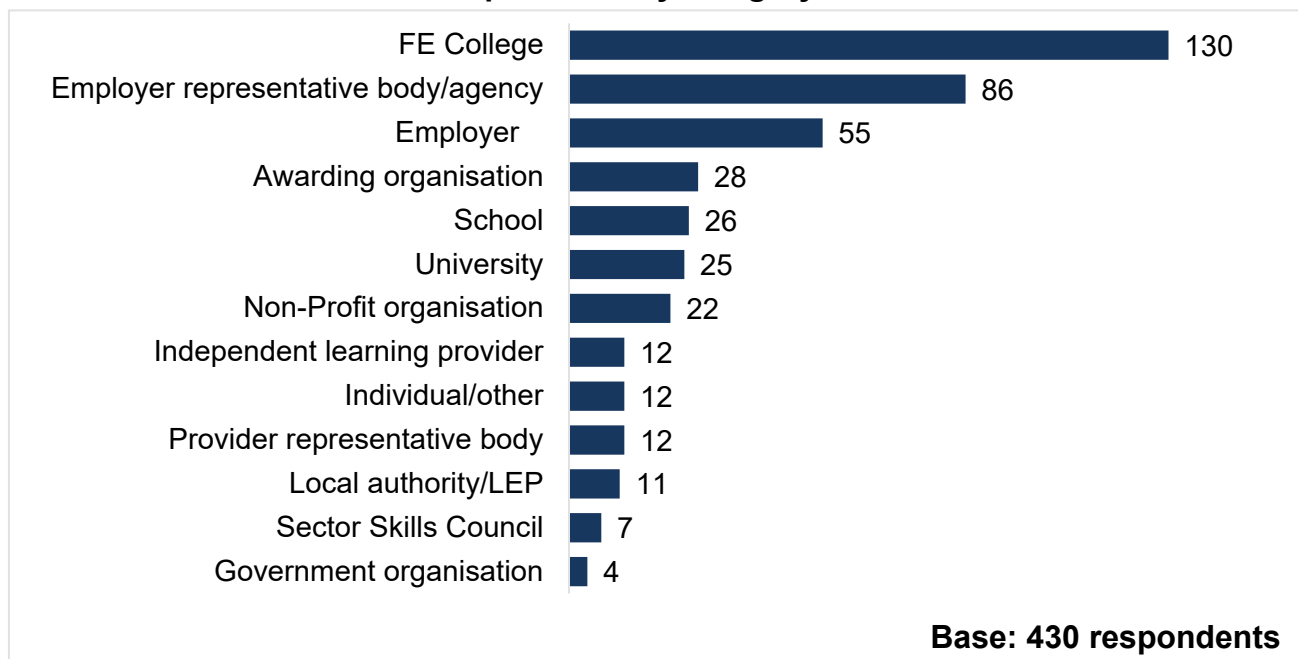
Analysis and reporting

Responses to the consultation came from educational institutions, industry, AOs, representative bodies, local authorities and others. Responses have not been weighted, and not all respondents answered all the consultation questions. The base number of responses per group varied considerably and the amount of detail in response to each of the consultation questions also varied between respondents. Where respondents stated that they agreed with our proposals through the 'yes/no' questioning, this often appeared to be an agreement in principle, caveated by additional considerations and factors that they felt we should take into account.

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[3] In ten cases, more than one response was received from the same organisation. These responses were counted separately where the individual respondents: a) indicated that they were not answering on behalf of their organisation, and b) did not provide cloned responses. This applied in nine out of the ten cases.

Main findings from the consultation

There was strong support for T Levels across different groups of respondents, and optimism about the potential of T Levels to transform the technical education system. There were also constructive suggestions to improve the design and implementation of T Levels.

The main findings included:

- respondents wanted us to be clearer about the purpose of T Levels and their positioning within the education system. This includes their target audience in relation to A levels and apprenticeships, and how a student with a T Level will compare to a student with a level 3 apprenticeship in a similar occupation

- T Levels need to be rigorous, adding value for employers, as well as inclusive of students with additional needs

- there is support for simplification of the existing qualifications system, but only where this is employer-led and does not leave gaps in high quality provision

- T Levels need to be as accessible as possible to students with special educational needs or a disability (SEND), including reasonable adjustments in assessments and industry placements

- industry placements are an important part of T Levels, but will be challenging to deliver on a national scale. We need to take action to mitigate inequality of opportunity

- there is support for a transition offer to support progression to level 3 provision

- there is general support for using an 'in year' funding model initially, rather than a lagged system. This will give providers the additional funding needed to deliver T Levels at the time they are taught

- T Levels will require supportive infrastructure, extensive marketing and time for the benefits to be realised

We have considered the responses and will be adjusting our approach to T Level design and implementation to take the views we received into account. We will:

- award an overall Pass grade for T Levels so it is clear to employers that a student has successfully completed all components of the programme. A Pass grade will only be awarded if a student successfully completes the industry placement, attains the Technical Qualification, and achieves the other specified elements of the T Level programme. We are exploring how higher overall grades could be awarded

above an overall Pass, i.e. Merit and Distinction. The different components of the Technical Qualification will still be graded separately

- provide additional support to enable T Level industry placements to be successfully delivered, including widening the remit of the National Apprenticeships Service (NAS) to provide a 'one stop shop' for advice and support to employers

- fund maths and English for students who have not yet achieved level 2 in addition to the hours required for the other parts of the course

- work closely with providers delivering the first T Levels to co-create the programmes and to address the delivery concerns raised by respondents

- increase the level and pace of our communication, as we move towards delivery, to respond to respondents' need for information, engage them in the design process and help them prepare for launch

- show how we are learning lessons from previous attempts to reform vocational and technical education, particularly from the 14-19 Diplomas

A substantial, high quality industry placement with an external employer will be an essential part of each T Level. They will give students the chance to put into practice the technical knowledge and skills they have learned in the classroom. Recognising the importance of this placement taking part in a real world, working environment – in industry – to the T Level programme as a whole, they will now be known as 'T Level industry placements'.

A full list of our changes and decisions are summarised in Annex C.

This consultation response is the not the end of the design process for T Levels. We are undertaking a co-design process with providers and employers to make sure that T Level courses work for them and students. Providers delivering in the 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic year will have the opportunity to work with the Department for Education (DfE) to shape and influence T Level courses, designing and testing the details of the programme and the best approaches for implementation. We will use this to identify the best way to support providers from September 2022 onwards.

The views of students

We recognise that the views of students are important in designing T Levels. We have organised consultation activity specifically to encourage students to share their views on T Levels. During the 2018 spring term, the DfE conducted user research with over 700 students from years 10 to 13.

The students came from 13 different education institutions from the North East to the South West, including further education (FE) colleges, sixth-form colleges and school sixth-forms. The research focused primarily on students who were studying digital,

construction and childcare qualifications at level 2 and 3, but also included some apprentices, A level and GCSE students.

Some of the main findings from our research with students were:

- students told us that they would prefer to start the course by obtaining broad knowledge about their chosen subject, then gradually focus on specialist work skills so that they finish the course feeling confident that they are competent in the workplace

- students told us that the opportunity to obtain experience in industry is the most valuable feature of the programme. They see industry placements and work encounters as tools to improve their confidence in their competency. Students also see industry placements as a way of improving their employability, recognising that employers and universities are looking for more than just a list of qualifications

- students worry that there will not be enough good employers offering industry placements in their local area. They said that this could discourage them from starting a T Level

- students have also told us that they have constraints on where they can get to for an industry placement because of available public transport links, travel time and cost

- students said they want T Levels to be as well respected as A levels. They also want the option to move onto further study (including university) after they complete their T Level

- students are willing to use their summer holidays to gain experience of work

- students also told us that choosing an occupational specialism is a difficult decision. They want experiences of different occupations so they can try a range of specialisms before they commit to just one. They think that encounters with different industries will help them confirm that they are making the right choice of course

We have considered these views in the Government Response and will continue to consider the views of students as we design and implement T Levels.

Lessons learned from abroad and previous attempts at reform

We want T Levels to be part of a long-term solution to making sure employers get the skilled workers they need for future prosperity. Our reforms are based on the recommendations of the Sainsbury Report, which drew upon analyses of both the domestic labour market and of 'what works' in other countries with high performing technical education systems. We have also conducted a review of recent attempts at reforming the technical/vocational education system, in particular the 14-19 Diplomas. We have identified some clear reasons why T Levels are better placed to succeed than the Diplomas.

We know that one reason the Diplomas were not widely taken up was that they lacked a clear purpose, attempting to chart a 'middle course' between vocational and academic qualifications. T Levels are different – they are part of a new, distinct technical offer, based on a common set of standards with apprenticeships. They will give students the knowledge and skills needed to get a skilled job, either immediately or after higher technical education.

Diplomas also had contextual differences. They had their origins in the 2004 Tomlinson Review, which proposed a wholesale change to the 14-19 education system. However, the Government opted to implement just a selection of Tomlinson's recommendations, rather than implement them in full. This led to Diplomas adding a layer of complexity to the already complex qualifications system, rather than simplifying it. In contrast, we are implementing the recommendations of the 2016 Sainsbury Report in full, making T Levels part of a new, streamlined technical option within our education system.

Another lesson learned is related to the fact that Diplomas were programmes that were broadly relevant to whole sectors and did not reflect the specific knowledge and skills employers said they wanted in new recruits to technician-level roles. The most effective technical education systems abroad start by looking at individual occupations first, working from the bottom up. T Levels explicitly set out to equip young people with the knowledge and skills required to enter skilled employment, with employers at the heart of specifying the content for each one. Occupational maps, drawn up and managed by the Institute, will unite apprenticeships and T Levels under a common set of occupational standards. This is a very different approach to the Diplomas, which did not recognise that apprenticeships and taught technical education qualifications needed to be seen as 'two sides of the same coin'.

Next steps

	Spring / Summer 18	Autumn / Winter 18	Spring / Summer 19	Autumn / Winter 19	Spring / Summer 20	Autumn / Winter 20
Work placements delivered with capacity funding		●				
Launch ITT for the procurement of the qualifications		●				
Development of the provider support programme		━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━				
Award contract with successful AO(s)			●			
Development of T Level qualifications by AOs			━━━━━━━━━━━━			
First teaching of 3 pathways in 2020						●

Spring 2018

We have announced the providers who will deliver the first three T Levels from September 2020, and have a national readiness support programme in place to support these providers in getting ready for delivery. We will work closely with these providers to shape, design and deliver the T Level programme, starting with an introductory event for providers, followed by regular network meetings so that we ensure genuine co-creation.

We are asking all providers to complete a data collection about their plans to implement T Levels.

Summer 2018

We will identify an organisation to work with us to design and deliver the support for providers, identified as required to prepare their workforce, in the data collection exercise. We envisage that this will be available from early summer 2019 for the group of providers delivering T Levels from September 2020.

We will hold market engagement sessions to refine the design of the procurement and the role and responsibilities of AOs who will design and administer the provision of the first three T Levels.

Throughout summer and autumn 2018, we will discuss T Levels funding with providers and other stakeholders to develop the funding approach further.

We will publish guidance to help employers and providers to effectively source, design and implement T Level industry placements, highlighting best practice.

Successful providers will receive first tranche of Capacity and Delivery funding to build their capacity to deliver T Level industry placements.

We will set out details of the plan for our review of qualifications and how we are engaging stakeholders.

The National Apprenticeships Service (NAS) will start providing support for employers delivering T Level industry placements.

Autumn 2018

We will launch the invitation to tender (ITT) for AOs to bid for the exclusive licences for the Technical Qualifications in the first three T Level pathways.

Providers who will deliver the first three T Levels from September 2020 will complete implementation plans setting out the actions they are taking to get ready for delivery and highlighting where they need further support. There will be dedicated support for providers on the ground from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) field force.

Executive summary of the Government Response

This section provides a high-level summary of the Government's response to the public consultation on the implementation of T Level programmes. A summary of the changes and decisions relating to the questions set out in the consultation are in Annex C.

1. T Level design

T Levels are technical study programmes that include a qualification and an industry placement. These 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 Level programme requirements

Each Technical Qualification will be based on content devised by T Level panels. Achieving a 'Pass' grade in the occupational specialism will show that a student has the level of knowledge and skill needed to get a skilled job. We have described this as 'threshold competence', which is as close to full occupational competence as can be expected from students studying a classroom-based qualification.

The assessment of the Technical Qualification must give people confidence in the quality and rigour of T Levels. We remain of the view that externally set tests are the best way to make sure that an appropriate range of content is covered, and to an adequate depth. Licensed awarding organisations (AOs)[4] will develop the full details of the assessments to be used after the overarching T Levels requirements and content are finalised.

Respondents generally agreed that grades for the core and occupational specialism components of the Technical Qualification should be reported separately on students' T Level certificates. However, many respondents disagreed with the proposal to use different names for the two grading systems, as this could be confusing for employers, students and parents. We explored using the same naming system (e.g. A*-E) for both types of component further with employers, providers and assessment experts, but have concluded that this approach had significant drawbacks. The Technical Qualification will therefore include a six point grading scale for the core (A*-E) and a three point grading scale for each occupational specialism (Distinction, Merit, Pass). However, in response to the desire to keep things simple, and make sure the significance of completing the T Level programme overall is properly recognised, we will introduce an overall T Level Pass grade. A T Level Pass grade will only be awarded if a student successfully completes the industry placement, attains the Technical Qualification, and achieves the other specified elements

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[4] Those awarding organisations (AOs) who have been successful in the procurement of T level Technical Qualifications.

of the T Level programme. We are exploring how higher overall grades could be awarded above an overall Pass, i.e. Merit and Distinction.

Where students transfer onto another T Level within the same route, where possible, we will make sure that if they have already attained the core component, this is recognised in their new T Level. Our policy on re-takes will align with other national qualifications, although we would expect students to be able to re-take components of the Technical Qualification separately.[5] For those students who do not complete their T Level, partial attainment will be recognised through a transcript.

T Levels will be stretching level 3 programmes, and we would expect students to attain at least level 2 maths and English by the time they complete the programme.[6] However, we believe that providers are best placed to decide on whether to admit a student onto a level 3 programme, so we will not impose a minimum entry requirement. We will fund maths and English for students who have not yet achieved level 2 in addition to the hours required for the technical elements.

We maintain the view that T Levels should include additional occupation-specific requirements where possible, if they are essential for skilled employment. We will work with T Level panels to identify these requirements and to explore how they can be embedded. In principle, we believe that a student should be able to take an A level alongside their T Level, particularly if it supports progression outcomes for their chosen T Level. We are particularly supportive of high attaining students who want to take Core maths or an A level in maths alongside their T Level. The advanced maths premium, announced last year, will help providers to deliver this where they are expanding the total number of students taking level 3 maths. We are also considering how the large programme uplift might work in the context of T Level programmes.

High quality industry placements are an essential part of T Levels. They represent a significant opportunity to make T Levels stand out as a world class technical education offer. The feedback from our student research emphasised that industry placements will increase the attractiveness of T Levels. We recognise that there are concerns over the capacity of some employers and providers to offer industry placements, as well as the availability of industry placements in some areas with limited numbers of relevant employers. We are putting in place a comprehensive programme of support to address these concerns, which includes:

- investing significant funding in building the capacity of providers to deliver industry placements through the Capacity and Delivery Fund

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[5] This would not be funded under current funding arrangements.

[6] We recognise that some students with SEND may find it difficult to attain level 2 English and maths qualifications, so we will be taking into account the flexibility of the exit requirements afforded to apprentices.

- offering an advice and support service for employers, including a simple referral and matchmaking service to providers through the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)

- providing additional bursary funding in the 2018/19 academic year to help students travel to industry placements

- engaging small employers to establish what support they need to offer industry placements

- clear and simple 'how to' guidance for employers and providers

The importance of quality assuring T Level industry placements was widely supported in the consultation. We agree that this should be as simple as possible, so that employers and providers are clear about their responsibilities. We will make sure that this does not place a significant burden on providers or employers. To do this, we will publish guidance to help providers plan industry placements into the curriculum, explain the processes required to set up a placement and make sure students are prepared to undertake an industry placement. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) field force will also provide targeted support for providers in the introduction of T Level industry placements. Alongside this, we will put in place more intensive support for providers who may need it.

T Level industry placements are about providing students with high quality, meaningful training, not work. Therefore, students on a T Level industry placement should not be entitled to a salary as the placement is forming part of a course of further education[7]. There is no legal requirement or expectation that T level students will be paid. We recognise that for some employers, any type of unpaid placement would discourage them from taking part in the programme, so they are able to pay students should they wish to. In taking this approach, our aim is to ensure as many students and businesses as possible benefit from T Levels and to prevent students facing any avoidable costs.

We are working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to make sure that students, including those and their family who already receive benefits, are not negatively affected by undertaking an industry placement. We will also consider implications for students that have existing part time jobs and other circumstances such as childcare and other caring responsibilities to ensure they can still access a high quality placement.

We recognise that T Level industry placements need to be flexible to accommodate different industries' needs, as well as geographic limitations. We know 'one size doesn't fit all', and throughout the 2017/18 academic year we have run a pilot scheme to test different approaches and models of industry placement. Early indications from pilots show that we will need to adopt a range of models and approaches across different routes and occupations. We will maintain our requirement for a minimum of 45 days placement in

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[7] See regulations 53 and 3 of the National Minimum Wage Regulations 2015.

total, but will allow providers to work with employers to determine if this is best delivered through day release, a single 3-month placement, or a number of blocks at different times during the programme, potentially with different employers. We will continue to develop and test these approaches, making sure that these new flexibilities are delivered whilst maintaining high standards of quality.

Progression onto apprenticeships and higher technical education

Feedback from the consultation has indicated that, in many cases, students should be able to progress from T Levels onto apprenticeships at level 4 and above. However, we recognise that in some routes, students may need additional training to reach full occupational competence. Once T Level content is finalised we will consider with the Institute the best way to support T Level graduates to reach full occupational competence when they progress into work, including onto an apprenticeship.

Students completing T Levels should be able to progress into skilled employment at level 3, and into further relevant training at level 4, 5 or 6, either in the workplace or at an education provider. We are working with higher education (HE) providers to facilitate progression from T Levels to relevant HE courses in similar disciplines, for example by sharing T Level content as it is developed. It is important that information and guidance offered in schools makes clear the progression routes from different subjects taken at 16 to 19, so that young people can make informed choices.

The Sainsbury Report stressed the importance of students being able to progress from the technical route (T Levels) to the academic route if they wanted to. This would likely require students to undertake some sort of bridging provision to acquire additional knowledge and skills. Once T Level content is finalised, we will work with HE providers to identify where bridging provision might be needed. Respondents said that allocating UCAS Tariff points to T Levels would support progression and we are working with UCAS to explore this option.

Simplifying the current system

As we introduce T Levels, it is important that we make sure the system is as simple as possible, and that other qualifications offer the best possible opportunity for young people to progress. We will review qualifications that currently attract Government funding for post-16 study. Most respondents agreed with the principles we set out for a review of level 3 qualifications and qualifications at level 2 and below. We are aware of the concerns about removing qualifications that are well established and supported by employers. However, in designing the review we will want to ensure that continued funding is only available for the group of qualifications that serve a genuine and useful purpose, are of a high quality and enable students to progress to meaningful outcomes. We will set out further details about the review shortly, and we expect to speak with a wide variety of providers and AOs throughout the review.

Following the comments received, we believe that there is also a case for looking at the non-GCSE qualifications available for pupils aged 14 to 16, and therefore propose to review these. We will publish a consultation on the principles by which that review will be guided in due course.

Transition onto T Levels

We want to develop an effective transition offer to make sure that as many students as possible can complete T Levels. We will work with the Institute, providers and sector bodies during 2018 to gather evidence on existing good practice of similar 'transition' programmes. In response to the consultation feedback, we will also consider how the transition offer could best be targeted. The work will also be informed by the review of level 2 qualifications to establish which qualifications are suitable for the offer.

Availability of T Levels to adults

Feedback from the consultation highlighted that there is no 'one size fits all' approach that could be introduced to meet the needs of the majority of adult learners. We recognise that 19 to 23 learners who do not yet have a level 3 qualification could benefit from the same T Level programme as 16 to 19 year-olds. For learners who are over 24, we will take into account wider reviews to technical education, including the review of qualifications at level 3 and at level 4/5, as we consider any specific adaptations that will improve accessibility.

2. T Level procurement

For each occupational pathway, there will be one high quality T Level that meets employer-set standards, which will include a Technical Qualification. An exclusive licence for the Technical Qualification will be awarded to an AO following a procurement process that will comply with relevant procurement rules, and follow the principles of equal treatment and transparency.

Procurement and contracting of T Level Technical Qualifications

Our objective is that these licences will be an attractive market proposition that will encourage AOs to bid. We will make sure that there are effective exit arrangements at the end of each licence to enable licences to transfer smoothly from one AO to another. We understand that some AOs are concerned about the resources needed to bid for T Level licences without any guarantee of success, and we recognise that qualification development is an expensive exercise for AOs. We will make sure that the licence length is sufficient to make them sustainable practically and commercially. We are also considering a contribution to the development costs. Pre-procurement market engagement exercises are planned, aimed at informing the development of the ITT. Full details will then follow in the final ITT when it is published in autumn 2018.

Quality assurance and regulation

We want to draw on all available levers to make sure that Technical Qualifications within T Levels are subject to rigorous standards of assurance and the public can be confident that T Levels are a reliable indicator of technical occupational competence, in the same way that A levels are trusted as a measure of academic ability. We will introduce a joint model based on a collaborative arrangement between the Institute and Ofqual, whereby these Technical Qualifications will become a recognised category of qualification and, subject to appropriate consultation, Ofqual's accreditation decisions will form part of a joined up approval process. The detailed assurance requirements will be set out in the ITT documents for the first Technical Qualifications in autumn 2018. This arrangement will inform any future legislation in relation to the regulation and assurance of T Levels.

Accountability

We will put in place a strong set of accountability measures to judge the impact of T Levels. There was support amongst consultation respondents for the accountability measures we proposed, with strong agreement that destination measures provide the strongest evidence that T Levels are fit for purpose, as well as support for measuring completion rates. We will work with providers to determine how we should treat students who do not complete their course because they have started an apprenticeship.

3. T Level delivery

Supporting providers to deliver T Levels

We know that the introduction and delivery of T Levels will be a challenge for the FE sector, even with additional funding. The main challenge identified in the consultation was making sure that staff have sufficient expertise, as providers will need to upskill current teaching staff and recruit additional skilled staff. We will work closely with the sector to develop a programme of support to help providers prepare for the delivery of T Levels. This includes an investment of up to £20m to improve the quality of teaching over the next two years.

In the 2017 Spring Budget, we announced additional funding, rising to £500 million a year, to cover the additional taught hours and industry placement requirements for T Levels. We are asking all providers to complete a data collection about their plans to implement T Levels and will use the information to plan tailored support.

T Levels will take time to become established. After the first procurement, successful AOs will have a year to develop the qualifications. We have announced the providers who will deliver the first T Levels and are planning a national readiness support programme to help them, and other providers who follow, to get ready to deliver. We are currently planning to

introduce three T Levels from September 2020, and outline content for these has been made available on the Institute's website.

Some respondents, including the CBI, raised concerns about the capacity of the system to respond to this pace of roll-out. We recognise these concerns. Our priority is to deliver high quality programmes and therefore we have decided to extend the full roll-out of T Levels beyond 2022.

As part of this, we want to take an agile approach in responding to the speed of T Level panels' work, and in taking into account the capacity of AOs to bid for licences and the capacity of providers to adopt new T Levels. In some cases this may mean we slow plans to get a T Level into delivery – for example, the Building Services Engineering T Level – and in others we accelerate delivery – such as the Design, Surveying and Planning T Level. We will confirm the final sequencing of the roll-out of T Levels once the outline content is finalised by T Level panels.

We are already communicating with key audiences to increase awareness, understanding and engagement. As we move towards first teaching in 2020, the scale and pace of this communication will increase. As well as giving regular updates on progress, a comprehensive marketing strategy will be developed to make sure that parents, teachers, students and careers professionals know about T Levels and when new technical options will be available.

There are excellent examples of providers engaging with industry professionals. We intend to build on this, but recognise that there will be different challenges depending on a provider's location and their technical educational offer. We will work with the sector to consider how best we can meet the commitment set out in the Government's manifesto to attract experienced industry professionals into FE so students can gain the knowledge and skills that industry needs.

Making sure that T Levels offered by providers meet skills needs

There are plans to make sure that skills provision, including T Levels, meets local skills needs, such as plans to introduce Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) and Local Digital Skills Partnerships (LDSPs). These will work within existing local infrastructures, such as Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), to bring together local businesses and providers to work together to meet current and future skills needs. We encourage FE providers to work in partnership with MCAs and LEPs to boost the local T Level offer.

4. T Level funding and equalities

Funding

There was substantial support for retaining the existing National funding formula. We will therefore build on this to distribute funding for T Levels. We recognise that the additional taught hours and industry placement requirements for T Levels will mean that they cost more to deliver than current programmes. Additional funding, rising to £500 million a year, is available to meet these additional costs. We expect to fund different T Levels at different rates to reflect the cost of delivery (e.g. for the use of specialist equipment) and for variations in the number of additional taught hours.

Respondents indicated that funding should initially be provided in the year it is needed, rather than on a lagged basis. We will develop an approach to allocate funding that addresses stakeholder concerns in the initial roll-out of T Levels, subject to appropriate checks and adjustments e.g. for retention. This will be part of the detailed funding arrangements, which we will work closely with sector representatives to develop. We plan to consult further on funding arrangements this autumn.

Equalities

In accordance with our duties under the Equality Act 2010 we have considered the impact of the proposals on individuals sharing protected characteristics in order to give due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. Taking into account the responses received to the consultation we have published an equalities analysis, which is published along with this response.

Government Response to the consultation

1. Simplifying the qualifications system

1.1 Review of qualifications at level 3

Question 1: Do you agree that the principles outlined above are the right ones on which to base a review of which level 3 qualifications we should continue to fund in the new system, alongside T Levels and A levels? Yes/No. If no, what other principles do you think we should consider?

Yes	68%
No	32%
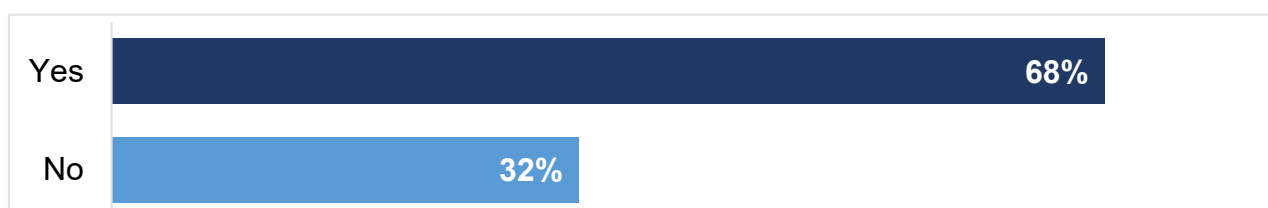
Number of respondents: 380

1. Most respondents agreed with the proposed principles for a review of level 3 qualifications, although there was a view that the principles should be defined more clearly. Some respondents were concerned about removing qualifications that were well established and supported by employers, such as Applied General Qualifications (AGQs), which they felt were successful in supporting student progression.

2. We will therefore proceed with the review of level 3 qualifications, with the exception of A levels, which have recently been reformed. We will set out more details about the process for the review in due course, setting out how this will address the concerns raised. We expect to engage widely as the review is designed to properly understand the impact of the process. We expect that decisions resulting from this review will be implemented in line with the timeline for the introduction of T Levels. However, this would not affect our ability to make decisions about funding in other contexts.

1.2 Review of qualifications at level 2 and below

Question 2: Do you agree that we should review qualifications at level 2 and below based on the principles that these qualifications should support progression into employment or higher-level study and have a value in their own right alongside T Levels? Yes/No. If no, what other principles do you think we should consider?

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Yes	80%
No	20%
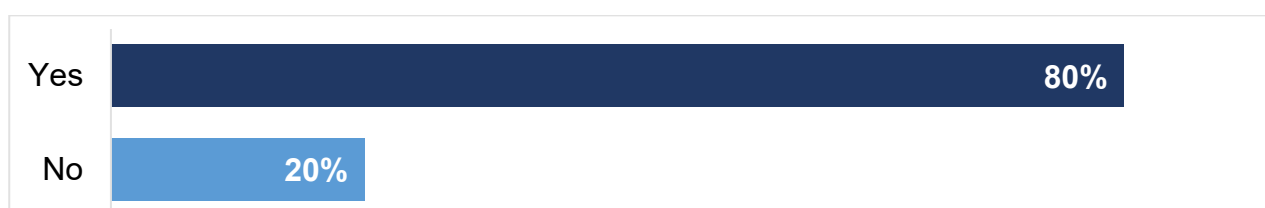
Number of respondents: 373

3. The majority of respondents agreed with our proposals to review qualifications at level 2 and below and the principles on which that review would be based. However, respondents suggested that provision at level 2 and below needs to cater for a wide range of student needs, including those who do not have basic literacy and numeracy skills, and those who have SEND.

4. We will therefore proceed with the review of qualifications at level 2 and below, taking account of the wide variety of student needs, including those with SEND. We recognise that provision at level 2 (and below) is a valuable route directly into employment for some students. We will work with the Institute, providers and sector bodies to identify occupations where entry is at level 2 and where qualifications are likely to be needed. The review will also consider the qualifications that provide suitable preparation for T Levels or other level 3 qualifications, alongside the development of our proposals for a transition offer. More information on our response to the transition offer proposals is provided in section 9.

5. A number of respondents commented on the contribution of level 1 and 2 qualifications for 14-16 year olds (Key Stage 4) including GCSEs, even though these were not in scope for the proposed review.

6. We are introducing new, more rigorous GCSEs to put England's education system on a par with high performing countries. We have also committed to no further reform of GCSEs and A levels (beyond the changes already announced) for the rest of this parliament. Following comments from respondents, we believe that there is a case for looking at the other, non-GCSE qualifications available for pupils aged 14-16, and propose to review these. We will publish a consultation on the principles by which that review will be guided in due course.

2. The Technical Qualification

2.1 Assessment

Question 3: Do you agree with the proposed approach to assessing technical qualifications? Yes/No – Please give reasons for your response.

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Yes	53%
No	47%
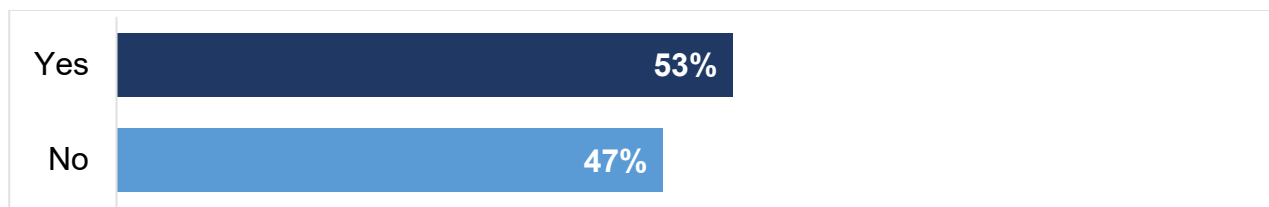
Number of respondents: 367

7. There were mixed views on our approach to assessment, but it was strongly supported by employers. Meeting the needs of employers is at the heart of the introduction of T Levels. The nature of externally-set tests means these are the best way to make sure

that an appropriate range of content is covered to an adequate depth. External assessment is also essential if we are to address concerns about the lack of rigour in vocational qualifications. We will therefore proceed with our proposals for the assessment of the qualification, including our proposals for external assessment. Licensed AOs will develop the full details of the assessments to be used, subject to the assurance framework being developed by the Institute and Ofqual, but only after we have finalised the development of the overarching T Levels requirements and content.

8. Respondents were concerned that our assessment proposals would make T Levels very difficult for students with SEND. To address this, we will work with the Institute and Ofqual to make sure reasonable adjustments are provided for students with SEND, which will be reflected into the ITT for AOs to develop T Levels.

9. Respondents said that we need to be clearer about what we mean by 'threshold competence', especially in relation to apprenticeships. Threshold competence is the level of knowledge and skill that a student needs to get a skilled job (as opposed to occupational competence, which is the ability to do a skilled job). It is as close to full occupational competence as can be expected of students studying a classroom-based qualification. The level of knowledge and skill will look different for each T Level and its associated occupations, and will be set by T Level panels.

10. The content of each occupational specialism in T Levels links directly to the corresponding standards used for apprenticeships. Therefore, in the same way that different apprenticeships take varying amounts of time to complete, the time required to deliver and assess each occupational specialism in T Levels will vary depending on how long it will typically take students to develop threshold competence.

2.2 Grading

Question 4: Do you agree with the approach to grading technical qualification components? Yes/No – Please give reasons for your response.

Yes	51%
No	49%
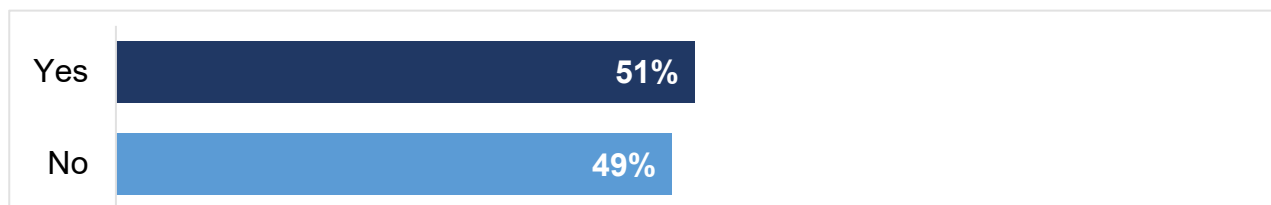
Number of respondents: 356

11. Respondents generally agreed that grades for the core and occupational specialisms within the Technical Qualification should be reported separately on students' T Level certificates. However, many respondents disagreed with the proposal to use different names for the two grading systems, as this could be confusing for employers, students and parents.

12. We explored using the same naming system (A*-E or Distinction, Merit, Pass) for both types of component further with employers, providers and assessment experts,

including from Ofqual, but have concluded that both these options had significant drawbacks.

13. That is, occupational specialisms must only be awarded if students meet a competency threshold (i.e. pass). A wide range of differentiation above or below this threshold beyond two grades (e.g. A*-E) would be technically difficult and not particularly useful. However, for the core, given the wide breadth and depth of knowledge, it would be meaningful to differentiate across a wider range of potential level 3 attainment; hence we will use a six point scale. Therefore, we will proceed with our proposal to use two component grades, with a six point grading scale (A*-E) for the core and a three point grading scale (Distinction, Merit, Pass) for occupational specialisms. These grades will be listed separately on the T Level certificate. An example of what a T Level certificate could look like is included in Annex E.

14. Attainment of a T Level is a significant achievement, and respondents – particularly employers – questioned why overall T Level attainment was not more clearly recognised. We will therefore introduce an overall Pass grade for T Levels. A T Level Pass grade will only be awarded if a student successfully completes the industry placement, attains the Technical Qualification, and achieves the other specified elements of the T Level programme. We believe an overall T Level grade, with supplemental grades for the Technical Qualification components and attainment information about the other T Level elements, will provide sufficient clarity about students' capabilities and achievements. We are exploring how higher overall grades could be awarded above an overall Pass, i.e. Merit and Distinction.

2.3 Maintaining comparable standards of performance

Question 5: Do you agree with the approach to maintaining comparable standards of performance for technical qualifications? Yes/No – Please give reasons for your response.

Yes	80%
No	20%

Number of respondents: 358

15. We will proceed with our proposal to make sure there are comparable grade standards, but the arrangements for how this is achieved, for example how employers may be involved, will be set out separately through the licensing and quality assurance arrangements.

2.4 Prior attainment and re-taking components

Question 6: Do you agree that prior attainment of the core could count if students switch to another T Level within the same route? Yes/No – Please give reasons for your response.

Yes	94%
No	6%

Number of respondents: 367

16. Respondents were strongly in agreement with our proposals. We will therefore proceed with our proposal to make sure students can, where possible, transfer their previous attainment for the core to other T Levels within the same route. However, the details of which core components can be transferred across T Levels will be determined once the Technical Qualification specifications and assessments have been developed for all Technical Qualifications in the route.

17. Regarding the opportunities for re-takes, we would expect the policy for Technical Qualifications to align with other national qualifications.[8] However, we would expect students to be able to re-take components of the Technical Qualification separately.

3. T Level industry placements[9]

3.1 Integrating industry placements within the T Level programme and appraising student performance

Question 7: Do you agree with the proposed approach integrating the industry placement within the T Level programme? Yes/No. please explain your answer. If no, what would be a preferable approach?

Yes	60%
No	40%
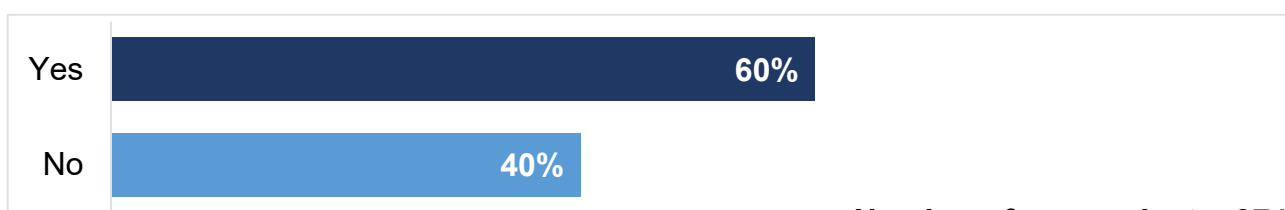
Number of respondents: 374

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[8] This would not be funded under current funding arrangements.

[9] As set out in the Main Findings section, T level work placements are now called 'T level industry placements'. The questions in the consultation referred to 'work placements', but have been amended in this document to 'industry placements' for clarity.

Question 8: Do you agree with the proposed method of appraising the student's performance on their industry placement, including the Employer Reference? Yes/No. please explain your answer. If no, what would be a preferable approach?

Yes	68%
No	32%

Number of respondents: 355

18. High quality industry placements are an essential part of T Levels. They are a unique selling point and represent a significant opportunity to make T Levels stand out as a world class technical education offer. The feedback from our student research emphasised that industry placements will increase the attractiveness of T Levels.

19. Many respondents agreed with the proposed approach of integrating the industry placement within the T Level programme. Those who disagreed with this approach had concerns over the capacity of some employers and providers to offer industry placements and the availability of industry placements in some areas with limited numbers of relevant employers.

20. We recognise these delivery challenges. T Levels (including industry placements) will be introduced on a small scale at first, and gradually increased until we reach full-scale delivery. This gives us time to get this right. We are currently running a pilot to test different approaches to industry placements. We will be sharing learning from the pilot scheme to identify and disseminate best practice to providers and employers.

21. We are also putting in place a programme of investment and support to help providers and employers get ready. Last year we announced the Capacity and Delivery Fund. This will be available to help providers build capacity to deliver high quality industry placements over the coming years.

22. It is clear that alongside this funding we will need to do more to support providers and employers. Taking on board all of the comments in the consultation, we will be putting in place a series of measures to address concerns. We will:

- publish 'how to' guidance for employers and providers on implementing T Level industry placements to make this as simple as possible

- provide support to providers from ESFA field force, alongside more intensive support where this is needed

- offer an advice and support service for employers through the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), including a simple referral and matchmaking service to providers

- provide additional bursary funding in the 2018/19 academic year to help students travel to industry placements

- explore what additional support may be needed for employers, particularly smaller employers

Further details are set out below.

3.2 Quality assurance, monitoring and reporting arrangements

Question 9: Do you agree with the proposed approach to quality assurance set out above? Yes/No – please explain. If no, please explain how we can make sure industry placements are quality assured?
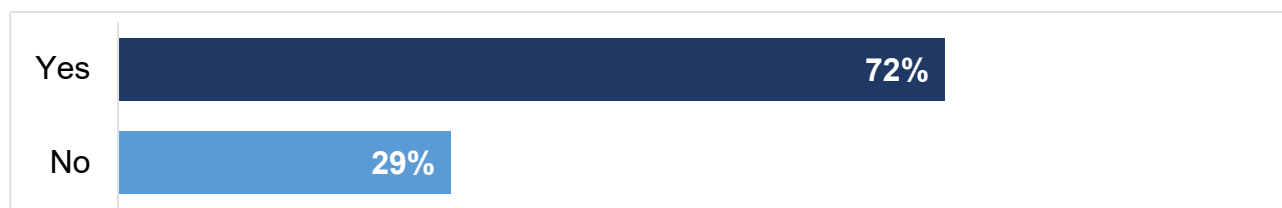
Number of respondents: 347

23. The importance of quality assuring T Level industry placements was widely supported, but respondents raised the potential complexity of doing this and the burden it could place on providers and employers. Some respondents said that quality assurance processes should be as simple as possible to make sure that everyone is clear about their responsibilities.

24. We will proceed with our proposals for assurance and monitoring of T Level industry placements, but take additional action to make sure that this does not place a significant burden on providers and employers. This will include:

- the Capacity and Delivery Fund, announced last year, will be available to help providers put in place the additional processes needed to ensure high quality industry placements

- publishing guidance to help providers to effectively source, design and implement industry placements, including planning them into the curriculum, the processes required to set up and organise a placement and how to make sure students are effectively prepared and add value in the workplace

- the ESFA will provide targeted support for providers in the introduction of industry placements

25. Some respondents were uncertain about the role Ofsted will play in the inspection of providers delivering T Levels, including the delivery of industry placements. We will work with Ofsted to agree their role in ensuring T Level industry placements are high quality and publish further details on this.

3.3 Making T Level industry placements more accessible, including for students with greater needs and those living in areas with no relevant employers

Question 10: What additional support or further modifications should be available to those with greater needs or special circumstances (such as caring responsibilities) during an industry placement?

Question 11: How can we support students to access industry placements relevant to their course in areas where there are no employers to offer placements nearby?

Question 12: Do you agree with our suggested approach to providing students with financial support whilst on an industry placement?

Yes	**68%**
No	**32%**

Number of respondents: 364

26. Comments from the consultation respondents and our student research highlighted that students may have to travel further to get to an industry placement than they would to attend their education provider, and that this may have cost implications. To respond to this initially, the ESFA will make additional 16 to 19 Bursary funding available to institutions that are delivering T Level industry placements in the 2018/19 academic year through the Capacity and Delivery Fund.

27. We want to make sure students with SEND and other needs have full access to industry placements. The consultation identified a range of potential solutions to make sure that this happens. This includes working collaboratively with specific industries, providers and SEND organisations to identify flexible industry placement models that accommodate students with greater needs or specific circumstances. Using evidence, including from the industry placement pilots, we will consider how providers can best be supported to make sure that students with SEND are able to complete their T Level industry placement. Employers and providers will receive guidance to make sure that all students with SEND and other additional needs are set fair and appropriate objectives for the industry placement, and have the necessary support and reasonable adjustments needed to benefit from external industry placements.

28. T Level industry placements are about providing students with high quality, meaningful training, not work. Therefore, students on a T Level industry placement should not be

entitled to a salary as the placement is forming part of a course of further education[10]. There is no legal requirement or expectation that T Level students will be paid. We recognise that for some employers, any type of unpaid placement would discourage them from taking part in the programme, so they are able to pay students should they wish to. In taking this approach, our aim is to ensure as many students and businesses as possible benefit from T Levels and to prevent students facing any avoidable costs.

29. We are working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to make sure that students, including those and their families who already receive benefits, are not negatively affected by undertaking an industry placement. We will also consider implications for students that have existing part time jobs and other circumstances such as childcare and other caring responsibilities to ensure they can still access a high quality placement.

3.4 Challenges for employers in offering T Level industry placements, and how they can be better supported and incentivised to offer placements, including to students with additional needs

Question 13: What are the common barriers/ challenges for employers to host industry placements and how can we support employers to offer placements?

Question 14: How do these challenges vary across industries and location types?

Question 15: How can the range of employers, including SMEs, be better supported to offer industry placements for students with additional needs?

Question 16: Would employers value a recognition in delivering industry placements, for example through a form of 'kitemarking'?

30. We want to make sure that employers get the support that they need to be able to offer T Level industry placements at the scale needed. Respondents said that employers want clear guidance to understand their roles and responsibilities, and to make the employer reference as straightforward as possible. In response, we will publish 'how to' guidance for employers on implementing industry placements later this year, including setting out the responsibilities and legal requirements of employers, as well as clear guidance and standardised templates for employer references.

31. We will extend the role of the NAS to provide a 'one stop shop' for advice on T Level industry placements to employers. NAS will also make a referral and industry placement matching service available for employers, meaning employers will have a single place to go to find local providers who offer industry placements. We will be speaking with small employers to establish what support they need to offer industry

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[10] See regulations 53 and 3 of the National Minimum Wage Regulations 2015.

placements. We will continue to develop options for this and will be publishing more information later this year.

32. Respondents also wanted T Level industry placements to be flexible to accommodate different industries' needs as well as geographic limitations. We know 'one size doesn't fit all', and throughout the 2017/18 academic year we have run a pilot scheme to test different approaches and models of industry placement. Early indications from these pilots show that we will need to adopt a range of models and approaches across different routes and occupations. We will work with specific industries and with providers to determine the best models and approaches and we will publishing more detailed guidance and appropriate industry placement templates for different scenarios nearer to roll-out of T Levels.

33. We will maintain our requirement for a minimum of 45 days placement in total, but allow providers to work with employers to determine which model is most appropriate. For example, this could be delivered through day release, a single block placement, multiple blocks at different times during the programme, or a mix of day release and blocks. We will continue to develop and test these approaches, making sure that these new flexibilities are delivered. However, our main priority is to make sure that all students get a high quality industry placement and we want to make sure that any flexibilities do not affect the quality of placements.

34. In addition, we are working with the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) to understand how students in rural areas can access T Level industry placements. Feedback from the industry placement pilot scheme will help with this.

35. We have also established a cross-Government group on T Level industry placements to encourage other Government departments to offer industry placements in their departments, as well as their public bodies. Government departments will also explore further options on how they can actively support delivery of industry placements.

36. Respondents had mixed views on the idea of recognising industry placements through kitemarking. We will therefore continue to consider the role of kitemarking, but will not be taking forward any plans to recognise employers who deliver industry placements at this stage.

4. Maths, English and digital

4.1 Higher standards of maths and English

Question 17: Should students be able to opt to take a higher level maths or English qualification e.g. core maths, A level maths, or work towards higher grades in GCSE even if T Level panels do not require it? What are the issues for providers in delivering this?

37. In principle, we believe that a student should be able to take an A level alongside their T Level, particularly if it supports progression outcomes for their chosen T Level. We are particularly supportive of high attaining students who want to take Core maths or an A level in maths alongside their T Level. The advanced maths premium, announced last year, will help providers to deliver this where they are expanding the total number of students taking level 3 maths.

38. Respondents said that logistical issues and teaching staff could be barriers to offering additional or higher level maths or English. We are planning to work with the providers who will deliver the first T Levels from 2020 to consider whether students could take an A level in another subject in addition to their T Level programme. We are considering what support might be needed to facilitate this, including changes to accountability measures, and how the large programme uplift might work in the context of T Level programmes.

39. T Levels will be stretching level 3 programmes, and we would expect students to attain at least level 2 maths and English by the time they complete the programme. Some providers were concerned about whether students would be able to access level 3 content without having achieved level 2 maths and English. We believe that providers are best placed to decide on whether to admit a student onto a level 3 programme, and we will not impose a minimum entry requirement.

40. Some respondents were concerned about maths and English attainment being a barrier to students accessing T Levels, particularly for those with SEND. Embedded and standalone maths and English skills and qualifications are an important part of T Levels. We will work with the Institute and Ofqual to explore ways to support students with SEND to make progress in their T Level, including whether existing flexibilities available to apprentices should apply to T Levels.

4.2 Funding options to provide maths and English for those who have not yet achieved level 2

Question 18: Which of these options for funding maths and English within the T Level programme do you think would be the most appropriate? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

Option	Percentage
Option 1	19%
Option 2	81%

Number of respondents: 298

41. Respondents across almost all groups were considerably more favourable to Option 2, which was to provide additional funded hours for the maths and English study on top of a student's T Level hours. Option 1 – providing the maths and English study from each student's T Level programme hours – was seen to disadvantage students who have to continue studying maths and English to meet the minimum requirement by reducing the time spent on the technical elements of the T Level.

42. We therefore intend to fund maths and English for students who have not yet achieved level 2 in addition to the hours required for the technical elements. This means that students who already hold the minimum exit requirements will have fewer hours of study in total, but it will mean that we avoid disadvantaging students with lower prior attainment. We will fund this from within the additional T Levels funding agreed in the 2017 Spring Budget.

5. Incorporating additional requirements/qualifications into T Levels

Question 19: Where there are additional occupation-specific requirements that can be delivered or assessed off the job, do you agree that these should be incorporated into T Levels? If not, why not?

Response	Percentage
Yes	86%
No	14%

Number of respondents: 345

43. We maintain the view that T Levels should include additional occupation-specific requirements where possible, if they are essential for skilled employment. This aligns

with the consultation feedback that T Levels should be employer-led. We will work with T Level panels to identify these requirements and to explore how they can be embedded within the T Levels. Some respondents were concerned about the need for additional funding for these requirements, as well the burden it might impose on students. We would expect additional occupation-specific qualifications to be funded from the T Level funding made available to providers.

6. Certification and recognising partial attainment

6.1 Information included in the certificate

Question 20: Do you agree with the information we propose to include in the certificate? Yes/No – Please explain your answer

Yes	75%
No	25%

Number of respondents: 345

44. Most respondents welcomed the proposals for certification, so we will proceed with our proposals to list attainment of the different elements of the programme separately. However, to take into account feedback from employers, an overall T Level Pass grade will now appear as the primary 'headline' grade on the T Level certificate. A Pass grade will only be awarded if a student successfully completes the industry placement, attains the Technical Qualification, and achieves the other specified elements of the T Level programme. As T Levels are two-year programmes, T Level results and certificates will be issued after the second year of study. An example of what a T Level certificate could look like is included in Annex E.

6.2 Recognising partial attainment in the transcript

Question 21: Do you agree that partial attainment should be reflected in the proposed transcript? Yes/No. Please give reasons for your response.

Yes	92%
No	8%
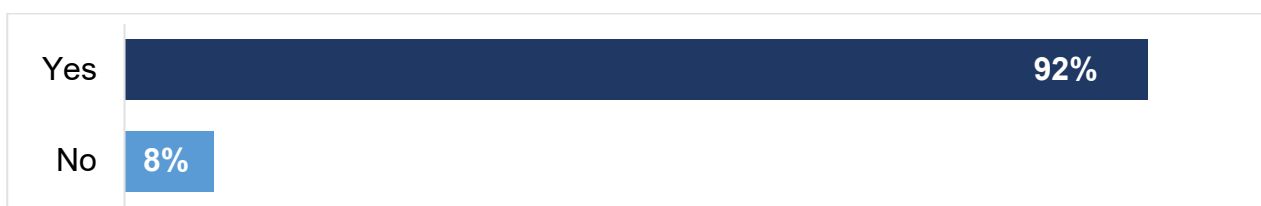
Number of respondents: 350

45. The majority of respondents agreed that partial attainment should be reflected in the transcript. We will proceed with proposals for recognising partial attainment through a transcript that identifies the components of the T Level the student has completed. For students who just missed out passing occupational specialisms, we will explore the use of a 'working towards' grade for these components. This grade would provide more support to provider and student judgements about re-takes.

7. Progression onto apprenticeships

Question 22: How can T Levels be designed in a way that enables students to progress onto apprenticeships?

46. T Levels will be available alongside apprenticeships as one half of a high quality technical education offer. They will both provide in-depth technical training, but via two different routes. Apprenticeships are employment with training, and apprentices specialise in one occupation as they learn on the job. T Levels will primarily be studied at an education or training provider, with students studying a broad occupational area before specialising, and having the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills on a substantial industry placement. Our ambition is for a coherent technical education system with shared standards – and smooth transition – between T Levels and apprenticeships.

47. Feedback from the consultation and discussions with employers to date have indicated that, in many cases, students should be able to progress from T Levels onto apprenticeships at level 4 and above. However, respondents highlighted that this will depend on the occupation and in some routes students may need additional training to reach full occupational competence, beyond the usual induction to the workplace. Consultation respondents included several suggestions on how to support T Level graduates to reach full occupational competence when they progress into work, including onto an apprenticeship. Once T Level content is finalised we will consider with the Institute the best way to do this.

48. As set out in Section 1, T Levels will simplify the current, complex qualifications market. To do this successfully, we need to make sure that parents, students and teachers understand the reforms to technical education and do not find the new system confusing. As part of our wider communications strategy, we will work with the Institute to support young people to understand the different post-16 qualifications, study programmes and apprenticeships they can choose from. This activity will be delivered in advance of the phased introduction of T Levels so that we can support Year 11 students making decisions on their options for Year 12 and 13.

8. Progression to higher technical education

Question 23: How can T Levels be built to provide a solid grounding for, and access to higher levels of technical education?

Question 24: What good practice already exists in enabling learners with technical (rather than academic) backgrounds gain access to, and succeed on, degree courses?

49. T Levels are being designed by employers to meet their skills needs. In addition, a core aim of the Sainsbury Report was that students should be able to progress to the highest levels of technical education. Students completing T Levels should be able to progress into skilled employment at level 3, and into further relevant training at level 4, 5 or 6, either in the workplace or at an education provider. Respondents suggested that we should create clear pathways for progression across both FE and higher education (HE) sectors and we agree with this approach. We are working with HE providers to facilitate progression from T Levels to relevant HE courses in similar disciplines, e.g. progressing from an Accounting T Level onto an accountancy degree, including sharing T Level content as it is developed.

50. T Levels will prepare students for higher level training in their particular subject area, including at FE colleges, new Institutes of Technology (IoTs)[11] and universities. However, they are not primarily designed to provide general access to a wide range of HE courses. It is important that information and guidance offered in schools makes clear the progression routes from different subjects taken at 16 to 19, so that young people can make informed choices. It will ultimately be up to individual employers and HE providers to decide which students they wish to recruit.

51. The Sainsbury Report stressed the importance of students being able to progress from the technical route (T Levels) to the academic route if they wanted to. This would likely require students to undertake some sort of bridging provision to acquire additional knowledge and skills. Respondents commented that HE providers already offer a range of effective bridging courses that aid transition to HE. Once T Level content is finalised, we will work with HE providers to identify where bridging provision might be needed, and explore how we can learn from best practice in giving students the opportunity to switch to different subject areas for higher level study. Respondents said that allocating UCAS Tariff points to T Levels would support progression. We recognise this and therefore we are working with UCAS to explore this option. We are also working with UCAS to provide clear information to students, HE/careers advisers, and HE providers about the progression options available after completing a T Level. We will also work

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[11] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/663691/DfE_IOT_Prospectus_Nov17.PDF

with the Office for Students (OfS) to explore how we can increase student choice for those who want to progress to HE.

9. Meeting the needs of all learners

9.1 Transition offer

Question 25: What support should we consider as part of a transition offer to make sure that students can progress to level 3 study and particularly T Levels?

52. Respondents were widely supportive of creating a transition offer for students who had performed less well at GCSE, and to provide an opportunity to progress for students with SEND who tend to take longer to achieve the same levels of attainment as other students.

53. We want to develop an effective transition offer to make sure that as many students as possible can complete T Levels. We will do further work with the Institute, providers and sector bodies throughout 2018 to gather evidence on existing good practice of similar 'transition' programmes, how the offer might meet employer needs, and what the role of the Institute might be. As mentioned in Section 1, we will proceed with the review of qualifications at level 2. This will help establish which qualifications may be suitable for the offer.

54. We will also take into consideration the additional points raised during the consultation on:

- who the transition offer is specifically targeted at

- how prior maths and English attainment is taken into account

- how the funding system should treat 18 year-old students who started a T Level at age 17 after a period of preparatory training

55. We will take a phased implementation approach once the first T Levels are introduced in 2020.

9.2 Availability of T Levels to adult learners

Question 26: How should we adapt T Levels for adults so that they meet the needs of adult learners?

56. Feedback from the consultation highlighted that there is no 'one size fits all' approach that could be introduced to meet the needs of the majority of adult learners. We recognise that 19 to 23 learners who do not yet have a level 3 qualification could benefit from the same T Level programme as 16 to 19 year-olds. For learners who are over 24, we will take into account wider reviews to technical education, including the review of qualifications at level 3 and at level 4/5, as we consider any specific adaptations that will improve accessibility.

10. Delivery of T Levels

10.1 Challenges for providers and the support/information needed

Question 27: What do you think the biggest challenges will be for providers in delivering new T Levels and what additional support do you think providers will need? Specifically, ensuring:

- **the right facilities are available**

- **the right equipment is available**

- **appropriately trained staff are recruited, and in the numbers required**

- **existing staff get high quality training and development**

Question 28: What information do you think will need to be provided to be able to market T Levels effectively to students and parents, and how far in advance of first teaching will it be needed?

57. For providers delivering T Levels, the main challenge identified was making sure that staff have sufficient expertise, as providers will need to upskill current teaching staff and recruit additional skilled staff, especially in STEM subjects. We know that the delivery of T Levels will be a challenge for the FE sector, and that preparing the FE workforce to teach T Levels will be particularly challenging, even with additional funding. We will be working closely with the sector to design and develop a programme of support to help providers and teachers to prepare for the delivery of T Levels. This includes an investment of up to £20m to help make sure teachers are ready to deliver new T Levels.

58. In the 2017 Spring Budget, we announced additional funding, rising to £500 million a year, to cover the additional taught hours and industry placement requirements for T Levels. We are asking all providers to complete a data collection about their plans to implement T Levels and will use the information to plan tailored support.

59. T Levels will take time to become established. After the first procurement, successful AOs will have a year to develop the qualifications. We have announced the providers who will deliver the first T Levels and are planning a national readiness support programme to help them, and other providers who follow, to get ready to deliver.

60. We are currently planning to introduce three T Levels from September 2020. In the T Level Action Plan, which we published last October, we proposed introducing another 13 T Levels in 2021 and the remaining nine in 2022. Some respondents, including the CBI, raised concerns about the capacity of the system to respond to this pace of roll-out. We recognise these concerns. Our priority is to deliver high quality programmes and therefore we have decided to extend the full roll-out of T Levels beyond 2022.

61. As part of this, we want to take an agile approach in responding to the speed of T Level panels' work, and in taking into account the capacity of AOs to bid for licences and the capacity of providers to adopt new T Levels. In some cases this may mean we slow plans to get a T Level into delivery – for example, the Building Services Engineering T Level – and in others we accelerate delivery – such as the Design, Surveying and Planning T Level. We will confirm the final sequencing of the roll-out of T Levels once the outline content is finalised by T Level panels.

62. We are already communicating to key audiences about T Levels to increase awareness, understanding and engagement. To-date, this has included:

- the publication of an Action Plan in October last year, which set out key policy decisions and next steps on implementation

- two sets of events across the country to raise awareness of the reforms and to engage delivery partners in person on the questions raised in the consultation

- attendance at engagement activities with a range of stakeholders

63. We are taking action to increase the scale and pace of this communication as we move towards first teaching in 2020. As well as giving regular updates on progress, a comprehensive marketing strategy will be developed to make sure that parents, teachers, students and careers professionals know about T Levels and when new technical options will be available.

64. Our user research discovered that after having started their course, some students would still like to be able to change to another T Level within the route. We will be working with the providers of the first T Levels in 2020 explore how courses could be designed to allow students to change to another T Level early on in the first year. The common nature of the core content applying across all T Levels within a route could make this possible, though is dependent on providers offering all T Levels within a route.

65. We recognise that the T level programme is ambitious and we are continuously assessing our plans to enable us to achieve the successful roll out of the first T Levels in 2020, including:

- publication of outline content for the first three T Levels to encourage comment and engagement by employers, providers and awarding organisations

- continued engagement with awarding organisations, including to provide an opportunity to shape the procurement process, ahead of ITT launch in autumn 2018

- close working with the providers that have been selected to deliver the first T levels in September 2020 to involve them in the design process and help them prepare for launch

- appointment of an organisation to work with us to design and deliver a support programme for providers

- allocation of additional funding in 2018/19 to allow providers to develop capacity to deliver industry placements

- dedicated and flexible support for providers from the Education and Skills Funding Agency field force

- engagement with providers and other stakeholders to agree the approach to T Levels funding

- development of a comprehensive marketing strategy to make sure that parents, teachers, students and careers professionals know about T Levels.

10.2 Engagement between providers and industry

Question 29: How much engagement do providers currently have with industry professionals in shaping the curriculum, teaching, and training other members of staff?

Question 30: What challenges will providers face if they want to bring in more industry expertise?

66. There are pockets of excellent practice across the sector of providers engaging with industry professionals. We intend to build on this, but appreciate that there will be different challenges dependent on a provider's location and their technical educational offer. We will work with the sector to consider how best we can meet the commitment set out in the Government's manifesto to attract experienced industry professionals into FE so students can gain the knowledge and skills that industry needs.

10.3 Making sure that T Levels offered by providers meet skills needs

Question 31: Should we seek to further influence which T Levels are offered by providers, according to local and national skills needs? Yes/No. If yes, how should we do this?

Yes/No. If yes, how should we do this?

Yes	61%
No	39%
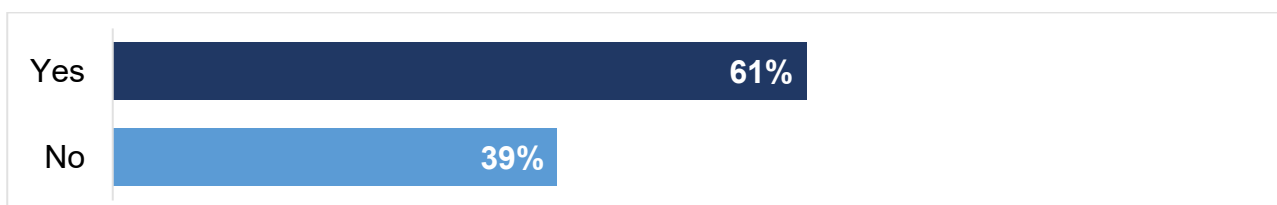
Number of respondents: 325

Question 32: How do providers currently take account of local and national skills needs when planning their provision and how do they work with the existing structures that have responsibility for local skills planning?

Question 33: What additional support will providers need to make sure that T Levels meet local skills priorities?

67. Many respondents agreed that we should further influence which T Levels are offered. We will therefore do further work to make sure that the T Level offer is aligned to local and national skills needs. There are related policies under development that we will take into account, such as the role of Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) and Local Digital Skills Partnerships (LDSPs). These will work within existing local infrastructures, such as Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), to bring together local businesses and providers to work together to meet the current and future skills needs of local employers, and deliver opportunities to local people.

68. We encourage FE providers to work in partnership with MCAs and LEPs to boost the local T Level offer. This includes working together to promote the need for high quality T Level industry placements amongst local employers, and to make sure that students have access to a broad range of T Levels across different providers.

69. We recognise, and will promote to employers and providers, that certain occupations (and industry placements, therefore) can be found across multiple sectors, for example many employers have an IT department which could be suitable for students on a Digital T Level.

11. Procurement and contracting

11.1 Copyright

Question 34: What material could reasonably be included under the copyright of a technical qualification? Are there any other steps that we could take, within the parameters of the legislation, that would allow this to operate effectively and in everyone's interests?

70. The extent of the copyright arrangements is still under consideration, and our approach will take into account the comments raised as part of the consultation. The materials that are subject to the transfer of copyright and the basis of transfer will be included as part of the ITT documentation. We are currently working with the Institute to make sure that material subject to copyright transfer will safeguard quality in the event of contract transfer and provide stability for learners and providers. Full details will be included in the ITT when it is published in autumn 2018, following market engagement events with AOs over the summer.

11.2 Competition mechanism

Question 35: How can the above mechanisms (i.e. licence length, lotting and transferability) be used to help AOs recover their investment, maintain appropriate profit margins but also keep the market competitive for future re-procurements?

Question 36: When contracts are re-procured what would be needed over and above the licensed copyright to submit a competitive bid? How will AOs keep their skills levels up to maintain their capability to bid in future re-procurements?

71. We will end the race to the bottom on technical qualifications by making sure there is one high quality T Level for each technical occupation that meets employer set standards and includes a Technical Qualification. We will award an exclusive licence to an AO to develop and deliver each Technical Qualification following a procurement exercise that will comply with relevant procurement rules, and follow the principles of equal treatment and transparency.

72. We will make sure that the licence length is sufficient to make the licence practically and commercially sustainable and this will take into account feedback from the consultation responses and feedback from market engagement events. Some AOs were concerned about the resources required to bid for licences without any guarantee of success. We are considering how we can make sure that all AOs interested in bidding in future rounds can do so.

73. There were suggestions that we should provide an assured level of income for AOs based on guaranteed student numbers, with providers looking for limits on what AOs could potentially charge the market. In the original licence lengths, we will reflect the fact that it will take time for student numbers to grow from 2020. Full details will be included in the ITT when it is published in autumn 2018, following market engagement events with AOs over the summer.

11.3 Pricing mechanism

Question 37: Are there other variables (in addition to those listed in the text above) that could influence the return on investment for AOs? How might these factors influence interest from the AO sector for initial and further competitions?

74. We recognise that qualification development is an expensive exercise for AOs. We are therefore considering the costs incurred by AOs during the development of a qualification, and if it would be possible to pay a potential contribution towards those development costs. Full details will be included in the ITT when it is published in autumn 2018, following market engagement events with AOs over the summer.

12. Quality assurance and regulation

75. We did not ask a specific question in the consultation about the quality assurance and regulation of Technical Qualification component of T Levels. A small number of respondents did, however, comment on the overarching framework and potential risks.

76. Some respondents said that the assurance framework should involve independent regulation of Technical Qualifications by Ofqual, given its experience and expertise in

the area. Others, however, commented on the potential for confusion, duplication and gaps in an assurance model that involves both the Institute and Ofqual. The comments demonstrate the importance of the DfE working closely with both the Institute and Ofqual to make sure that any joint assurance approach is robust, and that there is clarity about how respective roles would be reconciled.

77. The Institute has overall responsibility, as set out in the Technical and Further Education Act 2017, for all aspects of the T Level programme, including the Technical Qualification. Specifically, the Institute has ultimate responsibility for deciding whether a Technical Qualification can be taught. This includes:

- setting occupational standards, setting content and engaging AOs to develop and deliver Technical Qualifications

- statutory approval of Technical Qualifications that meet its quality tests and approval criteria

- maintaining the quality of Technical Qualifications through setting standards and performance indicators in contracts with AOs, which AOs must meet

78. Alongside this, Ofqual has responsibility for the regulation of qualifications in England, as set out in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. For T Levels, we think it would be beneficial for Ofqual to use its regulatory levers to assure consistency in assessment and awarding of Technical Qualifications by education and training providers across the country and over time. Specifically, Ofqual would:

- set recognition requirements for organisations that wish to deliver Technical Qualifications

- set accreditation requirements as appropriate as part of the Institute's overall approvals process

- for Technical Qualifications that meet its accreditation requirements, use regulatory powers as appropriate to maintain assessment standards

79. We want to draw on all available levers to make sure that Technical Qualifications are subject to rigorous standards of assurance so the public can be confident that T Levels are a reliable indicator of technical occupational competence, in the same way that A levels are trusted as a measure of academic ability. We will introduce a joint model based on a collaborative arrangement between the Institute and Ofqual, whereby the Technical Qualifications within T Levels will become a recognised category of qualification and, subject to appropriate consultation, Ofqual's accreditation decisions will form part of a joined up approval process. This arrangement will inform any future legislation in relation to the regulation and assurance of T Levels.

80. The Institute and Ofqual have made good progress towards developing this collaborative approach. The principles and features underpinning the joint approach will be that:

- the assurance framework and criteria will preserve employers' role in shaping T Levels to make sure that the qualifications provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to gain skilled employment

- the Institute and Ofqual will agree a single, unified process and arrangements for the whole qualification cycle – which includes AOs making a single submission to the Institute for approval

- communications in public and with AOs would be streamlined as far as possible through a single process led by the Institute

This approach will make sure the system benefits from the Institute's expertise in working with employers and Ofqual's expertise in regulating high quality qualifications. The new collaborative model will be designed so that it is seamless for AOs, with all communication, guidance and interaction provided via the Institute.

81. The detailed assurance requirements will be set out in the ITT documents for the first Technical Qualifications in autumn 2018.

13. Performance and accountability measures

Question 38: Which of the proposed performance measures are most important? Please explain. Are there any other measures, such as student and employer feedback that should be part of the accountability system for T Levels? Yes/No. Please explain.

Yes — 75%
No — 25%

Number of respondents: 281

82. The majority of respondents agreed with all the measures proposed. We will be taking forward the proposed measures as follows:

- **Destination measures:** There was strong agreement that destination measures provide the strongest evidence that T Levels are fit for purpose. We will consider how these existing measures can be developed to reflect the introduction of technical routes and the transition offer

- **Completion:** There was widespread support from respondents, though there were concerns about how students who leave T Level programmes early to either start an apprenticeship or employment would be treated in the completion measure. We will work with providers to determine how we should treat students who do not

complete their course because they have started an apprenticeship, but we do not support leaving for employment because it can lead to long-term low earnings

- **Attainment measures:** There was widespread support from respondents, although some commented that an attainment measure should be calculated for all students, not just those who complete all T Level requirements. We will therefore reconsider if we should publish the attainment of all students taking Technical Qualifications, instead of just those students who complete the entire programme

- **Progress measure:** Respondents supported a progress measure. However, some thought it might be difficult to develop a value-added measure for Technical Qualifications given that GCSEs are not a good predictor of outcomes for students taking technical qualifications. We will test the feasibility of a value added progress measure when the 2018 Tech Level results are known. However, we will not know if it is possible to design a value-added measure for T Levels until we have the results from the first three T Level in 2022, so it may not be possible to publish a progress measure for the first three routes. We will explore if it is possible to have a progress measure for all age groups taking T Levels, including adults

- **Maths and English progress measures:** There were no concerns about our proposals to use current maths and English progress measures

83. We will consider if it is possible to produce meaningful, robust student and employer feedback measures for technical routes and, if it is possible, when might be the best time to introduce such measures.

84. Ofsted will be reviewing their inspection framework for 2019 and they will hold a separate consultation on the specifics of their proposals.

14. Funding

Question 39: Do you have any comments about how we might approach the funding of T Levels? How could the funding formula be adapted to distribute funding for T Levels?

Question 40: How might we adapt funding flows to AOs to make sure that the full range of T Levels is available to students around the country?

85. In line with feedback from the consultation, we intend to build on the existing funding arrangements and formula to distribute funding for T Levels. We recognise that the additional taught hours and industry placement requirements for T Levels will mean that they cost more to deliver than current programmes. Additional funding, rising to £500 million a year, is available to meet these additional costs and we will consider in detail the mechanism for distributing this. We expect to fund different T Levels at different rates to reflect the cost of delivery (e.g. for the use of specialist equipment) and the variation in the number of taught hours required.

86. Respondents indicated that funding should initially be provided in the year it is needed, rather than on a lagged basis. We will develop an approach to allocate funding that addresses stakeholder concerns in the initial roll-out of T Levels, subject to appropriate checks and adjustments e.g. for retention. This will be part of the detailed funding arrangements, which we will work closely with sector representatives to develop. We will announce these arrangements well in advance so that providers are aware of the funding rates and can plan accordingly, and we will keep the overall funding package under review as other aspects of T Levels policy are developed.

87. As part of procurement and contracting, we are considering the option of providing direct funding to contracted AOs to help cover their upfront development costs. Full details will be included in the ITT when it is published in autumn 2018, following market engagement events with AOs over the summer.

15. Equalities

Question 41: How could any adverse impact be reduced and are there any ways we could better advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not? Please provide evidence to support your response.

88. As well as being inclusive of those with a protected characteristic, respondents said it was also important that T Levels are inclusive of students with SEND or mental health issues, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. We know that students with SEND and additional needs will require flexibility and accessibility in the design and delivery of T Levels. To do this we will:

- make sure there are reasonable adjustments for students with SEND, and ensure a fair assessment of their progress and achievements. We will reflect reasonable adjustments and accessibility in the ITT for AOs seeking to develop Technical Qualifications and through the assurance arrangements being developed by the Institute and Ofqual

- consider direct entry into employment, as well as further education and training, in our review of qualifications at level 2 and below. SEND organisations, among others, have raised the importance of this at level 2 in particular

- explore how we can support students with SEND who may find it difficult to attain maths and English qualifications

- make sure that T Level industry placements are fully accessible to students with SEND. We must make sure all students with SEND benefit from an external placement, but we know that they may need additional support on the placement. In particular we will:

  o continue to explore good practice and potential solutions

- work collaboratively with employers, providers and SEND organisations and build on learning from the supported internship model and other good practice, so that we can build in flexibilities and accommodate students with additional needs

- use evidence, including from the industry placement pilots, to consider how providers can be best supported to make sure that students with SEND are able to complete their industry placement

- make sure employers and providers have guidance so that students with SEND are set fair objectives and given appropriate support

- be flexible about the hours that students are expected to complete on the T Level industry placement, as a reasonable adjustment

89. We have taken into account the responses received and in accordance with our duties under the Equality Act 2010 we have considered the impact of the proposals on individuals sharing protected characteristics, in order to give due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. We have published our equalities analysis alongside the Government Response.

Annex A: Summary of the consultation response analysis by Pye Tait Consulting

1. Introduction

The Government is reforming technical education in order to create a world-class skills system.

As part of the Government's reforms, at aged 16 students will be able to choose from an academic programme (primarily through A levels) or a technical programme (primarily through a T Level or apprenticeship).

The Department for Education (DfE) launched a public consultation from 30th November 2017 to 8th February 2018, to obtain views on all major aspects of its proposals for implementing T Levels. This report presents an overview of the main points and arguments.

The consultation generated 430 responses from a wide range of organisation types and individuals, spanning educational institutions (all levels), industry, awarding organisations, representative bodies, local authorities and others. Not all consultation respondents answered all questions.

Where respondents stated that they agreed with DfE's proposals through the 'yes/no' questioning, this often appeared to be an agreement in principle, caveated by additional considerations and factors that they felt the DfE should take into account. Overall, perceptions were mixed within and between respondent groups, meaning that it cannot be said for example that one group holds views that may be considered significantly different to another group. However, awarding organisations tended to be comparatively less favourable to the main principles proposed.

2. Principles of the T Level programme

In the consultation document, the DfE set out its intentions to review the current range of publicly funded qualifications at level 3, as well as those at level 2 and below. More than two thirds of consultation respondents answering on this topic (68%) agreed with the DfE's principles for reviewing qualifications at level 3, whilst 80% agreed with the principles for reviewing qualifications at level 2 and below.

Respondents were generally favourable to the idea of creating a simplified qualifications landscape, as long as this is guided by industry need and does not result in gaps in valuable provision. They felt that the three principles set out by the DfE for the review at level 3 needed more precise definition, for example by clarifying how a qualification would be identified as "truly necessary" and by explaining what "good quality" meant in practice. It was also argued that Applied General Qualifications (AGQs) are strong enablers for

widening participation to higher education courses and improving social mobility and therefore they should be retained.

At level 2 and below, respondents made clear that the DfE's review should take into account the importance of a broad curriculum, labour market needs and students with additional and complex needs. It was emphasised qualifications at level 1 and Entry levels often support students with additional and complex needs. A minority of respondents mentioned the need for the qualification offer at Key Stage 4 (for pupils aged 14-16) to be reviewed. The main reason for this was the need to look at the system in its entirety, and to ensure pupils were taking qualifications that would assist progression. However, several others were more cautious, noting that recently reformed GCSEs need time to bed in.

3. The Technical Qualification

Views were divided on the DfE's proposals for assessment, with just over half (53%) of respondents broadly agreeing. There were considerable variations between respondent groups, for example, employers were more favourable than FE Colleges and awarding organisations. The DfE's proposal to combine examinations-based and practical assessment was generally well received. However, concerns were raised that a heavy reliance on exam assessment could present a barrier for students who choose a T Level to move away from an exam assessment approach. Awarding organisations in particular stressed that employer-set projects risked being of variable quality and lacking in consistency.

Respondents generally agreed that the size and multiple components of the Technical Qualification made it appropriate to grade these separately. Almost all felt a single system should be used (either E – A*, or Pass/Merit/Distinction) since combining both could become confusing for employers, especially when comparing job applications. University respondents were particularly favourable to separate grades being awarded for the core component to inform their assessment of a student's potential in higher education.

The idea of employers supporting standardisation and grading was well received in principle, but most respondents questioned what precisely that would involve. As well as time and expertise, employers would need to be involved, especially given that matters relating to assessment and standardisation can be extremely complex.

There was confusion among numerous respondents across different categories regarding the concept of 'threshold competence' and how this would be defined for different occupational specialisms.

The vast majority (96%) of respondents agreed with the DfE's proposal that prior attainment of the core content should count if students switch to another T Level within the same route. There was a call for more clarity on certain aspects, such as how prior learning would be measured and what would establish 'marginal differences'.

4. T Level industry placements

The majority of consultation respondents (60%) broadly agreed with the DfE's proposal to incorporate industry placements within T Level programmes. They cited enhanced employability skills and improved work readiness as positive outcomes from a significant and meaningful industry placement with an employer. They valued the potential benefit of the 'real world of work' on the student experience, which largely explained their favourability to the approach in principle.

However, respondents set out a range of challenges. There was considerable concern about the risk of a 'postcode lottery', i.e. industry placement opportunities being dependent on a student's geographical location. Around half of respondents indicated that geographical barriers could be reasonably tackled and advocated a 'creative' and 'flexible' approach to T Level industry placements where opportunities are hard to secure. For example, simulated or realistic working environments in colleges or sparsity uplift funding to help with employer engagement in rural areas. The other half were less optimistic this could be easily done, with a small minority of the view that this would be an impossible task.

There was a strong view that many small and micro businesses may not be able to support T Level students for the proposed 45-60 days' duration due to unpredictable workloads or perceptions of the costs, time and bureaucracy involved. Some employers also made a general point that the proposed length of industry placements may need to be longer in some sectors than in others to enable 'threshold competence' to be achieved[12].

Suggestions to overcome these challenges included strong partnership working and industry engagement (for example through Local Enterprise Partnerships), clear benefit statements or incentives to encourage employers to take part and a centrally coordinated approach to avoid the risk of employers being inundated by requests from different providers.

Furthermore, there was a collective call for flexibility and support for students with additional needs, for example those with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) and carers. Additional resources may need to be factored in to cater for certain needs.

In terms of the resource burden on employers, there was a strong case made for additional financial support, particularly for SMEs, which would help them to cover additional costs in resources, supervision, mentoring and pastoral care.

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[12] Whilst not mentioned directly in response to this consultation question, respondents raised numerous questions elsewhere about how 'threshold competence' would be measured in practice, the extent to which employers would realistically value this over competence attained through a level 3 apprenticeship, and the resulting fitness for purpose of T levels in enabling progression to level 4.

Respondents were supportive of the need for strong quality assurance of T Level industry placements with 72% agreeing with the DfE's proposed approach. Providers argued that additional funding and resources would be required to meet the additional requirements placed on them.

Most respondents agreed that employers are well placed to appraise students, although there were some concerns about how to ensure consistency between employers.

Around half of all respondents said they would value recognition for delivering T Level industry. However, levels of enthusiasm varied greatly, as did responses to the suggestion of kitemarking.

5. Maths and English

Respondents were favourable to the DfE's flexible approach in specifying either GCSE and/or Functional Skills in maths and English as the expected level of attainment by the time students complete their T Level programme.

To meet student aspirations, respondents were in favour of students being able to take a higher-level maths qualification if they wished, such as core maths, A level maths or work towards higher grades in GCSE, even where not required by T Level panels. The main issues identified for providers were logistics and capacity, with implications for providers in terms of timetabling, teacher resources, facilities, and costs.

Of the DfE's two proposed options for funding the study of level 2 maths and English at the same time as other components of the T Level programme, the majority (81%) favoured option 2. This option would see maths and English funded as additional hours on top of T Level hours, justified by respondents on the basis that all students should have the same amount of time for the other technical elements.

6. Certification

Three quarters of respondents (75%) agreed with the proposals to include the T Level certificate and 92% agreed that partial attainment should be reflected on the transcript. Respondents made the point that having all components clearly listed, with the outcomes associated with each one would help universities and employers (particularly SMEs) identify the best candidates.

Additional suggestions relating to the T Level certificate included adding unique identifiers (to aid tracking and requests for re-prints), security features to reduce the risk of forgery, the name of the awarding organisation and more detail about the industry placement.

7. Flexibility and progression in technical education

Respondents frequently mentioned that clear mapping of T Levels to apprenticeship standards would help students and parents to identify what T Level they should select to enable onward and seamless progression. A commonly mentioned issue was T Level students risked being less work-ready than an individual completing a level 3 apprenticeship (primarily due to the comparatively short industry placement). It was argued this could make it more challenging to ensure that T Level students are able to progress on to a level 4 apprenticeship as easily as someone completing a level 3 apprenticeship.

Educational institutions largely agreed T Levels must equip students with the necessary academic capabilities to succeed in higher education, such as essay writing and mathematical problem solving skills. Respondents felt this could be best supported by keeping in mind the need for rigour and parity with A levels. The most commonly mentioned examples of good practice for enabling students with technical backgrounds to gain access to degree course included BTECs, University Technical Colleges (UTCs), foundation degrees, access courses and industry placements. A large minority of respondents stated that UCAS points would need to be attached to T Levels in order to provide entry into higher education. It was felt that this would offer comparability to other level 3 qualifications, but would arguably cement the progression opportunities available on completing a T Level.

8. Meeting the needs of all learners

Respondents were almost universally supportive of creating a transition offer for helping students to discover more about their aptitudes and aspirations and supporting those with good academic ability but who may have performed less well at GCSE due to wider influencers. It was also seen as useful for providing bridging opportunities for students with additional needs, such as Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND).

A variety of suggestions were received relating to the support that could be offered during a transition offer most commonly, some form of meaningful contact with industry, high quality careers advice, guidance and one-to-one mentoring and an emphasis on developing employability skills.

The main concern raised by respondents was that a course length of one year could be insufficient and called for greater flexibility to enable different rates of progress to be acknowledged, especially for learners with additional needs. A minority of respondents observed that the proposed approach of being "specifically designed to support entry into T Levels" should be opened up to better align with the Sainsbury Review (which recommended that a transition offer should be available to all who had struggled to achieve at Key Stage 4 and/or were uncertain about what choices to make at age 16).

On the topic of opening up T Levels to adult learners, most respondents agreed that a two-year, full-time T Level programme would be unlikely to suit most adult learners, especially in a college-based setting populated by 16-19 year olds. A variety of suggestions were put forward for a more flexible offer for adults, such as part time provision, distance learning, recognition of prior learning and work-based experience, and access to grant or loan funding.

9. Delivery of T Levels

The biggest identified challenge to delivering T Levels was the need to ensure sufficient volumes of high quality industry placements, for the length of time needed and with minimal geographical disparities. Respondents made the point that employers would need to be convinced of the value of offering industry placements (especially those that have not previously been involved in offering placements or apprenticeships) with adequate support and guidance to help them discharge their responsibilities.

Another key challenge mentioned by providers was ensuring sufficient staff expertise, with a need to upskill current teaching staff (through access to suitable training, CPD and closer links with industry) and recruit additional skilled staff where necessary.

In terms of marketing, a strong message from respondents was that students and their parents will need clear information on what T Levels are and how they 'fit' alongside other post-16 education routes, detail on the progression opportunities, the benefits and outcomes for students (including employability prospects), and the extent of industry backing and support, especially for industry placements.

Approximately one third of respondents made the case that a good deal of engagement already takes place between providers and industry professionals with respect to building relationships, improving teachers' knowledge and enabling industry placement opportunities. However, obstacles to this can include lack of funding and time for providers to make such things happen effectively. In addition, issues of salary differences between academia and industry can make it hard to attract industry professionals from more highly paid sectors (such as IT and engineering) into teaching roles.

Most respondents argued local providers and employers know their labour market well and should be consulted to influence which T Levels can be offered locally. A number of suggestions were put forward by respondents as to how this could be done. Access to high quality Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) for each region/area, skills needs audits and alignment with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and drawing on existing local partnership networks and other support structures such as Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs).

Another key argument, especially if T Levels are expected to be on a par with A levels, was T Level opportunities should not be unduly constrained by geographical location. Students should have the right and ability to study what interests them, irrespective of where they live.

Several respondents drew comparisons between T Levels and the former 14-19 Diplomas[13]. It was argued that the amount of work needed to implement T Levels successfully will require continuing and sustained commitment, for example in the event of a change of Minister or any change of Government. Linked to this point, several respondents questioned the timescale for implementation (for first teaching from September 2020) and stressed it will be vital that sufficient time is allowed for robust development and strong marketing.

10. Procurement and contracting of qualifications

In terms of copyrighting the Technical Qualification, most respondents suggested that the qualification specifications and assessment criteria could be put forward for this purpose, which would ensure continuity and a level playing field. A common view was that teaching materials ought to be in the public domain, with copyright arrangements likely to take time, potentially holding up any changes to qualifications in the future.

Respondents raised concerns that issuing a licence to only one awarding organisation could reduce market competition, choice and innovation. A licence period of about five years was generally considered appropriate in order to ensure consistency but prevent the risk of complacency. However, there was concern about awarding organisations' ability to retain capability in a sector in which it is not working for the length of the licence period.

Awarding organisations argued that collaborative/consortium arrangements should be strongly encouraged when tendering for a licence, especially to provide an opportunity for smaller organisations that would otherwise struggle to manage an entire sector.

Several awarding organisations (AOs)/AO representatives pointed out that establishing the extent of copyright that will pass to the Institute is crucial for awarding organisations. This should be confirmed before AOs are invited to bid to develop the Technical Qualifications, as this would likely be key to their decision-making intentions.

11. Accountability

Respondents described the relative pros and cons of accountability measures already set out by the DfE, with destinations measures gaining most traction, followed by completion, attainment, progress and (finally) maths and English measures. It was largely felt destination measures would best prove the case to students and parents that T Levels

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[13] The Diplomas were composite qualifications in England, launched in September 2008 and closed by the DfE in August 2013. They were available to learners between the ages of 14 and 19, as one of the main learning choices alongside GCSEs, A levels and apprenticeships.

support transition into meaningful and prolonged employment. The challenge here would be setting in place systems for reliably gathering this information.

Additional suggested measures included (from most to least cited): employer and student feedback, measures of 'value added', development of employability skills and attendance.

12. Funding

Respondents were most supportive of in-year funding at the outset, with lagged funding introduced at a later point when clarity has been achieved on take-up of T-levels, general costs and outlay.

Many FE Colleges mentioned that funding needs to be sufficient to take into account aspects such as travel (to industry placements), rurality issues, expensive equipment and other sectoral weighting issues, capacity of smaller providers and inherent cash flow challenges. Employers were keen to ask about funding to cover additional costs and resources required to enable industry placements; they emphasised funding should be kept as simple as possible.

13. Equalities

In addition to being inclusive of individuals with protected characteristics, respondents mentioned the importance of T Levels being inclusive of learners with SEND, those with mental health issues, those from otherwise disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as some form of tailored provision for adult learners. On that basis, it was felt that minimising adverse impact and promoting inclusion may be best supported through adequate funding, effective promotion, ensuring accessible and high quality industry placements, and enabling high quality careers advice.

14. Conclusions

1. There is a need for greater clarity relating to the positioning of T Levels in the education system, including their identity and target audience in relation to A levels and apprenticeships.

2. T Levels need to be rigorous, value-adding for employers, as well as inclusive of students with additional needs.

3. There is support for simplification of the existing qualifications system but only where this is employer-led and does not leave gaps in valuable provision.

4. Assessments need to enable progression and demonstrate rigour, whilst being consistent and inclusive.

5. There was confusion about what 'threshold competence' means. This requires greater clarity (especially as it could mean something different in each pathway) as well as ensuring employers can be confident that a student completing a T Level would be at least as valuable for industry as a learner completing a level 3 apprenticeship.

6. T Level industry placements are a vital component of T Levels but will be highly ambitious and challenging to deliver on a national scale, requiring considerable effort to mitigate inequality of opportunity.

7. A transition offer will be valuable but, where possible, should be a more open and inclusive proposition as opposed to being specifically linked to T Levels.

8. There is general support for an 'in-year' funding model.

9. T Levels will require a strong supportive infrastructure network, extensive marketing and time for the benefits to be realised, measured and promoted.

Annex B: List of organisations that responded to the consultation

Note: we have not published the names of organisations who wished to keep their submissions confidential.

Online responses

- Great Brighton Metropolitan College (GBMET)
- Society of British Theatre Designers
- 16-19 Academy
- Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT)
- Abingdon and Witney College
- Access Creative College
- Activate Learning - Creative Arts
- Active IQ
- Adrow Ltd
- Agriskills Forum
- Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB)
- AIM Awards
- Altain Education
- AMFORi Consulting & Training
- Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)
- Aquinas College
- Ark
- Arts Council England
- Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
- Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
- Association of Colleges
- Association of Employment and Learning Providers
- Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers (ALMR)
- Aston University
- Atkins Ltd
- Awarding First
- Awarding Organisation
- Baker Dearing Educational Trust
- Barnet and Southgate College
- Barnet Southgate College
- BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT
- Belle Vue Girls' Academy
- Berkshire College of Agriculture

- Building Engineering Services Association (BESA)
- Bilborough College
- Birmingham City Council (Post 16 Forum)
- Bishop Burton College
- Blackburn College
- Blackpool and The Fylde College
- Bolton College
- boomsatsuma
- Boston College
- Bournemouth and Poole College
- Bridgwater and Taunton College
- British Army
- British Association of Landscape Industries
- British Beer and Pub Association
- British Dyslexia Association
- Brockenhurst College
- Birkenhead Sixth Form College (BSFC)
- BSix Brooke House 6th form
- Build UK
- Building Services T Level Panel
- Burton and South Derbyshire College
- CACHE Technical Education Advisory Board (Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education)
- Cadcoe
- Calderdale College
- Career Colleges Trust
- Carmel College
- Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)
- Council for Dance Education and Training (CDET)
- Central Careers Hub
- Central YMCA
- Certsure LLP

- Chameleon School of Construction Ltd
- Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH)
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
- Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering
- Cheadle and Marple College
- Cirencester college
- Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)
- City & Guilds
- City College Norwich
- City College Plymouth
- City College Southampton
- City of Sunderland College
- Clacton County High School
- College Membership Organsiation
- College of Further Education
- CONSTRUCT Concrete Structures Group
- Coombe Dean School
- Cornwall College
- Coventry College
- Coventry University
- Crafts Council
- Cranford Community College
- Craven College (General Further Education College)
- Creative & Cultural Skills
- Creative Skillset
- Cultural Learning Alliance
- Currie & Brown
- Darlington College
- Datapipe
- DBC Training (Derby Business College)
- dBs Music
- Develop
- DfE T Level Panel
- DMB Consulting
- Double Negative
- Droitwich Spa High School and Sixth Form Centre
- Duke of Edinburgh's Award
- Early Childhood Studies Degrees Network (ECSDN)
- East Riding College
- Electrical Contractors' Association (ECA)

- Engineering Construction Industry training Board (ECITB)
- Edens Education Ltd
- EDF Energy
- Energy and Utility Skills
- Engage, the National Association for Gallery Education
- Expertina ltd
- Fair Train
- Federation of Awarding Bodies
- Federation of Master Builders
- Ferndown Upper
- Forestry Commission England
- Further Education College
- futureCodersSE CIC
- Gama Aviation (Engineering) Limited
- Gateway Qualifications
- General FE College
- Global Academy
- Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP
- GTA England Limited (Group Training Associations)
- GuildHE
- Habia and skillsActive
- Halesowen College
- Harper Adams University
- Hartlepool College of FE
- Hartpury College
- Havant and South Downs College
- Havering College of Further and Higher Education
- Havering Sixth Form College
- Haybridge High School
- Heathrow Airport
- Heritage Skills Academy
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Headmasters' and Headmistresses Conference (HMC)
- Hoople Ltd
- Humber LEP
- Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW)
- IMC Worldwide
- Independent Schools Council
- Institute of Certified Bookkeepers
- Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining
- Institute of Physics

- Institute of Science & Technology
- Institution of Civil Engineers
- Instructus
- J.C. Bamford Excavators Limited
- Jisc (formerly the Joint Information Systems Committee)
- Joint Council for Qualifications
- Joseph Leckie Academy
- JTL Training
- KBR (Kellogg, Brown & Root)
- Kendal College
- King's College London
- King's Head Theatre
- Kingston College (Part of South Thames Colleges Group)
- KPMG
- Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership
- Lancaster & Morecambe College
- Landex
- Launceston College
- Leeds City College
- Leeds College of Building
- Leicester College
- Leyton Sixth Form College
- Linking London
- London Borough of Newham
- London Councils
- London South Bank University
- London South East Colleges
- London Youth
- Long Road VI Form College
- Mary Lyon Centre, Harwell Institute, MRC
- Mathematics in Education and Industry (MEI)
- Merlin Entertainments
- Middlesex University
- MillionPlus
- Mineral Products Qualifications Council
- Mineral Products Qualifications Council / University of Nottingham
- Mjwhetnall
- Morgan Sindall
- Movement to Work: the coalition of progressive UK employers working to tackle youth unemployment
- Myerscough College
- Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

- NALEP BG Skills sub group (New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership)
- National Association for Numeracy and Mathematics in Colleges (NANAMIC)
- National Day Nurseries Association
- National Deaf Children's Society
- National Education Union
- National Farmers Union
- National Foundation for Educational Research
- National Hairdressers Federation
- National Theatre
- Natspec
- NCFE (awarding organisation, not an acronym)
- National College Group (NCG)
- National Citizen Service (NCS)
- Nelson and Colne College
- New City College
- New College Swindon
- Newcastle College
- Newham College
- Newquay Tretherras
- NextGen Skills Academy
- National House Building Council (NHBC)
- National Open College Network (NOCN)
- North West Regional College
- Northampton College
- Northern Regional College
- Northumbria Youth Action ltd
- Notre Dame College
- Nottingham College
- Nottingham Trent University (submission is made on behalf of the University)
- Nova Training
- Nuclear Skills Strategy Group
- North West Regional College (NWRC)
- Oxford, Cambridge & RSA (OCR)
- On behalf of the Manufacturing and Process T Level panel
- Oxford and Cambridge Club
- Pearson
- People 1st
- PJC Ltd
- Plumpton College

- PM Training (Project Management)
- Policy Connect
- Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust
- Preston's College
- Priestley Sixth Form College
- Professional body- awarding organisation
- Progress to Excellence Ltd
- Propertymark Qualifications
- Qualifications Wales
- Queen Mary University of London
- Reaseheath College
- Redland Green School
- Reigate Learning Alliance
- Responding on behalf of the Science Industry Partnership (Cogent Skills)
- Retired
- RG Specialist Solutions Ltd (Rob Gray)
- Riverside College
- Royal Academy of Engineering
- Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
- Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
- Royal Navy
- Royal Society of Biology
- Royal Society of Chemistry
- Royal Statistical Society
- Runshaw College
- Salford City College
- Scarborough Sixth Form College
- School
- secondary school
- Secondary School and Sixth Form
- Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies Alliance (Semta)
- Sheffield Music Hub
- Shooters Hill 6th Form College
- Simon Fox Education
- Sixth form College
- Skanska Engineering Survey
- Skills & Education Group (ABC Awards and Certa)
- Skills for Care
- Somerset County Council
- South and City College Birmingham
- South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
- Southern Regional College
- Space Engineering Services
- Specialist Art and Design College
- St Mary's and St John's CE School
- Staffordshire University
- Stephenson College
- Strathclyde University
- Suffolk One
- T level Legal Panel
- T Level Panel (made up of various organisations)
- Tavistock College
- Technical Professional Education Ltd.
- The Association for Project Management
- The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB)
- The Cotswold School
- The Creative Industries Federation
- The Edge Foundation
- The Greenkeepers Training Committee Ltd
- The Institute of Conservation
- The Institute of The Motor Industry
- The Lancashire Colleges
- The Leigh UTC
- The Sheffield College
- The Sheffield UTC Academy Trust
- The Sixth Form College Farnborough
- The Society of Licensed Conveyancers
- The University of Northampton
- The Welding Institute
- TIGA (Trade Association for UK games industry, can't find a specific meaning)
- Tourism and Hospitality SME
- Transport for London
- Truro & Penwith College
- Trades Union Congress (TUC)
- UAL Awarding Body (University of the Arts London)
- UK Fashion & Textile Association and British Fashion Council

- UK Theatre and Society of London Theatre
- Uniper Technologies Lmited
- Universities UK
- University Alliance
- University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust
- University of Brighton
- University of Central Lancashire
- University of Leeds
- University of Sheffield
- University of South Wales
- University of Wolverhampton
- UTC Norfolk
- UTC Sheffield
- UVAC (University Vocational Awards Council)
- Uxbridge College
- Volunteering Matters
- Vocational Training Charitable Trust (VTCT)

- Walsall College
- WCG (Warwickshire College Group)
- Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers (WCSM)
- West Midlands Combined Universities
- West Midlands Construction UTC
- West Suffolk College
- West Yorkshire Combined Authority / Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership
- Weston College
- White Light Ltd - Technical Solutions Company
- Wilberforce Sixth Form College
- William Howard School
- Windsor Forest Colleges Group
- Winstanley College
- Wolverley CE secondary school
- Worcester Sixth Form College
- Wycliffe College

Emailed responses

- Ambitious About Autism
- Association for Project Management (APM)
- Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN)
- British Chambers of Commerce (BCC)
- Birmingham City University
- British Academy
- Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
- Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEx)
- Construction and the Built Environment Education Advisory Committee
- Disability Rights UK
- EEF (formerly the Engineering Employers Federation)
- Freedom and Autonomy for Schools – National Association (FASNA)
- Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
- Greater London Authority (GLA)
- Manufacturing Technologies Association

- National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women teachers (NASUWT)
- Newquay Tretherras
- NHS Employers
- Ofqual
- Pearson
- Prince's Trust
- Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIBP)
- Rolls-Royce
- Royal National College for the Blind
- Sage
- Special Education Consortium (SEC)
- Sixth Form Colleges Association (SFCA)
- Surrey Employment and Skills Board
- Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)
- UK Metals Council
- University of Wolverhampton
- Young Women's Trust

Annex C: Summary of changes and decisions

This table summarises briefly how we are responding to the proposals in the consultation.

Proposal theme	Summary of decision
Q1. Review of level 3 qualifications	Proceed with the review on basis of principles set out, setting out more details about the process in due course
Q2. Review of qualifications at level 2 and below	Proceed with the review on basis of principles set out. Review non-GCSE qualifications at Key Stage 4 after consulting on the principles
Q3. Assessing Technical Qualifications	Proceed with the assessment proposals, including external examination of the core. Full details of the assessment design will not be finalised until after T Level content is finalised
Q4. Grading Technical Qualifications	Proceed with a six point grading scale for the core (A*-E) and a three point grading scale for each occupational specialism (Distinction, Merit, Pass). Introduce an overall T Level Pass grade
Q5. Maintaining comparable standards of performance for Technical Qualifications	Proceed with the proposal to make sure there are comparable grade standards, with the arrangements for this set out separately through the licensing and quality assurance arrangements
Q6. Prior attainment and re-taking components of the Technical Qualifications	Proceed with the proposal to allow students, where possible, to use their prior attainment for the core for other T Levels within the same route. Details will be determined once the Technical Qualification specifications and assessments have been developed
Q7. Integrating industry placements within T Levels	Proceed with the plan to have high quality industry placements integrated into T Levels
Q8. Appraising student performance on an industry placement	Publish 'how to' guidance for employers and providers on implementing T Level industry placements later this year, including guidance on the employer reference
Q9. Quality assurance of industry placements	Proceed with the proposals for assurance and monitoring of T Level industry placements, taking additional action to make sure that this does not place a significant burden on providers or employers
Q10. Additional support or modifications for those with greater needs or special circumstances during an industry placement	Develop guidance for employers and providers so that all students with SEND and other additional needs are set fair and appropriate objectives for the industry placement, and have the necessary support
Q11. Supporting students to access industry placements in areas where there are no employers to offer placements	Consider what 'good' T Level industry placements look like in different industries and occupations, taking into account the need for flexibility. Work with Defra to understand how students in rural areas can access industry placements
Q12. Financial support for students on an industry placement	ESFA will make additional 16 to 19 Bursary funding available to institutions that are delivering extended T Level industry placements in the 2018/19 academic year with the Capacity and Delivery Fund. There is no

	legal requirement or expectation that T Level students should be paid on industry placements
Q13. Barriers/challenges for employers to host industry placements Q14. How barriers/challenges to host industry placements vary across industries and location types	Publish 'how to' guidance for employers and providers on T Level industry placements later this year. ESFA to provide targeted support. Extend the role of NAS to provide a 'one stop shop' for support to employers and a matching service for industry placements. Explore support for employers, particularly SMEs
Q15. How employers, including SMEs, can be better supported to offer industry placements for students with additional needs	Provide guidance to employers on T Level industry placements for students with SEND and other additional needs
Q16. Recognising employers for delivering industry placements	Do not take forward plans to recognise employers who deliver T Level industry placements at this stage, though consider further the role of kitemarking
Q17. Allowing students to take a higher level maths or English qualification	Work with providers of the first T Levels in 2020 to consider how students can take an A level alongside their T Level, and what support might be needed to facilitate this
Q18. How additional maths and English should be funded within T Levels	Use some of the additional T Levels funding we have secured to fund maths and English for students who have not yet achieved level 2 in addition to the hours required for the Technical Qualification
Q19. How to incorporate additional occupation-specific requirements into T Levels	T Levels should include additional occupation-specific requirements where possible if they are essential for skilled employment. Work with T Level panels to identify these requirements and to explore how they can be embedded within T Levels
Q20. What should be included on a T Level certificate	Proceed with the proposals for certification, but introduce an overall Pass grade so it is clear to employers that a student has completed all components of the programme. The different components of the Technical Qualification will still be graded separately
Q21. Reflecting partial attainment in a transcript	Proceed with proposals for recognising partial attainment through a transcript that identifies the components of the T Level the student has completed. Explore the use of a 'working towards' grade for students who just missed out passing occupational specialisms
Q22. How T Levels can enable students to progress onto apprenticeships	Consider further what additional measures are required to support progression from T Levels to apprenticeships once the content of T Levels is finalised
Q23. How T Levels can provide a solid grounding for, and access to, higher levels of technical education	Work with HE providers to make sure T Levels support progression to higher levels of technical education. Work with UCAS to explore allocating a UCAS tariff to the Technical Qualifications
Q24. Existing good practice in enabling students with technical backgrounds gain access to, and succeed on, degree courses	Once T Level content is finalised, work with HE providers to identify where bridging provision might be needed and explore how we can learn from best

	practice in giving students the opportunity to progress from technical to academic, or vice versa
Q25. How a transition offer could help students progress to level 3 study (particularly T Levels)	Consider different approaches for implementation of the transition offer once the first T Levels are introduced in 2020
Q26. Adapting T Levels for adult learners	Look at how we can support 19 to 23 year-old learners to access T Levels. For learners over 24, take into account the wider reviews to technical education, including the review of qualifications at level 3 and level 4/5, and consider any specific adaptations that will improve accessibility
Q27. Challenges for providers in delivering T Levels, and the support needed	Work closely with the FE sector to design and develop a programme of support to help providers and teachers to prepare for the delivery of T Levels. This includes an investment of up to £20m to improve the quality of teaching over the next two years. Extend the full roll-out of T Levels beyond 2022. Confirm the final sequencing of the roll-out of T Levels once the outline content is finalised by T Level panels
Q28. Information needed to market T Levels effectively to students and parents	Take action to increase the scale and pace of our communications with providers, employers and the wider public ahead of first teaching in 2020
Q29. The engagement providers currently have with industry professionals in shaping the curriculum, teaching, and training other members of staff Q30. Challenges providers will face if they want to bring in more industry expertise	Build on good practice across the sector of providers engaging with industry professionals. Consider how we can meet the manifesto commitment to attract experienced industry professionals to work in FE
Q31. Influencing which T Levels are offered by providers, according to local and national skills needs Q32. How providers currently take account of local/national skills needs when planning their provision, and how they work with the existing structures that have responsibility for local skills planning Q33. Additional support providers need to make sure that T Levels meet local skills priorities	Undertake further work to ensure that T Levels meet skills needs. Take into account policies under development such as the role of Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) and Local Digital Skills Partnerships (LDSPs). Encourage FE providers to work in partnership with MCAs and LEPs to boost the local T Level offer.
Q34. Materials that could reasonably be included under the copyright of a Technical Qualification, and steps that we could take that would allow this to operate effectively and in everyone's interests	Full details will be included in the ITT when it is published in autumn 2018
Q35. How to help AOs recover their investment and maintain appropriate profit margins, but also keep the	Full details will be included in the ITT when it is published in autumn 2018

market competitive for future re-procurements	
Q36. What is needed above the licensed copyright to submit a competitive bid, and how AOs can keep their skills levels up to maintain their capability to bid in future re-procurements	Full details will be included in the ITT when it is published in autumn 2018
Q37. Variables that could influence the return on investment for AOs, and how these factors might influence the AO sector for initial and further competitions	Consider the payment of up front development costs by the Institute. Full details will be included in the ITT when it is published in autumn 2018
Q38. Performance and accountability measures for T Levels	Proceed with the performance and accountability measures proposed
Q39. The funding of T Levels Q40. Adapting funding flows to AOs to make sure that the full range of T Levels are available to students around the country	Work closely with sector representatives to build on the existing funding arrangements to distribute funding for T Levels. Consult further on funding arrangements this autumn. Full details on providing funding to contracted AOs to help cover their development costs will be included in the ITT when it is published in autumn 2018
Q41. Reducing the potential adverse impacts of T Levels, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations	As well as reducing impacts on those with protected characteristics, make sure that students with SEND have the necessary reasonable adjustments to undertake T Levels. Publish a full equalities impact assessment

Annex D: Glossary

Term	Definition
Accreditation (qualifications)	In relation to qualifications, accreditation is Ofqual's statutory approval process for individual qualifications of certain types (eg GCSEs an A levels) which Ofqual decides should be subject to accreditation. To be accredited a qualification must comply with criteria specified by Ofqual to ensure that it is fit for purpose.
Applied General Qualifications (AGQs)	These are level 3 qualifications for post-16 students who want to continue their education through applied learning. Applied general qualifications allow entry to a range of higher education courses, either by meeting the entry requirements in their own right or being accepted alongside and adding value to other level 3 qualifications such as A levels
Classroom-based provision	Provision delivered in a college or other training provider as part of a study programme. Training may be delivered through a mixture of classroom-based activity and simulated workplace environments e.g. workshops
Comparable standards of performance	Comparable standards of performance mean that a grade for a Technical Qualification component (e.g. a Pass) with the same title should be consistent with the grades awarded to other learners (by the same and different providers) in the year it was awarded and in subsequent years
Core	Part of the Technical Qualification made up of: • knowledge and understanding that any student on a particular route (e.g. anyone studying one of the three Construction T Levels) would need to know, which would be assessed through an exam • an employer-set project, in which a student would demonstrate some of the above knowledge as well as core workplace skills
Digital skills	Skills required to achieve defined outcomes which relate to the use of digital technology, including hardware and software applications
Employer-set project (Technical Qualification core)	Projects set by employers, in conjunction with providers and awarding organisations, which require students to apply a minimum range of core knowledge and skills, and selected maths, English and digital skills, to achieve defined, work-related goals
External assessment	External assessment is a form of assessment in which question papers, assignments and tasks are specified by the awarding organisation, then taken under specified conditions (including details of supervision and duration) and marking or assessment judgements are made by the awarding organisation. It does not include moderation or verification of centre-based assessment undertaken by an awarding organisation. External assessment need not be limited to paper or on-screen tests. It may include digital recordings of students, external examiners viewing and assessing artefacts made by students, assessed performance at an external assessment centre or other effective means made possible by developing technologies

Term	Definition
Full occupational competence	The level of competence expected to perform independently in a skilled occupation. This level of competence is expected of apprentices for successful completion of their apprenticeship and to be awarded an apprenticeship certificate
Grade	The product of an awarding organisation's processes to determine a leaner's point of attainment on a relative performance scale. The grading scale itself indicates relative performance e.g. A* - E or Distinction/Merit/Pass
Institute for Apprenticeships (the 'Institute')	A Crown non-departmental public body, established in April 2017 responsible for, among other things, ensuring the quality of and approving standards and apprenticeships assessment plans, and ensuring that apprenticeships quality assurance for assessments is carried out. When the relevant legislation is commenced, it will assume responsibility for technical education functions in England - at which point it will be called the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education
Invitation to Tender (ITT)	ITT is a tender document suite issued to prospective bidders outlining the specification, what offers must contain, how any offers will be evaluated, what contract terms are offered, and other related information that a bidder would reasonably be expected to understand before making an offer (their bid)
Internal assessment	Normally provider-based assessments where an initial assessment judgement is made by staff within the learning institution. Internal assessment must be subject to appropriate controls by the awarding organisation, for example external moderation
Occupation	A set of jobs whose main tasks and duties are characterised by a high degree of similarity. In the UK, 'job' is sometimes used interchangeably with 'occupation'. The term 'job' is much more limited, implying connection to an employment contract in a workplace. In contrast, an occupation is a more general and all-encompassing term for 'employment in which individuals are engaged' and is not restricted to a particular workplace
Occupational map	Produced for each route, the maps group occupations according to where there is a requirement for shared technical knowledge, skills, and behaviours, and identifies the occupations for which standards exist
Occupational specialism	The part of the Technical Qualification focussed on developing knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to an occupation. The content of each occupational specialism directly links to the corresponding apprenticeship standard(s). The time required to deliver and assess each occupational specialism varies depending on how long it will typically take learners to develop threshold competence. To ensure employers recognise which roles a learner is qualified to start work in, we propose that the title of an occupational specialism is linked to the title of the corresponding apprenticeship standard
Outline content	The knowledge, skills and behaviours identified by T Level panels, and based on the relevant standards, that each Technical Qualification should cover

Term	Definition
Pathway	A pathway is a sub-set of a route which groups common sets of occupations into a number of occupational clusters together
Planned hours (qualifications)	For Technical Qualifications, planned hours include taught contact time, time for informal and formal assessment, and time for planned learning activities delivered externally to the provider, for example, employer visits. The required planned hours for the T Level Technical Qualification will be within 900 and 1400 hours. These planned hours do not include time for the industry placement
Post-16 Skills Plan	The Government's vision for technical education, accepting the recommendations of the Independent Panel on Technical Education, chaired by Lord Sainsbury, available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-skills-plan-and-independent-report-on-technical-education
Prior attainment	Formally certified attainment e.g. a qualification or a series of qualifications, that has/have been attained prior to the start of the T Level programme or certification of the T Level or a part of it
Provider	An education or training organisation that is approved to deliver technical education to students
Recognition (qualifications)	In relation to qualifications, recognition is Ofqual's statutory process for approving awarding organisations before they can provide any of the qualifications regulated by Ofqual. Once recognised by Ofqual, an awarding organisation must comply with Ofqual's 'General Conditions of Recognition' to ensure that it is fit for purpose.
Route	The Sainsbury Report used labour market information to define 15 technical 'routes' to skilled employment. The routes reflect shared requirements for occupationally related knowledge, skills and behaviour. They form the structure through which all technical education will now be delivered
Sainsbury Report	The Independent Panel on Technical Education, chaired by Lord Sainsbury, reported its findings in April 2016. The recommendations were accepted in the Post-16 Skills Plan and form the basis for technical education reforms
Standards	The Institute approves standards for occupations and publishes them in a list. The standard describes the occupation and the outcomes which a person will be expected to attain to successfully achieve competence in that occupation. An apprentice must achieve those outcomes in order to be certified. The T Level qualifications will be based on these same standards
Study Programme	All 16 to 19 year-old students are funded for an individual study programme. Study programmes have a core aim. The study programme must be tailored to each student, have clear study and/or employment goals reflecting the student's prior attainment, and include: • substantial qualifications • maths and English for students who have not achieved grade A*-C/ 9-4 GCSE in these subjects • high quality work experience or work preparation

Term	Definition
	• added value non-qualification activity that supports the students' goals and is integrated into the study programme
T Level certificate	The formal certificate that shows the named learner has completed successfully all the requirements of a T Level programme.
T Level industry placements	Structured experiences of work for students on a T Level, to last a minimum of 45 working days (minimum 7 hour working day). They are intended to provide individuals with the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for skilled employment in their chosen occupation and which are less easily attainable by doing a qualification alone
T Level panels	Advisory groups of employers, professionals and practitioners that will create the outline content for new Technical Qualifications, drawing from standards and from their own experience of the common knowledge, skills and behaviours required for occupations within their industries. T Level panels will be convened for each pathway within a given route
T Level programme	A technical study programme including: • an approved Technical Qualification • an industry placement • maths, English and digital requirements • any other occupation-specific requirements/qualifications set out by the relevant T Level panel • any further employability, enrichment and pastoral (EEP) provision (as required in all study programmes)
T Level transcript	The formal document that shows which components of a T Level a learner has attained and which components they still have to attain in order to be awarded a T Level certificate. This is awarded to recognise partial attainment.
Technical Education	Technical Education encompasses any training, such as qualifications and apprenticeships, that focuses on progression into skilled employment and require the acquisition of both a substantial body of technical knowledge and a set of practical skills valued by industry. Technical education covers provision from level 2 (the equivalent of good GCSEs) to higher education (level 6) but it differs from A levels and other academic options in that it draws its purpose from the workplace rather than an academic discipline.
Technical Qualification	The technical education qualification forming part of the T Level programme, approved by the Institute under section A2DA of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009
Threshold competence	The level of competence deemed by employers as sufficient to secure employment in roles relevant to an occupational specialism. Achievement of threshold competence signals that a learner is well-placed to develop full occupational competence, with further support and development, once in work

Annex E: Example of a T Level certificate

INSTITUTE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

T Level certificate of achievement and recognition

This is to certify that

ANNE OTHER

has been awarded a **Pass**

SOFTWARE AND APPLICATION DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Achieving:

TECHNICAL QUALIFICATION	GRADE
Core: Software Application Design and Development	D
Web application Design	Merit

ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATION	
Software Certified Professional (Level 2)	Pass

MATHS AND ENGLISH	
OCR GCSE English	4
Pearson Functional Skills Mathematics (Level 2)	Pass

WORK PLACEMENT	
Trainee Software Designer	Completed

Awarded on

25ᵗʰ August 2022

Signed

xyz

Chair, The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

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