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## Guidance

# T Levels – how to express an interest to deliver in 2021 to 2022 academic year, including the transition offer

Information for post-16 institutions considering expressing an interest to deliver T Levels in 2021 to 2022 academic year including the transition offer.

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## Contents

- [Summary](#)
- [Purpose](#)
- [Introduction](#)
- [T Levels introduced for the 2021 to 2022 academic year](#)
- [Requirements for delivery of T Levels in the 2021 to 2022 academic year](#)
- [Conditions on providers for delivery in the 2021 to 2022 academic year](#)
- [Method of selecting providers for the 2021 to 2022 academic year](#)
- [Qualifying students](#)
- [Relevant qualification types used to identify qualifying students](#)
- [Selecting the relevant T Levels\(s\), route and sector subject area](#)
- [Capital funding for T Levels](#)
- [Funding for T Level delivery and local skills needs](#)
- [Support for professional development](#)
- [Course directory](#)

- [Successful 2020 providers](#)
- [How to express an interest to deliver T Levels in 2021 to 2022](#)
- [Rollout of T Levels and selection of providers from 2022 onwards](#)

## Summary

Providers meeting the criteria below are invited to express an interest to deliver T Levels in 2021 to 2022 academic year. The closing date for applications is midnight on 28 February 2019 and providers who express an interest will need to:

- have an Ofsted rating of Good or Outstanding, or be able to demonstrate that they have an equivalent standard of quality – for providers which do not yet have an Ofsted rating (providers with an Ofsted rating of Outstanding will not be given priority over those with a Good rating in this round)
- have at least satisfactory financial health, and
- for UTCs, National Colleges, and providers in opportunity areas only:
  - currently be delivering to a minimum of 10 qualifying students per T Level subject area they are applying to deliver; and
  - currently be delivering to a minimum of 50 qualifying students across all pathways they are applying to deliver, or
- for all other providers:
  - currently be delivering to a minimum of 10 qualifying students per T Level subject area level they are applying to deliver; and
  - currently be delivering to a minimum of 100 qualifying students across all pathways they are applying to deliver

## Purpose

The aim in selecting providers for 2020 T Level delivery was to identify a small number of high-performing providers across as many provider types as possible. This will help us to ensure high quality delivery in a controlled way in the first year of T Levels, as well as to help us understand how delivery will vary across the range of FE provider types.

The criteria to select providers for T Level delivery in 2021 has been developed to recognise providers delivering technical education to a large number of students. This is designed to increase the number of students taking T Levels in the second year of rollout. It also ensures that we are able to select a relatively small number of providers so we can continue providing the right level of support in the early stages of rollout.

The purpose of this guidance is to:

- detail what is required of providers wanting to deliver T Levels in 2021 to 2022
- specify the criteria providers must meet before expressing an interest in delivering T Levels in 2021 to 2022
- outline how we will make the final selection of providers
- refer providers to the T Level funding consultation
- communicate that to deliver the transition offer we expect that providers must have been successful in

becoming a T Level 2020 or 2021 provider

- detail how providers can express an interest and the deadline for doing so

## Introduction

The first [T Level Action Plan](#) published in October 2017, provided an update on our progress since the publication of the [Post-16 Skills Plan](#) in the development and implementation of T Levels. The Skills Plan committed to implementing all of the recommendations of the Independent Panel on Technical Education ([the Sainsbury Report](#)) to introduce a new system of technical education to provide a high quality technical option alongside an academic option for students aged 16 to 19. Parliament legislated to deliver these reforms through the Technical and Further Education Act 2017.

To ensure we can deliver the skills needed for Britain to continue to compete on a global platform, we need to develop our home-grown technical skills in the same way that we develop our academic skills.

T Levels are new courses coming in September 2020, which will follow GCSEs and will be equivalent to 3 A Levels. T Levels will combine classroom theory, practical learning and a 3-month industry placement to make sure students have real experience of the workplace. The 2-year T Level courses have been developed in collaboration with employers and businesses so that the content will meet the needs of industry and prepare students for work. They provide the knowledge and experience needed to open the door to highly skilled employment, an apprenticeship or higher level study.

Over the past year we have made huge progress, working with delivery partners to ensure that T Levels are implemented successfully from 2020 and that they deliver great outcomes for students and employers. We are hugely grateful for the energy, enthusiasm and creativity of our many partners and are clear that continuing to work with them over the next few years will remain a central characteristic of the programme.

The [T Level Action Plan 2018](#) sets out the details of that progress, provides an update on T Level design principles and gives information about what we expect our next steps will be over the coming months. It reflects our strategy for the next phase of roll out – developing the next set of Technical Qualifications (TQs) and identifying high-quality providers to deliver them in a way that grows coverage across the country in a managed way.

In May 2018, we [announced the providers](#) that will deliver the first 3 T Levels from the 2020 to 2021 academic year, from the Digital, Construction, and Education and Childcare routes.

## T Levels introduced for the 2021 to 2022 academic year

As set out in the [Action Plan](#), the second wave of T Levels will be delivered from the 2021 to 2022 academic year. A further 7 T Levels will complete the Digital and Construction routes, and will introduce the full Health and Science route. The 10 T Level pathways that will be available for delivery from 2021 are shown below in table 1, along with the Sector Subject Areas that we consider are most relevant to the route in which the T Level sits.

Introducing further T Level pathways in the 2021 to 2022 academic year gives us the opportunity to work with more post-16 institutions and employers to develop the capacity and capability they will need to deliver the requirements of T Levels.

T Levels will have credibility with employers and prepare young people for skilled jobs of the future,

supporting the aims of the [UK's Industrial Strategy](#) to boost productivity and earning power across the country.

**Table 1 – The 10 T Level pathways that will be available for delivery from 2021 and the relevant Sector Subject Areas**

T Level Route	Sector Subject Area (SSA) - for the purposes of identifying relevant current provision, SSAs are applied to the T Level route and are not used to distinguish between pathways	T Level Pathway and outline content. To view the outline content for each pathway, please click on the hyperlink(s). The outline content in relation to the 7 new T Levels due in September 2021 are still subject to change until the invitation to tender documentation is published
Digital	6.1 ICT practitioners, 9.3 Media and communication	<a href="#">Digital support and services</a> , <a href="#">Digital business services</a> , <a href="#">Digital production design and development</a>
Construction	5. 1 Architecture, 5. 2 Building and Construction, 5.3 Urban, Rural and Regional Planning	<a href="#">Onsite construction</a> , <a href="#">Building services engineering</a> , <a href="#">Design, surveying and planning</a>
Education and Childcare	1.5 Child development and well-being, 13.1 Teaching and lecturing, 13.2 Direct learning support	<a href="#">Education</a>
Health and Science	1.1 Medicine and Dentistry, 1.2 Nursing and subjects and vocations allied to medicine, 1.3 Health and Social Care, 2.1 Science	<a href="#">Health</a> , <a href="#">Healthcare science</a> , <a href="#">Science</a>

Providers are advised to refer to the T Level outline content and [occupational maps](#) to identify how closely any qualifications they currently deliver are related to the T Level(s) they are applying to delivery in 2021 to 2022 academic year.

## The T Level outline content

The outline content in relation to the 7 pathways which are due in September 2021 is still subject to change until the invitation to tender documentation is published, the versions shared for public consultation are as linked in table 1, column 3.

## Occupational maps

The concept of the occupational maps arose from the Sainsbury Report where the Independent Panel on Technical Education recommended the development of a framework of 15 routes to skilled employment. The occupational maps were developed to articulate this common framework across all technical education covering both employment based (apprenticeships) and college based (T Levels) learning. The maps document all of the skilled occupations that can be accessed through an apprenticeship or T Level. Occupations are grouped together to show linkages between them and possible routes for progression.

Route Panels reviewed the recommendations and approved changes to the maps as a result. The Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA) published [updated maps](#) in May 2018. The English economy is dynamic, so the occupational maps are intended to be live documents and will continue to be updated regularly as

occupations evolve and new ones emerge.

## Transition offer

As stated in the [T Level Action Plan](#) we are developing a transition offer which will be focused on providing effective preparation for students to complete a T Level. It will be targeted at young people who are not ready to start a T Level at age 16, but who can realistically be expected to complete a T Level by age 19. We are currently working with the sector to gather existing good practice on transition programmes and to develop principles and models of delivery. We are working with T Level 2020 providers on development of the transition offer and exploring with them how and when the transition offer might start to be delivered.

We are not currently planning a separate expression of interest process for providers to apply to deliver the transition offer. To be considered for initial delivery, providers will need to already be a 2020 provider, or they will need to have been selected through this expression of interest process, to deliver at least one T Level in the 2021 to 2022 academic year. Further information about the proposed transition offer and confirmation of the approach to selection of early providers will follow at a later date.

Please note: we will ask providers selected for T Level delivery in either 2020 or 2021 to opt in, so this expression of interest may be your only opportunity to be involved in early delivery of the transition offer.

## The T Level outline content

The outline content in relation to the 7 pathways which are due in September 2021 are still subject to change until the invitation to tender documentation is published, but the versions shared for public consultation are as linked in table 1, column 3.

## Requirements for delivery of T Levels in the 2021 to 2022 academic year

Providers expressing an interest to deliver T Levels in 2021 to 2022 are committing to:

- work with DfE and the IfA in advance of first delivery to be ready to deliver T Levels in 2021
- comment on the content developed for the T Level routes for delivery in 2021 to 2022
- identify and recruit a suitable cohort, with a minimum of 10 students aged 16 to 18 in each T Level cohort
- offer high quality T Levels that will support progression for students into skilled employment or higher levels of education or training
- ensure students taking a T Level will develop the numeracy, literacy, digital and wider transferable skills, attitudes and behaviours needed to succeed in occupations relevant to their chosen routes and the wider workplace of the future
- work collaboratively with employers to offer a substantial industry placement with an employer, away from the students' learning environment
- act as champions of T Levels by positively promoting them, to build momentum and maximise student take-up on roll out
- test our approach to delivery and the support available for providers
- help identify the issues that need to be addressed through the transition year if more young people are to progress to a T Level

- share learning to help develop the approach for providers who will deliver in future years
- ensure the inclusion of the T Levels they plan to deliver in the Further Education Course Directory

## **Conditions on providers for delivery in the 2021 to 2022 academic year**

Only providers funded by ESFA for 16 to 19 study programmes with qualifying students are eligible to express an interest. This includes all types of schools, academies, colleges and independent learning providers that are funded by the ESFA.

In addition, providers will need to meet all of the requirements of the criteria below to be eligible to express an interest to deliver T Levels in the 2021 to 2022 academic year. Providers who express an interest will need to:

- have an Ofsted rating of Good or Outstanding or be able to demonstrate that they have an equivalent standard of quality – for providers which do not yet have an Ofsted rating (an Outstanding rating will not be given priority over Good in this round)
- have at least satisfactory financial health; and
- for UTCs, National Colleges, and providers in opportunity areas only:
  - currently be delivering to a minimum of 10 qualifying students per T Level subject area they are applying to deliver; and
  - currently be delivering to a minimum of 50 qualifying students across all pathways they are applying to deliver, or
- for all other providers:
  - currently be delivering to a minimum of 10 qualifying students per T Level subject area they are applying to deliver; and
  - currently be delivering to a minimum of 100 qualifying students across all pathways they are applying to deliver

Successful providers will be required to complete an implementation plan detailing the actions they will take to be ready for T Level implementation. It has been designed with provider input as a supportive planning tool. You can find an overview of the T Level implementation plan process, guidance on how to complete an implementation plan template, and the template on the [T Level – implementation plan page] (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/t-levels-implementation-plan-guidance-and-template>)

We reserve the right to exclude any provider where a Financial Notice to Improve (FNTI) is in place, where a provider is at risk of financial difficulty or where there are any other known issues that could prevent or affect quality delivery.

If a providers status changes against any of the published criteria between when we consider your expression of interest and delivery, we reserved the right to review your continued participation in the group of 2021 providers.

## **Method of selecting providers for the 2021 to 2022 academic year**

### **Managing provider numbers**

In the event that there is significant interest from providers, we will increase the minimum student number set out in the criteria to help us establish a manageable number of selected providers. We will do this by giving priority to providers with the largest qualifying student population in 2017 to 2018 academic year across all of the T Level pathways they are applying to deliver. Providers selected through this process will be invited to deliver T Levels in the 2021 to 2022 academic year and will be given 2 weeks to confirm that they wish to deliver T Levels from September 2021.

## Opportunity areas

In line with [DfE's Social Mobility Action Plan](#) we want to ensure that there are more providers in opportunity areas that will deliver T Levels in 2021 to 2022. If the overall minimum number of students requirement would not result in good coverage of these areas, we may use a lower minimum student number threshold than the 50 stated in this document, specifically for providers in opportunity areas.

This will allow students in opportunity areas the chance to access the new T Levels as early as possible. Creating opportunities for students in these areas is a key priority for the DfE. [Further information on opportunity areas](#) is available on GOV.UK.

## Delivering across the sector

The 2020 expression of interest process resulted in some provider types, including National Colleges and University Technical Colleges, not yet being sufficiently represented in the delivery of T Levels. We have therefore set a lower minimum student number threshold of 50 specifically for these provider types. Should there still not be adequate representation of these providers we may use a lower student number threshold than the 50 published in this document.

## Qualifying students

To identify a proxy for students that might be in scope for a T Level we will use 2017 to 2018 end-year data from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and the school census. Prospective providers should use these data sets to identify their qualifying students. Students that meet all of the following criteria are treated as qualifying students:

- full-time, that is those with total planned hours recorded as above 540 if aged 16 or 17 and 450 hours for an 18 year old
- students that have met the qualifying start period for their study programme
- students aged 16, 17 and 18
- students aged 19 to 24 with an education, health and care plan
- students who are enrolled on a level 3 programme, with a vocational core aim, which is within the SSA(s) relevant to the T Levels (see table 1) that will be available for delivery in the 2021 to 2022 academic year (and is of a relevant qualification type)

Students who are 19 years old at the beginning of their 2 year programme (and who do not have an education, health and care plan) are not included.

## Relevant qualification types used to identify qualifying students

Relevant qualifications used are those that are:

- level 3 technical or vocational qualifications
- at least 360 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) (the size of an A level)
- within the sector subject areas (SSAs) for the route in which the T Levels sit as illustrated in [table 1](#)
- categorised as an Occupational Qualification, Other General Qualification, QCF Qualification or a Vocationally- Related Qualification

## Selecting the relevant T Levels(s), route and sector subject area

Providers are advised to follow the following 5 steps to establish their eligibility and when selecting the T Level pathway(s), they intend to deliver in September 2021:

### Step 1

Establish the T Level pathway(s) (for example, on site construction) they are best placed to deliver by referring to the core content ([table 1, column 3](#)) and occupational maps and then select the route within which that T Level pathway sits (for example construction).

### Step 2

Establish the qualifications that they currently deliver (2017 to 2018 academic year) in the relevant SSA for example for the construction route that would be 5.1 Architecture, 5.2 Building and Construction & 5.3 Urban, Rural and Regional Planning.

### Step 3

Check that the qualifications they are delivering is one of the qualifying Ofqual categories.

### Step 4

[Establish the number of students taking these qualifications in 2017 to 2018 academic year and check that they meet the student number thresholds for the route and overall.](#)

These figures will determine your eligibility to express an interest.

### Step 5

Estimate the number of students expected to be enrolled on each T Level pathway for the 3 academic years 2021 to 2022, 2022 to 2023 and 2023 to 2024. Providers can do this by identifying the number of students taking the qualifications which are most similar to the T Levels they intend to deliver. They can do this by referring to the T Level core content (table 1, column 3) and occupational maps. These numbers will form our initial planning assumptions and will not form part of the section process.

Providers are advised that having at least 10 qualifying students studying qualifications within the relevant SSAs will qualify them to submit an interest to deliver any or all of the T Level pathways within that route.

Once the provider has selected the T Level that they wish to deliver and identified the route (step 1); they



will need to establish the qualifications that they deliver in the relevant sector subject areas (SSAs) to that route (step 2), the expression of interest will then ask for the qualifications that the provider currently delivers, and the number of students studying those qualifications in 2017 to 2018. It is these numbers which will determine eligibility to express an interest.

To be eligible to express an interest providers must have a minimum of 50/100 qualifying students (depending on provider type and location) in total across all the routes they wish to deliver and in each route they are applying to deliver there must be a minimum of 10 students studying qualifications in the relevant SSAs for that route.

Providers may find it useful to view these guided examples of how to assess eligibility.

## [T Levels - Illustrative examples](#)

PDF, 536KB, 7 pages

## Capital funding for T Levels

Delivery of high-quality technical education requires cutting-edge, industry-standard facilities and equipment. From January/February 2019 a capital fund of £38 million will open to bids from eligible providers delivering the first 3 T levels pathways in 2020. This will support them to make the investments needed in facilities and equipment, ready to deliver high quality, industry relevant programmes from September 2020. We are considering the most appropriate method of allocating this funding and will publish details when the bidding round opens.

We are currently considering the capital requirements for 2021 onwards in the context of the spending review 2019 and will use the information from providers who completed the T Level data collection exercise held in summer 2018 to inform this. However, we cannot confirm whether there will be a capital allocation for providers selected to deliver T Levels from 2021. Expressing an interest through this process could (if further funding is available) qualify successful 2021 providers to bid for capital funding. Expressing an interest does not guarantee any additional funding or agreement from DfE to deliver T Levels in 2021.

## Funding for T Level delivery and local skills needs

The [T Level funding consultation](#) was launched on 27 November 2018, and covers the per-student revenue funding for providers to deliver T Levels. It runs until 19 February 2019, and we would recommend that all providers considering expressing an interest to deliver T Levels read and respond to this consultation.

The T Level Action plan and the funding consultation outline the department's plans to strengthen the relationship between local employers and skills providers. Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) are being introduced to support this aim. It is likely that we will expect providers to have due regard to the local skills analysis, priorities or strategies published by Local Employment Partnerships (LEPs), Local Authorities (LAs), Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) or the Greater London Authority (GLA) when planning their learning offer. You may wish to strengthen existing, or develop new, relationships with those bodies as you plan your T Level offer.

## Support for professional development

Our ambition for a world-leading standard of technical education in England relies on excellent teachers. We have every confidence that teachers and leaders will be able to deliver T Levels effectively, but we are also aware that - as T Levels are a new, higher quality programme, involving substantially more teaching hours – they could benefit from additional support to prepare for this change.

To ensure that T Levels deliver great outcomes for learners, we are committed to ensuring that teachers and leaders have the support they need to deliver them well. We are investing up to £20 million over the 2 years to March 2020 to support providers as they prepare for the introduction of T Levels. As part of this £20 million, we have announced the investment of £8 million in a new bespoke [T Level Professional Development \(TLPD\) offer, led by the Education and Training Foundation \(ETF\)](#). This will be vital training to build on the expertise we currently have and help staff prepare for the change and successfully deliver the first T Levels.

Working with key partners and providers to understand the challenges that staff will face in delivering T Levels will help the ETF to co-design with the sector, bespoke training to help improve the knowledge and skills of those staff. An ongoing professional development needs analysis will ensure we really understand the needs of individual providers and members of staff, and that TLPD is tailored to meet those needs.

We have already engaged extensively with providers and other partners and this feedback has informed the high-level design of TLPD which includes the following 5 strands:

- ongoing professional development needs analysis: building a clear understanding of professional development needs. An ongoing process that will inform the development of TLPD and learn from the excellent practice that already exists
- understanding T Levels: ensuring that all staff understand T Levels and what the introduction of T Levels means for their job
- teacher development: focusing on pedagogy (core teaching skills and methods); practice (subject knowledge and subject specific teaching); professional knowledge (industrial and employability understanding for teachers); and developing teachers' capacity to embed English, maths and digital skills in technical teaching environments
- knowledge hubs: embedding learning from TLPD through teacher development networks, focused on T Level pathways and regions, and with input from industry and professional bodies, in order to adapt teaching practice
- organisational readiness: focusing on professional development around leading and managing educational change, targeted at middle managers, with a particular focus on teaching leadership and curriculum planning/ timetabling

[Training](#) will be available from spring 2019, details will be available on the ETF website.

## Course directory

The [16 to 19 course directory](#) will in time be updated to include T Levels. All T Level providers will be required to upload T Level course details to the course directory.

## Successful 2020 providers

The list of the [successful 2020 providers](#) can be found on GOV.UK. Please note, successful 2020 providers do not need to submit a further expression of interest in order to deliver additional T Levels in the 2021 to 2022 academic year. The 2020 providers will need to meet the minimum criteria of 10 qualifying students per T Level subject area. We will contact 2020 providers to determine if they wish to deliver any additional T Levels in 2021, in February 2019.

## How to express an interest to deliver T Levels in 2021 to 2022

Providers that meet the criteria are invited to express an interest to deliver any of the T Level pathways available from September 2021 – this includes the 3 T Level pathways which will be introduced from September 2020. To do this, all providers will be required to complete and submit an expression of interest to the ESFA. The questions in the expression of interest are to assess whether providers meet the criteria requirements. Some questions will ask providers to demonstrate how they meet the criteria so that we are able to understand whether they meet the benchmarks overall. Separate guidance is available on how to complete the expression of interest.

The expression of interest will also ask providers to supply detailed information specifically on (this information will not determine selection):

- their current engagement and partnerships with local employers so that we can understand the existing employer networks they have across different occupations to deliver the T Levels; and
- their strategy for maximising take-up of T Levels and the effects on other qualifications they offer

Providers should note that without a completed expression of interest, their expression of interest to deliver T Levels from 2021 will not be considered by the ESFA.

The final page of the expression of interest requires you to click on the finish survey button, failure to do so means that the ESFA will not receive your expression of interest. Therefore, your application will not be considered. Once you have submitted your expression of interest you will see a confirmation message. If this message is not received please contact us by completing an [enquiry form](#).

The deadline for submission is midnight on 28 February 2019 and late submissions will not be considered.

We have published a guide to completing your expression of interest.

[T Levels – how to complete your expression of interest to deliver in academic year 2021 to 2022.](#)

PDF, 471KB, 6 pages

Please [complete your expression of interest online](#).

## Rollout of T Levels and selection of providers from 2022 onwards

We expect to announce which T Levels will be available from September 2022 in autumn 2019, and will continue to work closely with the Institute for Apprenticeships to agree which T Levels will be ready for delivery. We will also confirm at that time which providers will be able to deliver from 2022. We currently expect roll out to be significantly increased at this stage as T Levels become a more ‘main stream’ part of the 16 to 19 qualifications offer.

We understand that the reforms to the wider technical education system, including the qualifications review, will have an impact on when providers decide to begin delivering T Levels.

### ESFA enquiries

For all enquiries please submit a [contact form](#).

### Timescales for applications to deliver T Levels in the 2021 to 2022 academic year

Date	Action
16 January 2019	Guidance and link published for providers to express an interest
28 February 2019 (midnight)	Deadline for expression of interests to be submitted by providers
30 June 2019	All providers to receive notification of the outcome of their expression of interest
Late June/early July 2019	Induction event for successful providers
31 January 2020	First draft of provider implementation plans due to be submitted by selected providers

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