



Department
for Education

Review of post-16 qualifications at level 2 and below in England

Glossary of terms

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Summary

This document is issued alongside the government consultation on the review of post-16 qualifications at level 2 and below in England.

Who is this publication for?

The consultation is for anyone with an interest in post-16 education and training for young people and adults in England. Some of the content of the consultation is technical detail aimed at professionals working in the post-16 education sector. It is important that we consult on this technical detail, but it is also important to gather the views of others – including potential students and parents or carers. This glossary explains some of the terms used in the consultation.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Adult Education Budget (AEB)	<p>The AEB aims to engage adults and provide the skills and learning they need to equip them for work, an apprenticeship or other learning.</p> <p>The national AEB supports three statutory entitlements to full funding for eligible adults (aged 19 and above). These are set out in the Apprenticeships, Skills and Children’s Learning Act 2009, and enable eligible adults to be fully funded for the following qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English and mathematics, up to and including level 2, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade A* to C or grade 9 to 4, and/or • first full qualification at level 2 for individuals aged 19 to 23, and/or • first full qualification at level 3 for individuals aged 19 to 23 <p>Further information on AEB funding and performance can be found on GOV.UK</p> <p>From August 2019, AEB is devolved. Further information can be found on GOV.UK.</p>
Advanced Learner Loan	<p>An Advanced Learner Loan helps eligible adults (aged 19 and above) with the costs of a course at a college or training provider in England. Further information can be found on GOV.UK.</p> <p>Qualifications for which an individual can take a loan out are known as qualifications that are designated for loans. These can be found in the Advanced Learner Loans qualifications catalogue.</p>
Applied General qualifications (AGQs)	<p>Applied General qualifications are level 3 qualifications for post-16 students. They allow entry to a range of higher education courses, either by meeting the entry requirements in their own right or being accepted alongside other level 3 qualifications such as A Levels. Applied General qualifications are included in DfE’s 16 to 18 school and college performance tables.</p>
Apprenticeship	<p>An apprenticeship is a job that combines practical training with study.</p> <p>See “A guide to apprenticeships” for further information.</p>
Apprenticeship standards	<p>Contains a list of the skills, knowledge and behaviours an apprentice will need to have learned by the end of their apprenticeship. Apprenticeship standards are based on occupational standards, with the addition of an End Point</p>

Term	Definition
	Assessment plan detailing the independent assessment that apprentices must take after their training. Apprenticeship standards have replaced apprenticeship frameworks as part of reforms to raise the quality of apprenticeships. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education is responsible for approving apprenticeship standards. (See also occupational standards)
Awarding Organisations (AOs)	Refers to individual organisations that design, develop and assess qualifications but are not themselves education providers.
Classroom-based provision / study	Provision delivered in a school, college or other training provider as part of a study programme or T Level (for students aged 16 to 19) or as a standalone qualification or non-regulated learning (for adults aged 19 and above). Training will be delivered in a classroom-based setting through a mixture of activities, e.g. in the classroom, online, workshops, simulated working environments and if appropriate supervised working environments.
Core component	The part of the qualification which details and assesses underpinning knowledge and general employability skills and behaviours, relevant to the standard to which it relates.
Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)	The ESFA is an executive agency sponsored by the Department for Education. It is accountable for funding education and skills for children, young people and adults. See the ESFA website for more information. In the consultation document, references to the Department for Education should be taken to include the ESFA.
Employer-led standards	See occupational standards
Entry-level competence	See occupational entry level competence
ESFA list of qualifications approved for funding 14 to 19	<p>The ESFA list gives information about which qualifications are approved for funding for students. Qualifications are approved in accordance with their suitability for students in the following age categories: pre-16, 16 to 18, and 18+.</p> <p>For some DfE-funded institutions, such as maintained schools and academies, qualifications have to be approved for funding for ages 14 to 19 for them to be delivered to young people. Further information can be found on the ESFA list of qualifications approved for funding webpages.</p>
Full level 3	A study programme consisting of two A Levels, or other equivalent regulated level 3 qualifications, including Tech Levels

Term	Definition
	and Applied General qualifications. Further information regarding what contributes towards a full level 3 can be found here .
Full level 2	Attainment of a full level 2 equates to achievement of 5 or more GCSEs at grades 4 and above, or a Level 2 vocational qualification of equivalent size.
Full occupational competence	The level of competence expected to perform independently to a level needed to successfully undertake a skilled occupation without further training. Apprenticeships and some T Level technical qualifications will lead to this level.
Further Education (FE)	Further education (FE) includes any study after secondary education that's not part of higher education (that is, not taken as part of an undergraduate or graduate degree). Courses range from basic English and maths to Higher National Diplomas (HNDs).
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	The activity of a student being taught or instructed by, or otherwise participating in education or training under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.
Higher Education (HE) provider	An institution or training provider that provides HE courses. Note, some HE providers also deliver apprenticeships.
Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)	Impartial, practical support provided to students enabling them to make suitable educational and employment decisions.
Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE)	A Crown non-departmental public body, established in April 2017 as the Institute for Apprenticeships, responsible for, amongst other things, ensuring the quality of and approving standards and apprenticeships assessment plans, and ensuring that apprenticeships quality assurance for assessments is carried out. On 31 January 2019 it assumed responsibility for delivery of technical education functions in England – at which point it became the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.
Key stage 4	The national curriculum is organised into blocks of years called 'key stages'. At the end of each key stage, a pupil's performance is assessed. Key stage 4 refers to education in years 10 and 11 of schools in England (ages 14 to 16), at the end of which most pupils sit GCSEs or equivalent level 1/2 qualifications. See the guidance on the national curriculum for further information.

Term	Definition
Level 2 and below	<p>In the context of the Qualifications Review this phrase refers to post-16 qualifications at level 2, level 1 and entry level (which includes the sub-levels: entry level 1, entry level 2 and entry level 3).</p> <p>Most qualifications have a difficulty level. The higher the level, the more difficult the qualification is. You can find out what qualification levels mean on GOV.UK.</p>
Level 3 and below	<p>In the context of the Qualifications Review this phrase refers to post-16 qualifications at levels 3, 2, 1 and entry level (including sub-levels 1, 2 and 3).</p>
National Skills Fund (NSF)	<p>A £2.5 billion fund, part of the Plan for Jobs, which will help adults to train and gain the valuable skills they need to improve their job prospects. NSF covers both the investment in skills bootcamps and the Free courses for Jobs offers.</p>
Non-qualification activity	<p>Activity of value that does not necessarily lead to qualifications but enables students to progress. Examples include tutorials; work to develop study, leadership, team-work or self-management skills; activities such as volunteering or participation in the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Scheme.</p>
Non-regulated learning	<p>Learning which is not subject to awarding organisation external accreditation in the form of a regulated qualification.</p>
Occupation	<p>A set of jobs whose main tasks and duties are characterised by a high degree of similarity. It is also an all-encompassing term for individuals’ employment and is not restricted to a particular workplace.</p> <p>In the UK, ‘job’ or ‘role’ is sometimes used interchangeably with ‘occupation’. However, the term ‘job’ or ‘role’ is much more limited, implying connection to an employment contract in a workplace.</p> <p>The term ‘occupation’ (for example in ‘occupational standards’) is a more general and all-encompassing term for ‘employment in which individuals are engaged’ and is not restricted to a particular workplace. It also points towards opportunities for progression, both within an occupation but, importantly, also to related occupations with a similar skill requirements.</p>
Occupational entry-level competence	<p>The learner has achieved as many outcomes of an occupational standard as can reasonably be expected through a predominantly classroom-based course and can perform to a level needed to successfully start an entry-level role relevant to the occupation.</p>

Term	Definition
	The learner is well placed to reach full competence after a period of on-the-job experience.
Occupational Maps	<p>Occupational Maps group occupations with related knowledge, skills and behaviours into 15 technical routes, making it easier to see the opportunities for career progression within that particular route. Our technical education reforms would mean that competence in an occupation on the maps could be achieved through an apprenticeship, a T Level, a higher technical qualification or a reformed level 3 qualification. Entry-level competence could be achieved through a reformed level 2 qualification.</p> <p>Most routes have been split into a number of pathways. The maps provide a useful guide to show the technical education options available for employers as well as individuals and training providers.</p>
Occupational standards	The occupational standards (also referred to as employer-led standards) set out the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) required for an occupation. Occupational standards make it possible to assess whether an individual has achieved the KSBs needed to be competent in an occupation. They are developed by groups of employers and approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. Occupational standards currently form the basis of T Levels and apprenticeships (see also apprenticeship standards).
Ofqual	<p>The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England. It was set up in April 2010 under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and is also covered by the Education Act 2011.</p> <p>Ofqual is a non-ministerial government department with jurisdiction in England. See the Ofqual website for further information.</p>
Performance Tables	DfE's school and college performance tables are published annually, reporting key stage 2 results for primary schools in December; GCSE and equivalent results for secondary schools (provisional results in October and revised results in late January); and A Levels and other 16 to 18 results for schools and colleges in late January and March. School and college performance tables provide a reliable, accessible source of comparative information on pupil attainment and progress.

Term	Definition
Pre-vocational qualifications	Skills-based qualifications at entry level 1 and entry level 2 that allow students to explore a range of industries and occupations, supporting their decision-making and eventual progression to a "pre-technical" qualification at entry level 3.
Provider	An education or training organisation that is approved to deliver education to students.
Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF)	The RQF provides a single, simple system for cataloguing all qualifications regulated by Ofqual. Qualifications are indexed by their level and size. Ofqual maintains a register that provides more detail on each qualification. See the Register of Regulated Qualifications for further information.
Sainsbury Review	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. See the Report of the Independent Panel on Technical Education for more information.
Study Programme	All students funded through the 16 to 19 funding methodology must be enrolled on a study programme, or T Level programme, which typically combines qualifications and other activities, and is tailored to each student's prior attainment and career goals. All study programmes must have a core aim. This will be tailored to the needs of the individual and typically include a substantial qualification (academic or technical) or preparation for employment. For further information see the study programmes guide for providers .
Supported Internship	A supported internship is a type of study programme specifically aimed at young people aged 16 to 24 who have a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care (EHC) plan, who want to move into employment and need extra support to do so.
T Level	A T Level is a rigorous, stretching programme of study at level 3 based on recognised, employer-led standards. T Levels offer a high quality, prestigious technical alternative to A levels and are aligned with work-based technical education also delivered at level 3 through apprenticeships. T Levels are being introduced in phases from September 2020.
T Level Transition Programme	The T Level Transition Programme is a specific 16-19 study programme for level 2 students. Its purpose is to help students

Term	Definition
	<p>develop core knowledge, skills and behaviours in five areas which will help them to progress onto, and succeed on, their chosen T Level route. The five areas are: industry-relevant technical knowledge and skills; knowledge and skills for the workplace; skills for successful study; English, maths and digital skills; and positive attitude and behaviours. The core target group are students who have the potential to progress onto a T Level with the extra support and preparation that the programme can provide</p>
Technical Education	<p>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 GCSEs at A* to C or 9 to 4) 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.</p> <p>References to technical education also include qualifications that many would call “vocational”, especially qualifications at the lower levels of difficulty.</p>
Traineeship	<p>A traineeship is a skills development programme that includes a work placement. Traineeships help 16 to 24 year olds - or 25 year olds with an education, health and care (EHC) plan - get ready for an apprenticeship or job if they don't have the appropriate skills or experience. It can last from 6 weeks up to 1 year.</p>
Wolf Review	<p>The Secretary of State for Education commissioned Professor Alison Wolf of King's College London to carry out an independent review of vocational education. Professor Wolf's Review of Vocational Education (2011) is available on GOV.UK.</p> <p>The government's response to the Wolf Review can be found on GOV.UK.</p>



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