



Department
for Education

Review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 in England

**Guidance for awarding organisations and
providers**

May 2022

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Overview

What is in this document

This document is an update of guidance originally provided in July 2021 and last updated in February 2022. This document combines guidance originally published in separate documents for awarding organisations and providers. It supports the policy statement¹ on the future of level 3 qualifications and consultation response published in July 2021.

The main updates since the July 2021 guidance are:

- the agreement to push the timeline back a year in light of the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, to allow awarding organisations and providers as much time as possible to prepare for the reforms;
- bringing the digital pathfinder for post-16 level 3 occupational qualifications in the digital route into the first full cycle of approvals of qualifications commencing delivery from 1 August 2025; and
- the removal of the English and maths exit requirement for T Levels.

This document is intended to be used by awarding organisations and by colleges, schools and other education and training providers, including those offering post-16 performance table qualifications. It outlines, at a high level, the principles of the approvals process for academic and technical qualifications, including when the newly-approved qualifications will commence delivery. Further guidance for qualifications to be delivered from 2025, including detailed operational funding approval guidance and criteria will be published in autumn 2022. This document is divided into five sections:

- This **overview**, which explains the scope of the review, a high-level outline of the reforms.
- **The changes to the level 3 academic and technical qualifications landscape**, which describes the types of qualifications that we will fund once the reforms are completed. There is further detail on the qualifications landscape in Appendices B-D.
- **Qualifications that overlap with T Levels**, which explains the process and criteria for the withdrawal of funding from technical qualifications that overlap with T Levels.
- **Changes to the timeline for reform of level 3 qualifications**, which provides key dates – more detail is in Appendix A.

¹ DfE (2021). [Review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 in England: policy statement](#)

- **Approval process for academic and technical qualifications**, which provides more detail on the approval process and criteria that will be applied to each type of qualification – an overview of the process is in Appendix E.

In addition there are some valuable resources in the appendices to this document:

- Appendix A provides a timeline showing when key changes will take place.
- Appendices B-D show the categories of academic and technical qualifications that we will fund for young people and adults.
- Appendix E provides a high level overview of the approval process for academic and technical qualifications at level 3.

Introduction

We are reforming the post-16 system, which at level 3 means improving the quality of both technical and academic qualifications on offer. We want A levels and T Levels to become the qualifications of choice for 16 to 19 year olds studying at level 3 in an education setting. A levels are world renowned, and will be central to the study programmes of most students taking the academic pathway to progress to university. T Levels are co-designed by employers to ensure students develop the skills required by business and industry. They focus on occupational skills and can help students into skilled employment, higher study or apprenticeships. T Levels are intended to provide new, world class technical education, and we want as many people as possible to benefit from them, just as many thousands of young people on the academic route already benefit from rigorous and well-respected A levels.

We recognise, however, that there will be a need for other qualifications to support the core A level and T Level offer. These will only be funded where they are high quality and have a clear purpose that adds value to that core offer. [The government response to the second consultation on post-16 qualifications reform](#) sets out the types of academic and technical qualifications that will be considered for funding alongside A levels and T Levels. The Secretary of State for Education will determine which qualifications at level 3 should be approved for funding. This will follow approval by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) for technical qualifications.

We recognise the significant programme of change that is required to make sure the qualification system is set up to deliver for decades to come, and we value the critical role and expertise of awarding organisations and providers in helping us to achieve this. We will continue to work closely with the education sector throughout implementation of these changes, including the new powers provided by the [Skills and Post-16 Education Act](#).

Scope of the review

All level 3 qualifications which DfE approves for post 16 funding offers (including Advanced Learner Loans) are subject to review, with the exception of A levels, AS levels and T Levels, as well as the following qualifications that we have already confirmed will continue to be funded:

- Extended Project qualifications
- Advanced Extension Awards
- Performing Arts Graded Examinations
- Core Maths qualifications
- The International Baccalaureate Diploma
- Access to Higher Education (HE) Diplomas

Apprenticeships, traineeships, and the 14 to 16 offer (Key Stage 4) are also not in scope of the review.

The Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and the Greater London Authority (GLA) have responsibility for adult education for their residents, including determining which qualifications should be funded for adult residents. They must also fund the statutory entitlement².

Post-16 qualifications at level 3 – overview of changes

The changes to level 3 qualifications involve three main stages:

- Withdrawal of funding from qualifications that have low or no enrolments, which has already been announced. Qualifications with no enrolments have already had funding approval withdrawn; those with low and no enrolments will do so on 1 August 2022.
- Technical qualifications that overlap with T Levels will have funding approval withdrawn for 16 to 19 year olds (as explained in the section about overlap with T Levels from page 10);
- New criteria for academic and technical qualifications will be introduced that will need to be met in order for qualifications to be approved for funding in future:
 - Academic qualifications will need to meet new criteria set by DfE.
 - Technical qualifications will need to be approved against new criteria set by IfATE.

² Statutory entitlements include a first level 2 and/or 3 qualification for adults aged 19 to 23, to English and maths up to level 2, and essential digital skills for adults up to level 1.

Qualifications which are in scope for the review and which have not met either the new academic or technical criteria referenced above will not be approved by DfE for funding in future.

All qualifications will need to comply with regulations set by Ofqual in order to be eligible for funding approval, and Ofqual will provide feedback into the approval process.

Ofqual has recently consulted on its proposed regulatory approach to academic and technical qualifications and will confirm this in summer 2022. This will be followed by a second consultation on the detail of any conditions, requirements or guidance against which it will regulate approved level 3 qualifications in the future landscape. You can read about its proposals in [the Ofqual consultation “Regulating academic and technical qualifications at level 3”](#) (now closed).

IfATE will consult in summer 2022 on their approach to approving technical qualifications. The details of the process for approving academic and technical qualifications will be published in autumn 2022. This will include DfE’s requirements for funding approval; IfATE’s criteria for its approval of technical qualifications (subject to consultation); and Ofqual’s conditions and guidance for academic and technical qualifications (again, subject to consultation). This is discussed further in the section about the approval process from page 13, and a high-level representation of the process is provided at Appendix E.

Post-16 qualifications at level 2 and below

Alongside our reforms to level 3 qualifications, we want to improve post-16 study at level 2 and below. Getting level 2 and below right is key to making sure that students have clear lines of sight to level 3 qualifications, apprenticeships, traineeships, and for some, directly into employment. The review is considering all funded qualifications with the exception of GCSEs, Essential Digital Skills qualifications and all three subject areas of Functional Skills (English, maths and digital). Our consultation on our level 2 and below proposals closed on 27 April and we will publish our response later this year.

Changes to the level 3 academic and technical qualifications landscape

The government's vision is to transform the academic and technical qualifications landscape and expand opportunity right across the country, so that more people can get the skills they need to get good jobs. This means improving the overall offer so that all qualifications that are available alongside A levels and T Levels are high quality.

We need to ensure that approved qualifications are relevant, necessary and will lead to positive outcomes for all types of students.

Through the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, the government has legislated to extend and refine the existing statutory framework for the approval and regulation of technical education qualifications. The legislation allows IfATE to approve a broader range of technical education qualifications than it could previously. This supports reforms set out in the post-16 qualifications review and in the Skills for Jobs white paper, ensuring that the majority of technical education is linked to employer-led standards by 2030. The legislation also embeds the collaborative relationship between IfATE and Ofqual for the approval and regulation of technical education qualifications. This will reinforce the long-term stability of the technical education qualification regulatory framework.

Future funding of academic qualifications

In the future, A levels will form the core of level 3 academic study programmes for most students. This is because we believe A levels provide the best preparation for HE in most academic subject areas, and provide access to the best opportunities at the broadest range of HE providers. Too many current qualifications lead to students' options for HE progression being narrowed, both in terms of the choice of subjects available to them and the type of provider. However, we will also fund two main types of academic qualification in addition to A levels, playing a similar role to current Applied General qualifications provided they meet new quality criteria. These will complement the A level offer, supporting students to progress to HE in government priority subjects and in areas less well-served by A levels and T Levels.

The first type of qualification will be **small academic qualifications** (typically no larger than one A level) that should typically be taken alongside A levels. These qualifications will be funded in government priority subjects (such as STEM subjects) and in areas where an A level is not available (such as health and social care).

The second type of qualification will be **large academic qualifications** (equivalent in size to three A levels) that should typically be taken as an alternative programme to A levels. These qualifications will be funded in subject areas that are less well-served by A

levels and where there is no T Level³, such as creative and performing arts. We expect these qualifications will have a strong practical focus, offering breadth and depth that is valued at HE.

To be approved for funding these academic qualifications will need to meet new criteria, ensuring they are necessary alongside A levels and will support progression to HE. We will set out further detail about the tests to be applied for academic qualifications when we publish the approval criteria.

We have not pre-judged which **academic subject areas** will be funded in future, but there are a number of areas where we see a clear role for qualifications alongside A levels and T Levels. As highlighted above, these include STEM, health and social care, and performing and creative arts subjects. It is important to note that large academic qualifications will not be funded in subject areas where there is a T Level. The final range of subject areas funded in future will depend on the outcome of the new approvals process, including an assessment of the need for a particular qualification and its quality against the new approval criteria. We intend to publish further detail about the approval criteria for academic qualifications in the autumn.

Future funding of academic qualifications for adults

Adults who want to progress into further study will have access to the same range of level 3 academic qualifications as 16 to 19 year olds. This is because these qualifications offer the best preparation to progress onto and successfully complete high quality HE courses.

This includes Access to HE Diplomas to support adults who do not have traditional qualifications to progress into HE.

Future funding of technical qualifications

The government's objective is to deliver a high quality and stable technical education system, based on occupational standards that are developed by employers. This will ensure that the skills needs of business and industry are met, provide clear progression pathways and deliver the outcomes learners need to move in to skilled jobs or further technical training. This will be delivered through technical qualifications approved by IfATE, with extensive employer involvement in the process. T Levels will form the core of

³ We are keeping T Levels under review. Where new T Levels are announced we will no longer fund large academic qualifications in that subject area.

the technical offer at level 3, and will cover most occupations that a 16 to 19 year old might train for at level 3, but they won't cover everything.

We will fund a range of other level 3 technical qualifications alongside T Levels at 16-19. These include:

- Qualifications that support entry into technical occupations not covered by a T Level. These will be designed around the knowledge, skills and behaviours statements that are set out in one of IfATE's employer-led occupational standards, and will focus on building occupational competence in a particular occupation.
- Specialist qualifications that build on and go beyond an occupational standard, enabling students to develop more specialist skills and knowledge than could be acquired through a T Level or occupational entry qualification alone.

Future funding of technical qualifications for adults

The technical qualifications listed in the previous section will all also be funded for adults and, in addition, we will fund some further qualifications for adults only:

- Qualifications that support entry into technical occupations that are covered by T Levels;
- Qualifications that enable entry into occupations without employer-led standards, where there is employer demand but where it may not be appropriate to create an occupational standard.
- Qualifications that focus on a range of cross-sectoral skills that are valuable in their own right and transferrable across multiple occupations.

These are set out in more detail in Appendix C (for 16 to 19 year olds) and Appendix D (for adults).

Qualifications that overlap with T Levels

In future, large qualifications that overlap with T Levels will no longer attract funding for 16 to 19 year olds.

The first stage currently underway is to remove funding approval from technical qualifications that overlap with T Levels. We have applied three tests to determine overlap:

- Is it a technical qualification, in that it primarily aims to support entry to employment in a specific occupational area(s)?
- Are the outcomes that must be attained by a person taking the qualification similar to those set out in an occupational standard covered by a T Level?
- Does the qualification aim to support entry to the same occupation(s) as a T Level?

A provisional list of qualifications that have been assessed as overlapping with waves 1 and 2 T Levels was published on 11 May 2022. These qualifications will no longer be funded for 16 to 19 year olds for new starts after 1 August 2024, unless they are subject to a successful appeal by the awarding organisation. To ensure we have the best available evidence when considering appeals, organisations such as employers, HEIs, and other training providers are able to support awarding organisations' appeals. More information on the appeals process can be found in the [appeals guidance](#). Students part way through studying for a qualification that is having funding withdrawn will continue to be funded and will be able to complete their course.

Following this, we will also review qualifications in the same routes as T Levels in waves 3 and 4. Technical qualifications that overlap with the T Levels in these waves will have funding approval removed for 16 to 19 year old new starts from 1 August 2025.

The overlap process will not affect funding for adult learners. However these qualifications will be subject to the approval processes for academic and technical qualifications described elsewhere in this document.

Where new T Levels are introduced in future, qualifications which overlap with them would have funding approval removed – in the same way as for existing T Levels. We will set out the arrangements for withdrawing funding approval from overlapping qualifications, alongside the details of the process for approving academic and technical qualifications, in autumn 2022.

Changes to timeline for reform of level 3 qualifications

The Secretary of State committed in November 2021 to allow an extra year before our reforms to Level 3 qualifications are implemented. In addition, we are bringing the digital pathfinder into the first full cycle of approvals. These changes will allow us to continue to work hard to support the growth of T Levels and gives more notice to providers, awarding organisations, employers, students and parents so that everyone can prepare for the changes.

Our reform timeline is linked to the roll out of T Levels and a table of the T Level waves and when they commence teaching is shown below.

Wave and year of first teach	T Levels being launched
Wave 1 (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, surveying and planning for construction • Digital production, design and development • Education and childcare
Wave 2 (2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building services engineering for construction • Digital business services • Digital support and services • Health • Healthcare science • Onsite construction • Science
Wave 3 (2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting • Design and development for engineering and manufacturing • Engineering, manufacturing, processing and control • Finance • Maintenance, installation and repair for engineering and manufacturing • Management and administration
Wave 4 (2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal care and management • Agriculture, land management and production • Catering • Craft and design • Hair, beauty and aesthetics • Legal services • Media, broadcast and production

These changes mean that we will remove 16-19 funding approval for qualifications that overlap with waves 1 and 2 T Levels from academic year (AY) 2024/25. The provisional list of qualifications that overlap with wave 1 and 2 T Levels was published on 11 May 2022, and the final list will be published in September. We will remove 16-19 funding approval from qualifications that overlap with wave 3 and 4 T Levels from 1 August 2025.

The timeline for the introduction of reformed technical and academic qualifications for 16-19 and adults will also move back one year. The first reformed technical and academic qualifications will be approved in July 2024 for qualifications aligned to wave 1, 2 and Engineering and Manufacturing (from wave 3). These newly-approved qualifications will be taught from AY 2025/26, and at that point we will remove funding approval from qualifications aligned to these routes that have not been approved.

For wave 3 and 4 (excluding Engineering and Manufacturing), qualifications will be approved in July 2025. Approved qualifications will be taught from AY 2026/27.

Further opportunities will be available to submit qualifications in future years. For example, a qualification aligned to wave 1 can first seek approval for 2024, but should also be able to do so in future approval years.

A high-level timeline showing key dates for the reforms is provided in Appendix A. More detailed timelines for the approval of individual qualifications will be released alongside the approvals and funding criteria in autumn 2022.

Approval process for academic and technical qualifications

Overview of approval process

The first reformed academic and technical qualifications at level 3 will be available to teach from 1 August 2025. This will involve approval decisions by IfATE for technical qualifications, followed by a funding decision by the DfE for both academic and technical qualifications. Ofqual will provide feedback into this process. The process for each type of qualification is outlined in Appendix E.

Academic qualifications – qualification review stage

To be approved for funding, academic qualifications will need to be on Ofqual's Register of Regulated Qualifications, considered to be necessary by DfE, and meet any regulations set by Ofqual.

For the approval of academic qualifications, awarding organisations will be required to submit qualification-related materials for review. These are likely to include qualification specifications, assessment strategies and assessment materials. Any particular materials and evidence required will be set out in the criteria published by DfE and in the information that Ofqual provides to awarding organisations regarding its review process.

During the first part of the qualification review stage DfE review the necessity of each qualification and whether it will support progression to high quality HE courses that deliver strong outcomes. Large academic qualifications will not be approved in T Level subject areas.

Ofqual will then provide feedback to DfE on the likely compliance of the qualifications submitted with the applicable regulations. Ofqual is currently consulting on its regulations for academic and technical qualifications. DfE will take this feedback into account as part of funding approval decisions.

Technical qualifications – qualification review stage

IfATE will be responsible for approving technical qualifications that will be funded alongside T Levels, with approval criteria largely focused on ensuring the vast majority of technical qualifications align to employer-led occupational standards. Through the application of this criteria, awarding organisations are encouraged to put forward qualifications delivering the skills employers need. IfATE's route panels (made up of industry experts) will review qualifications to ensure they meet employer needs before IfATE takes its final approval decision. IfATE will also take into account feedback from Ofqual. All qualifications submitted for approval will need to be on Ofqual's Register of

Regulated Qualifications. The DfE will only consider technical qualifications for funding approval that have been approved by IfATE.

Awarding organisations will be required to submit qualification-related materials for review. These are likely to include qualification specifications, assessment strategies and assessment materials. Any particular materials and evidence required will be set out in autumn 2022 in the criteria published by DfE and IfATE. The qualifications will also have to meet any regulations set by Ofqual. Each qualification will be reviewed to ensure it meets the new qualification categories and associated criteria, including that it has a distinct purpose and is high quality.

The Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 sets out the statutory approval tests for different categories of qualifications. These ensure that anyone taking an approved technical qualification attains the outcomes desired by employers. Meeting the relevant statutory tests will, therefore, ensure that the qualification will support progression to skilled employment.

Awarding organisations will need to provide evidence as to how they have engaged with relevant employers to ensure their particular qualification will deliver what employers need, and that their qualification offers a suitable way of meeting demand for and engaging learners to develop particular knowledge, skills and behaviours. Awarding organisations will also be expected to show how their qualifications map to employer-led occupational standards to meet the relevant statutory test – e.g. for qualifications providing competence to enable entry to an occupation, this will involve the qualification mapping to as many as possible of the knowledge, skills and behaviours listed on a standard that can be taught in a course of education. Any qualifications without a strong employer-related case for approval and, where relevant, a strong link to an employer-led standard will not be approved.

Where an employer-led standard has not been developed and it can be demonstrated that it would be appropriate to develop one (for example, there is evidenced employer need for education or training in that occupation), we have asked IfATE to consider how it can expedite the process for development of a standard. Once a standard has been developed, IfATE can consider the approval of qualifications against the standard, in line with the process above.

There may also be technical qualifications that are aligned to occupations that are currently outside the current scope of the occupational maps, but are found to be in demand by employers. We want to ensure the availability of qualifications in occupations that are valuable to employers and so have asked IfATE to explore how such scenarios are addressed through its occupational maps and approvals processes, to allow such qualifications to be approved and funded. Where gaps in provision are identified, IfATE will explore how provision might be stimulated in the identified area(s).

Appeals

At a suitable stage in the process, awarding organisations will be permitted an opportunity to resubmit an academic or technical qualification if it narrowly missed meeting the approval criteria at the first attempt. We expect that 'in-cycle' resubmissions may only be possible where minor changes are required to meet the quality threshold. Awarding organisations will also be given the opportunity to appeal funding approval decisions. Details of the appeals processes will be published later this year.

Institute, Ofqual and DfE interaction

In order to ensure a streamlined approach to the review and approval of qualifications, DfE, IfATE and Ofqual are working closely together to develop a coherent process that aims to avoid unnecessary additional administrative burden on awarding organisations. Submissions for academic and technical qualifications will start at a single access point. AOs will submit information once and it will be shared with DfE, IfATE and Ofqual as appropriate. Submissions will be shared and handled in a coordinated way by the appropriate organisations in line with their respective roles in approval.

A high level representation of this process is shown in the diagram at Appendix E. Details of this process are still in development. The process and criteria for each type of technical qualification are subject to forthcoming consultation by IfATE, and Ofqual is consulting on its regulations for academic and technical qualifications. We will publish a more detailed description of the process in autumn 2022. The diagram covers level 3 qualifications – although we intend, where possible, to take a consistent approach for qualifications at other levels that will follow a similar approvals process.

Funding approval stage

DfE will have final responsibility for confirming whether the qualification will be approved for funding and, for post-19, in which offers the qualification will be available. DfE will publish detailed funding approval criteria for qualifications in advance of each qualification review cycle. Prior to confirming funding decisions, DfE will conduct a funding review to confirm the qualification is in scope for funding approval. Following this, where DfE approves the qualification for funding, it will publish that information so that providers can prepare for delivery the following academic year.

All qualifications approved for funding by DfE during the qualifications review period will be approved until 31 July 2027. As happens now, qualifications will be subject to review during this funding validity period, and DfE will operate a process to 'roll-over' qualification offers where qualifications continue to meet criteria. Further details of how offers will be reviewed and 'rolled-over', including what additional information DfE may require from awarding organisations, will be published in the autumn.

Communication and support

We intend to support awarding organisations through the approvals process by providing guidance regarding the process and engagement such as webinars and other events. We will also engage stakeholders further as this work moves forwards. Awarding organisations will also be provided with feedback on submissions, where relevant and appropriate.

We are also supporting providers to transition to the new qualifications landscape, to ensure they are well prepared and have the right structures in place to deliver. We have contracted the Association of Colleges (AoC) to support providers who have registered to deliver T Levels in 2023 and 2024. This programme includes peer to peer learning and best practice sharing; national learning events and webinars; tools, guidance and other resources; and conversations with T Level advisors.

Providers can also access T Level specific CPD (Continuing Professional Development) through the T Level Professional Development Programme delivered by the Education and Training Foundation.

Accountability and post-16 performance tables

DfE has responsibility for maintaining the lists of qualifications included in 16-18 performance tables. The new funding approval process will ensure that all qualifications are high quality, but while funding approval will be a pre-requisite for inclusion, it may not be sufficient on its own. DfE may wish to consider other factors, including the fit with the Government's broader policy priorities. The final decision on which qualifications should be included in performance tables will continue to lie with the Secretary of State for Education. Full details of the process for adding qualifications to the performance tables, performance points and approach to discounting will be published alongside the funding approval criteria.

Appendices

Appendix A: Key dates

Date	Academic and technical qualifications aligned to the following technical routes:			Cross-cutting and employer-proposed technical qualifications, and academic and technical qualifications not aligned to a route
	Digital, Education & Childcare, Construction & Built Environment, Health & Science (wave 1 and 2 T Levels)	Engineering & Manufacturing	All other technical routes	
May 2022	Publication of initial list of qualifications that overlap with wave 1 and 2 T Levels.			
May-Aug 2022	Appeals period for overlap decisions.			
September 2022	Publication of final list of qualifications that overlap with wave 1 and 2 T Levels and will therefore have funding withdrawn.			
Spring-Summer 2022	Ofqual policy consultation on its proposed regulatory approach to academic and technical qualifications.			
	Ofqual technical consultation on the detail of its regulatory approach to academic and technical qualifications.			

	Institute consultation on its criteria for approval of technical qualifications.			
1 Aug 2022	Funding approval withdrawn from level 3 qualifications with no or low publicly funded enrolments.			
Sep 2022		First teaching of T Level Engineering & Manufacturing	First teaching of T Levels in Accounting; Finance; Management and administration	
Autumn 2022	<p>Guidance, qualification approval criteria and funding approval criteria published for qualifications to be approved for delivery from 1 August 2025. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IfATE publishing final criteria for reformed technical qualifications; • Ofqual publishing any changes to its regulatory framework (subject to ongoing consultation); • DfE publishing final qualification funding approval criteria, including criteria for the approval of small and large academic qualifications, and confirming how existing qualifications will be managed during the transition to a reformed landscape. 			
Autumn 2022- Summer 2023	<p>First submission windows for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small academic qualifications; and • technical qualifications in the Occupational entry and Specialist categories. 	<p>First submission windows for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small academic qualifications; and • technical qualifications in the Occupational entry and Specialist categories. 		

Spring 2023 (TBC)		Publication of initial list of qualifications that overlap with T Levels.	Publication of initial list of qualifications that overlap with T Levels.	
Spring-Summer 2023 (TBC)		Appeals period for overlap decisions.	Appeals period for overlap decisions.	
Summer 2023 (TBC)		Publication of final list of qualifications that overlap with T Levels and will therefore have funding withdrawn.	Publication of final list of qualifications that overlap with T Levels and will therefore have funding withdrawn.	
Sep 2023			First teaching of T Levels in Legal services; Agriculture, land management and production; Animal care and management; Catering; Craft and design; Hairdressing, barbering and beauty therapy; Media, broadcast and production.	
Autumn 2023-Spring 2024			Submission windows for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small academic qualifications; and 	Submission windows for these qualifications. This includes small academic

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> technical qualifications in the Occupational entry and Specialist categories. 	qualifications not aligned to a technical route; and large academic qualifications, which will only be funded if they do not overlap with a T Level.
July 2024	List of approved qualifications published, for first teaching from 1 Aug 2025 (tbc).	List of approved qualifications published, for first teaching from 1 Aug 2025 (tbc).		
1 Aug 2024	Funding approval for 16 to 19 year olds withdrawn for technical qualifications that overlap with T Levels.			
July 2025			List of approved qualifications published, for first teaching from 1 Aug 2026 (tbc).	List of approved qualifications published, for first teaching from 1 Aug 2026 (tbc).
1 Aug 2025	Funding commences for reformed qualifications. Funding approval withdrawn for qualifications that have not secured	Funding commences for reformed qualifications.	Funding approval for 16 to 19 year olds withdrawn for technical qualifications that overlap with T Levels.	

	<p>approval.</p> <p>Funding approval also withdrawn for existing large academic qualifications such as Applied General Qualifications (AGQs) that align with these routes.</p>	<p>Funding approval withdrawn for qualifications that have not secured approval.</p> <p>Funding approval also withdrawn for existing large academic qualifications such as AGQs that align with this route, and (for 16 to 19 year olds) for technical qualifications that overlap with T Levels.</p>		
Sep 2025	First teaching of qualifications that have secured approval.	First teaching of qualifications that have secured approval.		
1 Aug 2026			<p>Funding commences for reformed qualifications.</p> <p>Funding approval withdrawn for qualifications that have not secured approval.</p> <p>Funding approval also withdrawn for large academic qualifications such as AGQs.</p>	<p>Funding commences for reformed qualifications.</p> <p>Funding approval withdrawn for qualifications that have not secured approval.</p>
1 Aug 2026	All level 3 qualifications that are in scope of this guidance will be assumed to have funding approval withdrawn, unless they are approved through the new approval process.			

Sep 2026

First teaching of qualifications that have secured approval.

First teaching of qualifications that have secured approval.

Appendix B: Diagram illustrating the academic qualifications at level 3 that will be funded in future

Academic landscape for 16 to 19 year olds and adults

Qualifications that support students to progress onto and achieve high quality FE and HE academic courses.

A/AS levels

Small qualifications alongside A levels

Large alternatives to A levels

Academic qualifications for 16 to 19 year olds and adults

- **A levels:** These world renowned qualifications will be central to the study programmes of most students taking the academic pathway to progress to university.
- **Small qualifications that can be taken alongside A levels:**
 1. Qualifications with a practical or occupational component, supporting progression to an aligned HE subject and designed to complement A level study e.g. health, or qualifications in STEM subjects, such as engineering. These would typically be no larger than 1 x A level in size.
 2. Qualifications that offer additional and complementary skills to support progression to HE, including Core Maths, Extended Project Qualifications, and Performing Arts Graded Examinations.
- **Large alternatives to A levels:**
 1. Qualifications with a strong practical focus that support progression to high quality specialist HE courses. They will be in subject areas less well-served by A levels and will not overlap with a T Level e.g. creative and performing arts. One of these qualifications would typically be a student's full study programme.
 2. Alternative programmes to A levels, including the International Baccalaureate Diploma, and Access to HE Diplomas (these are funded for adults and for 18 year olds in exceptional circumstances).

Appendix C: Diagram illustrating the technical qualifications at level 3 that will be funded in future for 16 to 19 year olds

Technical landscape for 16 to 19 year olds

Qualifications that provide the knowledge, skills and behaviours students need to progress to skilled employment or higher technical study.

T Levels

Apprenticeships

Occupational-entry technical qualifications in areas not served by T Levels

Specialist qualifications

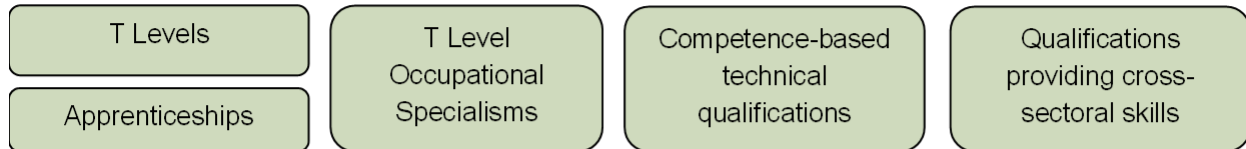
Technical qualifications for 16 to 19 year olds

- **T Levels:** We are introducing T Levels as the new technical programme of choice for 16 to 19 year olds. T Levels are co-designed by employers to ensure students develop the skills required by businesses and industry. T Levels are a prestigious technical alternative to A levels providing direct entry into occupations and progression to further and higher education.
- **Occupational-entry qualifications:** Based on employer-led occupational standards, these qualifications will support entry to occupations that are not covered by T Levels. Recognising there are certain occupations where the extent of workplace experience required to develop competence cannot be delivered in an education setting, the Institute may, by exception, approve technical qualifications in these occupations.
- **Specialist qualifications:** These qualifications will cover recognisably specialist areas of skill and knowledge which go beyond those available in a T Level or other competence-based technical qualification in an area not served by T Levels e.g. low-carbon construction design, building on the Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction and the Built Environment T Level.

Appendix D: Diagram illustrating the technical qualifications at level 3 that will be funded in future for adults

Technical landscape for adults

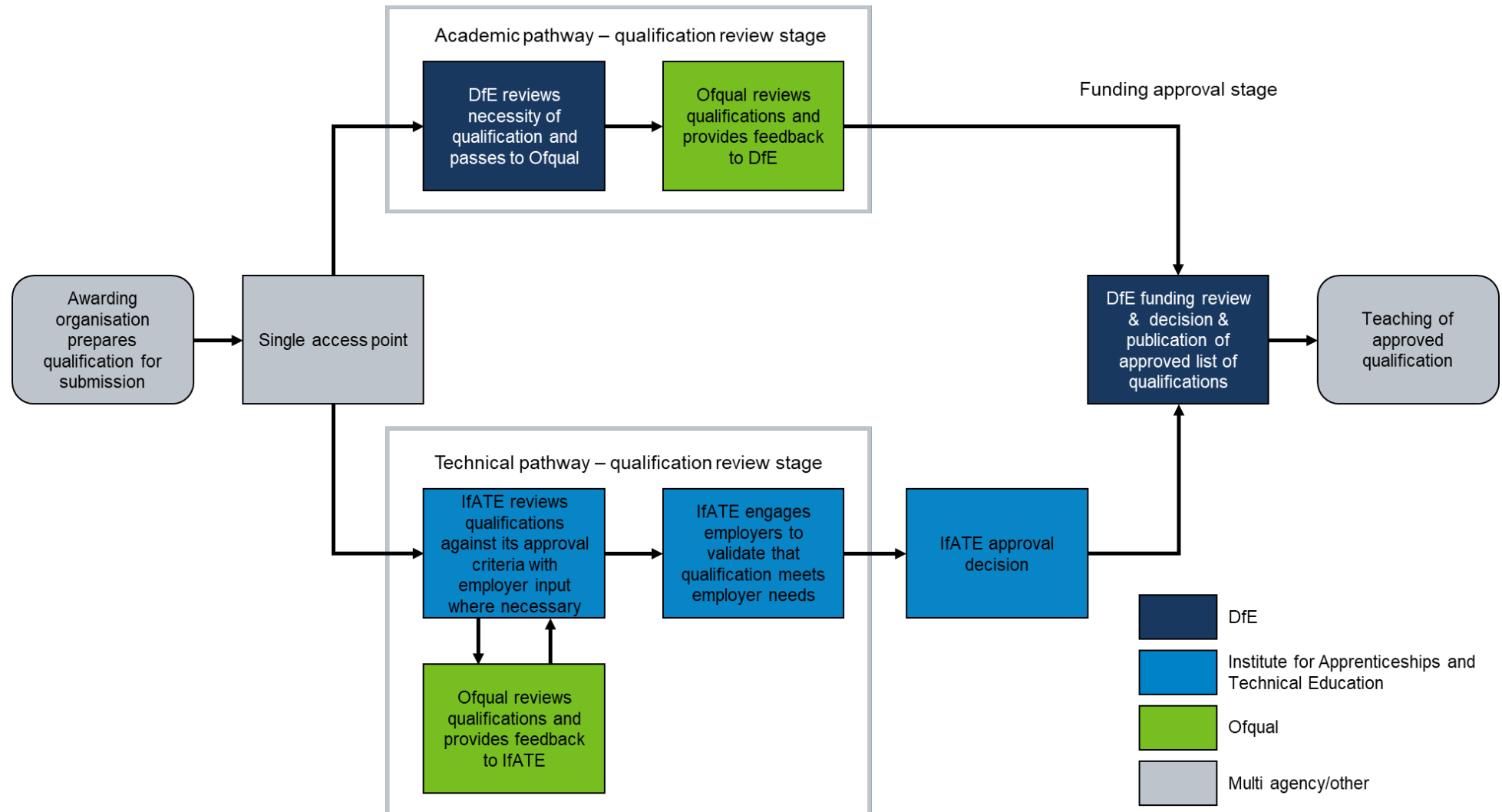
Qualifications that provide the knowledge, skills and behaviours to upskill or retrain to progress to skilled employment or higher technical study.



Technical qualifications for adults, in addition to those available for 16 to 19 year olds

- **Occupational-entry technical qualifications in T Level areas:** these qualifications will support entry to occupations that are served by T Levels e.g. construction (as well as occupations that are not served by T Levels).
- **Occupational-entry technical qualifications for occupations without employer-led occupational standards but which are still in demand by employers:** these qualifications would help to ensure the availability of qualifications in occupations that are valuable to employers, but where it may not be appropriate for an occupational standard to be developed.
- **Qualifications focusing on a range of cross-sectoral skills:** these qualifications would offer a discrete set of knowledge and skills that is valuable in its own right and transferrable across multiple occupations.
- **Specialist qualifications that build on qualifications aligned to employer-led occupational standards:** these would include qualifications which are more appropriate for adults (such as those that are essential to certain safety critical industries).
- **T Levels: we are considering how T Levels could be made available to adults in future, subject to the outcomes of future Spending Reviews. This could include:**
 - The two-year T Level programme with flexibilities applied, such as recognition of prior learning and reduction of industry placement hours for those with relevant work experience; and
 - T Level Occupational Specialisms as stand-alone qualifications.

Appendix E: Diagram showing high-level outline of the approvals process for academic and technical qualifications at level 3





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