



Department
for Education

Timeline for the approval of post-16 qualifications at level 3 for 2025

Information for awarding organisations

Purpose

This document is a detailed timeline for qualifications submitted in Cycle 1 of the level 3 qualifications approval process, to be read alongside the [Guide to the post-16 qualifications landscape at level 3 and below for 2025 and beyond](#). It is aimed at awarding organisations.

Dates

Date: 10 January to 10 February

Action: Awarding organisation registers intent to submit qualification(s).

If you are an awarding organisation considering submitting a level 3 qualification for funding approval, we ask that you register your intention to submit. You must also confirm the qualification(s) you intend to submit are within your Ofqual scope of recognition to be regulated. More detail is on [Awarding organisations: submitting qualifications for approval](#).

Date: 14 February to 24 March 2023

Action: Awarding organisation submits proposal for additional specialist technical qualification.

If you are an awarding organisation considering submitting an additional specialist technical qualification that is not on the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education's (IfATE)'s predefined list, you will need to first submit a qualification proposal to IfATE. More detail is on [Awarding organisations: submitting qualifications for approval](#).

Date: 3 July to 31 July 2023

Action: Awarding organisation submits qualifications for approval.

[Awarding organisations: submitting qualifications for approval](#) contains links to the Department for Education's (DfE) 2025 to 2026 qualifications funding approval manual, IfATE's published process and criteria for approval of level 3 technical qualifications, and Ofqual's regulations covering both alternative academic and technical level 3 qualifications.

Date: Summer 2023 to spring 2024

Action: DfE, IfATE and Ofqual review qualifications.

Qualifications will be reviewed against the criteria in DfE's [2025 to 2026 qualifications funding approval manual](#). Technical qualifications will also be reviewed against IfATE's criteria. Ofqual will provide feedback to DfE and IfATE.

Date: 1 April 2024

Action: Deadline for awarding organisations to update Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications.

On 1 April 2024, prior to completing the funding approval review, DfE will take a download of the information held on Ofqual's Register of Regulated Qualifications. By that date the awarding organisation must make sure that it has completed all the necessary information on Ofqual's Register

Date: Summer 2024

Action: IfATE confirms decisions on whether to approve as technical qualifications.

IfATE will decide whether the qualification is approved as a technical qualification under the powers set out in the Skills Act. Applicants will be issued an approval decision which determines the eligibility of their technical qualification to be considered for public funding.

If a qualification is not approved in one of IfATE's technical qualification categories, and the awarding organisation disagrees with how the final decision was reached, in certain circumstances IfATE will review its decision-making process. This is known as procedural review. The awarding organisation may be able to seek procedural review and should consult the guidance available on IfATE's [procedural review page](#).

Date: 31 May 2024

Action: DfE informs awarding organisation of funding approval decisions.

DfE will review qualifications against the funding approval criteria. The DfE funding approval decision is separate and independent from Ofqual's recognition of awarding organisations and regulation of qualifications and IfATE's decision to approve technical qualifications.

If an academic or technical qualification is not approved for funding for one or more qualification offers, the awarding organisation may be able to ask DfE to review the outcome, on the basis that the funding approval criteria have not been applied correctly. Further detail will be published in the spring 2023 update of the 2025 to 2026 qualifications funding approval manual.

Date: 31 July 2024

Action: DfE publishes final list of qualifications with funding approval.

Qualifications that are approved for funding for 25/26 will be published on the [list of Qualifications approved for funding](#).

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Date: 1 August 2025

Action: Funding approval commences. Funding approval removed from qualifications not approved.

Delivery commences for qualifications approved for funding through this process.

Level 3 qualifications in the following Sector Subject Areas will have their funding approval removed unless they have been approved through this process, or exempted from the process. Further detail will be published in the spring 2023 update of the 2025 to 2026 qualifications funding approval manual.

Sector Subject Areas this applies to:

- ICT user
- ICT practitioner
- Child development and well-being
- Teaching and lecturing
- Direct learning support
- Health and social care
- Science
- Medicine and dentistry
- Nursing and subjects and vocations allied to medicine
- Building and construction
- Engineering

Qualifications exempted:

- A and AS levels
- Technical Qualifications in T Levels
- Access to HE Diplomas
- Advanced Extension Awards
- Core Maths qualifications
- Extended Project qualifications
- Performing arts graded examinations
- The International Baccalaureate Diploma