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Policy paper

# Higher Technical Qualification: an introduction

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**Applies to England**

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This guidance is for:

- providers that are considering offering an approved Higher Technical Qualification
- awarding bodies that are thinking about submitting qualifications for approval as a Higher Technical Qualification

If you are considering studying for a Higher Technical Qualification, visit the [National Careers Service](#). You can also [search and apply for Higher Technical Qualification courses on the UCAS website](#).

A [list of the approved Higher Technical Qualification courses](#) and the organisations that can offer them is available.

## What a Higher Technical Qualification is

As part of our [higher technical education reforms](#), we created approved higher technical qualifications as an alternative to apprenticeships or degrees.

These qualifications are new or existing level 4 and 5 qualifications such as [HNCs, HNDs and foundation degrees](#). They sit between A levels or T Levels and degrees, and can be taught at a further education college, an independent training provider or a university.

These qualifications have been developed by awarding bodies in collaboration with employers so students can develop the skills that employers want.

The Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education will approve each new Higher Technical Qualification as meeting the knowledge and skills needed by the sector. Approved courses show the Higher Technical Qualification quality mark logo.

Watch our video to get an [introduction to the Higher Technical Qualification](#).

## Available subjects

Higher Technical Qualification courses are currently being taught in a variety of digital occupations. By 2025, they will be available across a wide range of sectors.

From September 2023, students will also be able to take a Higher Technical Qualification in the following sectors:

- construction
- health and science

From September 2024, students will also be able to take a Higher Technical Qualification in the following sectors:

- business and administration
- education and childcare
- engineering and manufacturing
- legal, finance and accounting

From September 2025, students will also be able to take a Higher Technical Qualification in the following sectors:

- agriculture, environmental and animal care
- catering and hospitality
- creative and design
- hair and beauty
- care services
- transport and logistics
- protective services
- sales, marketing and procurement

## Qualification approvals process

The [Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education](#) has launched a national opt-in approval

scheme for new and existing level 4 and 5 qualifications.

Awarding bodies can submit qualifications to be approved as a Higher Technical Qualification against the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education's occupational standards at levels 4 to 5.

To be able to submit a qualification, higher education institutions must be [registered with the Office for Students](#) and the qualifications designed by awarding organisations must be on the [Ofqual register](#).

Awarding bodies submit qualifications for approval along with supporting evidence via an [online application form](#). The next approvals window will open on 8 May 2023 and close on 30 June 2023.

Once submitted, the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education will then assess that the qualification meets the knowledge and skills employers in that sector need.

## Funding

There is new funding available to support providers to grow high-quality level 4 and 5 provision and higher technical qualifications. In 2022 to 2023, this includes £8 million through the strategic priorities grant and up to £32 million through the [skills injection fund](#).

We have also provided the Office for Students with [£450 million of capital funding for financial years 2022 to 2025](#). £400 million of this was available through a bidding exercise to target funds at government's strategic priorities, including higher technical qualifications. The Office for Students will announce the outcomes of this bidding exercise in due course.

## Student finance

From September 2023, Higher Technical Qualification courses will be eligible for the higher education student finance offer on the same basis as degree courses. This means that both full- and part-time students starting a Higher Technical Qualification that is longer than a year will be able to apply for both tuition fee and maintenance loans. Part-time maintenance loans are currently only available for level 4 and 5 students studying a small number of pre-registration medical courses.

Higher Technical Qualification courses that are shorter than a year in duration will be eligible for the [Advanced Learner Loans](#), which offers tuition fee but not maintenance loans.

Information for students about [student finance and eligibility](#) is available.

## Find out more

Providers interested in offering Higher Technical Qualification courses should check the list of [approved higher technical qualifications](#).

More information about [providing Higher Technical Qualification courses](#) is also available.

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