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Technical education learner survey 2022

Research report

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Summary

Background

The government's ongoing reforms to technical education aim to address the issues identified in the [2016 Sainsbury Review](#), to improve the quality of technical education and therefore delivering the technical skills needed to boost productivity in the UK economy. T Levels and the T Level Transition Programme (TLTP) were introduced in academic year 2020/21 and were in the second year of delivery in 2021/22. The first accredited Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), which are technical qualifications at level 4/5, were introduced in academic year 2022/23. These are part of wider reforms to level 4/5 technical education.

The Technical Education Learner Survey (Tech Ed Study) aims to understand learners' choices of technical education programmes, their experiences and outcomes on these programmes, and their progression to future study and work.

Survey methodology

In summer 2022, surveys were undertaken with the first and second cohorts of T Level learners¹, the second cohort of TLTP learners², learners studying for pre-reform level 4/5 qualifications, and a comparison group for the second T Level cohort, comprising learners from other level 3 courses (level 3 technical qualifications and A levels). This was the first wave in a longitudinal study of T Level and level 3 comparator learners who started their programme in 2021/22 and the second wave in a longitudinal study of T Level learners who started their programme in 2020/21.

Learners were identified using information from administrative data (the National Pupil Database and Individualised Learner Record). All T Level and TLTP learners were invited to participate in the surveys and a representative sample was selected of the other learner groups.

The first cohort of T Level learners (2020 starters) was interviewed in June to July 2022, at the end of their two-year programme. A total of 587 learners were interviewed – a response rate of 47%. The other learner groups were interviewed in August to September 2022. Response rates varied between the learner groups: 44% for 2021 T Level starters (2,388 interviews); 31% for 2021 TLTP starters (892 interviews); 32% for other level 3 technical learners (2,558 interviews); 33% for A level learners (661 interviews); 27% for level 4/5 learners (1,375 interviews).

¹ The first T Level cohort could take T Levels within three routes: Construction, Digital, Education and Early Years. The second cohort could take T Levels within these routes, plus the Health and Science route.

² The second TLTP cohort could study the four T Level routes available to the second T Level cohort.

T Levels and comparison with other level 3 programmes

- In 2021/22, T Levels attracted a wide range of learners, including those who thought that they otherwise would have chosen A levels, another technical qualification, or an apprenticeship. This is similar to in 2020/21. Of 2021 starters not taking T Levels (other level 3 technical and A level learners), just under a third were aware of T Levels when choosing their courses (29% and 28% respectively).
- Across all level 3 courses, including T Levels, learners' choices were influenced by their interest in the subject area, and how the subject fitted with their intended future area of work. On starting their programme, T Level learners were surer about the area they wanted to work in than other level 3 learners.
- There was a significant return to in-person teaching in the 2021/22 academic year, with almost all learners from both T Level cohorts taught mostly or entirely in person. Across all level 3 qualifications, most learners were taught for 11-20 hours a week. Of 2021 starters, T Level learners were more likely than other level 3 learners to have high teaching hours i.e., more than 20 teaching hours a week.
- Almost all the first T Level cohort (2020 starters) completed the required industry placement by the end of their programme. However, almost one fifth of T Level learners completed a placement of fewer than 300 hours, below the standard minimum T Level expectation of 315 hours, although within the flexibilities allowed by DfE as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including meeting a set of pre-agreed learning outcomes. Three quarters of the second cohort began their industry placement in the first year of their T Level. These placement rates are higher than for 2020/21, when placements were impacted by COVID-19. Across both T Level cohorts, most placements related directly to the learners' occupational specialism. Most learners from both cohorts were satisfied with their placement and felt it met their expectations.
- T Level learners were more likely to have an industry placement and other contact with employers than other level 3 technical learners. T Level placements also tended to be longer than other level 3 technical work placements.
- Across both T Level cohorts, most learners found their workload manageable, including the amount of teaching on the programme and work done outside of taught lessons.
- Lack of study materials was the most common barrier to learning for T Levels. This was reported more by the second T Level cohort (2021 starters) than the first (2020 starters), especially learners on some new T Level courses (delivered from 2021/22), including by 69% of learners in the new Health and Science route. In other routes, this was reported as a barrier for between 21% and 37% of learners.

- Satisfaction with the T Level programme dropped substantially for the second cohort. This was associated with some of the new T Level courses, particularly those in Health and Science, which is likely to reflect concerns with assessment in that route (fieldwork for the second cohort took place after exams), and with the level of science content in the Health pathway. Satisfaction was similar for new providers and those who had delivered T Levels in 2020/21. The second T Level cohort was less satisfied with their programme than those in the same year group on other level 3 technical and A level courses.
- Four fifths of the first T Level cohort reported that the programme had helped them significantly develop their knowledge of the subject area, understanding of how workplaces operate, relevant practical skills, and readiness to work in their chosen occupational area.
- Almost two thirds of the first T Level cohort intended to move into further study or work in their T Level occupational specialism area, with only one in ten deciding to leave the general field of their T Level. The three main next steps for this cohort were a university degree, a job, and an apprenticeship.

T Level Transition Programme

- In choosing the TLTP, 2021 starters reported that the subject area was most important, followed by the type of programme and associated qualification(s), with the school or college considered the least important of these three factors.
- The most commonly reported reason for choosing the TLTP (as opposed to another programme) was that learners considered it to be 'important for the kind of job I want'.
- There was a significant return to in-person teaching in the 2021/22 academic year, with most TLTP learners taught entirely or mostly in person.
- Considering TLTP learners' experience of the programme, almost two thirds found it 'quite challenging' (59%), with 12% finding it 'extremely' or 'very challenging'. Most TLTP learners found the amount of teaching and the workload outside of lessons manageable.
- Just over half of TLTP learners spent time on work experience, an increase from 2020/21 when work experience was impacted by COVID-19. Most of these learners were satisfied with their work experience., the highest proportion of learners were satisfied with the knowledge they gained of the workplace while on work experience, and the lowest proportion of learners were satisfied with its timing.
- TLTP learners' overall satisfaction with the programme was high (69%), though slightly lower than for the first cohort (77%). With different elements of the

programme, the highest proportion of learners were satisfied with 'teachers' knowledge and expertise' (79%) and the lowest proportion with the 'employer contact' on the programme (46%).

- Most TLTP learners felt that the programme had helped them to develop the relevant knowledge, skills and understanding of their sector. Over two-thirds (69%) felt they had developed 'a great deal' or 'quite a bit' in the 'practical skills needed for their chosen subject'.
- At the end of the TLTP, just over a quarter of learners intended to progress onto a T Level, reduced from just over a third of learners at the start of the programme. Other common intentions for progression were to another type of study or qualification, or to an apprenticeship.
- Several factors were associated with the intention to progress to a T Level, including prior attainment, certainty around intended occupation, how challenging the individual found the TLTP and satisfaction with the programme.

Level 4/5 programmes

- The key reasons for learners choosing level 4 and 5 programmes were the importance of the qualification for the job they wanted and its recognition by employers. The key reasons for choosing the subject area were an interest in the area and to upskill in the same line of work. Education providers tended to be chosen because they were convenient to travel to and offered the subject of interest.
- Programme delivery used a range of in-person and online teaching. Almost three fifths of learners were taught primarily in-person, with just under a quarter taught primarily online. Learners were most commonly taught for less than 11 hours a week.
- Just under a third of learners had completed work experience or an industry placement but almost two thirds reported that their programme had not included contact with employers. Over fourth fifths of learners who had completed work experience were satisfied with it.
- Almost all learners found their workload manageable, including the amount of teaching on their programme and work done outside taught lessons.
- The most commonly reported barriers to learning were family responsibilities, working part-time and lack of in-person teaching.
- Three quarters of learners were very/quite satisfied with their programme, with three quarters or more satisfied with their teachers' knowledge and expertise, the skills covered for their chosen occupation/subject area, the standard of classroom

teaching, and the support received from tutors. Learners were least satisfied with the level of employer contact and careers advice provided.

- About three quarters of learners reported that the programme had helped them develop significantly in their knowledge of the programme's occupational area and practical skills needed for their chosen subject.
- Three quarters of learners were planning to work as a next step after their programme finished, and just over three quarters of these were planning on staying in their current job. Just under half of learners reported wanting to progress onto further study or an apprenticeship.

Conclusions

T Levels and the TLTP were developed to reform technical education by improving the quality of provision and strengthening employer links. The TLTP has high levels of learner satisfaction, and employer placements and contact are developing over time. T Levels seem to be successful in providing industry placements and employer contact, and the first T Level cohort reported high satisfaction. However, the second cohort were less satisfied than the first cohort and reported lower satisfaction than comparator A level and other level 3 technical learners. Between the first and second cohorts of T Level learners, satisfaction was lower across all T Level routes, however it was particularly low for the new Health and Science route which brought down the average satisfaction score.

Level 4/5 courses are currently under reform. The surveyed cohort undertook their courses before the reforms, acting as a baseline. The findings showed good levels of learner satisfaction, although low levels of industry placements and employer contact.

T Levels and the TLTP were primarily delivered in-person this year, while level 4/5 programmes were more varied in their mode of delivery. Most of these learners found their workload manageable and their programme 'quite challenging'. For T Levels and the TLTP, levels of work experience/industry placements in 2021/22 were higher than in 2020/21, when placements were impacted by COVID-19. Almost all of the first T Level cohort completed the required industry placement. Across these programmes, most learners who had undertaken work experience/industry placements were satisfied with it.

At the end of their programmes, most T Level, TLTP and level 4/5 learners reported that their programmes had helped them to develop the relevant knowledge, practical skills and understanding of their sector. For T Level and level 4/5 learners, the most commonly intended next step was degree-level study. The most commonly intended next step for TLTP learners at the end of their programme was a T Level, although the proportion (just under a third) who planned to progress to a T Level was lower than expected.

Introduction

Policy background

The government's ongoing reforms to technical education are designed to address the issues identified in the [2016 Sainsbury Review](#) by the Independent Panel on Technical Education. Once rolled out, the reforms should improve the quality of technical education and therefore the technical skills needed to boost productivity in the UK economy.

A key component of these reforms are T Levels, and the associated preparatory T Level Transition Programme (TLTP) – a one-year course which prepares learners who would benefit from additional support and study before studying a T Level. These technical programmes were introduced in the 2020/21 academic year, offering learners an alternative to existing study options after GCSEs, such as A levels, other level 3 technical courses or apprenticeships. Each T Level is the roughly equivalent in size to three A levels and are recognised by universities and other education providers, meaning learners can continue to Higher Education if they wish.³ Alternatively, it is also intended that learners can progress straight into employment in a relevant field or into other educational routes such as an apprenticeship. T Level programme content was developed in collaboration with employer panels and provides learners with the skills and knowledge required by employers, so that they are well equipped to start their careers.

Reforms are also being made to level 4 and 5 programmes, including the introduction of accredited Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) in academic year 2022/23. These are level 4 and 5 qualifications that the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) have deemed as having sufficient occupational standards for the relevant sector. Like T Levels and the TLTP, HTQs have been developed with employers and businesses to ensure learners receive the training, knowledge and skills required by employers.

The Tech Ed Study has been designed to provide an indication of whether these reforms are working as intended and to evaluate the learner experience of these programmes. The survey findings of the first year of the study ([Technical Education Learner Survey 2021](#)) were encouraging: the first cohort of learners on T Level and TLTP reported largely positive experiences of the first year of their programmes. Nevertheless, it was concluded that effects of the COVID-19 pandemic affected learners experiences of T Levels and the TLTP, with learners most commonly reporting the lack of in-person teaching as a barrier to learning, which was also found to be associated with lower levels of satisfaction. Additionally, pandemic related restrictions (such as being unable to physically attend

³ Many universities did not publish information on which of their courses would accept T Levels in time for 2022 entry to universities. The Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education wrote to universities in January 2023 to ask them to publish this information in time for the 2022/23 UCAS cycle.

workplaces) were likely to have had an impact on T Level learners' access to industry placements – a fundamental element of the new programmes.

Study context

The context for the T Level and TLTP programmes has changed between the 2021 and 2022 Tech Ed Study surveys. The lifting of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions has meant a return to in-person teaching and face-to-face industry placement experience. The 2021/22 academic year also saw new providers delivering T Levels and the TLTP, new T Levels and a TLTP programme in the Health and Science route, and new pathways within the Digital and Construction routes. The end of the 2021/22 academic year was also the first time that T Level learners could be surveyed at the end of the two-year programme. This provides an opportunity to gain a more complete picture of the T Level experience, as well as offering a better understanding of learners' post-course plans.

There were significant problems with Health and Science T Level assessments in 2021/22.⁴ Many learners and providers raised concerns when results were released in August 2022, and an Ofqual review found the assessments did not secure a sufficiently valid or reliable measure of student performance. Core results were reissued by NCFE in September 2022 based on the best of the Employer Set Project grade or overall Core grade. An [IfATE review](#) subsequently found the level of science content in the Health T Level⁵ was too high, and IfATE is working with NCFE, Ofqual and DfE to separate the core for the Health T Level, reviewing the relevance of all science content.

Study aims in 2022

In 2022, the Tech Ed Study aimed to continue to evaluate the success of ongoing technical education reforms in their aim of delivering high-quality learning experiences and supporting progression into desirable outcomes. To do so, the Tech Ed Study followed up the first cohort of T Level learners in a second wave of longitudinal data collection, to understand learners' views at the end of their programmes. These learners will be followed up again in a third wave of data collection a few months after they have completed their course.

In addition, the 2022 Tech Ed Study interviewed the second cohorts of T Level and TLTP learners at the end of their first year to capture experiences as the programmes expand and mature. This T Level cohort will be contacted again at the end of their second year and again a few months after their course is completed.

⁴ Health and Science T Level learners responded to the survey in August-September 2022. This period coincides with the release of T Level results, and the subsequent Ofqual review and regrading.

⁵ One of three T Level Health and Science pathways.

To provide a comparison for these cohorts, samples of learners at the end of the first year of A level programmes (all courses) and learners on level 3 technical courses in the same technical routes as those currently offered for T Levels were also interviewed about their learning experiences and short-term outcomes. This is the first of three waves of data collection that will follow the same timing as that for the second T Level cohort.

Finally, learners on level 4 and 5 programmes were interviewed in the 2022 Tech Ed Study to understand learners' experiences on pre-reform programmes. The intention is to survey level 4 and 5 learners enrolled on the subsequent post-reform programmes in future years to compare to the pre-reform cohort.

Survey approach

This report is based on surveys carried out in 2022 covering six different learner groups:

- T Level learners
 - 2020 T Level starters. The first cohort of T Level learners who started their programme in September 2020. This report covers a *second* survey (Wave 2) interview with them at the end of their second year of study.
 - 2021 T Level starters. The second cohort of T Level learners, starting in September 2021. Findings are from an initial survey (Wave 1) at the end of their first year in 2022.
- T Level Transition Programme (TLTP) learners
 - 2021 TLTP starters. The second cohort of TLTP learners, starting in September 2021. Findings are from a survey at the end of their course in 2022.
- Level 3 technical learners
 - Level 3 technical programme learners starting in the 2021/22 academic year, interviewed at the end of their first year in 2022.
- A level learners
 - A level learners starting in the 2021/22 academic year, interviewed at the end of their first year in 2022.
- Level 4/5 learners e.g. Higher National Diploma, Foundation Degree
 - These learners were recorded in the Individualised Learner Record database as finishing a level 4/5 programme in the 2021/22 academic year.

All T Level and TLTP learners starting in 2020 and 2021 were invited to participate in the surveys due to their relatively small size. Representative samples were selected to be approached among the other learner groups (for the level 3 technical learners, the

population comprised a group who were studying subjects in the same technical routes as those offered as T Levels in 2021). Learners were identified using the National Pupil Database and the Individualised Learner Record database operated by DfE. This does not cover level 4/5 learners recorded solely in Higher Education Statistics Agency data, such as those studying at Higher Education Institutions. See Appendix A – technical note for further details.

In all surveys, learners were invited to take part via email, text message and postal invitations. Data collection used a ‘web first’ approach, with a series of reminders sent to prompt self-completion. Follow-up telephone interviewing was used to increase response rates. See Appendix A – technical note for more details.

Questionnaire and data

The questionnaire for the Wave 2 survey with the first cohort of T Level learners (2020 starters) was designed to cover similar areas to the 2021 Wave 1 survey to enable comparisons between different stages of the programme. The questions collected detailed information in the following areas:

- **Learner characteristics**, including reasons for choosing programmes as well as more detailed socio-demographic characteristics not included in administrative data (only asked in cases where the information had not already been collected in the 2021 survey).
- **Experiences of the programmes**, including the format of delivery, how manageable and challenging learners found courses, time spent on industry placements, and satisfaction (overall and with various aspects including placements).
- **Short-term outcomes**, including perceptions of how the programme helped learners to develop skills and knowledge, planned next steps into further education and work, whether learners felt that the course matched what was advertised and their likelihood of recommending the course to others, and factors that learners felt were important in their career decision-making.

Similarly, the Wave 1 questionnaire used to interview the second cohort of T Level and TLTP learners, as well as A level, other level 3 technical and level 4/5 learners, was designed to closely align with the 2021 survey so that the experiences of the second cohort could be compared with those of the first. The questionnaire covered the same areas noted above, with considerable overlap in the questions asked of learner groups to allow for comparisons across programmes. There were some areas of questions specific to each learner groups:

- **Employment situation** questions were asked of level 4/5 learners, including what learners had been doing prior to their programme, and whether they were working during their programme.
- **Programme funding** questions were asked of level 4/5 learners, including how learners had paid for their tuition fees, and whether cost and funding options influenced their decision to take their programme.
- **T Level awareness and interest** questions were asked of the other level 3 technical and A level learner groups, including whether they had heard of T Levels and the likelihood of choosing them as an alternative to their programmes, to establish how T Levels are recognised and perceived by learners in the current post-16 education landscape.

This report

Findings in this report cover the surveys of all six learner groups, discussed in three separate chapters. Both T Level cohorts are discussed in one chapter, along with the comparator A level and other level 3 technical learner groups. Discussing the first and second cohorts of T Level learners provides a more complete picture of the T Level experience, with views taken at the midway point (for 2021 starters) and the end of the programme (for 2020 starters). Similarly, the A level and other level 3 technical learner groups are included in the same chapter, as they were interviewed to provide a comparison to T Level learners.

The TLTP and level 4/5 learner groups are discussed in separate chapters, given that the aim was not to compare the findings with the T Level learner group, but rather the experiences of learners within these separate learner groups.

Two separate sets of Appendix Tables have been published alongside this report (one for Wave 2 with T Level 2020 starters and one covering all the cohorts in 2022 Wave 1) and are referenced in the report throughout. Outputs from the multivariate analysis are also published in a separate set of tables alongside this report.

Percentages are rounded to zero decimal points. As a result, figures may not sum to 100%.

All reported base sizes exclude those who refused to answer or selected the option 'don't know' (unless these options were presented up-front). Figures based on a sample size of less than 30 are not presented.

All data are weighted to reflect the population of each cohort (see Appendix A – Technical note). Unweighted bases are provided in tables and charts.

Comparisons discussed in the report are statistically significant at the 95% level unless stated otherwise. Where the p value is greater than 0.05 the p value is provided in the accompanying text.

T Level learners

This chapter focuses on T Levels. It looks at subject and learner characteristics, reasons for choosing the programme, aspirations, delivery of the programme and its components, workload and challenges, learners' satisfaction, programme outcomes and next steps.

Key T Level findings and comparison with other level 3

- In 2021/22, T Levels attracted a wide range of learners, including those who thought that they otherwise would have chosen A levels, another technical qualification, or an apprenticeship. This is similar to in 2020/21. Of 2021 starters not taking T Levels (other level 3 technical and A level learners), just under a third were aware of T Levels when choosing their courses (29% and 28% respectively).
- Across all level 3 courses, including T Levels, learners' choices were influenced by their interest in the subject area, and how the subject fitted with their intended future area of work. On starting their programme, T Level learners were surer about the area they wanted to work in than other level 3 learners.
- There was a significant return to in-person teaching in the 2021/22 academic year, with almost all learners from both T Level cohorts taught mostly or entirely in person. Across all level 3 qualifications, most learners were taught for 11-20 hours a week. Of 2021 starters, T Level learners were more likely than other level 3 learners to have high teaching hours i.e., more than 20 teaching hours a week.
- Almost all the first T Level cohort (2020 starters) completed the required industry placement by the end of their programme. However, almost one fifth of T Level learners completed a placement of fewer than 300 hours, below the standard minimum T Level expectation of 315 hours, although within the flexibilities allowed by DfE as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including meeting a set of pre-agreed learning outcomes. Three quarters of the second cohort began their industry placement in the first year of their T Level. These placement rates are higher than for 2020/21, when placements were impacted by COVID-19. Across both T Level cohorts, most placements related directly to the learners' occupational specialism. Most learners from both cohorts were satisfied with their placement and felt it met their expectations.
- T Level learners were more likely to have an industry placement and other contact with employers than other level 3 technical learners. T Level placements also tended to be longer than other level 3 technical work placements.

- Across both T Level cohorts, most learners found their workload manageable, including the amount of teaching on the programme and work done outside of taught lessons.
- Lack of study materials was the most common barrier to learning for T Levels. This was reported more by the second T Level cohort (2021 starters) than the first (2020 starters), especially learners on some new T Level courses (delivered from 2021/22), including by 69% of learners in the new Health and Science route. In other routes, this was reported as a barrier for between 21% and 37% of learners.
- Satisfaction with the T Level programme dropped substantially for the second cohort. This was associated with some of the new T Level courses, particularly those in Health and Science, which is likely to reflect concerns with assessment in that route (fieldwork for the second cohort took place after exams), and with the level of science content in the Health pathway. Satisfaction was similar for new providers and those who had delivered T Levels in 2020/21. The second T Level cohort was less satisfied with their programme than those in the same year group on other level 3 technical and A level courses.
- Four fifths of the first T Level cohort reported that the programme had helped them significantly develop their knowledge of the subject area, understanding of how workplaces operate, relevant practical skills, and readiness to work in their chosen occupational area.
- Almost two thirds of the first T Level cohort intended to move into further study or work in their T Level occupational specialism area, with only one in ten deciding to leave the general field of their T Level. The three main next steps for this cohort were a university degree, a job, and an apprenticeship.

T Levels were introduced in September 2020, with courses in Education and Childcare⁶, Digital and Construction. In the second year of delivery (the 2021/22 academic year), seven new courses were introduced. These included new courses within the Digital and Construction routes, and the introduction of three new T Levels in the Health and Science route. The scale of delivery also increased from September 2021, with the number of T Level providers growing from 43 to 102, and the number of full-time learners increasing substantially.

The first year of T Level delivery (2020/21) was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which meant more teaching was delivered online, and particularly affected provision of industry placements. Due to lifting of restrictions, the second year of delivery (2021/22) was less impacted.

⁶ Following the production of this report, this route was renamed Education and Early Years.

This chapter draws on survey responses from two T Level cohorts, and two comparison groups.

The two T Level cohorts are:

- 2020 T Level starters: The first T Level cohort, who began their T Level in September 2020 and were surveyed at the end of their two-year programme. Where relevant, responses are compared with the survey of this cohort at the end of their first year.
- 2021 T Level starters: The second T Level cohort, who began their T Level in September 2021 and were surveyed at the end of their first year.

The two comparison groups are other level 3 learners who began their courses at the same time as 2021 T Level starters:

- 2021 other level 3 technical starters: level 3 technical learners who began their courses in September 2021 and were surveyed at the end of their first year. Learners were sampled if they were studying for at least one substantial technical qualification, in a subject area that mapped onto the technical routes for available T Levels.⁷
- 2021 A level starters: A level learners who began their courses in September 2021 and were surveyed at the end of their first year.⁸

These learner groups are compared with 2021 T Level starters to explore learners' experiences of different level 3 qualifications. T Levels are designed to be a prestigious technical alternative to A levels, so comparing these courses allows this aim to be evaluated.

T Levels aim to improve the consistency of quality of level 3 technical education, so comparisons with pre-existing level 3 technical qualifications allow this aim to be evaluated. This is particularly important given the government's plans to remove funding approval from level 3 technical qualifications which overlap with T Levels.

Learner characteristics

The learner characteristics outlined below are intended to provide a picture of the population profiles of T Level, A level and other level 3 technical learners. They are based on the original population as provided by administrative records, rather than the

⁷ A level 3 vocational or technical programme, with at least 360 guided learning hours, in a Subject Sector Area that mapped onto one of the four T Level technical routes available in 2021/22 (Construction, Digital, Education and Childcare, Health and Science).

⁸ A proportion of A level starters were also doing other level 3 technical courses. These individuals were included in both the A level and other level 3 technical course samples in proportion to their number in those populations. The questionnaire asked individuals to think about all their courses when responding to questions about satisfaction with their course.

group interviewed in the survey. The descriptions of the T Level population profile refer to the second T Level cohort, who started the programme in 2021, with some comparisons drawn with the first cohort, who started the programme in 2020.

Sex

Overall, there were more female T Level learners (55%) than male. A similar proportion of A level learners were female (56%), and level 3 technical learners were even more likely to be female (62%). Like the 2020 T Level starters, the 2021 Education and Childcare T Level learners tended to be female (95%) and the Digital and Construction learners tended to be male (91% and 86% respectively). Health and Science learners were most commonly female (85%).

Ethnicity

The 2021 T Level starters were majority white (81%). Like the 2020 T Level starters, the Digital route was slightly more diverse, with a larger proportion of Asian learners (14%). The A level and level 3 technical learner groups were more diverse but were still majority white (70% and 68% respectively).

Free school meals (FSM) in recent years

Overall, 24% of 2021 T Level starters received free school meals (FSM) in recent years⁹. Within this learner group, it was highest for Education and Childcare learners (27%) and lowest for Digital and Construction learners (21% and 22% respectively). Level 3 technical learners were slightly more likely to be eligible for FSM at 31%, compared to 18% among A level learners.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The proportion of learners who were recorded in administrative data as having Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision in both the 2021 T Level starters and level 3 technical learners was 12%. The proportion of A level learners with SEN was comparatively lower, at 7%. Among T Level 2021 starters, Digital learners were slightly more likely than other routes to have SEN, at 17%.

Previous educational attainment

The prior attainment of the T Level 2021 starters was more comparable to the other level 3 technical learners than the A level learners. While 93% of T Level and 91% of level 3

⁹ An indicator of free school meal status (FSM) was obtained for learners for the two years prior to their start on the course. The measure included instances of free school meals eligibility in any of the previous six years.

technical learners had gained four or more GCSEs grades four or above, 99% of A level learners had met the same level of prior attainment. The difference in prior attainment is more clearly shown when looking at the 'Attainment 8' score, a score calculated across 8 qualifications including maths and English (which are double weighted). Quintiles for this score were developed based on the first cohort T Level population, and using this we see that 24% of T Level learners starting in 2021 are in the highest achieving quintile, 19% of level 3 technical learners and 65% among A level learners.

Provider characteristics

Overall, just under half (47%) of 2021 T Level starters were studying with providers who had been operating T Levels in the 2020/21 academic year i.e., the first year that T Levels were introduced. This was fairly consistent across T Level routes, except for the Digital route, where 52% of learners were studying with providers who had been operating T Levels in the 2020/21 academic year.

Choosing the programme: 2021/22 learners

T Level starters who began their courses in September 2021 were asked how they found out about their programme, their reasons for choosing it above alternatives, their aspirations when choosing the programme, and the reasons for choosing their subjects areas and providers. To make comparisons with other level 3 qualifications, learner groups who began A levels and other level 3 technical qualifications in September 2021 were asked a similar set of questions.

Awareness of the programme

The majority (59%) of 2021 T Level starters indicated that they had heard about their programme 'from a college or school providing the programme' (their website, prospectus, open day etc.). The other sources of information identified were: 'teachers at their school' (25%), 'careers advisers' (17%), 'programme website' (12%), 'social media' (11%) and 'friends' (10%). Smaller proportions (<10%) of learners gained awareness of the programme through 'local advertising' or from 'an employer'. Further details can be found in Appendix table TL023.

Most 2021 A level (72%) and level 3 technical starters (71%) were not aware of T Levels when they chose their programme. Based on their current knowledge of T Levels, relatively few A level (21%) and other level 3 technical learners (28%) would have been 'very likely' or 'likely' to consider a T Level instead of their current programme. Around half of A level learners (49%) would have been 'not likely' or 'not at all likely' to consider a T Level instead of their current programme, whilst only 29% of other level 3

technical learners reported this. Further details can be found in Appendix tables AL022 and L3026.

Aspirations

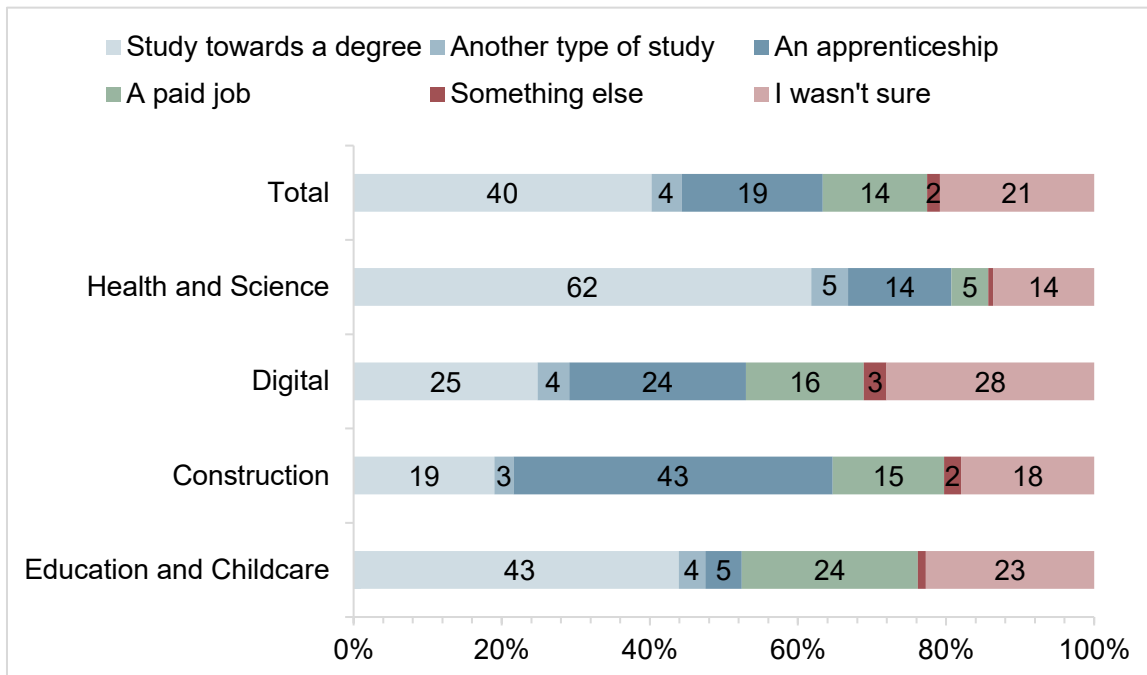
2021 T Level starters were asked to think back to when they were choosing their current programme and what they had originally wanted to do after completing the programme.

The second T Level cohort (2021 starters) had similar aspirations to the first cohort (2020 starters), with around two fifths (40% of 2021 starters, 41% of 2020 starters) wanting to go on to 'study towards a degree' after their T Level.

However, 2021 T Level starters' aspirations varied substantially by subject. Degree level study was a particularly common aspiration for Health and Science learners (63%), while apprenticeships were particularly common for Construction (43%) and Digital (24%) learners, compared with Health and Science (14%) and Education and Childcare learners (5%). Education and Childcare learners were the most likely to want to go into paid work after the programme (24%). Digital learners were the most likely to report they were not sure what they wanted to do (28%). The general aspirations reported by 2021 T Level starters did not differ significantly depending on attainment score, FSM status, SEN status, parents' employment status, or whether parents held a degree or not.

2021 T Level starters were noticeably less likely to aspire to study a degree, compared to 2021 A level starters (40% compared to 68%). Compared to other level 3 technical 2021 starters, T Level learners had broadly similar aspirations. Compared with A level learners, T Level learners were more likely to want an apprenticeship (19% compared to 7%) or to do paid work upon completion of the programme (14% compared to 3%). Further details can be found in Appendix tables TL017, AL013, and L3017.

Figure 1 First year T Level learners' original aspirations for after their programme (2021 starters)



Base: First year T Level learners (unweighted: 2,388). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

2021 T Level starters were reasonably sure at the start of the programme about their intended occupation, and more certain than other level 3 learners. Around three fifths (62%) were 'certain' or 'quite sure' about the occupation. A quarter (26%) said they were 'considering a few occupations'. In comparison, around half (53%) of other level 3 technical learners and two fifths (41%) of A level learners were 'certain' or 'quite sure' about their intended occupation. Further details can be found in Appendix tables TL018, AL014, and L3018.

Reasons for choosing subject area

Learners were asked about their reasons for choosing their programmes, subject area(s) and school or college, and the relative importance of each of these factors.

For all learner groups starting in 2021, subject area was the most important consideration when choosing a programme (72-77% of learners). For T Level and other level 3 technical learners, choice of qualification (47% and 39% respectively) was more important than choice of provider (20% and 29%), while for A level learners, choice of provider (38%) was more important than choice of qualification (23%). This may relate

to the wider availability of A levels compared with technical courses, giving A level learners a larger range of local providers to choose from.

The most commonly reported reasons that 2021 T Level starters gave for choosing their subject were that it ‘fitted with the areas they wanted to work in’ (66%) and they ‘were interested in the subject area’ (61%). Learners could give more than one reason. Smaller numbers of learners reported choosing the subject because it was ‘important for their intended further study’ (29%) or they were ‘advised to study this area’ (19%). Very few learners reported choosing the subject because ‘friends were doing the same subject area’ (4%). Similarly, across 2021 starters for other level 3 programmes, the most common responses were interest in the subject (82% of A level learners and 65% of level 3 technical learners) and fit with intended work areas (55% of A level learners and 62% of level 3 technical learners). Further details can be found in Appendix tables TL019, AL015, and L3019.

Reasons for choosing qualification

The most commonly reported reasons that 2021 T Level starters gave for choosing their qualification were that it ‘offered the right mix of classroom learning and practical study’ (45%) and ‘the industry/work experience element’ (44%). Learners could give more than one response. Over a fifth of learners also reported that they chose the qualification because:

- ‘it is important for the kind of job I want’ (33%)
- ‘it is recognised by employers’ (25%)
- ‘it is important for further study’ (24%)
- ‘they were advised to’ (23%)
- ‘it offered an alternative to academic study’ (22%).

Some learners reported a lack of choice in qualifications, saying that the T Level qualification ‘was the only type available in my subject’ (15%). The attainment scores of T Level learners did not affect the reasoning for choosing the T Level qualification. Further details can be found in Appendix table TL020.

2021 T Level starters gave different reasons for choosing their qualification than other level 3 learners. The most commonly reported reasons that 2021 A level and other level 3 technical starters gave for their choices were that the qualification was important for ‘further study’ (61% A level, 38% other level 3 technical learners) or ‘the kind of job I want’ (40% A level, 45% other level 3 technical). Other level 3 technical and A level learners were less likely than T Level learners to choose their qualifications due to the ‘right mix of classroom learning and practical study’ (26% other level 3 technical and

12% A level) or 'the industry/work experience element' (14% other level 3 technical and 4% A level). This suggests that T Level learners are aware of T Levels' strong emphasis on extended work experience when choosing their qualification, and that this programme element is influential in their decisions. Further details can be found in Appendix tables AL016 and L3020.

Reasons for choosing provider

The most commonly reported reasons 2021 T Level starters gave for choosing their provider were that it 'offered the subjects I wanted to do' (64%) and 'was convenient to travel to' (60%). Learners could give more than one response.

Approximately a fifth of learners reported choosing their provider because 'friends were going there' (18%), while fewer learners chose their provider because of 'informal recommendations' (12%), 'its adverts or open day' (11%), 'its formal rating' (11%), because they had 'studied there previously' (9%), or because their 'parents/guardians chose it' (5%). Further details can be found in Appendix table TL021.

Subject offer and convenient travel were also the most common reasons for choosing their provider for 2021 starters of other level 3 technical programmes and A levels. However, both groups of learners were more likely to cite previous study with the provider, compared to T Level learners (44% of A level and 22% of other level 3 technical learners). This could reflect the likely context that fewer learners could stay at their previous education provider to study T Levels than other level 3 qualifications, given the small number of T Level providers in 2021/22, and the high proportion of FE providers.

Overall, level 3 technical learners gave more similar responses to T Level learners, which may reflect that both courses are technically oriented. A level learners were more likely than T Level learners to cite friends going there (37%), and the provider's formal rating (25%). Further details can be found in Appendix tables AL017 and L3021.

Alternatives to a T Level

Learners were asked what they thought they would have most likely done instead if they had not chosen to do their current programme.

A quarter of 2021 T Level starters indicated that they would most likely have either taken 'a different kind of technical or vocational qualification' (25%) or 'A levels' (25%). A similar proportion of learners reported they would most likely have done an 'apprenticeship' (23%) whilst fewer learners would most likely have taken 'a mixture of A levels and other courses' (11%). This suggests that T Levels are succeeding in attracting a wide range of learners, including those who would have otherwise taken an academic pathway. Further details can be found in Appendix table TL024. Responses were similar across T Level subjects, except for Construction learners who were particularly likely to

have applied for an apprenticeship instead (41%). Among other level 3 technical learners, Health and Science learners reported they would have likely chosen 'a mixture of A levels and other courses' significantly more than other learners.

Leaving the programme early

Around a tenth (9%) of 2021 T Level starters left their T Level programme before they were surveyed at the end of their first year. The most common reasons for leaving reported by learners related to their experience of the programme, specifically having not 'liked the programme' (47%) and 'lack of support from teachers' (42%). Just over a fifth of these learners left the programme due to broader reasons such as 'personal problems' (28%), having 'changed their mind about future career plans' (28%), or having 'found an apprenticeship instead' (22%).

Programme content and delivery

All learner groups were asked about their programme content and delivery in 2021/22. Responses for 2021 T Level starters are compared with 2020 T Level starters after their first year and after their second year of study. The number of hours 2021 T Level learners were taught are compared to 2021 starters for A level and other level 3 technical qualifications.

Teaching characteristics

Data from 2021/22 shows a significant return to in-person teaching for both T Level cohorts, after high levels of hybrid and remote teaching in the 2020/21 academic year during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, 2020 starters (first T Level cohort) were more likely than 2021 starters (second T Level cohort) to be continuing with some elements of hybrid teaching in 2021/22, perhaps because they had already experienced this teaching mode.

Almost all 2021 T Level starters (94%) were taught 'entirely' (42%) or 'mostly' (52%) in-person in the 2021/22 academic year. Only a small proportion of learners were taught in-person and online in equal amounts (5%). The mode of programme delivery was similar across T Level subjects.

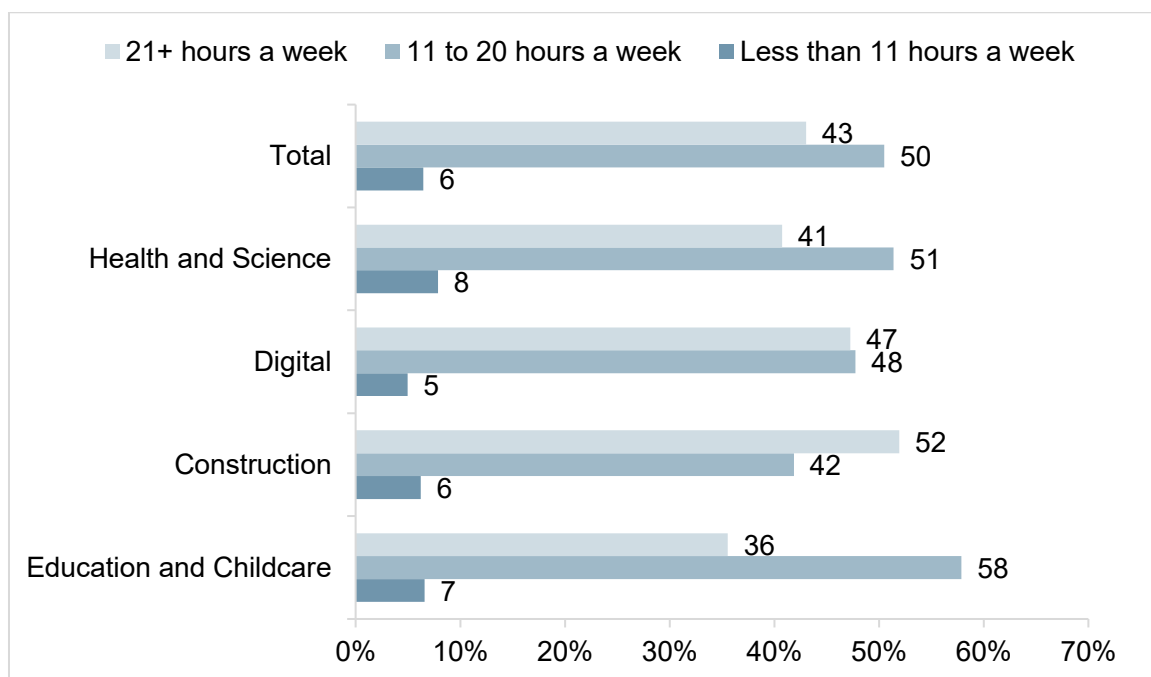
2020 T Level starters were slightly less likely than 2021 starters to be taught in-person in 2021/22, with 85% taught 'entirely' or 'mostly' in-person. However, **in-person teaching for 2020 starters is much higher in 2021/22 (their second year) compared with**

2020/2021 (their first year), when only about a quarter (28%) were taught ‘entirely’ or ‘mostly in person’.

When asked to report the number of teaching hours received, learners answered regardless of whether they were taught online or in-person. These teaching hours excluded an industry placement or other work experience. **Half of 2021 T Level starters (50%) reported receiving 11 to 20 hours of teaching each week**, with a further 43% reporting receiving 21 hours or more. Only small groups of learners reported receiving less than 11 hours (6%), an improvement compared with 2020 T Level starters in their first year (13%). The hours of teaching did not differ significantly from the first to the second year for 2020 T Level starters.

There was some variation by subject, with Construction learners receiving more teaching hours on average compared with Education and Childcare learners (52% of Construction learners reported receiving 21 or more hours of teaching hours per week compared to 36% of Education and Childcare learners) (Figure 2). This difference may relate to the varying proportion and length of industry placements between the subjects.

Figure 2 Usual number of teaching hours per week in academic year 2021/22 for first year T Level learners (2021 starters)



Base: First year T Level learners (unweighted: 2,376). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

The majority of 2021 starters for A levels and other level 3 technical qualifications also reported receiving 11 to 20 teaching hours a week (65% and 52% respectively). 2021 level 3 technical starters were more likely to report low teaching hours (22%

reported less than 11 hours teaching per week) compared to A level learners (5%). Of 2021 starters, T Level learners were more likely than the other level 3 learners to have high teaching hours (43% reported more than 20 teaching hours, compared with 30% for A level and 26% for other level 3 technical learners). This is in line with increased expectations for contact time for T Levels,¹⁰ compared with existing level 3 technical programmes.

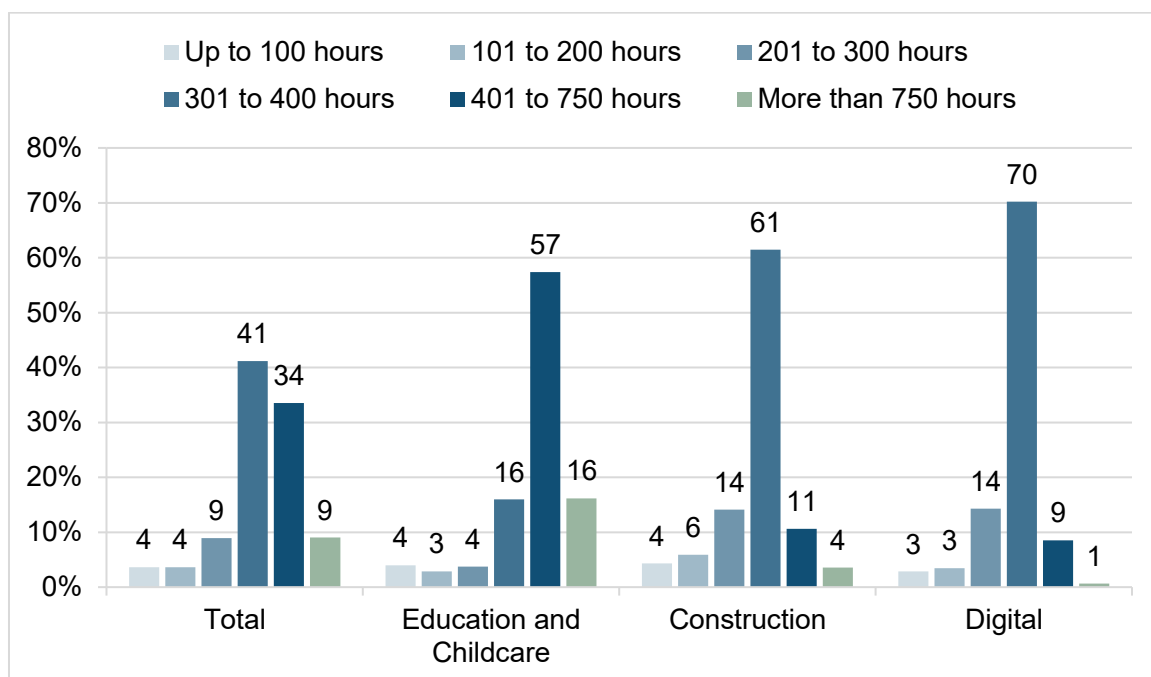
Industry placement

By the end of their programme, almost all 2020 T Level starters who responded to the survey had completed the required industry placement (95%), compared with 64% of this group at the end of their first year. This proportion was similar across subjects by the end of the second year, even though there were some variations between subjects after the first year. These findings are similar to the provisional [published results](#) (94% placement completion, with similar rates for each route), which is the preferred data source as it covers the full population of T Level learners.

The placement length for most T Level learners was in line with programme expectations. Of 2020 T Level starters who had completed a placement by the end of their programme, the most common placement length was between 301-400 hours (41%), in line with the minimum expectation of 315 hours for most T Levels. About a third of 2020 T Level starters (34%) had a placement length of 401-750 hours. However, almost one fifth of 2020 T Level starters (17%) had a placement length less than 300 hours, which was permitted under flexibilities to the DfE Industry Placement guidance to reflect the challenges of delivering placements in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, including completion of a pre-agreed set of learning outcomes.

¹⁰ 1,800 hours over two years, including the industry placement.

Figure 3 Industry placement hours for second year T Level learners at the end of their programme (2020 starters)

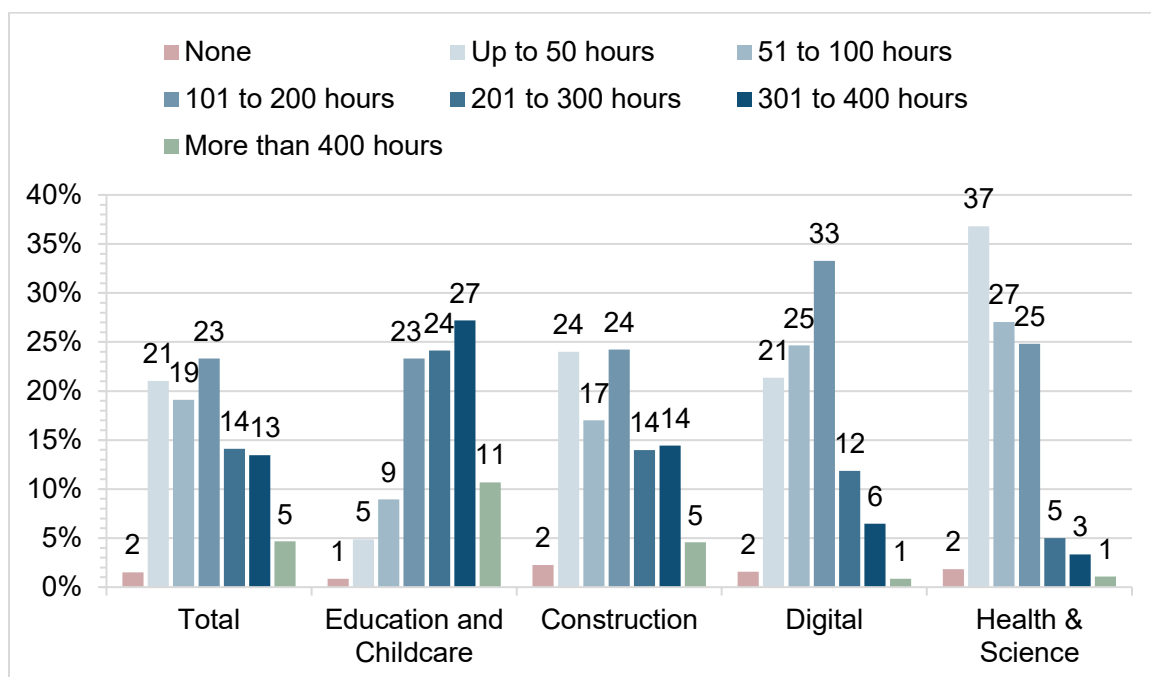


Base: Second year T Level learners who had done an industry placement (unweighted: 548). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

A higher proportion of the second T Level cohort (2021 starters) had begun an industry placement by the end of their first year than those in the first cohort (75% of 2021 compared to 64% of 2020 T Level starters). First year placements for 2020 starters were substantially disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, first year placements were more common for T Level learners than other level 3 technical learners, of whom under half (48%) had undertaken work experience or an industry placement during the first year of their programme. Further details can be found in Appendix tables TL032 and L3032.

The length of industry placements for 2021 T Level starters varied by subject. Education and Childcare learners completed more hours on placements than other learners (Figure 4). This reflects the special placement requirement of 750 hours for the Early Years Educator specialism within Education and Childcare. Further details can be found in Appendix table TL033.

Figure 4 Industry placement hours for T Level learners at the end of their first year (2021 starters)



Base: First year T Level learners who had started an industry placement (unweighted: 1,793). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

For 2021 T Level starters who had begun their placement, placement hours in the first year varied widely. A quarter (26%) of learners completed 101-200 hours in their first year of their T Level. Almost one fifth (18%) had already completed more than 300 hours. Overall, placement hours in the first year were higher for the second cohort (2021 T Level starters) than the first cohort (2020 starters), which is as expected given widespread disruption to placements during the pandemic.

Of 2021 T Level starters, Education and Childcare (94%) and Health and Science (76%) learners were the most likely to report having spent time on a work experience or industry placement during the first year of their programme. The number of Construction and Digital learners who reported this was around three fifths (65% and 62% respectively).

Whether 2021 T Level starters had undertaken an industry placement did not differ regionally, by level of area deprivation, or whether learners were residing in an urban or rural area.

Compared with other level 3 technical learners, 2021 T Level starters had longer placements, as well as being more likely to undertake a placement. The most common placement length for other level 3 technical courses was up to 50 hours (40%), with a further quarter (23%) lasting 51-100 hours. A significantly smaller number of other

level 3 technical learners (13%) completed more than 300 hours of work experience, compared to 2021 T Level starters. Further details can be found in Appendix table X.

Most 2020 T Level starters (76%) reported completing the 2021/22 section of their placement entirely in-person, with an additional fifth (17%) completing their placement 'mostly in-person'. Education and Childcare placements were particularly likely to be entirely in-person (91%) and this was also the most reported option for Construction learners (79%). Only half of Digital learners (48%) had entirely in-person placements, while the other half (52%) incorporated remote elements to varying degrees. Across subjects, remote working was usually located at the learner's college or school (71%), or at home (25%). Further details can be found in Appendix Wave 2 table 24.

For 2021 T Level starters, most placements took place entirely in-person (88%). Eight percent of learners reported that their industry placement took place 'mostly in-person' with some remote working. Similar to 2020 T Level starters, when 2021 T Level starters were asked where their remote working took place, they reported that it occurred in their college or school (45%), or at home (27%). Further details can be found in Appendix tables TL034, TL035, and Wave 2 table 25.

Almost all 2020 T Level starters (90%) felt that their placements directly related to their occupational specialism. This was most prevalent for Education and Childcare (98%) and Construction (89%) learners, with only 76% of Digital learners agreeing with the statement. 92% of 2020 T Level starters felt their placements related to either their occupational specialism or the general field of their programme. **Slightly fewer 2021 T Level starters (83%) felt that their placement directly related to their occupational specialism by the end of their first year**, with it being lowest among Health and Science learners (73%). Further details can be found in Appendix Wave 2 table 26 and table TL036.

Two thirds of 2021 T Level starters (69%) had contact with employers outside of their industry placement. This was most commonly through talks with employers (54%), with around a fifth of learners reporting contact through visiting employers (21%) or as part of their project work (19%). Education and Childcare learners were less likely than other subjects to have contact with employers beyond their industry placement (60%). Construction learners reported that they visited employers more (34%) than the other programme subjects. Other level 3 technical learners were less likely than T Level learners to have contact with employers, with 47% reporting they had some type of contact with employers beyond work experience. Further details can be found in Appendix tables TL039 and L3024.

Workload and challenges

All learner groups were asked about the workload in their programme, any barriers to learning they experienced, and the level of challenge in their programme. Responses for 2020 T Level starters are compared with those for 2021 T Level starters. Responses for 2021 T Level starters are compared with 2021 starters for other level 3 courses.

Workload and clarity

The workload in T Levels was manageable for most learners. Almost all 2020 T Level starters indicated that the amount of teaching was 'very', 'mostly' or 'quite' manageable (94%) in their second year, similar to their responses at the end of first year (93%). Only a small group found the amount of teaching to be 'not very manageable' or 'not at all manageable' (6% for their second year and 7% for their first year). 2020 T Level starters also found the work undertaken outside of taught lessons across their two year programme to be 'very', 'mostly' or 'quite' manageable (92% for second year and 90% for first year). Responses about workload were similar across subjects, attainment quintiles and SEN status. Further details can be found in Appendix Wave 2 tables 28 and 29.

However, 2021 T Level starters were slightly less positive than 2020 starters, with 88% finding the amount of teaching 'very', 'most' or 'quite' manageable (10% 'not very manageable', 2% 'not at all manageable'). Similarly, 86% found workload outside lessons 'very', 'mostly' or 'quite' manageable with 11% of learners reporting it was 'not very manageable', and 3% stating it was 'not at all manageable'. Further details can be found in Appendix tables TL29 and TL30.

2021 starters of A level and other level 3 technical courses were similar to 2021 T Level starters in finding the amount of teaching manageable (90% for A level, 91% for other level 3 technical). They were less likely than T Level learners to report that the workload outside lessons was 'very', 'mostly', or 'quite' manageable (86% for T Level, 81% for other level 3 technical, 76% for A level). Further details can be found in Appendix tables AL025, AL026, L3029 and L3030.

For the small group of T Level learners (8% 2020 starters in their second year; 14% 2021 starters in their first year) who did not find the work outside lessons manageable, the most commonly reported reasons were:

- 'Not enough support from teacher / tutor' (56% 2020 starters; 50% 2021 starters)
- 'Too much work given' (46% 2020 starters; 42% 2021 starters)
- 'The work set was unclear' (41% 2020 starters; 52% 2021 starters)
- 'Other commitments outside the programme' (29% 2020 starters; 26% 2021 starters)
- 'The work was too hard' (8% 2020 starters; 29% 2021 starters)

Further details can be found in Appendix table TL031 and Wave 2 table 30.

Barriers to learning

‘Lack of materials for studying’ was a barrier to learning for many T Level learners in 2021/22; almost half of 2021 starters (43%) and nearly a third (31%) of 2020 starters reported this (Error! Reference source not found.). For 2021 starters, learners on new pathways were more affected by lack of materials (27% to 69%) than learners on pathways which had also been delivered in 2020/21 (21% to 35%). However, one new pathway (Onsite Construction) was better resourced than most pathways also delivered in 2020/21, with only 27% of learners reporting lack of materials as a barrier. Lack of materials was a particular issue for 2021 Health and Science starters, where over two thirds of learners (69%) were affected. Concerns about lack of materials across all T Level routes were also reported by Ofsted,¹¹ who noted that teaching and learning was affected by delays and shortages of textbooks, teaching materials and sample exam papers.

In 2021/22, the other most common barriers to learning were

- Lack of in-person teaching (22% 2020 starters, 19% 2021 starters)
- working part-time (20% 2020 starters, 26% 2021 starters)
- Lack of reliable IT or online access (19% 2020 starters, 21% 2021 starters)
- Cost of travel to the programme (17% 2020 starters, 17% 2021 starters)
- Lack of specialist equipment / software (16% 2020 starters, 22% 2021 starters)¹²

For 2020 T Level starters, who were in the second year of their programme, ‘lack of in-person teaching’ was a particular issue for Construction learners (35%, compared with 21% for Digital and 18% for Education and Childcare). ‘Family responsibilities meant could not study enough’ were a barrier to learning for specific groups (19% of FSM learners compared with 8% of non-FSM, and 14% of female compared with 7% of male learners).

A quarter of T Level learners (25% of 2021 starters, 25% of 2020 starters) did not report experiencing any barriers to learning in 2021/22. For 2020 T Level starters, the proportion of learners who experienced ‘no barriers’ varied across subjects (36% of Digital learners, compared with 21% of Education and Childcare, and 16% of Construction learners).

¹¹ Ofsted (2022). [A review of the quality of T-level courses: interim report.](#)

¹² Please note that there were minor differences in wording for the specific barriers asked about between 2021 starters and 2020 starters, so caution should be exercised when comparing these numbers.

2021 T Level starters were more likely to report a lack of materials for studying (43%) compared with 2021 starters for A level (18%) and other level 3 technical courses (15%). A level learners were more likely to report part-time working as a barrier (26%) than other level 3 technical learners (20% 2021 T Level starters, 18% 2021 other level 3 technical starters). Further details can be found in Appendix tables TL042, AL033, and L3037.

Table 1: Barriers to learning reported by first year T Level learners (2020 and 2021 starters), and second year T Level learners (2020 starters)

Barriers to learning	% of 2020 first year T Level learners	% of 2021 second year T Level learners	% of 2021 first year T Level learners
Lack of materials for studying (for instance textbooks, workbooks, online resources)	17%	31%	43%
Working part-time meant could not study enough	11%	20%	20%
Lack of specialist equipment/ software for programme	9%	16%	17%
Lack of reliable IT or online access	17%	19%	16%
Lack of in-person teaching	37%	22%	14%
Cost of travel to my programme	10%	17%	13%
Family responsibilities meant could not study enough	11%	11%	10%
Mental/ physical health issues or special needs	2%	3%	3%
Lack of support and guidance	3%	1%	3%
Poor organisation of the course/lessons planning, lack of communication	n/a	4%	3%
COVID-19	5%	2%	1%
<i>Unweighted Base</i>	799	581	2,363

Base: First year and second year T Level learners. Source: Tech Ed Study 2021 (Jun-Aug 2021) and Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022)

How challenging learners found T Levels

For the academic year 2021/22, the majority of T Level learners (55% of 2021 starters and 65% of 2020 starters) reported that their programme had been ‘quite challenging’. 2021 starters (33%) were more likely than 2020 starters (23%) to describe

the programme as 'very' or 'extremely' challenging. A small proportion of learners were at the other end of the scale, with 13% of 2021 starters and 12% of 2020 starters describing their programme as 'not very' or 'not at all challenging'.

Of 2020 T Level starters, learners with lower prior attainment were more likely to have found the programme 'extremely' or 'very challenging' in their second year; 28% for the lowest achieving quintile of the T Level population at GCSE, compared to 15% for the highest achieving quintile of the T Level population, although this finding was not statistically significant at the 5% level ($p=0.074$). Difficulties managing the amount of teaching and workload outside lessons were also associated with finding the programme 'extremely' or 'very' challenging. This finding is statistically significant. Further details can be found in Appendix Wave 2 table 32.

Other level 3 technical qualifications were considered slightly less challenging than A levels or T Levels. Just under a quarter of 2021 other level 3 technical starters (23%) described their qualifications as 'extremely' or 'very' challenging, compared with 38% of 2021 A level starters and 33% of 2021 T Level starters. Further details can be found in Appendix tables TL040, AL031, and L3035.

Satisfaction with the programme

All learner groups were asked about their overall satisfaction with their programme, and their satisfaction with specific aspects of the programme. Learner satisfaction gives insights into how key elements of the programme are experienced by learners, and how delivery can be refined. This is particularly important because of the ambition to significantly scale T Level learner numbers in future years.

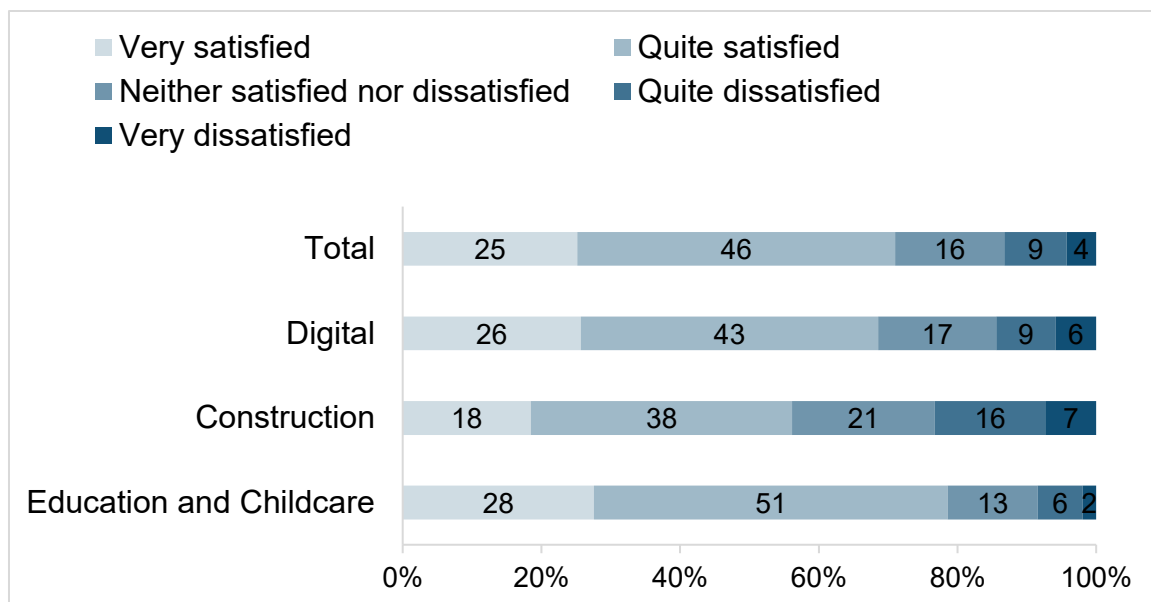
Responses for 2021 T Level starters are compared with those for 2020 T Level starters. This indicates the effects of changes in delivery for the second cohort, including the new Health and Science route, new pathways for Construction and Digital, and the selection of new providers. Responses for 2021 T Level starters are also compared with 2021 starters for other level 3 courses, to see how the experience of the 2021 cohort varies depending on their chosen programme.

Overall satisfaction

The first cohort of T Level learners had high satisfaction at the end of their programme, with most learners (71%) indicating they were 'very' or 'quite satisfied' with the programme (Figure 5). However, 13% of learners were 'very' or 'quite dissatisfied'. This is slightly lower than the proportion of these learners who were 'very' or 'quite' satisfied at the end of their first year (79%, with 8% 'quite' or very' dissatisfied). At the

end of their second year, a larger proportion (79%) of Education and Childcare learners were satisfied, compared to learners in Digital (69%) and Construction (56%) learners.

Figure 5 Overall satisfaction with T Levels at the end of their programme (2020 starters), by subject



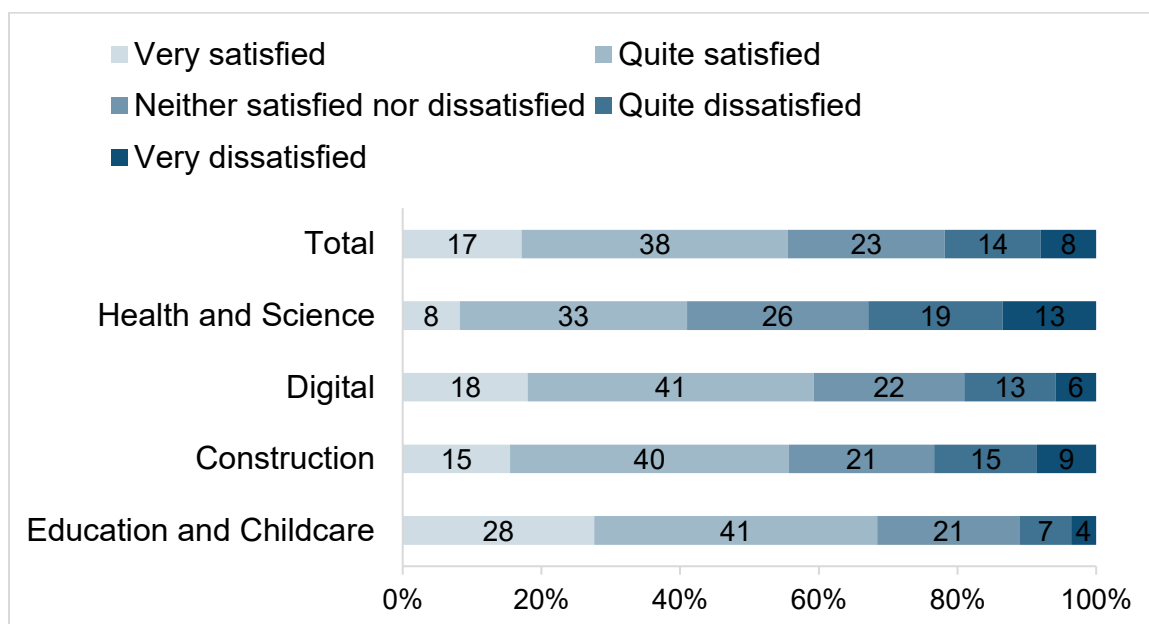
Base: Second year T Level learners (unweighted: 584). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

Learner satisfaction is lower for the second T Level cohort (2021 starters) than the first (2020 starters). At the end of their first year, just over half (56%) of 2021 starters were ‘very’ or ‘quite’ satisfied (Figure 6). At the end of their first year, 79% of 2020 starters were ‘very’ or ‘quite’ satisfied, compared with 71% at the end of second year.

Almost a quarter of 2021 T Level starters (22%) were either ‘very’ or ‘quite dissatisfied’, with the remaining 23% of learners ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’. These proportions are larger than those for 2020 starters, both at the end of their first year and at the end of the programme. These proportions of learners were similar across FSM and SEN status, and prior attainment.

2021 T Level starters reported lower satisfaction than the same cohort of other level 3 technical learners (75%) and A level learners (73%). Further details can be found in Appendix tables TL043, AL034, and L3038.

Figure 6 Overall satisfaction with T Levels at the end of their first year (2021 starters), by subject



Base: First year T Level learners (unweighted: 2,388). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

Comparing T Level routes, satisfaction for 2021 T Level starters was highest within the Education and Childcare route (68%), followed by Digital (59%) and Construction (56%). Satisfaction was lowest within the new Health and Science route (41%) which brought down the average satisfaction score. However, satisfaction was also lower across the other existing routes compared to the 2020 cohort when surveyed at the end of first year.

Comparing T Level pathways, the pathways which were previously delivered in 2020/21 generally had higher satisfaction (59% to 68% of learners 'very' or 'quite satisfied') than the new pathways (34% to 64%). Comparing both 2020 and 2021 cohorts for the three pathways which were delivered in both years:

- Satisfaction was similar across years for Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction (67% of 2020 starters were satisfied at the end of their first year, compared with 65% of 2021 starters)
- Satisfaction decreased for Digital Production, Design and Development (77% and 59% respectively)
- Satisfaction decreased for Education and Childcare (85% and 68% respectively)

Of the seven new pathways, four had particularly low satisfaction, which also contributed to the overall drop in satisfaction. In the Health and Science route, all three pathways had low satisfaction (41% overall, and 39% to 48% for the three individual pathways). The Building Services Engineering for Construction pathway also had low satisfaction (34%).

Lower satisfaction may reflect the increased barriers reported by the second cohort (2021 starters), particularly the lack of study materials such as textbooks, teaching materials and sample exam papers. It is also likely to reflect the concerns about assessments in the Health and Science route, and about the level of science content in the Health pathway. The introduction of new T Level providers in 2021/22 has not affected learner satisfaction. Further details can be found in 'Multivariate analysis of overall satisfaction'.

At the end of their second year, two thirds of 2020 T Level starters were likely to recommend their programme to others (27% 'very likely, 40% 'quite likely'). Education and Childcare learners were most likely to recommend their programme (73% 'very' or 'quite likely'), compared with Digital learners (65%) and Construction learners (57%). Learners' satisfaction with the programme and the level of challenge were associated with being 'very' or 'quite' likely to recommend the programme: 88% of satisfied learners, compared with 10% of dissatisfied learners, and 77% of learners who found it 'quite challenging', compared with 44% of those who found it 'extremely' or 'very challenging'.

Only around half (52%) of 2021 T Level starters were 'very' or 'quite likely' to recommend their programme to others, compared with around two thirds (68%) of 2021 starters for both A level and other level 3 technical courses. For T Level subject areas available to both cohorts, fewer 2021 starters were 'very' or 'quite likely' to recommend their programme than 2020 starters (a difference of 3-14 percentage points). 2021 Health and Science learners, a new subject area, were least likely to recommend their programme (42% 'very' or 'quite likely', with 19% 'very unlikely'). Recommendation levels were similar for T Level providers who were new in 2021/22 and those who had delivered T Levels in 2020/21. Further details can be found in Appendix tables TL066, AL057, L3061, and Wave 2 table 55.

Satisfaction with specific aspects of the programme

All learner groups were asked about their satisfaction with a range of factors relating to the delivery of their programme (**Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.**). The first T Level cohort (2020 starters) were broadly satisfied with most aspects of their programme, while the second cohort (2021 starters) expressed mixed satisfaction.

At the end of their second year, 2020 T Level starters were broadly satisfied with most aspects of their programme, with 71 to 80% of learners 'very' or 'quite satisfied' with seven of the ten aspects asked about. 2020 T Level starters were particularly satisfied with the skills covered for their chosen area (80%) and teachers' knowledge and expertise (75%). Fewer learners were satisfied with the careers advice provided (64%) and assessment on the programme (58%), while only a minority of learners (41%) were satisfied with programme organisation and management.

2021 T Level starters expressed mixed satisfaction with different aspects of the programme and were less satisfied with aspects of the programme than 2020 starters, including when these cohorts are compared at the end of their first year. For 2021 starters, the proportion of learners who were ‘very’ or ‘quite’ satisfied with different aspects ranged from almost three quarters (72%) who were satisfied with teachers’ knowledge and expertise, to two fifths (40%) who were satisfied with programme organisation and management.

2021 T Level starters were less satisfied than 2021 starters for A levels and other level 3 technical qualifications on several aspects of their programme. These included teachers’ knowledge and expertise, the standard of classroom teaching, equipment, software, and resources available, and programme organisation and management. 2021 starters on technical courses (T Levels and other level 3 technical) were more satisfied than A level learners for the standard of practical ‘hands on’ work, careers advice, and the level of employer contact, reflecting the stronger focus on employment pathways for these courses.

Table 2: Elements of the programme where 2020 T Level starters were satisfied, at the end of their first year and second year

Elements of programme satisfaction	% 2020 T Level starters ‘very’ or ‘quite’ satisfied at end of first year	% 2020 T Level starters ‘very’ or ‘quite’ satisfied at end of second year
The standard of classroom teaching	88%	72%
The standard of practical ‘hands on’ work	69%	73%
Teachers’ knowledge and expertise	88%	75%
Support received from tutors or teachers	80%	73%
Programme organisation and management	61%	41%
Skills covered for chosen occupation / subject	80%	80%
Equipment, software and resources available	75%	71%
Way learners are assessed on the programme	68%	58%
The careers advice provided	62%	64%
Level of employer contact in the programme	59%	72%
<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>755- 800</i>	<i>2,290- 2,553</i>

Base: First year and second year T Level learners, excluding those who said the element was ‘Not applicable’. Source: Tech Ed Study 2021 (Jun-Aug 2021) and Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

Table 3: Elements of the programme where 2021 T Level starters and their comparators were satisfied at the end of their first year

Elements of programme satisfaction	% 2021 T Level starters 'very' or 'quite' satisfied	% level 3 technical learners 'very' or 'quite' satisfied	% A level learners 'very' or 'quite' satisfied
The standard of classroom teaching	69%	76%	82%
The standard of practical 'hands on' work	62%	63%	48%
Teachers' knowledge and expertise	72%	81%	88%
Support received from tutors or teachers	69%	69%	66%
Programme organisation and management	40%	61%	64%
The skills it covered for chosen occupation / subject area	68%	75%	71%
Equipment, software and resources available	64%	72%	67%
The way learners are assessed on the programme	51%	66%	53%
The careers advice provided	54%	55%	40%
The level of employer contact in the programme	49%	35%	11%
<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>2,312- 2,381</i>	<i>2,290- 2,553</i>	<i>53- 672</i>

Base: First year T Level learners, other level 3 technical learners and A level learners, excluding those who said that the element was 'Not applicable' to them. Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

Multivariate analysis of overall satisfaction

Multivariate analysis was conducted to provide insight into the relative importance of a range of factors with overall satisfaction for the 2020 T Level starters. Logistic regression shows whether a given factor is statistically significantly associated with the dependent variable (in this case 'very' or 'quite satisfied' vs not satisfied) while controlling for other factors. In this analysis, a range of models were developed to look at demographic associations, course delivery factors and satisfaction with the individual elements of the course.

In a model that only included demographic and socioeconomic factors (e.g. sex at birth, age, ethnicity, SEN, FSM), only sex was found to be statistically significantly associated with overall satisfaction (female students being more likely to be satisfied with their

course overall). When aspects of the course were included in the model (the subject, whether taught mostly in person, how challenging learners found the course and satisfaction with the industry placement), sex was found to no longer be significant. In this model, **the following were associated with being satisfied with the course overall for 2020 T Level starters:**

- Being very or fairly satisfied with the industry placement.
- Finding the course 'quite challenging' or 'not very/not at all challenging' rather than 'extremely' or 'very challenging'.
- Being on the Education and Childcare course, rather than Digital or Construction.

Looking at the individual specific aspects of course satisfaction (alongside demographic and course-related factors), low satisfaction with the following were found to be significantly associated with overall satisfaction:

- The standard of classroom teaching.
- Programme organisation and management.
- The way learners are assessed on the programme.

Turning to the **T Level starters in 2021**, there were no statistically significant associations for demographic factors. Prior attainment was also not significant, nor was whether the provider was operating T Level courses in 2020/21. The following course-related factors were **associated with being satisfied with the course overall:**

- Being on the Education and Childcare course, rather than Health and Science.
- Being 'very or fairly satisfied' with the industry placement, compared to being not satisfied or not starting a placement.
- Finding the course 'quite challenging' rather than 'extremely / very challenging' or 'not very/not at all challenging'.
- Being taught in-person all the time or mostly, rather than remotely.

Looking at the individual specific aspects of course satisfaction (alongside demographic and course-related factors), the following were found to be significantly associated with overall satisfaction for the T Level starters in 2021:

- The standard of classroom teaching.
- The standard of the practical hands on work.
- The support you received from tutors or teachers.
- Course organisation and management.
- The skills it covered for your chosen occupation / subject area.

- The way learners are assessed on the programme.
- The level of employer contact in the course.
- Preparation for further study.

More detail on these regression models is provided in the separate accompanying tables.

Satisfaction with industry placement

All learners who had undertaken work experience or an industry placement were asked about their satisfaction with this aspect of the programme. [An industry placement is a core requirement of T Levels](#), but is not required for other level 3 technical and or A level qualifications. Responses for 2020 T Level starters are compared with their responses at the end of their first year and with responses for 2021 T Level starters. Responses for 2021 T Level starters are compared with 2021 starters for other level 3 courses.

Satisfaction with specific aspects of the industry placement

The majority (85%) of 2020 T Level starters expressed satisfaction with their industry placement. A larger proportion of Education and Childcare learners (90%) were satisfied with their industry placement compared to learners taking courses in Construction (81%) and Digital (78%), perhaps reflecting the longer placements in this specialism. This is similar to satisfaction reported by 2020 starters at the end of their first year. Further details can be found in Appendix Wave 2 table 44.

Three quarters (74%) of 2021 T Level starters who had begun an industry placement were satisfied with their placement, lower than for 2020 starters at the end of their first year (88%). The results for 2021 T Level starters were similar to satisfaction with work experience for 2021 starters in A level (78%) and other level 3 technical courses (77%).

2021 T Level starters were also asked whether placements met their expectations in specific areas:

- ‘Experience of a real workplace’ (81% felt it met their expectations)
- ‘The opportunity to build my confidence in the workplace’ (71%)
- ‘Given real tasks to carry out’ (67%)
- ‘Able to apply technical knowledge and skills developed on the programme’ (58%)

Only a small group of learners (6%) felt the placement had not met their expectation in any of these areas. The importance of ‘real tasks’ was also emphasised by Ofsted’s T Level review. They found that in some placements, learners were given direct

responsibilities such as managing class behaviour or redesigning a website. However, in other placements, learners were only asked to complete basic tasks such as preparing children's snacks or completing data entry.¹³

Education and Childcare learners were the most positive about these aspects of placement, being particularly likely to report 'building confidence' (81%) and being given 'real tasks to carry out' (76%). Health and Science learners were the least positive, being less likely than others to report being given 'real tasks to carry out' (56%) or being able to 'apply technical knowledge and skills' (50%). Further details can be found in Appendix table TL056.

Programme outcomes

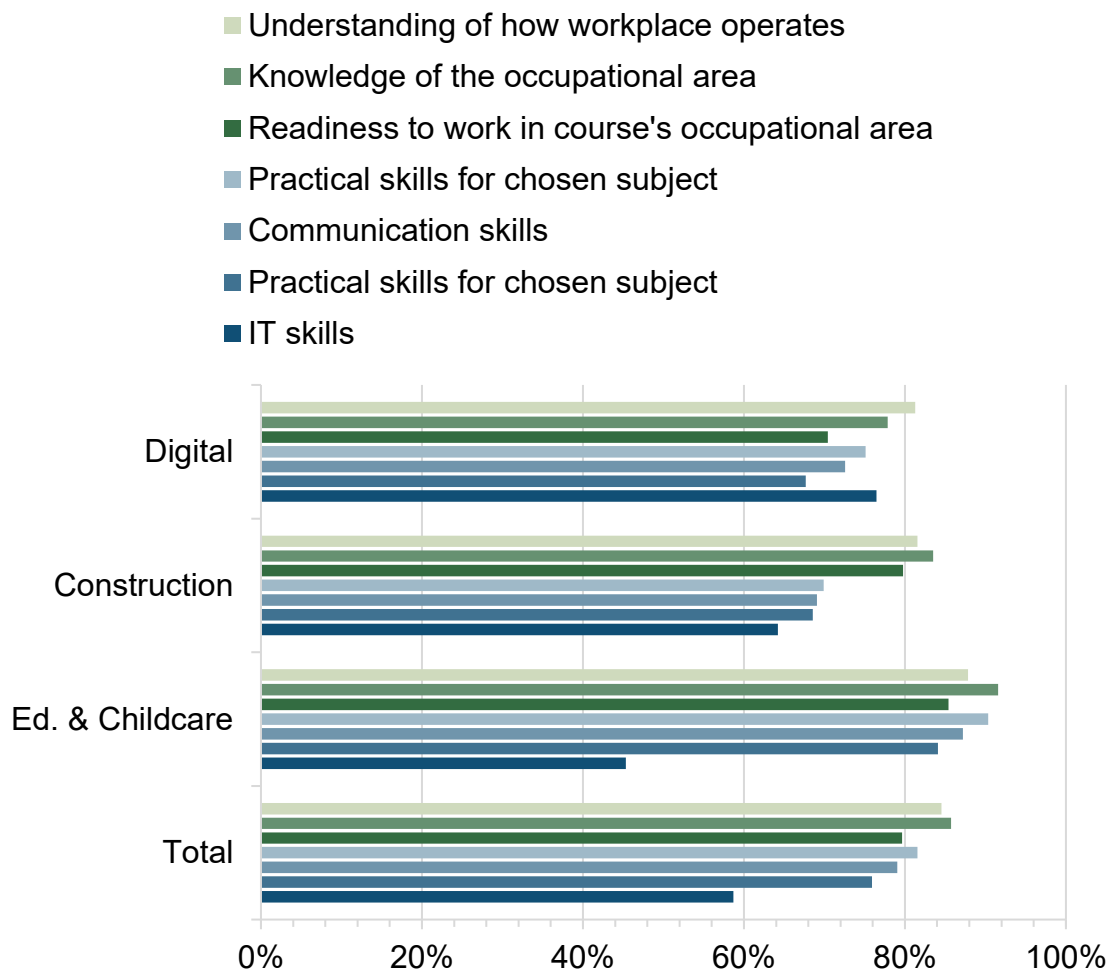
T Level learners at the end of their programme (2020 starters), were asked how it had contributed to specific aims and outcomes of the T Level programme.

2020 T Level starters reported that the programme had helped them to develop the relevant knowledge, practical skills and understanding for their chosen sector.

Figure 7 shows the extent to which the programme had helped 2020 starters develop in relation to specific aims and outcomes.

¹³ Ofsted (2022). [A review of the quality of T-level courses: interim report.](#)

Figure 7 T Level learners (2020 starters) who felt the programme helped develop outcomes ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a bit’ by the end of their programme, by subject



Base: Second year T Level learners (unweighted: 584-586). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

Almost all 2020 T Level starters reported that taking the programme had helped them at least ‘quite a bit’ to develop their ‘knowledge of the subject area’ (86%) and ‘understanding of how workplaces operate’ (85%). Around four fifths of learners reported the programme had helped them to develop ‘the practical skills needed for their chosen subject’ (82%) and their ‘readiness to work in the occupational area’ (80%). For subject knowledge, understanding of the workplace and practical skills, less than 2% of learners reported the T Levels had ‘not at all’ helped them develop. However, for ‘readiness to work in their occupational area’, 4% of learners reported the programme

had 'not at all' helped them develop. Further details can be found in Appendix Wave 2 tables 56, 57, 58, and 62.

The programme also helped 2020 T Level starters to develop core skills and employability skills. Most 2020 T Level starters reported that their courses had developed their 'communication skills' (79%), 'confidence' (76%) and 'IT skills' (59%). For each of these, between 2 to 4% of learners reported their T Level programme had 'not at all' helped them to develop these skills.

Digital learners were more likely to have developed IT skills (76%), especially compared with Education and Childcare learners (45%). Conversely, Education and Childcare learners were more likely to have developed communication skills (87%), compared with Digital (73%) and Construction learners (69%). These differences are expected, given the skills profile of different occupational areas.

Learners with low prior attainment (lowest quintile of T Level population) were less likely than those with high prior attainment (highest quintile) to report the programme had helped them develop readiness to work in the area (71% and 83% respectively) (although this was not statistically significant at the 5% level, $p=0.076$).

Across every outcome, learners who were dissatisfied with their programme were less likely to report the programme helped them to develop in relation to key aims and outcomes. This difference was largest for developing practical skills (41% and 93% respectively), knowledge of the subject area (45% and 96%), and readiness to work in the occupational area (40% and 90%). Further details can be found in Appendix Wave 2 tables 56, 57, and 62.

Next steps

T Levels are intended to enable progression to a range of pathways, including degree-level study, apprenticeships and skilled work. 2020 T Level starters, who completed their T Level programme in 2022, were asked about their planned next steps. 2021 T Level starters, who were at the end of their first year at the time of the survey, were also asked about their planned next steps at the end of the programme.

Most 2020 T Level starters (62%) planned to go on to further study after completing their T Level. Nearly two fifths (38%) indicated they planned to take 'a university degree', while about a fifth (17%) planned to take 'an apprenticeship (including a degree apprenticeship)'. Over a quarter (28%) said that their next step after the programme was to get 'a paid job'. The remaining 9% intended to do something other than work or study or had not decided.

Education and Childcare learners were most likely to report studying for a degree (43%) or getting a paid job (42%) as their next step, with almost all learners planning to take one of these two pathways. Digital learners were most likely to report studying for a degree (40%) or taking an apprenticeship (27%) as their next step. Construction learners were more likely to report taking an apprenticeship (34%) than learners in other routes. These subject differences may indicate underlying differences in the available progression routes for each occupational area.

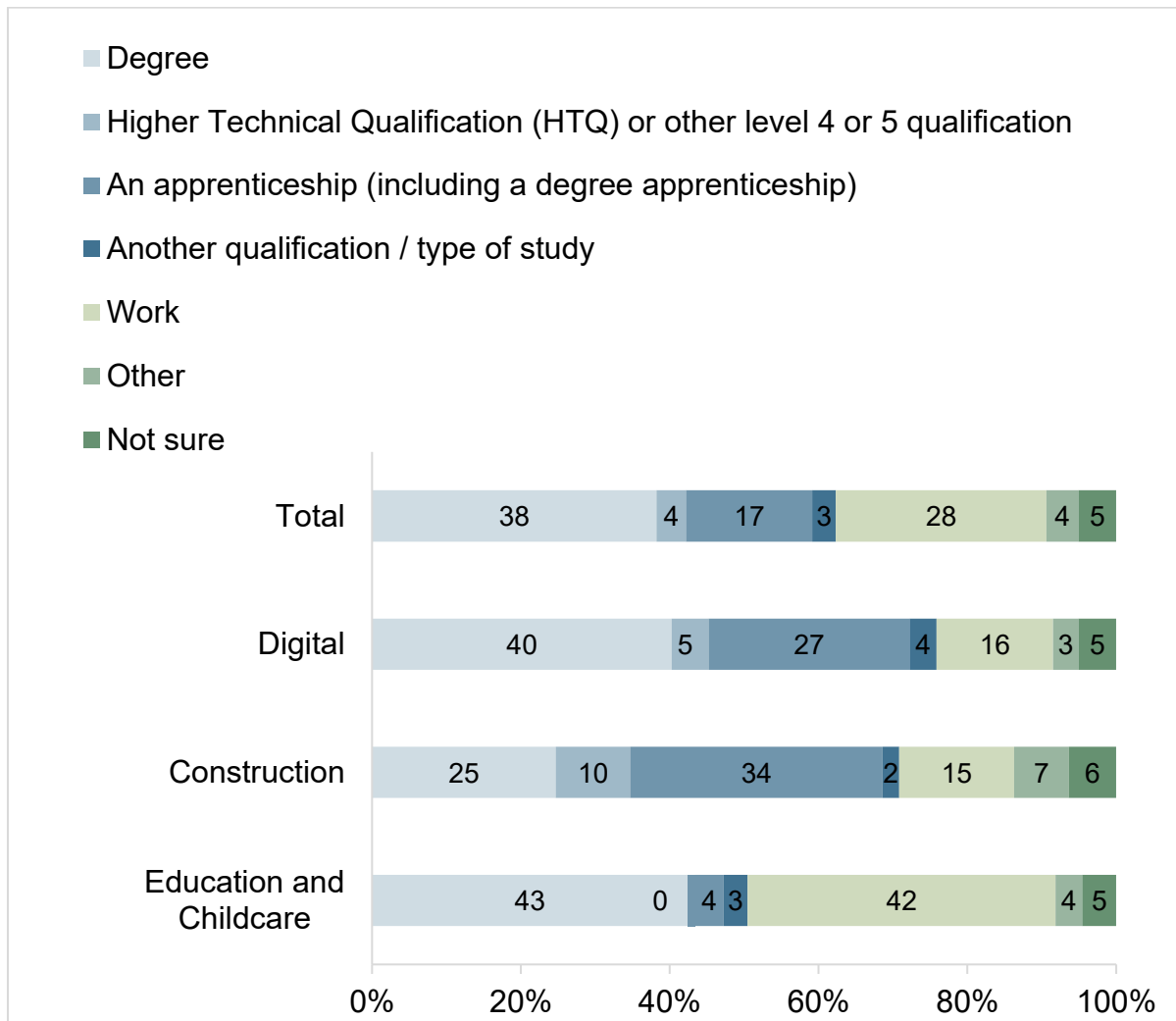
Degree level study was more likely for learners with higher academic prior attainment (49% of the highest quintile of the T Level population, compared to 35% of the lowest). Degree level study was also associated with higher satisfaction with the T Level programme (45% for 'satisfied' learners, compared with 25% for dissatisfied learners).

Most 2020 T Level starters who planned to take an apprenticeship as their next step were planning to do so at level 4/5 (43%) or level 6 (35%) apprenticeship.

Smaller numbers were planning to do a level 3 apprenticeship (12%) or were not sure (10%). Further details can be found in Appendix Wave 2 table 67.

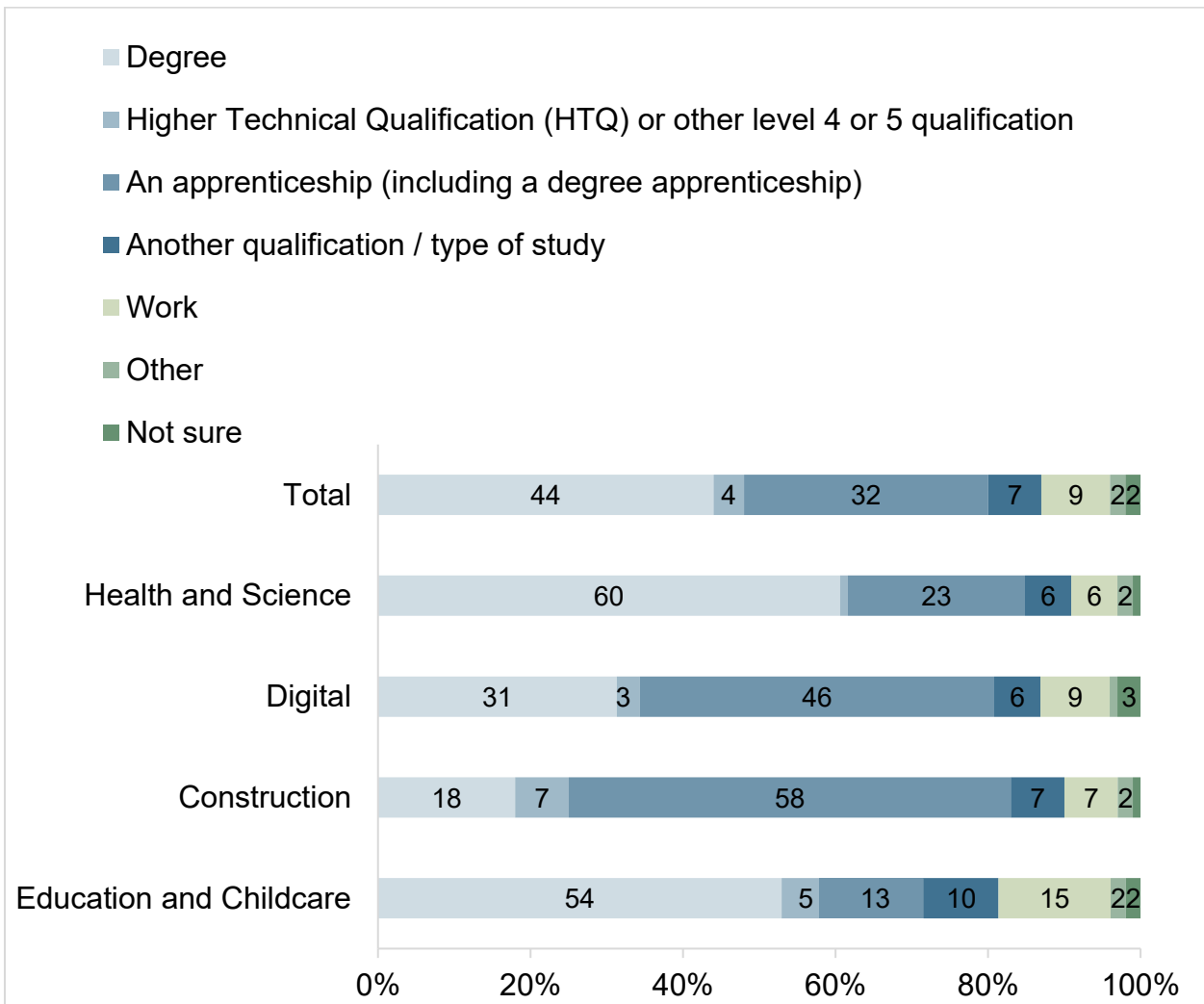
Looking at intended next steps for 2021 T Level starters at the end of their first year, a higher proportion aimed to study for a degree (44%) or take an apprenticeship (32%) and a lower proportion intended to find work (9%), compared to 2020 starters during their first and second year. Again, this varied by subject, with those in Health and Science being particularly likely to want to study for a degree (60%). Further details can be found in Appendix table TL080 and Wave 2 table 64.

Figure 8 Planned next steps for 2020 T Level starters at the end of their programme, by subject



Base: Second year T Level learners (unweighted: 587). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

Figure 9 Planned next steps for 2021 T Level starters at the end of their first year, by subject



Base: First year T Level learners (2,394). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

At the end of their programme, most 2020 T Level starters planned to stay in their T Level occupational specialism (64%), with a further 9% staying in their general T Level field but moving to a different specialism. Around one in five had not made a decision (19%) at the time of the survey. Only 9% of T Level learners had decided not to stay in the same general field as their T Level.

As might be expected learners who were initially certain, quite sure about, or were only considering a few occupations, were more likely to plan to stay in their specialism after their programme (84%, 63%, and 68% respectively), than learners who were not sure (46%). Finding the programme less challenging was another factor associated with 2020 T Level starters staying in the same area as the occupational specialism (71% of learners

who found it 'not very/not at all' challenging, 55% of learners who found it 'extremely/very challenging').

The majority (69%) of 2020 T Level starters 'strongly' or 'mostly' agreed that they felt supported by their school or college in deciding on their next step. Larger proportions of Digital learners (75%) and Education and Childcare (70%) learners felt supported in deciding their next step, compared with Construction learners (55%).

The most common factor reported as being the most important for career decision making was 'work that interests and stimulates me', selected by 82% of 2020 T Level starters, followed by a 'work-life balance that suits me' (69%). More than half of learners reported that 'an inclusive and supportive environment' (63%), 'opportunities to develop' (62%), 'secure employment' (59%), and 'a high salary/wage' (56%) were important. Only 50% of learners reported that 'opportunities to gain further qualifications' were important, which was substantially lower than for 'opportunities to develop', suggesting that developing capability is more important to T Level learners than additional certification. Further details can be found in Appendix Wave 2 table 75.

T Level Transition Programme

This chapter focuses on the T Level Transition Programme (TLTP). The focus is on learner characteristics, reasons for choosing the programme, aspirations, delivery of the programme and its components, workload and challenges, learners' satisfaction with the programme, learner outcomes and future plans.

Key T Level Transition Programme findings

- In choosing the TLTP, 2021 starters reported that the subject area was most important, followed by the type of programme and associated qualification(s), with the school or college considered the least important of these three factors.
- The most commonly reported reason for choosing the TLTP (as opposed to another programme) was that learners considered it to be 'important for the kind of job I want'.
- There was a significant return to in-person teaching in the 2021/22 academic year, with most TLTP learners taught entirely or mostly in person.
- Considering TLTP learners' experience of the programme, almost two thirds found it 'quite challenging' (59%), with 12% finding it 'extremely' or 'very challenging'. Most TLTP learners found the amount of teaching and the workload outside of lessons manageable.
- Just over half of TLTP learners spent time on work experience, an increase from 2020/21 when work experience was impacted by COVID-19. Most of these learners were satisfied with their work experience., the highest proportion of learners were satisfied with the knowledge they gained of the workplace while on work experience, and the lowest proportion of learners were satisfied with its timing.
- TLTP learners' overall satisfaction with the programme was high (69%), though slightly lower than for the first cohort (77%). With different elements of the programme, the highest proportion of learners were satisfied with 'teachers' knowledge and expertise' (79%) and the lowest proportion with the 'employer contact' on the programme (46%).
- Most TLTP learners felt that the programme had helped them to develop the relevant knowledge, skills and understanding of their sector. Over two-thirds (69%) felt they had developed 'a great deal' or 'quite a bit' in the 'practical skills needed for their chosen subject'.
- At the end of the TLTP, just over a quarter of learners intended to progress onto a T Level, reduced from just over a third of learners at the start of the programme. Other common intentions for progression were to another type of study or qualification, or to an apprenticeship.

- Several factors were associated with the intention to progress to a T Level, including prior attainment, certainty around intended occupation, how challenging the individual found the TLTP and satisfaction with the programme.

Learner characteristics

Sex

A slightly larger proportion of TLTP learners were female (53%). As with the previous academic year (2020/21), there were marked differences in sex by subject. For instance, 95% of learners on the Education and Childcare route were female, and on the Construction route, 98% were male.

Ethnicity

Across all routes, the majority of learners were white (76% overall). The proportions of white learners were higher in the Construction and Education and Childcare routes (88% and 85% respectively) compared to the more diverse Digital route and Health and Science route (67% and 71% respectively).

Free school meals (FSM) in recent years

Thirty-five percent of TLTP learners had received FSM in recent years. This was highest for learners enrolled on courses in the Health and Science route (41%) and Education and Childcare route (40%), and lowest for learners taking the Digital route (25%).

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Just under a third (29%) of TLTP learners were recorded in administrative data as having SEN. The Digital route had the highest proportion of learners with SEN (34%), with a slightly lower proportion for other routes (27% for each).

Previous educational attainment

Prior to starting the TLTP, 38% of learners had gained four or more GCSEs at grades four or above. There was some variation across the different routes. Prior attainment was highest for Construction learners (53% gained four or more GCSEs at grade 4 or above), and lowest for Digital and Health and Science learners (33% and 31% respectively). Overall, just over a quarter (28%) of learners had gained one or no GCSEs at grade four or above and 34% gained two or three.

Provider characteristics

Overall, just over half (54%) of TLTP learners were with providers who had delivered the TLTP in the previous academic year (2020/21).

Choosing the programme

TLTP learners were asked if they had been advised to apply for the programme, where they had heard about the programme, their aspirations upon completing the programme, and their reasons for choosing the subject area, programme and the provider.

Awareness of the programme

Nearly one third of learners (30%) of 2021 TLTP starters reported that they were 'advised to apply' to the programme, for example by a teacher or careers advisor. Another 30% reported that they discussed it as an option, for example with a teacher or careers advisor, but were not explicitly advised to apply. Almost two fifths (39%) reported that they chose the programme without being advised to. Further details can be found in Appendix table TP019.

The largest proportion of TLTP learners (49%) indicated that they heard about their programme 'from a college, school or training provider offering the programme'. The other main sources of information were: 'teachers' (29%); 'careers advisers' (19%); 'friends' (16%) and 'social media' (12%). Smaller proportions of learners gained awareness of the programme through 'local advertising' and 'an employer'. Further details can be found in Appendix table TP024.

Aspirations

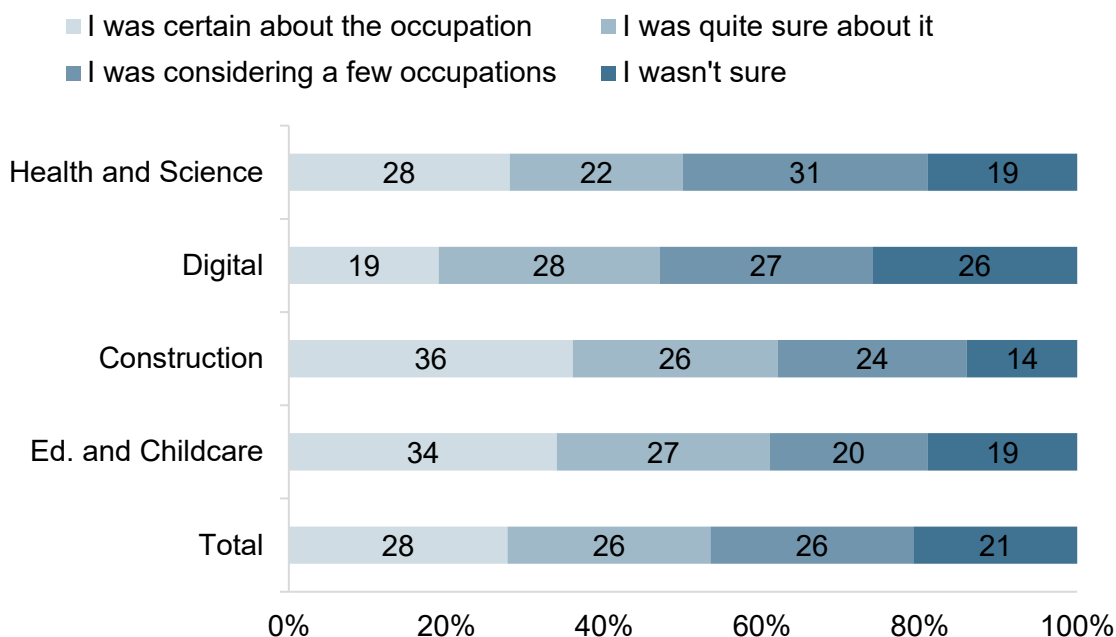
Around a third (36%) of TLTP learners reported that, at the start of the programme, they hoped to go onto a T Level afterwards. The equivalent figure for 2020 TLTP starters was 43%. Two fifths (40%) of 2021 TLTP starters reported that, at the start of the programme, they were unsure whether they wanted to progress onto a T Level, while a quarter (24%) said that they did not intend to progress onto a T Level.

TLTP learners who reported that at the start of the programme they did not plan to progress onto a T Level were asked what they wanted to do immediately after the programme finished. 'Another type of study' was the most common response (29%), followed by 'an apprenticeship' (24%). Further details can be found in Appendix table TP017.

TLTP learners were asked how certain they were about their occupation when choosing their programme. Only a small proportion of learners (28%) were 'certain

about the occupation' they wanted to find work in, with another 26% being 'quite sure' about their occupation. Digital learners were most likely to report they were not sure about the occupation they wanted to go in or were 'considering a few occupations' (see Figure 10). Further details can be found in Appendix table TP018.

Figure 10 Certainty about the occupation TLTP learners wanted to work in when choosing the programme (2021 starters), by subject



Base: TLTP learners (unweighted: 890). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

Reasons for choosing the subject area

The most common reasons TLTP learners gave for choosing their subject area was because they were 'interested in the subject area' (60%) and because it 'fitted with the areas I wanted to work in' (58%). Smaller proportions of learners said they chose the subject area because it was 'important for my intended further study' (26%), because they were 'advised to study this subject area' (12%) or because 'friends were doing the same subject area' (6%). Further details can be found in Appendix table TP020.

Reasons for choosing the programme

The largest proportion of learners (45%) reported they chose the TLTP because 'it is important for the kind of job I want'. Almost two fifths (38%) of learners reported they chose it because 'the qualification is important for further study'. Smaller proportions (22%) reported that 'it was the only type available in my subject', that 'the qualification is

recognised by employers' and that the programme 'offered the right mix of classroom learning and practical study'.¹⁴ Further details can be found in Appendix table TP021.

Reasons for choosing their school or college

The most common reasons TLTP learners gave for choosing their school or college were because 'it was convenient to travel to' (58%) and because 'it offered the subject(s) I wanted to do' (54%). Smaller proportions of learners said they chose their school/college because their 'friends were going there' (16%), because of 'its formal rating' (12%) and because of 'informal recommendations' (12%). Further details can be found in Appendix table TP022.

When asked to consider which of the three factors – 'the subject or subjects'; 'the type(s) of qualification' or 'the school/college/institution' – was most important to learners when choosing to do the TLTP, most learners (65%) reported that the subject was the most important factor. This was followed by the type(s) of qualification (44%) then the provider (25%). A smaller proportion (9%) reported that none of these factors was their most important consideration. Further details can be found in Appendix table TP023.

Alternatives to a T Level Transition Programme

The largest proportion (30%) of learners reported that they did not know what they would have done had they not chosen to do the TLTP. A similar proportion (28%) reported that they would have most likely done an apprenticeship instead, followed by a fifth (20%) of learners who reported that they would have done 'a different kind of technical or vocational qualification'. This pattern was broadly similar across subjects. Further details can be found in Appendix table TP025.

Leaving the programme early

TLTP learners who reported leaving the programme early (n=46) were asked their reasons for doing so. Just over half of these learners (55%) cited 'personal problems' as their reason for leaving the programme early. Just over a quarter (27%) 'didn't like the programme' and around a fifth reported 'lack of support from teachers' (21%), that 'the programme was too challenging' (20%) and that they 'found paid work instead' (20%). Further details can be found in Appendix table TP041.

¹⁴ Providers can deliver the TLTP using a qualification, non-qualification delivery or a combination of both. This survey question used the wording 'qualification' because the same question was also asked to other learner groups. Some TLTP respondents may have responded to the question thinking about the TLTP in general, whilst others may have been considering the specific qualifications gained through their TLTP.

Programme content and delivery

Over half (58%) of 2021 TLTP starters reported that their programme included qualifications in their chosen occupation area. Breaking this down, two fifths (40%) reported their programme included one main qualification and 18% reported that their programme included more than one qualification. This is slightly lower than the proportion of 2020 starters who reported their programme included at least one qualification in the chosen occupational area (64%). However, this may be explained by the increase in learners who were not sure whether their programme included such qualifications (33% of 2021 starters, 29% of 2020 starters). In both years, a similar proportion of learners reported that their programme did not include any qualification related to their chosen occupational area (9% of 2021 starters, 7% of 2020 starters).

Of 2021 TLTP starters, Education and Childcare (65%), Health and Science (62%) and Construction learners (61%) were more likely to report that their programme included at least one qualification than Digital (48%) learners. Further details can be found in Appendix table TP032.

Teaching characteristics

Nearly all learners (89%) starting a TLTP in 2021 had been taught ‘entirely’ or ‘mostly’ in person. Small proportions reported they had been taught ‘roughly the same amount online or in person’ (8%), ‘mostly online’ (2%) or ‘entirely online’ (1%). Across the four TLTP routes, there was no significant difference between Construction learners (10%) Health and Science learners (9%), Education and Childcare learners (8%), and Digital learners (6%) in relation to whether they reported being taught ‘roughly the same amount online and in-person’. Further details can be found in Appendix table TP026.

In comparison to 2020 TLTP starters, the amount of in-person teaching has increased considerably over the last academic year. Nearly all learners (96%) who started a TLTP in 2020 experienced a mix of online and in-person teaching and only 22% had been taught ‘mostly in-person’.

Half (50%) of 2021 TLTP starters reported receiving 11 to 20 hours of teaching a week, either online or in-person¹⁵. Across all TLTP routes, this was the most commonly reported amount of teaching hours, although it was more common for Construction learners (63%) and Digital learners (54%), compared to Education and Childcare (46%) and Health and Science (43%) learners. Further details can be found in Appendix table TP027.

¹⁵ It is not possible to know exactly which programme activities respondents will have included under the term ‘teaching’, although they were asked to exclude time spent on work experience. It is plausible that time spent doing supervised employability, enrichment and pastoral activities was not classed as ‘teaching’.

The reported number of teaching hours per week was higher for 2021 TLTP starters than 2020 TLTP starters. The proportion of learners taught for more than 20 hours per week increased from 15% (2020 starters) to 29% (2021 starters), while the proportion of learners taught for less than 11 hours per week decreased from 33% (2020 starters) to 21% (2021 starters). In both years, about half of learners were taught for 11 to 20 hours per week (50% of 2021 starters, 52% of 2020 starters).

Around two fifths (42%) of TLTP learners reported that they were studying GCSE English and a further 9% reported studying a Functional Skills qualification for English. Learners on Health and Science (52%) and Digital (50%) TLTP were more likely to report studying these qualifications than Education and Childcare (31%) and Construction (24%) learners. Further details can be found in Appendix table TP035.

Almost half (45%) of TLTP learners reported that they were studying GCSE maths and a further 14% reported studying a Functional Skills qualification for maths. Health and Science learners (56%) were more likely to report studying GCSE maths, compared to Education and Childcare (46%), Digital (43%), and Construction (21%) learners. Health and Science learners (18%) and Education and Childcare (17%) learners reported studying maths Functional Skills in similar proportions to Digital (14%) and Construction (8%) learners. Further details can be found in Appendix table TP036.

Work experience

At the end of their programme, just over half (53%) of 2021 TLTP starters reported spending time on work experience as part of their programme compared to 38% reported by 2020 TLTP starters. This may be due to the relaxing of COVID-19 restrictions, which has enabled more employers to host work experience placements.

Education and Childcare (85%) and Health and Science (59%) TLTP learners were much more likely to do work experience as part of their programme compared to Digital (32%) and Construction (30%) learners. This pattern was also seen for 2020 TLTP starters. A licence to practise qualification in Education and Childcare include requirements for work experience, which could explain why TLTP learners working towards such qualifications have a higher proportion reporting work experience. Providers for the Education and Childcare route and Health and Science route are also likely to have strong existing links with placement settings from their experience of delivering other courses. In addition, research on the early delivery of the TLTP¹⁶ reported that the first cohort of providers struggled to source Digital placements for their learners. This may be an on-going challenge, leading to fewer Digital learners completing a placement this year. This

¹⁶

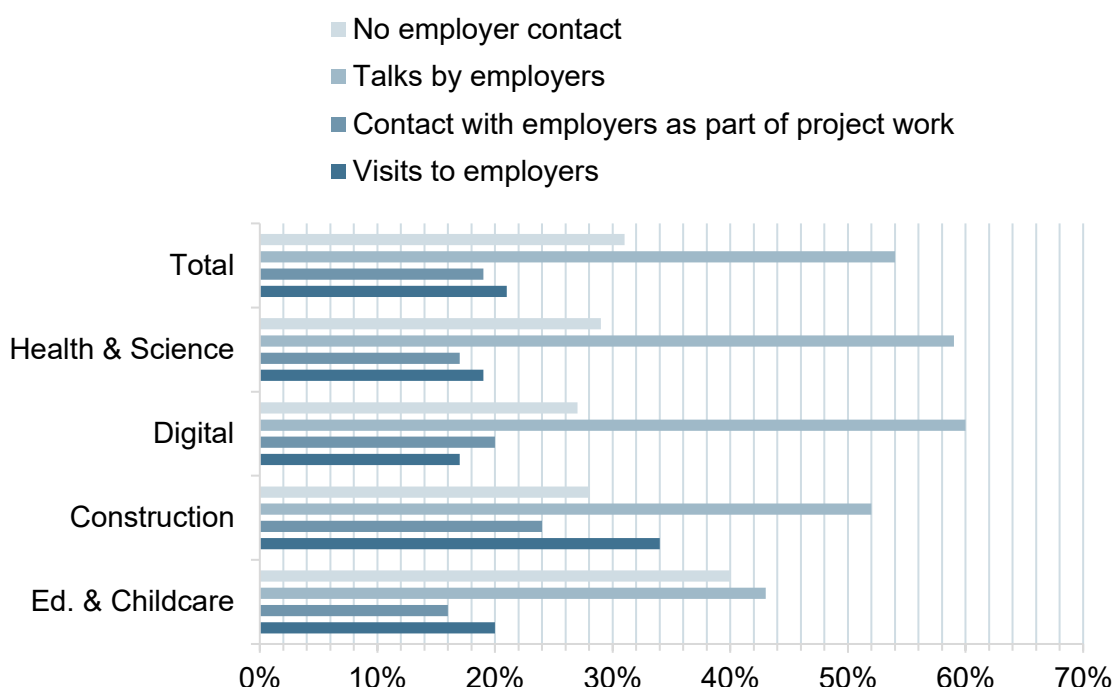
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1087315/T_Level_Transition_Programme_Research_Report_updated_June_2022.pdf

research also reported that providers had prioritised placements for T Level programmes over TLTP programme, which may also affect the prevalence of work experience amongst TLTP learners. Further details can be found in Appendix table TP037.

Outside of work experience, less than half of TLTP learners (44%) reported other contact with employers, such as visits, talks, or contact as part of project work.

Overall and across all four routes, ‘talks with employers’ was the most reported form of employer contact outside of work experience, reported by 31% of learners. Participation in other activities varied by subject (Figure 12). Further details can be found in Appendix table TP039.

Figure 11 Employer contact other than work experience reported by TLTP learners (2021 starters), by subject



Base: TLTP learners (unweighted: 847). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

Workload and challenge

Workload and clarity

The amount of teaching was manageable for most 2021 TLTP starters, with 92% describing it as ‘very’, ‘mostly’ or ‘quite’ manageable. This figure is similar to 2020 TLTP starters (93%). There was minimal variation by subject, SEN, FSM, how learners were taught, or attainment score. Further details can be found in Appendix table TP028.

The majority (88%) of TLTP learners found the work they had to do outside of taught lessons ‘very’, ‘mostly’ or ‘quite’ manageable. Again, this figure is comparable with 2020 TLTP starters (85%). There was minimal variation by subject, SEN, FSM, nor attainment score. Further details can be found in Appendix table TP029.

Among the 12% of TLTP learners who did not find the work outside of taught lessons manageable (i.e., ‘not very’ or ‘not at all’ manageable), the most common reason given was that ‘the work set was unclear’ (47%). Other reasons given included ‘not enough support from teacher/tutor’ (39%), ‘too much work given’ (35%), ‘other commitments outside the programme’ (28%) and ‘the work was too hard’ (27%). Further details can be found in Appendix table TP030.

The majority of TLTP learners (80%) were clear from the start what they needed to achieve to successfully complete the programme. There were some differences by subject and other learner characteristics:

- Higher proportions of Construction (86%) and Education and Childcare (85%) learners were clear about what they needed to achieve, compared to Health and Science (77%) and Digital (77%) learners.
- Slightly higher proportions of learners who were ‘certain’ or ‘quite sure’ about their future occupation when they were choosing their programme (85%) were clear of what they needed to achieve to complete the programme, compared to 76% who were considering a few occupations and 73% who weren’t sure.

The proportion for 2021 TLTP starters is slightly higher (6 percentage points) than for 2020 TLTP starters, of whom 74% reported that they were clear from the start what they needed to achieve to successfully complete the programme. Further details can be found in Appendix table TP031.

Most learners (85%) felt that the length of the programme was ‘about right’. There were differences by subject and other factors:

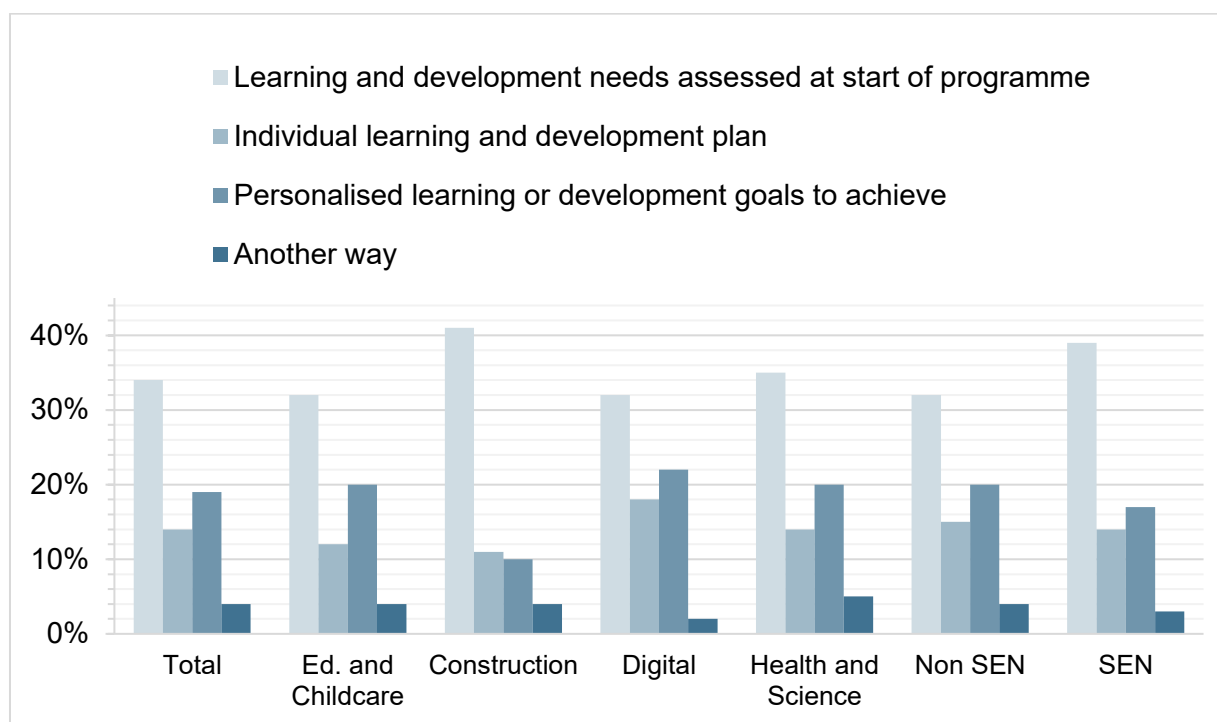
- Digital learners were the most likely to report that the programme was ‘too long’ (18%), compared with other subjects (between 6% to 8%).
- Almost all learners who found the amount of teaching ‘very’ or ‘mostly manageable’ considered the programme length ‘about right’ (93% and 90% respectively), compared with learners who found it ‘quite’, ‘not very’ or ‘not at all manageable’ (71%).

Further details can be found in Appendix table TP034.

Barriers to learning

A large proportion of TLTP learners (71%) reported that their programme was tailored to identify and help address their specific learning and development needs (Appendix table TP034). The most common approach reported was that ‘learning and development needs were assessed at the start of the programme’ (34%). Learners with SEN were more likely to report that their ‘learning and development needs were assessed at the start of the programme’ than other learners (39%) (Figure 12).

Figure 12 Ways in which the programme was tailored to identify and address learning and development needs for 2021 TLTP starters, by subject and SEN



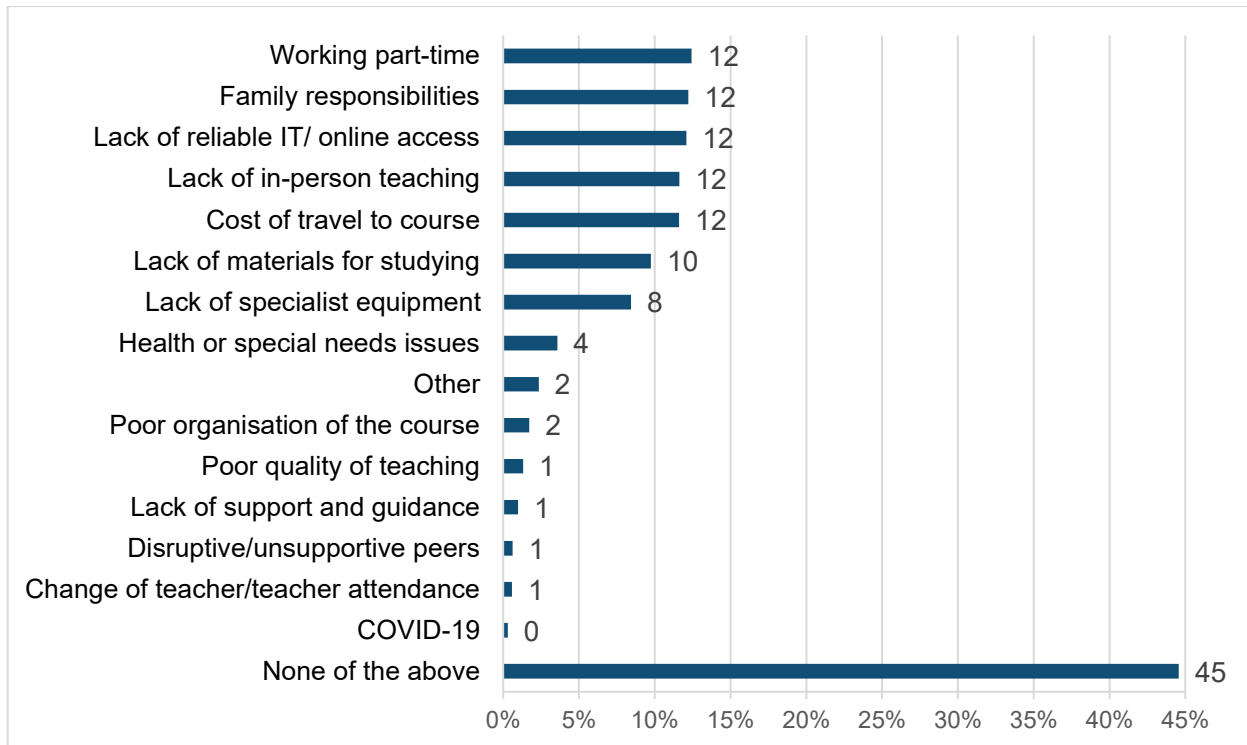
Base: TLTP learners (unweighted: 882). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

Around half (45%) of 2021 TLTP learners reported that they did not experience any of the barriers to learning presented to them in the survey, nor did they specify any other barriers. This is an improvement of 9 percentage points from 2020 TLTP starters (36%). However, it is important to note the distinction between the wording of the two surveys – 2020 TLTP starters could select ‘no barriers’ whereas 2021 TLTP starters could only select ‘none of the above’. Both cohorts were able to select ‘other’ and specify another barrier to learning if they did not feel it was captured in the list presented to them.

The proportion of learners who reported ‘lack of in-person teaching’ as a barrier was notably lower in 2021/2022 than in the previous academic year (12% of 2021 TLTP starters, 32% of 2020 TLTP starters), reflecting the higher proportions of in-person

teaching in 2021/22. Other frequently reported barriers to learning for 2021 TLTP starters were ‘lack of reliable IT or online access’, ‘cost of travel to my programme’, ‘family responsibilities meant could not study enough’ and ‘working part time meant could not study enough’ (12% for each barrier) (Figure 13).

Figure 13 Barriers to learning reported by TLTP learners (2021 starters)



Base: TLTP learners (unweighted: 870). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

Some barriers to learning were more likely to be reported by learners within TLTP routes or those who had certain characteristics:

- ‘Family responsibilities’ (18%), ‘working part-time’ (16%) and ‘lack of materials for studying’ (16%) were more commonly reported by Health and Science learners.
- ‘Lack of reliable IT or online access’ was most commonly reported by Digital learners (16%).
- ‘Lack of in-person teaching’ was most commonly reported by Construction learners (19%).
- Except for ‘family responsibilities’ and ‘working part time’, learners taught ‘entirely/mostly online’ were more likely to report experiencing the barriers to learning compared to learners taught ‘roughly the same online and in-person’ or those taught ‘mostly/entirely’ in-person’.

- ‘Family responsibilities’ was more of a barrier for female (15%) than male (9%) learners.
- Learners eligible for FSM were more likely (15%) to mention ‘family responsibilities’ as a barrier to learning compared to non-FSM learners (10%).

Further details can be found in Appendix table TP042.

How challenging learners found the T Level Transition Programme

About three fifths (59%) of 2021 TLTP learners reported that their programme had been ‘quite challenging’. A further 12% described it as ‘extremely’ or ‘very’ challenging. Conversely, almost a third (29%) described their course as ‘not very’ or ‘not at all challenging’.

The following learners were more likely to report that the programme was ‘extremely’ or ‘very challenging’:

- Health and Science learners (16%), compared with Education and Childcare (9%) and Construction learners (5%).
- Learners who reported finding the amount of teaching ‘quite’, ‘not very’ or ‘not at all’ manageable (18%) or that the amount of work outside lessons was ‘not very’ or ‘not at all’ manageable (26%).
- Learners with lower prior attainment (15% for 2 to 3 GCSEs at grade 4+, 14% for one or no GCSEs at grade 4+, compared with 9% for four or more GCSEs at grade 4+).

The proportion of learners who reported the programme was ‘extremely’ or ‘very challenging’ did not vary by SEN status (12% for both learners with and without SEN). Further details can be found in Appendix table TP040.

Satisfaction with the programme

Overall satisfaction

Two thirds (69%) of TLTP learners were either ‘very’ or ‘quite’ satisfied with the programme overall. A small proportion (10%) were ‘quite’ or ‘very’ dissatisfied.

Satisfaction among 2021 TLTP starters was slightly lower than 2020 TLTP starters, three quarters (77%) of whom were ‘very’ or ‘quite’ satisfied and 7% of whom were ‘quite’ or ‘very’ dissatisfied.

There was variation in satisfaction across the four TLTP routes. Education and Childcare learners reported highest satisfaction (79% ‘very’ or ‘quite’ satisfied), followed by Construction learners (70%) and Health and Science learners (69%), with Digital learners

having lowest satisfaction (62%). For Education and Childcare and Construction learners, these proportions are similar to the previous year (2020 TLTP starters). For Digital learners, satisfaction was 15 percentage points lower for 2021 TLTP starters than 2020 starters (77%). **Learners who were ‘certain’ or ‘quite sure’ about the occupation they wanted to find work in were more satisfied with the programme (78%) compared to those who were not sure (57%).** This pattern matches that found from 2020 TLTP learners.

Dissatisfaction was more likely amongst learners who found the programme ‘extremely’ or ‘very’ challenging (15%) and ‘not very’ or ‘not at all’ challenging (16%), compared to learners who found the programme ‘quite challenging’ (7%). Again, this pattern matches the findings from the 2020 TLTP starters.

There was little variation in satisfaction by whether learners had SEN or not, and whether they were eligible for FSM or not. Regardless of prior attainment score, most learners were either ‘very’ or ‘quite’ satisfied with the programme. Further details can be found in Appendix table TP043.

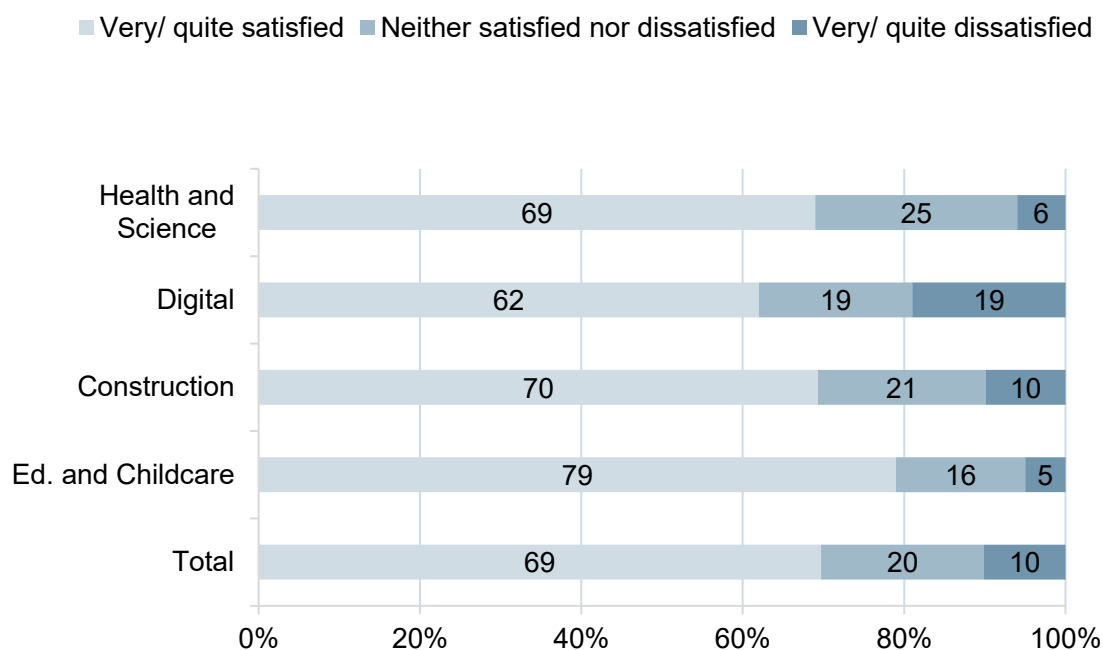
Two thirds (65%) of TLTP learners reported that they would be ‘very’ or ‘quite’ likely to recommend their programme to others. This is strongly associated with overall satisfaction: 84% of learners who were ‘very’ or ‘quite’ satisfied were ‘very’ or ‘quite’ likely to recommend the programme, compared with 23% of other learners.

Several other factors were associated with learners being ‘very’ or ‘quite likely’ to recommend the programme:

- TLTP route (72% of Education and Childcare and 70% of Health and Science learners, compared to 58% of Construction and 57% of Digital learners).
- Undertaking work experience (75% of learners who undertook work experience, compared with 55% who did not).
- Certainty about intended occupation (73% of learners who were ‘certain’ or ‘quite sure’ about their occupation, compared to 55% of learners who were considering a few occupations, and 56% of learners who were not sure).

Further details can be found in Appendix table TP071.

Figure 14 Overall satisfaction with TLTP programme (2021 starters), by subject



Base: TLTP learners (unweighted: 889). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

Satisfaction with specific aspects of the programme

Learners were asked about their satisfaction with a range of aspects relating to the delivery of their programme satisfaction. For almost all aspects, most learners were satisfied, however the proportions were lower than for 2020 TLTP starters. The highest proportions of learners were satisfied ('very' or 'quite' satisfied) with 'teachers' knowledge and expertise' (79%) and 'the standard of classroom teaching' (73%). These aspects also had the highest proportions of satisfied learners among 2020 TLTP starters, with even higher proportions of satisfied learners (89% and 84% respectively).

Overall, fewer learners were satisfied with 'course organisation and management' and with the 'careers advice provided' (both 60%), as well as 'the level of employer contact' (46%). This pattern was also seen for 2020 TLTP starters, however the proportion of satisfied learners for these aspects was higher among 2020 starters (by 7 to 11 percentage points). Further details can be found in Appendix tables TP044, TP046, TP048, TP052, and TP053.

Table 4: Elements of the TLTP programme where 2021 starters were satisfied

Elements of programme satisfaction	% 2020 TLTP learners 'very' or 'quite' satisfied	% 2021 TLTP learners 'very' or 'quite' satisfied
Teachers' knowledge and expertise	89%	79%
The standard of classroom teaching	84%	73%
The teaching of English	77%	73%
Skills covered for chosen occupation / subject area	77%	72%
Equipment, software and resources available	79%	72%
Support received from tutors or teachers	79%	71%
Amount of programme content related to subject area	77%	71%
The standard of practical 'hands on' work	70%	69%
The way learners are assessed on the programme	76%	69%
The teaching of Maths	80%	68%
Preparation for further study	-	65%
Programme organisation and management	71%	60%
The careers advice provided	68%	60%
The level of employer contact in the programme	53%	46%
<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>170-426</i>	<i>442-884</i>

Base: TLTP learners, excluding those who said that the element was 'Not applicable' to them. Source: Tech Ed Study 2021 (Jun-Aug 2021) and Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

Multivariate analysis of overall satisfaction

Multivariate analysis was conducted to provide insight into the relative importance of a range of factors with overall satisfaction for 2021 TLTP starters. Logistic regression shows whether a given factor is statistically significantly associated with the dependent variable (in this case 'very' or 'quite satisfied' vs not satisfied) while controlling for other factors. In this analysis, a range of models were developed to look at demographic associations, course delivery factors and satisfaction with the individual elements of the programme.

In a model that included demographic and socioeconomic factors (e.g. sex, age, ethnicity, SEN, FSM), only sex was found to be statistically significantly associated with overall satisfaction (those more likely to be satisfied overall were female). However, once

aspects of the course were included in the model (the subject, whether taught mostly in person, how challenging learners found the course and satisfaction with the work placement), sex was no longer significant. In this model, the following were associated with being satisfied with the course overall:

- Being 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with the work experience.
- Finding the course 'quite challenging' rather than 'very/extremely challenging'.
- Being age 17 or over.

Looking at the individual specific aspects of course satisfaction (alongside demographic and course-related factors), the following were found to be significantly associated with overall satisfaction:

- The standard of classroom teaching.
- Support received from tutors.
- Skills covered for chosen occupation.
- The way learners are assessed on the programme.

More detail on these regression models is provided in the separate accompanying tables.

Satisfaction with work experience

Overall satisfaction

Three quarters (77%) of TLTP learners who did work experience were 'very' or 'quite' satisfied with this element. Although high, this level of satisfaction is lower than the 82% of 2020 TLTP starters who were satisfied with their work experience. Fewer Digital learners were satisfied (69%) than learners on other routes (78-80%). Further details can be found in Appendix table TP058.

Satisfaction with specific aspects of work experience

TLTP learners were asked to indicate whether their work experience met their expectations in specific areas. About three fifths of learners reported that their placement met their expectations in gaining 'experience of a real workplace' (63%), being given 'real tasks to carry out' (61%) and having 'the opportunity to build my confidence in the workplace' (58%). About half of learners reported that their placement met their expectations in 'apply[ing] technical knowledge and skills developed on the course' (47%). Only a small proportion (9%) reported that the work experience did not meet their expectations in any of these areas. Digital learners were the most likely to report this (18%). Further details can be found in Appendix table TP059.

Learners were also asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a range of positive statements about their work experience (Table 5). There were high levels of agreement ('strongly agree' or 'agree') with each statement (68 to 81%). Several of these statements were repeated from the survey of the first TLTP cohort. For most of these statements, more 2020 starters agreed than 2021 starters, suggesting that the second TLTP cohort were less positive about their experience. However, more 2021 starters agreed that 'the placement came at the right point in the programme' (68%) than 2020 starters (60%). This may relate to the constraints on placement timings experienced by the first TLTP cohort (2020 starters) due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 5: Satisfaction with aspects of work experience for 2021 TLTP starters

Elements of work experience satisfaction	% 2021 TLTP learners 'very' or 'quite' satisfied
The placement improved my knowledge of the workplace	81%
The placement was a good challenge for me	79%
I benefitted from the placement	79%
My employer made sure I got the most I could out of the placement	75%
I felt a valued member of the team during my placement	73%
It was the right amount of time on the placement	73%
I had all the support I needed from the college / school during the placement	70%
I was fully prepared for my placement	69%
The placement came at the right point in the programme	68%
<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>465- 466</i>

Base: TLTP learners who had done a work experience placement as part of the programme, excluding those who said the element was 'Not applicable' to them. Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

Programme outcomes

TLTP learners reported that taking the programme had helped them to develop the relevant knowledge, practical skills and understanding of their chosen sector.

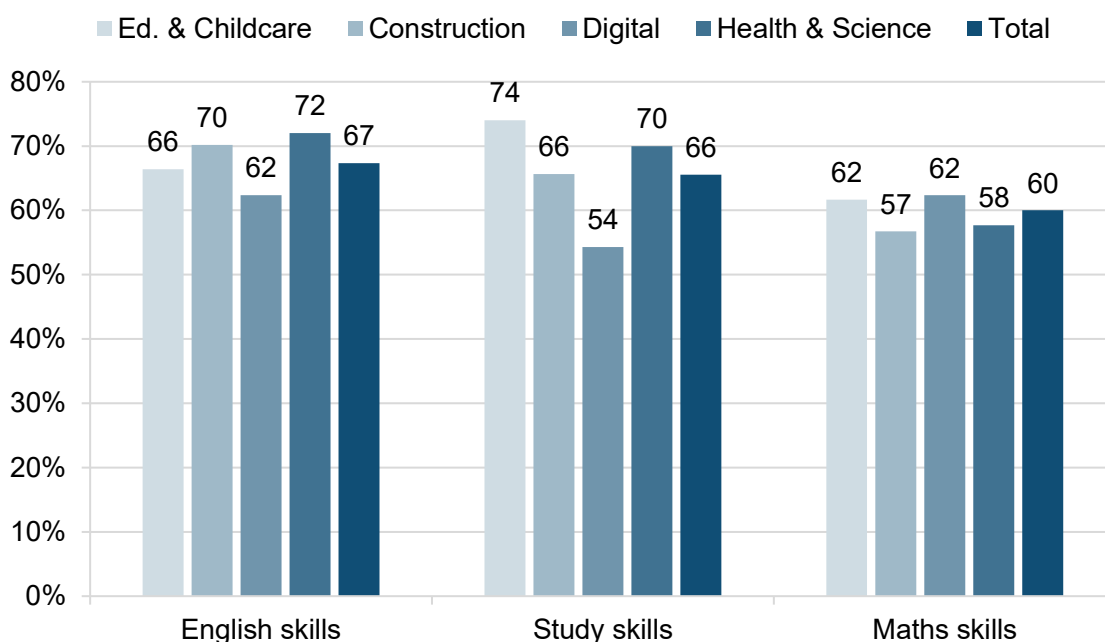
Figures 14 and 15 show the percentages of learners who reported the programme had helped them to a large extent (reporting 'a great deal' or 'quite a bit') in relation to key programme outcomes. **Most 2021 TLTP starters felt their programme helped them**

develop ‘practical skills needed for my chosen subject’ (69%) and ‘knowledge of the occupational area that my programme covered’ (68%). These proportions were similar for 2020 TLTP starters.

Most 2021 TLTP starters also reported that their programme helped them to a large extent in relation to ‘study skills’ (65%), ‘communication skills’ (66%) and ‘confidence’ (62%). Learners studying GCSE English or maths as part of their TLTP were asked about their development of these skills. Most of these learners reported that their programme had helped them to develop a ‘great deal’ or ‘quite a bit’ (67% for English, 60% for maths).

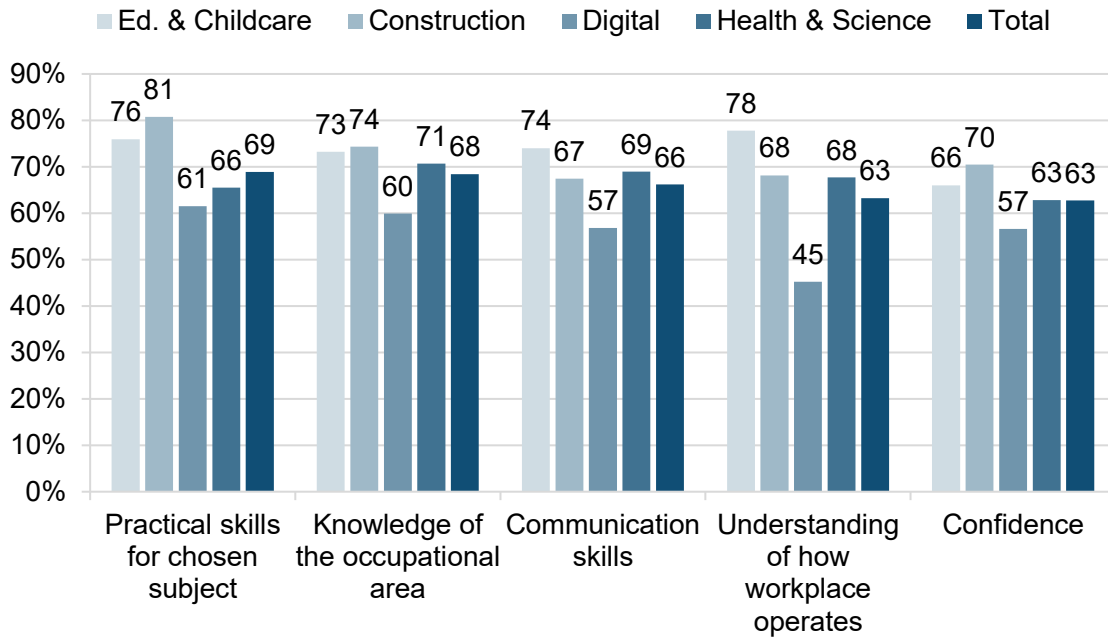
A key aim of the TLTP is to prepare learners for progression to a T Level programme. Only half of 2021 TLTP starters reported that the programme helped prepare them for a T level programme (49%) or developed their ‘knowledge of T levels in their chosen area’ (48%, decreased from 54% of 2020 learners). Some learners reported that their programme helped ‘not at all’ to prepare them for a T Level programme (14%) or to develop ‘knowledge of T Levels’ (10% of 2021 starters, increased from 6% of 2020 starters). Further details can be found in Appendix tables TP079 and TP082.

Figure 15 2021 TLTP starters who felt the programme helped develop study-related outcomes ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a bit’, by subject



Base: TLTP learners (unweighted: 458-891). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

Figure 16 2021 TLTP starters who felt the programme helped develop core skills and employability outcomes ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a bit’, by subject

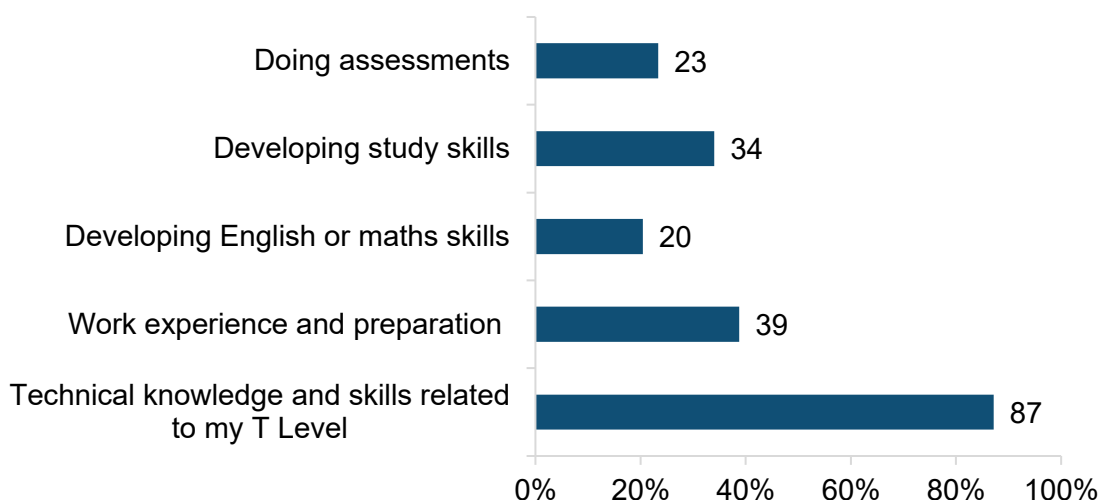


Base: TLTP learners (unweighted: 888-892). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

A small group of T Level learners who self-reported that they had completed the TLTP in 2020/21 and progressed onto a T Level in 2021/22 were asked how the TLTP had prepared them for T Levels. It is worth noting that due to the small sample, and because these learners had all successfully progressed onto T Levels, this group is unlikely to be representative of the broader TLTP cohort.

Most of the small group of T Level learners (2021 starters) who completed TLTP (n=44) agreed that the programme had prepared them well for the T Level (72% ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’). Learners were asked to comment on the aspects of the programme that best prepared them for T Levels (Figure 17). Further details can be found in Appendix tables TL025 and TL026.

Figure 17 Aspects of the TLTP that 2021 T Level starters who had done the TLTP felt had best prepared them for a T Level



Base: First year T Level learners who completed a TLTP prior to their T Level and agreed that the TLTP prepared them well for their T Level (unweighted: 32). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

Next steps

At the end of the programme, under a third (28%) of 2021 TLTP starters planned to progress to a T Level as their next step, with 29% unsure, and 42% who had decided not to. This is lower than for the first TLTP cohort (37% of 2020 starters planned to progress, 29% were unsure, and 34% had decided not to). TLTP learners were also asked to think back to the start of their programme and whether they had intended to go on to a T Level at that point: a higher proportion of learners in both cohorts intended to progress to a T Level at that earlier point than by the end of their course (36% for 2021 starters, 43% for 2020 starters).

Amongst 2021 TLTP starters, Digital learners and Health and Science learners were most likely to plan to take a T Level (32% and 31% respectively at the end of the programme) compared to Education and Childcare learners and Construction learners (25% and 23% respectively at the end of the programme). The same pattern by route was seen when learners were asked to think back to their plans at the start of the course.

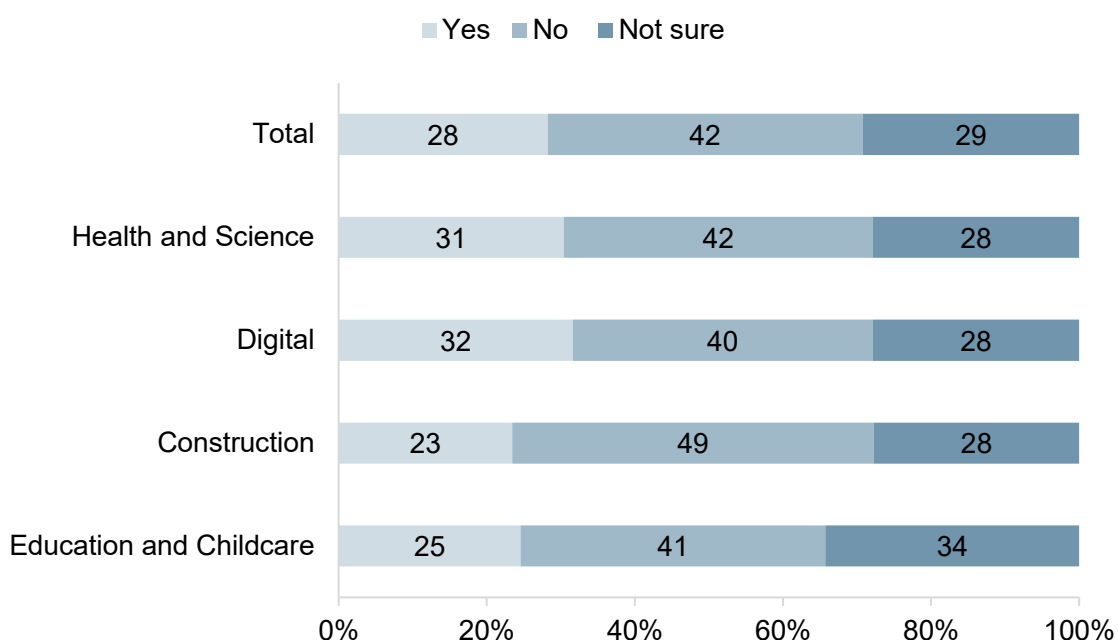
Several other factors were associated with the intention to progress to a T Level:

- Prior attainment (31% of learners with four or more GCSEs at grade 4+, and 31% of those with no more than one GCSE at grade 4+, compared with 25% of those with two or three GCSEs at grade 4+).

- Certainty about intended occupation (36% of learners who were 'certain' or 'quite sure', compared with 19% of learners who were 'considering a few occupations' and 20% of learners who were not sure).
- Finding the programme 'extremely' or 'very challenging' (36% of learners), compared to finding it 'quite challenging' (26%), or 'not very/not at all challenging' (30%).
- Satisfaction with the TLTP programme (33% of those who were satisfied, compared to 18% who were not satisfied).

Further details can be found in Appendix table TP083.

Figure 18 Whether 2021 TLTP starters were planning to continue to a T Level at the end of their programme



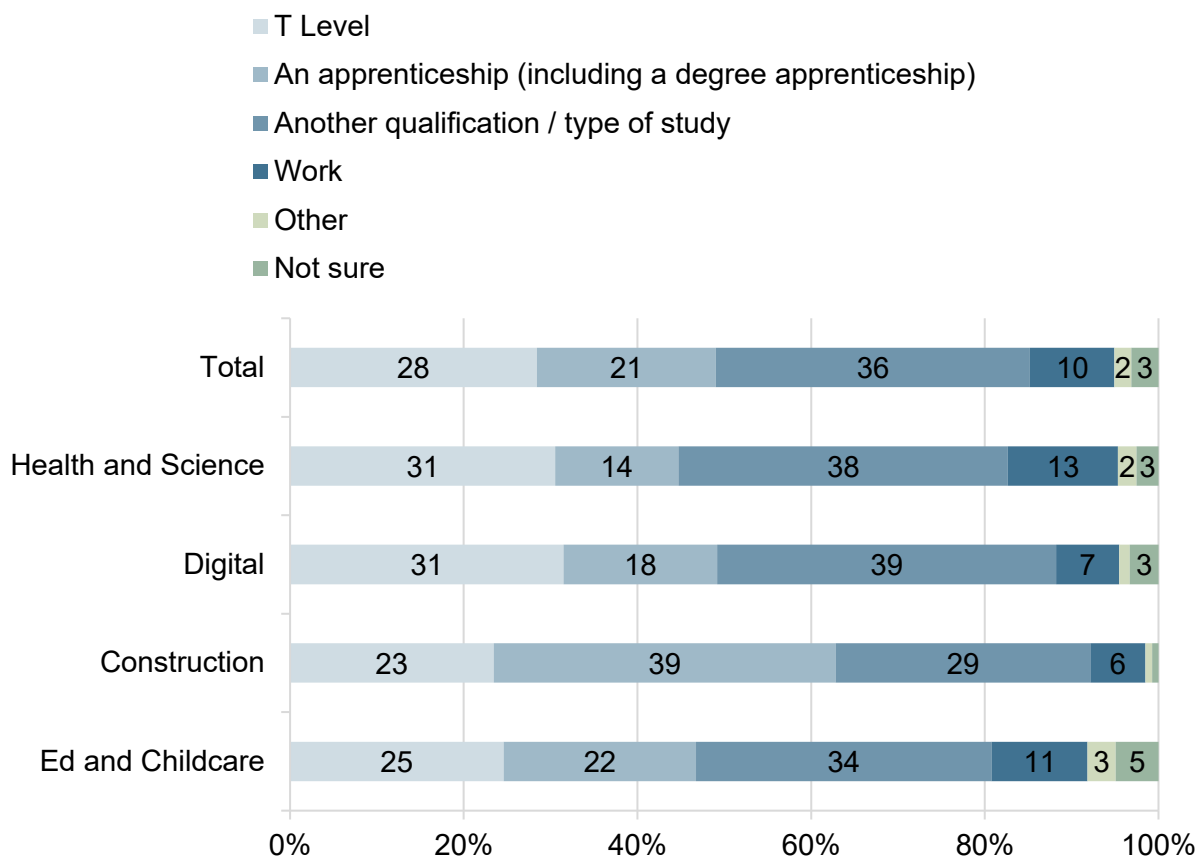
Base: TLTP learners (unweighted: 891). Source: Tech Ed Study 2021 (May-Sep 2022).

Learners who said they were not planning to or were unsure if they would continue onto a T Level were asked why. Only a small number of learners (n=50) responded to this question. Many of these learners reported that they preferred a different education or employment route: to 'study a different programme' (21%), 'move into employment' (12%), or 'do an apprenticeship' (5%). A small proportion of learners identified barriers to progressing to a T Level: that they 'don't have the required grades' (6%); will not continue for 'personal reasons' (4%) or thought a 'T Level would be too challenging' (2%).

At the end of the programme, the most common next steps planned by TLTP learners were studying a T Level (28%), studying another qualification (22%) or doing an apprenticeship (21%). A smaller proportion were planning to find work

(10%). This compares to 35% who said thinking back to the beginning of the TLTP they had wanted to progress to T Level, 29% who said another qualification, 24% who said an apprenticeship and 19% a paid job. Further details can be found in Appendix table TP85.

Figure 19 Planned next steps for 2021 TLTP starters at the end of their programme, by subject



Base: TLTP learners (unweighted: 892). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022). Note: Some learners may have selected options within the 'another qualification / type of study' category referring to their long-term learning aims rather than immediately after their programme due to the question wording. This could mean that fewer learners selected the T Level option than otherwise would have done.

Around two thirds (63%) of TLTP learners planned to 'work or study in the same general field' as their programme. Further details can be found in Appendix table TP087.

Most TLTP learners (64%) agreed that they felt supported by their education provider in deciding their next step (decreased from 71% of 2020 starters). This was similar across TLTP routes. Further details can be found in Appendix table TP088.

Level 4 and 5 learners

This chapter focuses on level 4 and 5 learners, exploring reasons for choosing the programme, aspirations, delivery of the programme, satisfaction, and future plans. The system for Higher Technical Education is currently under reform. New digital Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) are being delivered from autumn 2022, with other occupational routes available in subsequent years. The surveyed cohort are level 4 and 5 learners who undertook their programmes before the reforms, completing their qualifications in the 2021/22 academic year. Level 4 and 5 learners are identified through the Department for Education's (DfE) Individual Learner Record (ILR). This includes individuals studying level 4 and 5 qualifications at Further Education (FE) institutions, but not those studying at Higher Education (HE) institutions. Qualifications being studied for included Certificates/Diplomas of Higher Education, HNCs, HNDs and Foundation Degrees (apprenticeships were excluded as they are covered by [another DfE survey](#)).

Key level 4/5 findings

- The key reasons for learners choosing level 4 and 5 programmes were the importance of the qualification for the job they wanted and its recognition by employers. The key reasons for choosing the subject area were an interest in the area and to upskill in the same line of work. Education providers tended to be chosen because they were convenient to travel to and offered the subject of interest.
- Programme delivery used a range of in-person and online teaching. Almost three fifths of learners were taught primarily in-person, with just under a quarter taught primarily online. Learners were most commonly taught for less than 11 hours a week.
- Just under a third of learners had completed work experience or an industry placement but almost two thirds reported that their programme had not included contact with employers. Over four fifths of learners who had completed work experience were satisfied with it.
- Almost all learners found their workload manageable, including the amount of teaching on their programme and work done outside taught lessons.
- The most commonly reported barriers to learning were family responsibilities, working part-time and lack of in-person teaching.
- Three quarters of learners were very/quite satisfied with their programme, with three quarters or more satisfied with their teachers' knowledge and expertise, the skills covered for their chosen occupation/subject area, the standard of classroom teaching, and the support received from tutors. Learners were least satisfied with the level of employer contact and careers advice provided.

- About three quarters of learners reported that the programme had helped them develop significantly in their knowledge of the programme's occupational area and practical skills needed for their chosen subject.
- Three quarters of learners were planning to work as a next step after their programme finished, and just over three quarters of these were planning on staying in their current job. Just under half of learners reported wanting to progress onto further study or an apprenticeship.

Subject and learner characteristics

The subject and learner characteristics outlined below describe the profile of the level 4/5 learner population, which consisted of 37,424 learners who undertook level 4 or 5 programmes before the reforms, completing their qualifications in the 2021/22 academic year, based on the DfE's ILR database (i.e. within FE institutions, not HE institutions).

Subject of study

Level 4 and 5 learners were most commonly enrolled on either Business, Administration and Law programmes, or Health, Public Services and Care programmes. Of the learners in the available administrative data at the time of the survey, 8,674 (23%) learners were enrolled on the former and 8,548 (23%) on the latter.

For comparison purposes, level 4 and 5 subjects were categorised into subject groupings that aligned with current T Level routes. Most learners did not fit into an equivalent category and were on programmes classified as 'Other technical' subjects (33%, 12,311 learners) or 'Other non-technical' subjects (36%, 13,497 learners). 'Other technical' subjects comprised the sector subject areas of Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, Retail and Commercial Enterprise, Leisure, Travel and Tourism, and Education and Training. 'Other non-technical subjects' comprised the sector subject areas of Arts, Media and Publishing, History, Philosophy and Theology, Social sciences, Languages, Literature and Culture, Preparation for Life and Work, Business, Administration and Law.

In the subject areas covered by the first two cycles of HTQs, Health and Science had the highest proportion of learners, with 8,967 learners enrolled (24%), followed by Digital with 1,726 (5%) and Construction with 923 learners (3%).

Provider OfS registration

The Office for Students (OfS) has a registration system that identifies institutions providing 'high quality' higher education courses. Slightly over half (52%) of the level 4

and 5 qualification courses were with OfS-registered providers, just under half (48%) were not, with data missing for 1% of providers. Of the level 4 and 5 learners who took part in the survey, 78% reported that their programme had finished, and the remaining 22% reported that they would be carrying on after September 2022.

Personal characteristics

Sex

Overall, level 4 and 5 learners tended to be female (59%), but there were marked differences by subject. Health and Science subjects had the largest proportion of female learners (84%), whilst Digital and Construction had the smallest proportions (16% and 17% respectively). Other technical subjects tended to be more male dominated, and other non-technical subjects more female dominated.

Age

Level 4 and 5 learners tended to be older than learners in the other learner groups covered in the Tech Ed Study. Forty-four percent were over 30 years old, and 22% were aged over 40. A large proportion of younger learners were between 19 and 25 (35% of learners overall) and just 9% of learners were aged 18 or below. There were some differences by subject: Digital learners tended to be younger (51% were 20 or younger), and Health and Science learners tended to be older (34% were over 40).

Ethnicity

The majority of level 4/5 learners were white (83% overall). The ethnicity of learners was broadly similar across routes with some variation; Digital programmes tended to be more diverse, with a higher proportion of Asian (13%) and black (8%) learners enrolled than on subjects in other routes.

What were learners doing before the programme?

Learners were asked a range of questions regarding what they were doing before their programme in terms of study and work which are presented below.

Most level 4/5 learners (62%) had progressed from previous study in the months immediately before starting their programme. As would be expected from an older age group, most learners also reported that they had been working immediately prior to their programme (77%). Unsurprisingly, given their work commitments before the programme, prior study was often part-time. Learners on Digital programmes had a different profile from other subjects: they were younger, more likely to be progressing from full-time study, and less likely to have worked immediately before or during the programme.

Study prior to programme

Almost two thirds of learners (62%) were studying in the months immediately before their programme, with 35% studying full-time and 27% part-time. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45014.

Looking at differences by subject:

- The majority of Digital learners (75%) were studying full-time prior to their programme which perhaps reflects the fact that six in ten were aged 18-20.
- More than half of Construction learners (54%) were studying part-time prior to starting their programme, with a small proportion (16%) studying full-time.
- For the remaining subject areas, there was a mix of learners studying part-time (26 to 28%), full-time (30 to 37%) or not studying (35 to 44%).

As might be expected, younger learners were more likely to have been studying before their programme. Of those who were 20 and under, the majority (74%) were studying full-time. Older learners were less likely to have been studying in the months immediately prior to the programme (50% of learners aged 31 to 40, 53% of those aged 41+). Male learners were slightly more likely to be studying before the programme than female learners (65% and 60% respectively).

Work prior to programme

Over three quarters of learners (77%) were working in the months immediately before their programme, with 48% in full-time and 30% in part-time employment. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45015.

Looking at differences by subject:

- Most Construction learners (88%) and learners on programmes categorised as other technical subjects¹⁷ (84%) were working prior to their programme.
- About two fifths of Digital learners were not employed or looking for paid work (43%), which perhaps reflects the fact that they were younger and the majority were studying full-time.

Again, as might be expected, learners under 20 were less likely to be working full-time prior to their programme (just 20%) compared to around half or more for the other age groups. The variation on working full or part time before the start of the programme did not differ greatly by sex; male learners were slightly more likely to have been working full-

¹⁷ 'Other technical' subjects comprised the sector subject areas of Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, Retail and Commercial Enterprise, Leisure, Travel and Tourism, and Education and Training.

time than female learners (50% compared to 41%), whilst female learners were slightly more likely to have been working part-time than male learners (29% compared to 21%). The difference found may be attributed to females being more likely to have other commitments in the months before the programme started, such as looking after family or children (55%) compared to males (26%).

Working during the programme

Over three quarters (78%) of learners had undertaken paid work whilst attending their programme. Construction learners were most likely to have undertaken paid work (92%) and Digital learners the least likely (51%). There was minimal variation by age or sex. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45019.

Just under half of learners (44%) were working with the same employer and job as before their programme. A minority (4%) were with the same employer but in a different job. Around a fifth were working with a different employer (18%), or not working (22%). These proportions were very different across subjects. The proportion of learners working in the same job for the same employer varied from 57% for Construction to 19% for Digital. Similarly, the proportion of learners not working varied from 8% for Construction learners to 49% for Digital learners. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45018.

Choosing the programme

Learners most commonly heard about their programme from the provider offering it (40%), for example via a website, prospectus or open day. Other learners heard about the programme from friends or their employer (both 18%), teachers at their school (17%) and social media (11%). Further details can be found in Appendix table L45027.

Aspirations

Learners were asked about their planned next step after finishing their programme, with around a third planning to study towards a degree (32%) and a similar proportion (33%) wanting to get a paid job. Eight percent were considering another type of study, or something else, whereas 16% weren't sure. Only 3% were planning to do an apprenticeship. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45021.

In terms of certainty about the occupation they wanted to work in, half of learners (50%) were certain and around a fifth were quite sure (22%). Eighteen percent were considering a few occupations, and one in ten (10%) were unsure. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45022.

Reasons for choosing subject area

In terms of reasons for choosing the subject area of their programme, almost three quarters of learners had chosen it because it fitted with the areas they wanted to work in (71%) and over half (56%) because they were interested in the subject area. Just less than a third (29%) felt it was important for their intended further study, despite 41% reporting that they had originally intended to go onto further study after their programme. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45023.

The learners who were working prior to their programme (77% of all level 4/5 learners) were also asked their reasons for choosing their programme, primarily to ascertain what influence their employer or prior work experience had on their decision. **Almost half of these learners who were working prior to current study had chosen their programme because they had an interest in the area (47%) with just over two fifths wanting to upskill in the same line of work (44%).** This was followed by just under a third (30%) who wanted to increase their earnings and around a fifth who were retraining in a new line of work (20%) or whose motivation was to get promoted (17%). Only just over one in ten (13%) were doing their programme because their employer required it. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45020.

When asked about the most important reasons for choosing to do their programme, the subject(s) and the type(s) of qualification were reported by the highest proportions of learners (65% and 59% respectively). The particular provider was only perceived to be the largest important factor by around a quarter of learners (23%). Further details can be found in Appendix table L45026.

For Digital learners, the subject was by far the most important factor (reported by 82%) and for Construction learners it was the type of qualification (78%).

Reasons for choosing qualification

The largest proportions of learners had chosen their qualification because it was important for the kind of job they wanted (54%) and because it was recognised by employers (43%). In addition, around two fifths (39%) felt it was important for further study. Only around a fifth (18%) had chosen their programme for the industry/work experience element. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45024.

Reasons for choosing provider

Over half of the learners reported having chosen their provider partly because it was convenient to travel to (54%) and because it offered the subjects they wanted to do (52%). Just over a third (37%) reported having studied there previously as a reason for choosing the provider. Only small proportions had chosen to their provider

because their employer had chosen it (16%), it was informally recommended (11%) or because of its formal rating (7%). Further details can be found in Appendix table L45025.

How was their programme funded?

Almost two thirds of level 4/5 learners (59%) had funded their programme by taking out learner finance.¹⁸ Almost a quarter (24%) reported that their employer had paid their fees. Just over one in ten (12%) had paid out of their own money. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45028.

The vast majority of Digital learners and Health and Science learners (90% and 82% respectively) had taken out learner finance, whilst nearly a half of Construction learners (48%) and over two fifths of other technical learners (41%) had their fees paid by their employer.

As might be expected, the proportion of learners paying their fees themselves increased with age (from 5% of those aged under 21 to 20% of those aged 41 or more). Higher proportions of learners in the age bands over 21 reported that their employers had paid their fees (25-29%, compared with 13% for those under 21).

The majority of learners (70%) reported that cost and funding options did not influence their decision to take the programme. This was fairly consistent across subjects. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45029.

Why learners left the programme early

Sixty-nine learners had left their programme early and they were asked the reasons for this. Learners could report more than one reason for the decision.

Several reasons reported were not related to programme delivery and, reflected the fact that many level 4/5 learners combine studying with working and having family responsibilities. The top two reasons for learners leaving programmes were personal problems (reported by 45%) and not being able to juggle studying with other commitments (32%). Other common reasons unrelated to programme delivery reflected changes in learners' plans for education or employment: 'changed mind about future career plans' (20%), 'found paid work instead' (10%), and 'found an apprenticeship instead' (1%).

Learners did, however, report a number of reasons for leaving which did relate to the programme. These included: 'lack of support from teachers' (25%), 'didn't like the programme' (18%), 'the programme was too challenging' (11%), 'issues with COVID or

¹⁸ DfE data is available on the [proportion of level 4/5 learners who receive a learner loan](#), based on the full population.

online delivery' (11%), and 'asked to leave by provider' (3%). Further details can be found in Appendix table L45078.

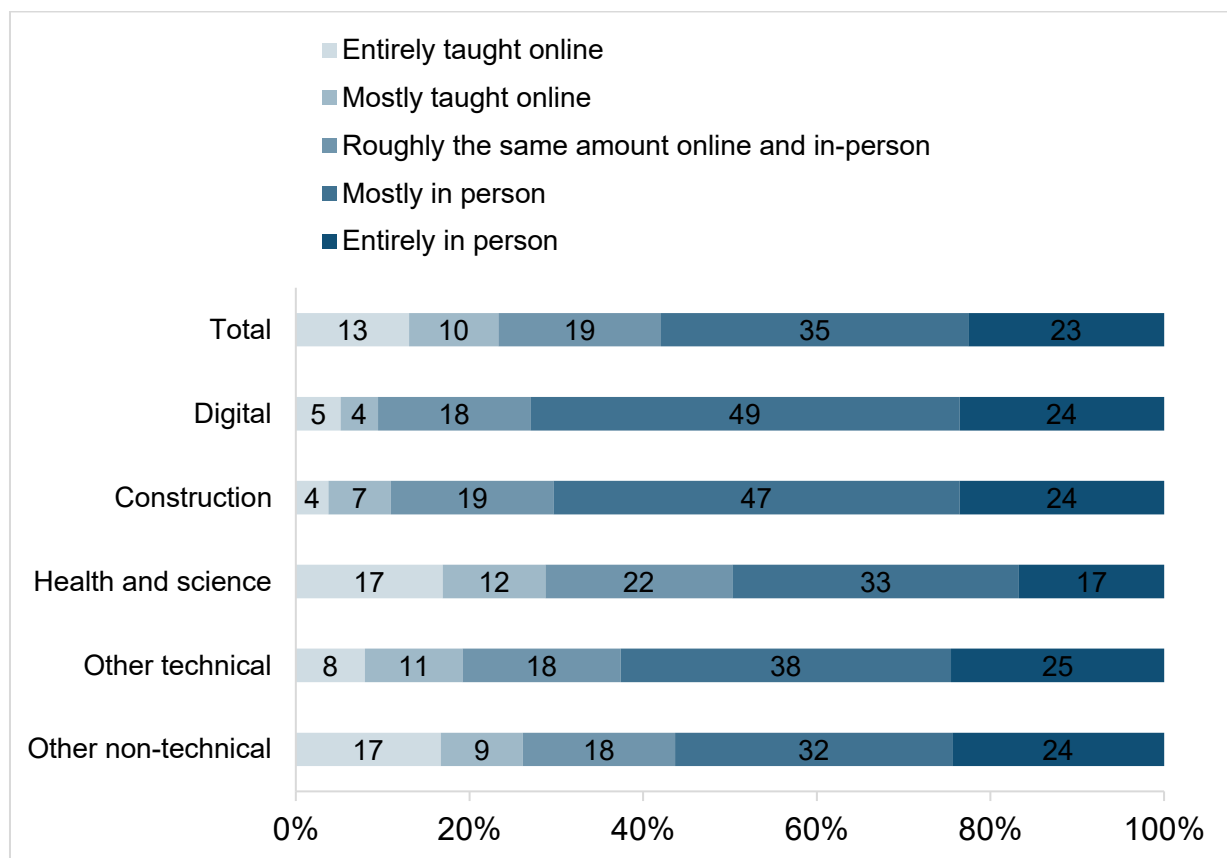
Programme content and delivery

Teaching characteristics

Almost six out of ten learners had been taught either entirely in-person (23%) or mostly in-person (35%). Almost a quarter had been taught either entirely online (13%) or mostly online (10%), with the remaining fifth (19%) being taught roughly the same amount online and in-person. This reflects the growing use of hybrid and remote learning in higher education following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Smaller proportions of Digital and Construction learners (9% and 11%) had been taught entirely or mostly online compared to 29% of Health and Science learners, 26% of other non-technical learners, and 19% of other technical subject learners.

Figure 20 Teaching format reported by level 4/5 learners in academic year 2021/22, by subject



Base: Level 4/5 learners (unweighted: 1,380). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

OfS-registered level 4/5 qualifications were less likely than other qualifications to be delivered online: almost a third (31%) of other level 4/5 qualifications were delivered entirely or mostly online compared to 16% of OfS-registered qualifications.

Almost two thirds of learners (64%) reported being taught less than 11 hours a week, followed by 29% being taught 11-20 hours a week. Only a small proportion (7%) were being taught more than 20 hours a week.. Reported teaching hours are lower than for level 3 technical education, perhaps reflecting the generally lower contact hours usually found in higher education and the increased emphasis on self-study. It is also likely that this reflects a higher proportion of part-time courses among level 4/5 learners¹⁹. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45031.

OfS-registered level 4/5 qualifications tended to deliver more hours than other qualifications: 42% of OfS-registered qualifications provided 11-20 hours a week compared to 13% of other qualifications for which the vast majority (81%) delivered less than 11 hours teaching a week.

Work experience

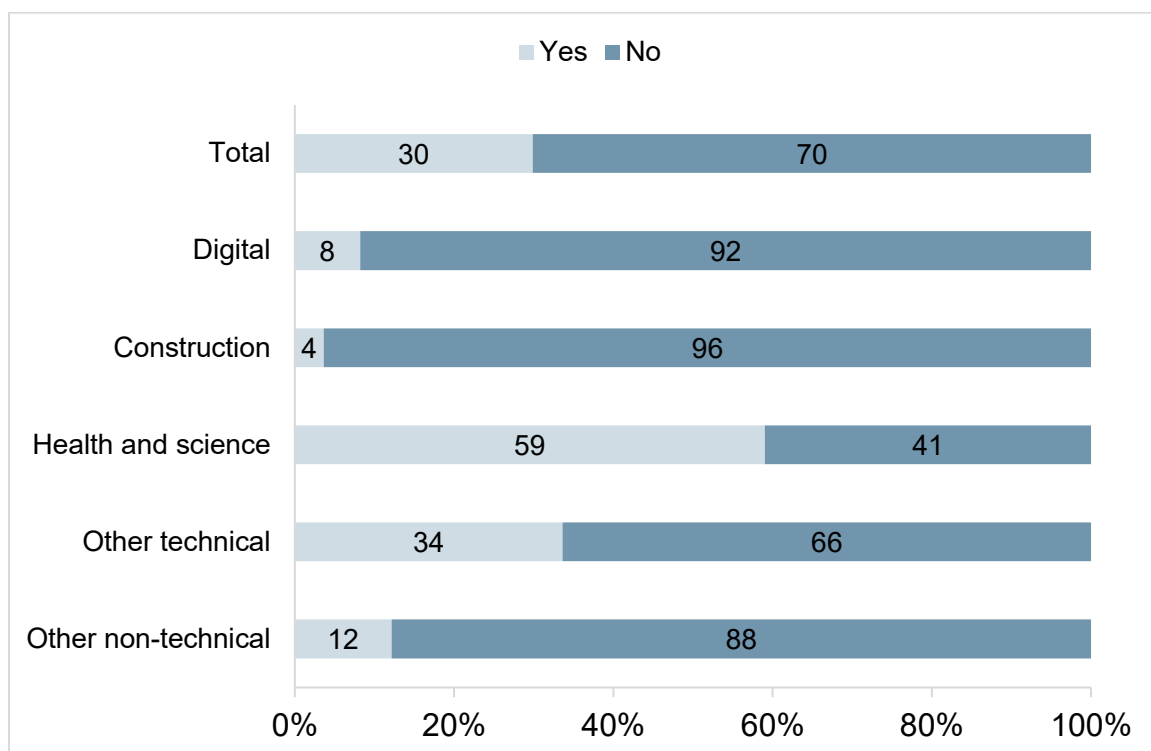
Employer engagement in technical education is seen as [a priority by the UK government](#). This engagement can take many forms, including involvement in qualification design and approval, as well as engagement in programme delivery through work experience, project work, visits and talks. Level 4/5 learners were asked about their experience of direct engagement with employers within their programme.

Relatively few level 4/5 learners had engaged with employers directly within their programme, including through work experience. It is worth noting that relatively few learners were satisfied with their programme's level of employer contact (43% of learners) and careers advice (54%), and the presence of a work experience element influenced some learners' choice of programme (reported by 18%).

Just under a third of learners (30%) had spent time on a work experience placement during their programme. There were differences by subject with around three-fifths of learners on Health and Science programmes (59%) and around a third of learners on other technical programmes (34%) having undertaken a work experience placement compared to 4% of Construction learners, 8% of Digital learners and 12% of other non-technical learners. There were few differences between learners in urban and rural areas and no significant differences between levels of area deprivation and or between those completing OfS-registered and other qualifications.

¹⁹ 34% of all L4/5 achievements (excl apprenticeships) in 2020/21 were for part-time courses according to [published data](#)

Figure 21 Whether level 4/5 learners had done a work experience placement during their programme, by subject



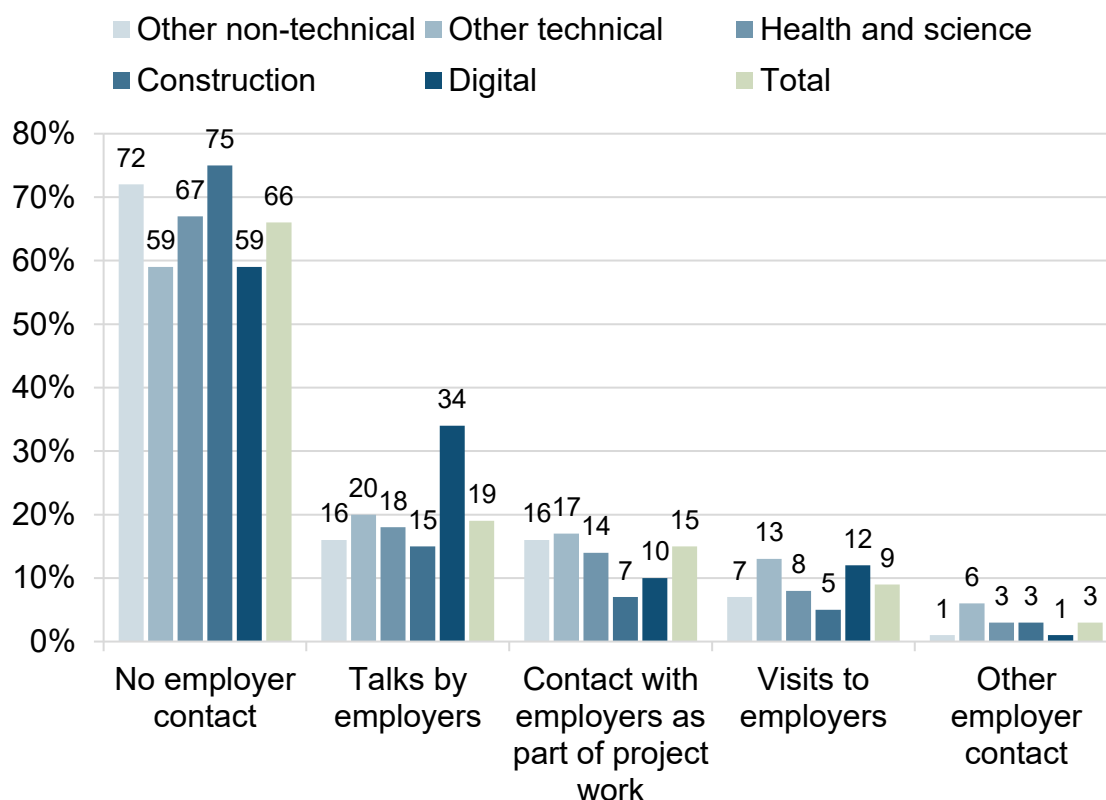
Base: Level 4/5 learners (unweighted: 1,381). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

Of those who had spent time on work experience, half had completed up to 100 hours (50%), with a further 46% completing more than 100 hours. A small proportion of learners had not yet completed any hours (4%). Learners studying for OfS-registered qualifications were more likely to have completed 100+ hours of work experience placement compared with other level 4/5 qualifications. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45036.

Other employer contact

Two thirds of learners (66%) reported that their programme had not included contact with employers (excluding any work experience placement). This was similar across learners who had finished and learners who were carrying on after September 2022. Small proportions reported talks by employers (19%), contact with employers as part of project work (15%) and visits to employers (9%).

Figure 22 Employer contact other than work experience reported by level 4/5 learners as part of their programme, by subject



Base: Level 4/5 learners (unweighted: 1,335). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

A higher proportion of OfS-registered level 4/5 qualifications included contact with employers (54%) than other level 4/5 courses (33%).

Larger proportions of Construction (75%), other non-technical (72%) and Health and Science learners (67%) reported no employer contact, compared to 59% for both Digital and other technical learners, perhaps reflecting the higher proportion of Construction learners already in work during the course. Higher proportions of Digital learners had received talks by employers (34%) compared to a fifth or less of learners of other subjects.

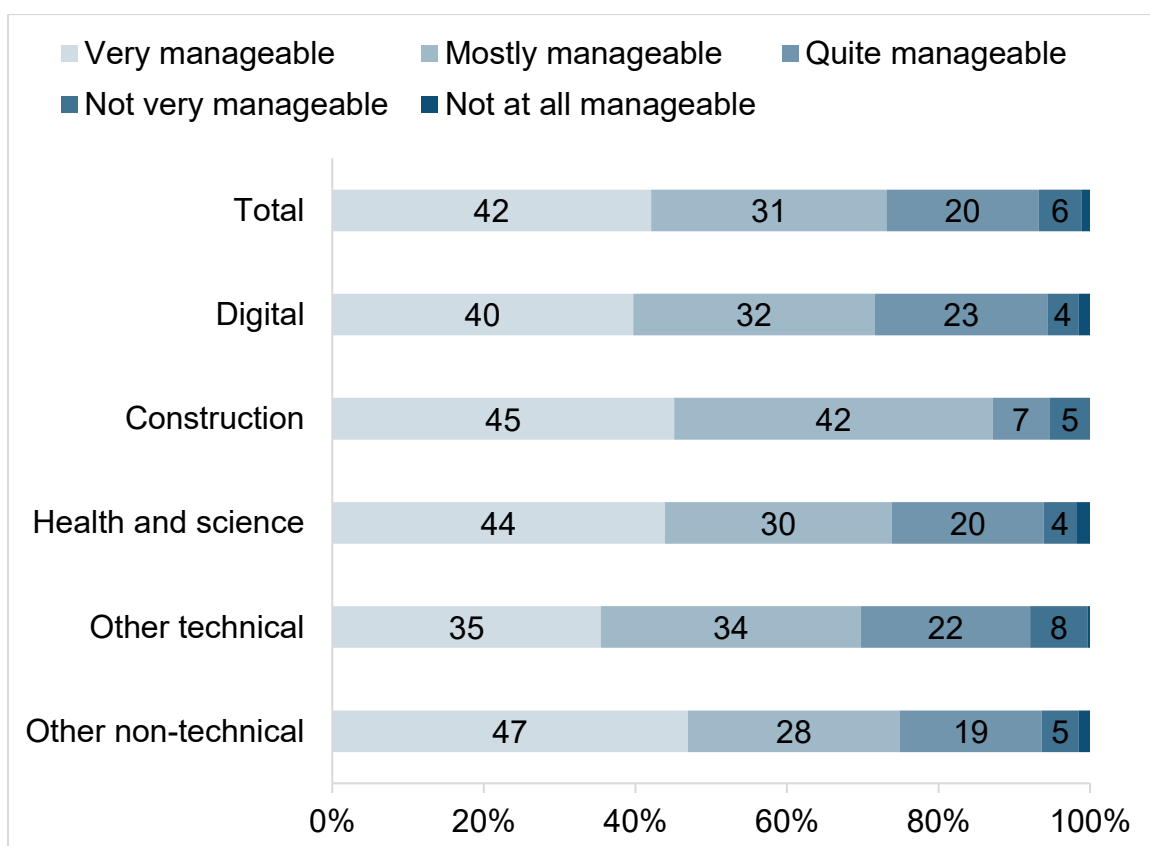
Workload and challenges

Level 4/5 learners' views on workload, barriers and challenges tended to reflect the fact that many were in paid work and had family responsibilities, which affected the time they had available to study.

Workload

Almost all learners (93%) felt that the amount of teaching on their programme was ‘very’, ‘mostly’ or ‘quite manageable’. Less than one in ten (7%) reported that it was ‘not very manageable’ or ‘not at all manageable’.

Figure 23 Extent to which level 4/5 learners felt the amount of teaching was manageable, by subject



Base: Level 4/5 learners (unweighted: 1,377). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

Learners who were taught mainly in person tended to find the amount of teaching more manageable (96% of learners taught mostly/entirely in person found it ‘very’, ‘mostly’ or ‘quite manageable’ compared to 89% of those taught ‘entirely/mostly online’ and 91% of those taught ‘roughly the same online and in-person’).

Most learners reported that the work required outside of taught lessons was manageable. Over four fifths of learners (85%) reported that the work required outside of taught lessons was ‘very’, ‘mostly’ or ‘quite manageable’, with 15% reporting that it was ‘not very’ or ‘not at all manageable’. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45033.

Key reasons for the 15% of learners who reported that the work outside of the programme was not manageable were ‘other commitments outside of the programme’ (60%) and ‘not enough support from their teacher/tutor’ (43%), although there was only a small group of Construction learners who agreed with the latter statement (6%). This was followed by ‘too much work given’ and ‘the work set was unclear’ (both reported by 30%). Further details can be found in Appendix table L45034.

Barriers to learning

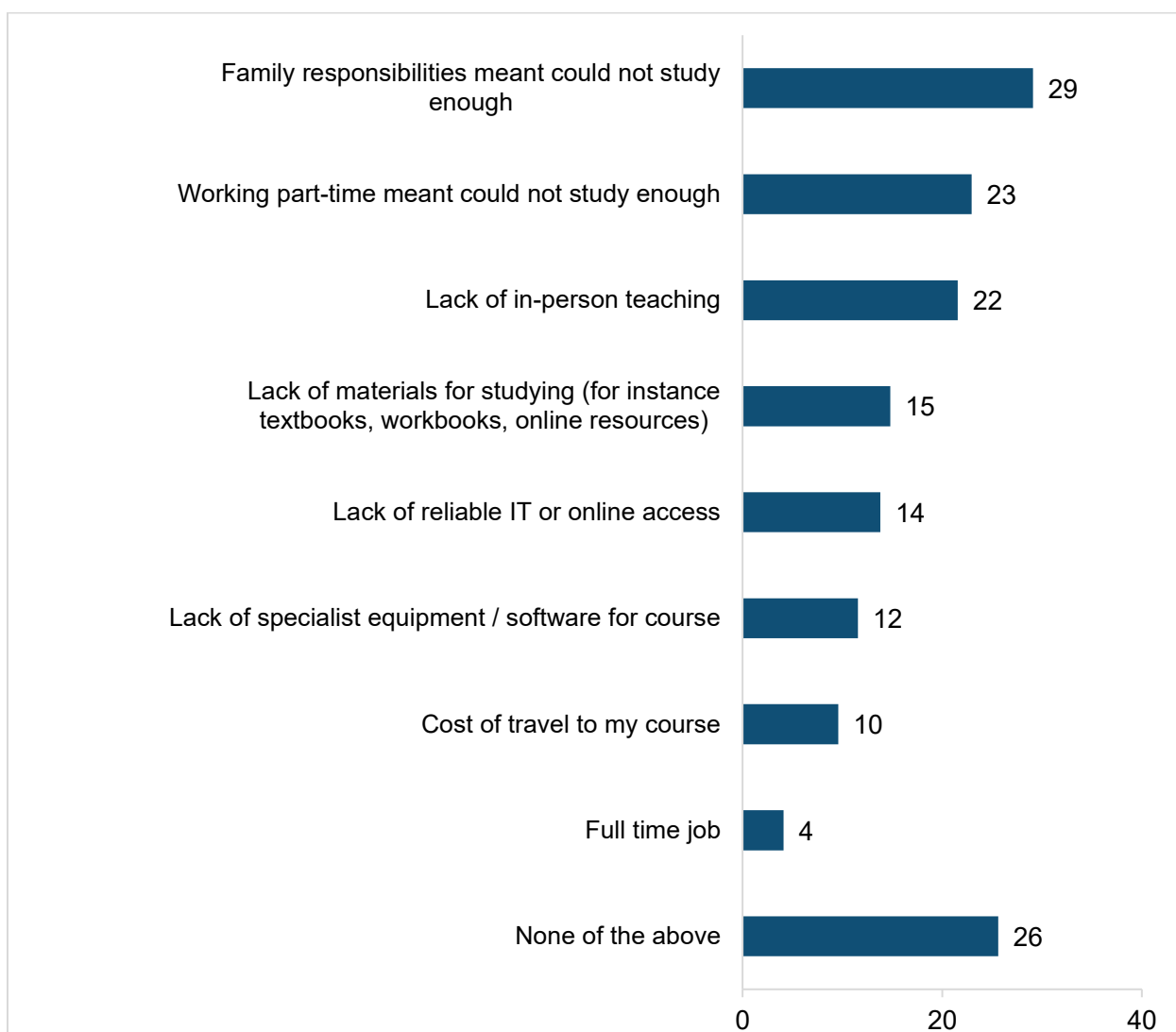
Learners were asked about their barriers to learning, and three key barriers emerged. These were: not being able to study enough because of ‘family responsibilities’ (reported by 29%) and ‘working part-time’ (23%), and ‘lack of in-person teaching’ (reported by 22%). Less than a fifth reported ‘lack of materials for studying’ (15%), ‘lack of reliable IT or online access’ (14%) and ‘lack of specialist equipment/software for the programme’ (12%) as barriers to learning.

The most commonly reported barriers by subject varied:

- For Digital learners, the most reported barrier was ‘lack of specialist equipment/software for their programme’ which was reported by 30%
- For Construction learners, the most frequent barrier was ‘working part-time meant could not study enough’ which was reported by 34%, closely followed by ‘family responsibilities meant could not study enough’, reported by 26%
- For Health and Science learners, other technical and other non-technical learners, the most common barrier was ‘family responsibilities meant could not study enough’, which was reported by 34%, 28% and 28% of learners respectively. This, again, was closely followed by ‘working part-time meant could not study enough’, reported by over a fifth of these learners.

Learners who had changed jobs or employers were more likely to report that they could not study enough due to part-time work (32-33%) than those still in the same job (26%).

Figure 24 Barriers to learning reported by level 4/5 learners



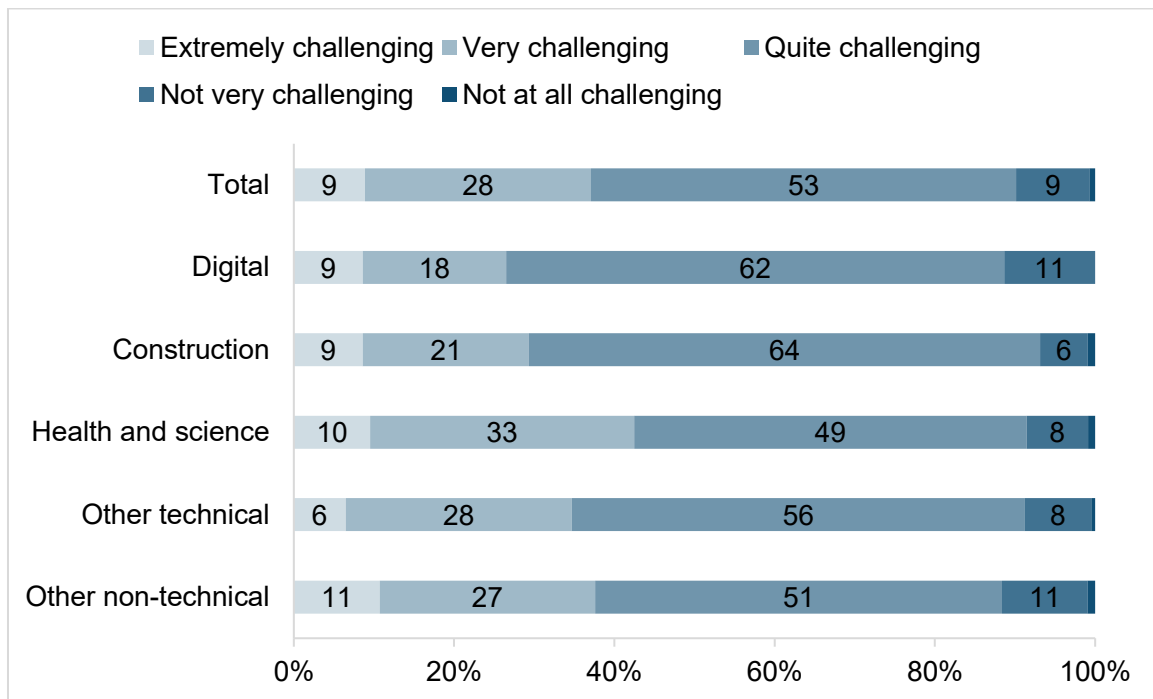
Base: Level 4/5 learners (unweighted: 1,370). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022). Note: barriers that were reported by less than 4% of all level 4/5 learners are not shown.

As might be expected, family responsibilities became an increasing barrier for learners in the older age bands, peaking in the 31-40 age group at 41%. It was also reported by a higher proportion of females (34%) than males (23%).

How challenging learners found the programme

About half of learners (53%) found their programme ‘quite challenging’. Almost two fifths (37%) finding it ‘extremely challenging’ or ‘very challenging’, while only one in ten (10%) reported it to be ‘not very’ or ‘not at all challenging’. This was similar for OfS-registered and non-registered qualifications.

Figure 25 Level of challenge felt on programme by level 4/5 learners, by subject



Base: Level 4/5 learners (unweighted: 1,380). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

The following groups had higher proportion of learners reporting that their programme was ‘extremely’ or ‘very challenging’:

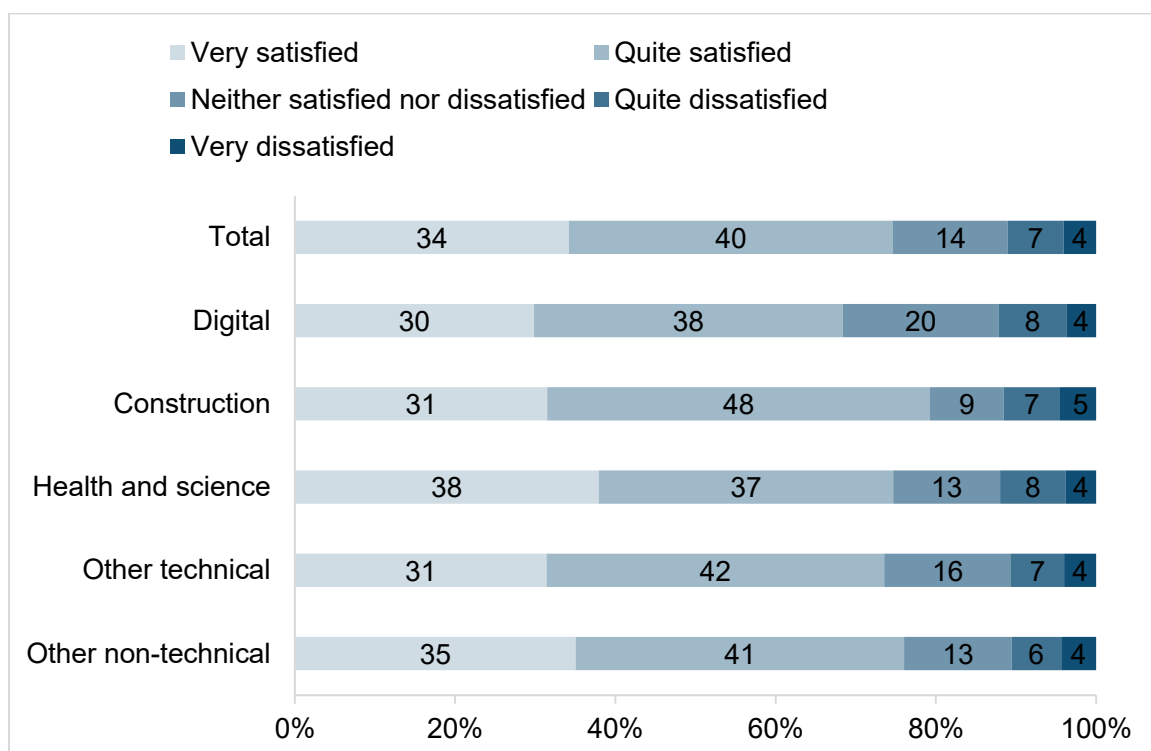
- Learners who found the amount of teaching less manageable (45% of those who found it ‘quite’, ‘not very’ or ‘not at all manageable’, compared with 31 and 38% of those who found it ‘very’ or ‘mostly manageable’ respectively).
- Learners who found the work outside lessons to be ‘not very’ or ‘not at all manageable’ (55%), compared with those who found it ‘very’, ‘mostly’ or ‘quite manageable’ (29-39%)
- Learners who were taught ‘roughly the same online and in person’ (44%) compared with those taught ‘mostly/entirely in person’ (36%) and ‘entirely/mostly online’ (34%).

Satisfaction with the programme

Overall satisfaction

Most learners (75%) were satisfied with their programme, with around just one in ten (11%) reporting that they were dissatisfied. Construction learners were the most satisfied (79%) and Digital learners the least satisfied (68%).

Figure 26 Overall satisfaction with level 4/5 programmes, by subject



Base: Level 4/5 learners (unweighted: 1,381). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

Satisfaction levels were similar for OfS-registered and non OfS-registered qualifications. There were also similar levels of satisfaction between learners who had completed their programmes (78%) and those still to finish (72%).

Learners who found their programme more manageable also reported being satisfied overall with their programme, as did those who reported being taught mostly in person.

- Learners who found the amount of teaching 'very manageable' were most satisfied (87%) compared to 77% who found the teaching 'mostly manageable' and 53% of those who found the amount of teaching 'quite'/'not very'/'not at all' manageable.
- Learners who found the work they had to do outside of lessons 'very manageable' were the most satisfied (89%) and those who found work outside of lessons 'not very'/'not at all' manageable were the least satisfied (39%).
- Learners who had been taught mostly/entirely in-person were the most satisfied (78%) and those who were taught mostly/entirely online were the least satisfied (68%). A little less than three quarters (72%) of those taught 'roughly the same online and in-person' were satisfied.

A high proportion of learners (72%) reported that they were ‘very likely’ or ‘quite likely’ to recommend their programme to others, with only 13% reporting that they were ‘quite unlikely’ or ‘very unlikely’ to recommend their programme. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45063.

There were some differences by subject, level of challenge and how manageable learners had found the amount of teaching and the work outside of lessons, mode of teaching, and intended next steps:

- Construction learners were more likely to recommend their programme (79% were ‘very likely’ or ‘quite likely’ to recommended it) and Digital learners least likely (60%)
- Learners who found their programme ‘extremely/very challenging’ or ‘quite challenging’ were more likely to recommend their programme (72% and 75% respectively were ‘very likely’ or ‘quite likely’ to recommended it) compared to learners who found it not very/not at all challenging (56%)
- Learners who found the amount of teaching very manageable or mostly manageable were ‘very likely’ or ‘quite likely’ to recommend their programme (83% and 74% respectively) compared to 52% who found their programme quite/not very/not at all manageable
- Similarly, learners who found the work outside of lessons very, mostly or quite manageable were more likely to recommend their programme (87%, 79% and 71% respectively were ‘very likely’ or ‘quite likely’ to recommended it) compared to 39% who found the work outside of lessons not very/not at all manageable
- A higher proportion of learners who had been taught entirely/mostly in-person were ‘very likely’ or ‘quite likely’ to recommend their programme (76%) than those who had been taught roughly the same amount online and in person (69%) or entirely/mostly online (66%)
- A higher proportion of learners intending to study at university or undertake another type of study following their programme were ‘very likely’ or ‘quite likely’ to recommend their programme (78% of both) than those planning a paid job (69%).

Satisfaction with specific aspects of the programme

At least three quarters of learners were satisfied with key aspects of programme delivery including teachers’ knowledge and expertise (83%), the skills covered for their chosen occupation/subject area (80%), the standard of classroom teaching (78%), support received from tutors (75%), and the way learners were assessed (75%).

Learners were least satisfied with the level of employer contact (43%) and the careers advice provided (54%). The finding relating to employer contact is unsurprising given the lack of employer contact reported by most learners.

Table 6: Elements of the programme where level 4/5 learners were satisfied

Extent to which learner was satisfied with:	% level 4/5 learners 'very' or 'quite' satisfied
Teachers' knowledge and expertise	83%
Skills covered for chosen occupation/subject area	80%
Standard of classroom teaching	78%
Support received from tutors	75%
The way learners are assessed	75%
Standard of practical hands-on work	71%
Equipment, software and resources available	68%
Programme organisation and management	61%
Preparation for further study	61%
The careers advice provided	54%
Level of employer contact	43%
<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>1,059 -1,380</i>

Base: Level 4/5 learners, excluding those who said the element was 'Not applicable' to them.

Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

There were few differences by subject and whether the qualification was OfS-registered or not.

Consistent with the finding that learners taught entirely/mostly in person were more satisfied overall than those who received more online teaching, these learners also reported higher satisfaction with specific aspects of the programme (excluding the level of employer contact in the programme).

Multivariate analysis of overall satisfaction

Multivariate analysis was conducted to provide insight into the relative importance of a range of factors with overall satisfaction for level 4/5 learners. Logistic regression shows whether a given factor is statistically significantly associated with the dependent variable (in this case 'very' or 'quite satisfied' vs not satisfied) while controlling for other factors. In

this analysis, a range of models were developed to look at demographic associations, course delivery factors and satisfaction with the individual elements of the course.

In a model that included demographic and socioeconomic factors (sex, age, ethnicity, tenure), only tenure was found to be statistically significantly associated with overall satisfaction (those living in a home that was owned were less likely to be satisfied overall than those in private or social rented housing). This was also the case when a variable for whether doing paid work during the course was added. A further model included aspects of the course: whether the course had finished or was continuing next year (or the learner left early); the broad subject area (in line with T Levels); whether the qualification was OfS-registered or not; whether taught mostly in person; whether any placement was done; how challenging learners found the course and satisfaction with the work placement (if done); teaching format. In this model, the following were associated with being satisfied with the course overall (in order of strength of association):

- Being taught mostly in-person.
- Finding the course 'quite challenging' rather than 'extremely' / 'very challenging'.
- Finishing in the current year, compared with leaving early or having another year to go.
- Renting their home (private or social renters) compared to owning.
- Being over 18.

Looking at the individual specific aspects of course satisfaction (alongside demographic and course-related factors), the following were found to be significantly associated with overall satisfaction:

- The standard of classroom teaching.
- Support received from tutors.
- Course organisation and management.
- Skills covered for chosen occupation.
- The level of employer contact.

More detail on these regression models is provided in the separate accompanying tables.

Satisfaction with work experience

Overall satisfaction

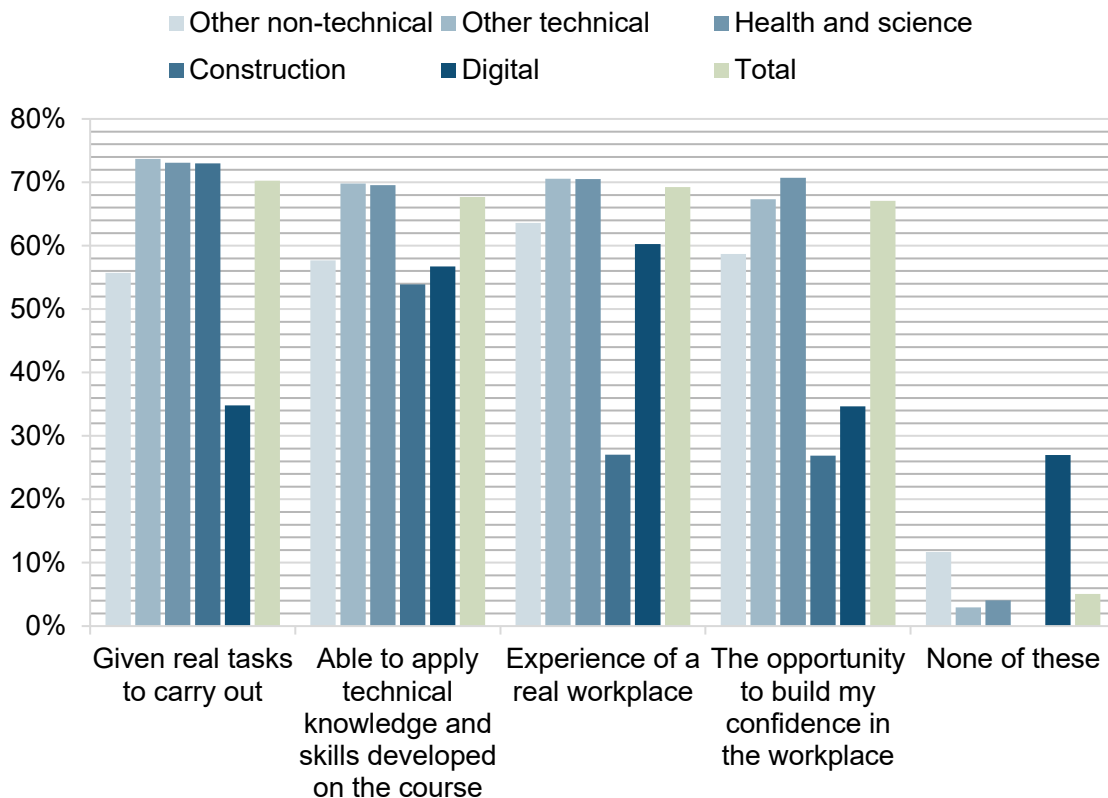
There were high levels of satisfaction with the work experience placement (86% of learners were satisfied) but it is worth remembering that less than a third of learners had completed one (30%). Further details can be found in Appendix table L45040. It is also worth noting that findings relating to the placement are skewed towards learners of Health and Science and other technical subjects, as learners from these subjects made up 87% of the learners who had completed a placement. For this reason, robust comparisons between subjects cannot be made.

Overall satisfaction with the work experience placement was associated with a range of other factors, with overall satisfaction decreasing when learners were dissatisfied with other aspects. These other aspects included: the placement coming at the right point in the programme, preparation for placement, whether their employer made sure they got the most out of the placement, support from their provider during the placement, the placement providing a good challenge, feeling a valued member of the team, and the placement improving their knowledge of the workplace.

Satisfaction with specific aspects of work experience

Over two thirds of learners who had completed a placement reported that it had met their expectations in a range of ways. This included: being given real tasks to carry out (70% agreed that it had met their expectations), experience of a real workplace (69%), being able to apply technical knowledge and skills developed on the programme (68%) and the opportunity to build confidence in the workplace (67%).

Figure 27 Areas in which level 4/5 learners felt their work experience met expectations, by subject



Base: Level 4/5 learners who had done a work experience placement (unweighted: 408). Source: Tech Ed Study 2022 (May-Sep 2022).

Learners studying for non-OfS registered qualifications tended to be slightly more positive about their placement meeting their expectations than learners studying for OfS-registered qualifications. This was particularly the case in terms of being able to apply technical knowledge and skills developed on the programme (75% of learners of non-OfS registered reported their expectations were met, compared to 61% of learners on OfS-registered qualifications).

Learners who had completed a placement were also asked if they agreed or disagreed with a range of statements about their placement and they were generally very positive. **Large proportions of learners agreed that their placement had improved their knowledge of the workplace (90%), that it was a good challenge (87%) and that they felt a valued member of the team (81%).** In addition, around three quarters agreed that they felt fully prepared for their placement (76%), that the placement came at the right point in the programme (72%) and that their employer made sure that they got the most out of the placement (72%). A slightly lower proportion (64%) agreed that they had all the support from their college/school during the placement.

Programme outcomes

Learners were asked to what extent their programme had helped them to develop a range of skills, understanding and knowledge.

Most learners (around three quarters) reported that their programme had developed ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a bit’ their knowledge of the programme’s occupational area (77%) and practical skills needed for their chosen subject (70%).

In addition, around three fifths or more reported that their programme had developed ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a bit’ their study skills (67%), confidence (64%), communication skills (63%) and understanding of how workplaces operate (58%). A lower proportion of learners reported that their programme had developed their IT skills (46%).

For most skills, understanding and knowledge which learners were asked about, only a very small proportion reported their programme had ‘not at all’ helped them develop these. However, about one in eight learners (13%) reported that their programme had ‘not at all’ helped them develop IT skills, although this was a lower proportion for Digital learners (2%).

In addition, one in ten learners (10%) reported that their programme had ‘not at all’ helped them develop their understanding of how workplaces operate. This could reflect the low level of work experience placements and employer contact, or learners’ already strong understanding of how workplaces operate before they started the programme, as most learners were already working.

There were some differences by subject:

- Lower proportions of Construction (60%) and other technical learners (63%) reported the development of their practical skills a great deal/quite a bit compared to 70% overall.
Higher proportions of learners of Health and Science (71%) and other non-technical subjects (66%) reported that their confidence had developed a great deal/quite a bit compared to 64% overall.
- A higher proportion of learners of Health and Science reported the development of their communication skills a great deal/quite a bit (74%) compared to 63% overall.
- A lower proportion of Digital learners (45%) reported developing an understanding of how workplaces operate a great deal/quite a bit, compared to 58% overall.
- As would be expected, a higher proportion of Digital learners (78%) reported the development of their IT skills a great deal/quite a bit, compared to 46% overall.

Those who were taught entirely online were less likely to report developing practical skills, with 62% of learners taught entirely online reporting that they had developed

practical skills compared to 70% of those taught roughly the same online and in person and 74% of those taught mostly/entirely in person.

There were also some differences between learners on OfS-registered and other qualifications. Learners on OfS-registered qualifications were more likely to report the development of their IT skills a great deal/quite a bit (55% compared to 37% for those on other level 4/5 qualifications). Learners on OfS-registered qualifications were also more likely to report the development of their study skills a great deal/quite a bit (72% compared to 62% for those on other level 4/5 qualifications). There was no significant difference between learners on non-registered qualifications and those on OfS registered qualifications in relation to developing their practical skills (73% reporting these had developed a great deal / a fair bit compared to 68%). Those on non-OFS registered qualifications were, however, more likely to report developing their knowledge of their occupational area (80% compared to 74%).

Next steps

In terms of next steps, **the largest proportion of level 4/5 learners planned to study for a degree (37%) or work (24%) after their programme finished.** Small proportions were planning a level 4/5 (15%) or other qualification (12%). Just 5% were planning to go onto an apprenticeship, and 3% had other plans, with 4% not sure. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45071.

Digital had the highest proportion of learners planning to go onto a degree (49%) and other technical the lowest (33%). This might reflect the fact that Digital learners were younger. A fifth or more of Health and Science, other non-technical and technical learners were planning to work after their programme compared to 11% of Digital learners.

A much higher proportion of learners studying for OfS-registered qualifications (52%) were planning to undertake a degree after their programme compared to 21% of other learners. A higher proportion of learners studying for non-OfS registered qualifications compared with OfS-registered qualifications were planning to work (29% as opposed to 19%) or to undertake another qualification (20% as opposed to 5%).

More than four fifths of learners (81%) intended to work/study in the same general field as their current programme. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45075.

Of those learners who were still working for the same employer as before their programme and were planning to go onto a paid job, just over three quarters (78%) were staying in their current job and an additional 4% were staying with their current employer

but in a different job. The remainder planned to work elsewhere. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45074.

The findings suggested that learners could have been provided with more support from their education provider to consider their next step. Just over half (54%) agreed that they felt supported by their education provider to decide on their next step, whilst 28% neither agreed nor disagreed and 17% disagreed. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45076.

A slightly higher proportion of learners studying for OfS-registered qualifications (59%) agreed that they felt supported by their education provider to consider their next steps than learners on other programmes (50%). By subject area, a higher proportion of Digital learners agreed they felt supported (60%).

Just less than three quarters of learners (70%) agreed that their programme had prepared them for their future career whilst the remainder neither agreed or disagreed (20%) or disagreed (10%). There was no difference between learners studying OfS-registered and other qualifications. Further details can be found in Appendix table L45077.

A high proportion of Construction learners (79%) agreed that their programme had prepared them for their future career, with a similar proportion of Digital learners (73%), Health and Science learners (72%), and other technical and non-technical learners (69%) reporting this.

Conclusions

The Tech Ed Study provides extensive findings on learner experiences and perspectives on the delivery of T Levels and the TLTP which are central to the technical education reform policy agenda in England. For this report (one of a series of reports from the Tech Ed Study), surveys were used to interview TLTP learners starting in 2021, 2020 T Level starters completing their second year, 2021 T Level starters at the end of their first year and a comparison group for the 2021 T Level cohort, who began studying other level 3 courses in 2021 (level 3 technical qualifications and A levels). In addition, learners studying for pre-reform level 4/5 qualifications such as Certificates/Diplomas of Higher Education, HNCs, HNDs and Foundation Degrees were surveyed to provide a baseline to enable comparisons with post-reform level 4/5 learners.

For T Levels, the first cohort continued to be positive in their second year: 71% reported satisfaction with their programme compared with 79% at the end of the first year. However, a lower proportion of the second cohort of T Level learners were satisfied at the end of their first year (56%). This is lower than the satisfaction level for the level 3 comparison groups: 75% of other level 3 technical learners were satisfied and 73% of A level learners. While satisfaction was lower for the second cohort than the first cohort for each of the existing T Level routes, it was particularly low for learners studying the new Health and Science route: less than half of these learners (41%) reported satisfaction. This may relate to the concerns about core assessments on this route, which Ofqual found were not fit for purpose, leading to regrading of T Level results for these learners.

Satisfaction for the second cohort of TLTP learners was lower than that of the first cohort (69% of 2021 starters compared to 77% of 2020 starters). This is despite the majority of this year's learners being taught entirely in-person compared to around a fifth last year, which might be expected to positively impact learning experience and hence satisfaction.

Level 4/5 learners had high levels of satisfaction: 75% reported that they were satisfied, with those taught primarily online – almost a quarter – being a little less positive (68%).

In the first year of the Tech Ed Study (academic year 2020/21), the lack of in-person teaching due to COVID-19 was the most commonly reported barrier to learning. However, in 2021/22 a much smaller proportion of TLTP and T Level learners reported this barrier. Almost half of TLTP learners did not experience any of the barriers listed in the survey. For both T Level cohorts, the most common barrier was a lack of study materials. The most common barriers for level 4/5 learners were family responsibilities and part-time work meaning they could not study enough, reflecting the older demographic of this learner group, followed by lack of in-person teaching.

Delivering courses with an appropriate workload – in terms of classroom teaching and independent study – is key to successful delivery. As with the first year of delivery in

2020/21, most TLTP and T Level learners surveyed in 2021/22, as well as level 4/5 learners in 2021/22, found their programme's workload manageable. The minority of TLTP and T Level learners who struggled to manage the workload outside classes identified lack of clarity of work set, insufficient support from teachers/tutors and the amount of work set as key reasons, echoing last year's findings. For level 4/5 learners, other commitments outside of the programme was a key reason for some finding their programme not manageable, followed by insufficient support from their teacher/tutor.

As in 2020/21, the majority of TLTP and T Level learners in 2021/22 found their courses 'quite' challenging, as did level 4/5 learners. Finding the programme 'quite challenging' was strongly associated with higher overall satisfaction. TLTP and T Level learners taught mainly online were more likely to report their courses being 'very' or 'extremely' challenging compared to those experiencing more face-to-face contact. This aligns with 2020/21 findings, although in 2021/22 the vast majority were taught mainly in person. Level 4/5 learners who had been taught roughly the same online and in-person reported a higher level of challenge than learners taught predominantly online or in-person.

In 2020/21, partly due to pandemic-related restrictions, TLTP and T Level learners reported low levels of work experience/industry placements, although this varied by subject. The situation is more positive in 2021/22. The proportion of TLTP learners undertaking work experience has increased to over a half, with employer contact also increasing. Almost all of the first T Level cohort (95%) had completed the required industry placement at the end of their programme, although about one fifth of placements were below the minimum expected length of 315 hours. Three quarters of the second T Level cohort had already begun a placement by the end of their first year, compared with just under half of other level 3 technical learners. For level 4/5 learners, just less than a third (30%) had undertaken work experience and about a third (34%) had contact with employers outside of work experience. Most T Level, TLTP and level 4/5 learners who had undertaken work experience or an industrial placement were satisfied with it.

Similar to 2020/21 findings, most T Level and TLTP learners reported that the courses had helped them to develop the relevant knowledge, practical skills and understanding of their sector. Similarly, most level 4/5 learners reported that their courses had developed their knowledge of their programme's occupational area and practical skills needed for their chosen subject. However, just under half of TLTP learners reported that their programme had developed their knowledge of T Levels, a small decrease on 2020/21.

Less than a third of this year's TLTP learners planned to continue onto a T Level, a decrease from 2020/21. Just over half reported they were planning to study something else or complete an apprenticeship, with a smaller proportion intending to find work.

For T Level learners, taking a university degree was the most frequently reported planned next step (almost two fifths of learners), followed by getting a paid job or doing

an apprenticeship. Taking a degree was also the most commonly reported intended next step for level 4/5 learners (over a third), followed by getting a paid job (around a quarter).

As in 2020/21, most T Level and TLTP learners felt supported by their school/college in deciding their next steps. The proportion was similar for the first and second T Level cohorts, but slightly lower for the second TLTP cohort than the first. Level 4/5 learners were less positive about the support they received on next steps, with just over half feeling supported by their education provider to consider their next step.

Appendix A – Technical note

The 2022 surveys were designed and delivered by NatCen with NFER providing policy expertise and questionnaire development guidance, alongside that from the research team and advisory board at DfE.

The 2022 surveys had many operational similarities and questionnaires for learner groups were aligned where possible, so are frequently discussed together below where the same approach was taken. Where necessary, the surveys have been discussed separately under the subheadings ‘Wave 2’ and ‘Wave 1’. ‘Wave 2’ refers to the survey of the 2021 T Level starters (i.e. the second wave of data collection for this group). ‘Wave 1’ refers to the survey of all other learner groups, including the 2022 T Level and Transition Programme starters, the other level 3 technical and A level comparator group, and level 4 and 5 learners (i.e. the first wave of data collection for these groups).

Populations and samples

For all learner groups, the sample frames were provided by two registers controlled by the Department for Education.

- **National Pupil Database (NPD).** NPD is a database of pupils in state funded education and higher education in England.
- **Individualised Learner Record (ILR).** ILR data is collected by providers in the further education and skills sector in England.

Note that learner numbers in these sample frames may differ from other DfE publications due to the timing of the snapshot of the databases and minor differences in definitions. Please refer to the most recently published T Level action plan for official learner figures.

2020 T Level starters – Wave 2

The population of interest for the 2020 T Level starters was all those enrolled in the first year of T Levels in the academic year 2020/21, as listed in the NPD or ILR. Given the relatively small size of the cohort, the full population was invited to participate in the first survey in 2021. For the 2022 survey at the end of their second year, the full population was again issued for fieldwork (including those not interviewed in the first wave) with the exception of a small group who had requested to leave the study and those who had stated at their first interview that they had not started a T Level or had left within the first year. A total of 1,244 learners were invited to take part in the second wave of the survey. Note that this number may vary somewhat from the total starters listed in other DfE publications due to the timing of the snapshot of the databases and minor differences in definition. The 1,244 learners invited to take part comprised the following groups:

- Interviewed in Wave 1 in 2021 and stated that they were on a T Level at the time (735 cases)
- Interviewed in Wave 1 and stated that they were not sure that they were on a T Level at the time (1 case)
- Issued but not interviewed in Wave 1 (508 cases)

T Level 2021 starters – Wave 1

The population of interest for the 2021 T Level starters was all those enrolled in the first year of T Levels in the academic year 2021/22. This included 135 cases who had been on a TLTP in 2020/21. A census approach was taken due to the relatively small number of learners in the population. As such, a total of 5,386 T Level 2021 starters were invited to take part. Note that this number may vary somewhat from the total starters listed in other DfE publications due to the timing of the snapshot of the databases and minor differences in definition.

Of the 5,386 T Level learners (starting their programme in 2021) in the available administrative data at the time of the survey, the largest number of learners (1,548) were enrolled on the Health and Science route (29%). Education and Childcare was the second most common route with 1,458 learners (27%), followed by Digital with 1,212 learners (22%). Construction was the least common route, with 1,169 learners (22%). This reflected the profile of the first T Level cohort, with the addition of the Health and Science route. The second T Level cohort was larger than the first, with 4,060 more 2021 T Level starters than 2020 T Level starters. These T Level routes break down into 10 'pathways'. The most common pathways were Health with 1,194 learners (22%) and Digital Production, Design and Development with 917 learners (17%). The least common pathways were Digital Business Services with 71 learners (1%) and Onsite Construction with 89 learners (2%).

Transition Programme 2021 starters – Wave 1

The TLTP 2021 starter population included learners on the four routes designated to be available in the 2021/22 academic year (Education and Childcare, Digital, Construction and Health and Science). The full population was included in the survey given the numbers starting on the course – a total of 2,238 TLTP 2021 starters were invited to take part. As noted above, there may be small differences to the number of starters listed in other DfE publications due to the timing of the snapshot of the databases and minor differences in definition.

Of the 2,824 TLTP learners identified in the available administrative data at the time of the survey, 913 learners were enrolled on the Health and Science route (32%). The Digital route was the second most popular with 733 learners (26%), followed by Education and Childcare with 653 learners (23%). Construction courses had the smallest number of learners with 510 (18%)²⁰. This has changed since the previous academic year, where Education and Childcare route was the most popular, followed by Digital then Construction. The Health and Science route did not operate in 2020/21.

T Level Comparison group – Wave 1

To provide a comparison for the T Level 2021 starters, samples of learners at the end of the first year of A level programmes (all courses) and learners on other level 3 technical courses in the same broad subject areas as those currently offered for T Levels were also interviewed about their learning experiences and short-term outcomes. While not matched samples, it is expected that T Level learners will be diverted from these routes as the programme expands, providing a relevant point of comparison.

The other level 3 technical learner population was limited to subject areas that were broadly comparable to the T Levels offered in 2021/22, and learners on apprenticeships were excluded. Learners were sampled if they were studying for at least one substantial technical qualification, in a subject area that mapped onto the technical routes for available T Levels (i.e. Construction, Digital, Education and Childcare, Health and Science).

Using the published list of qualifications approved for Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) 16-19 funding in 2021/22²¹, qualification types selected were those classed as: 'occupational', 'vocational', 'vocationally-related' or 'other general'. These categories include Applied General Qualifications (AGQs) and Tech Levels. Only courses of 360 hours or more were selected to limit the sample to substantial qualifications – i.e. the same size as an A level – while ensuring sufficient sample sizes.

The mapping used to link Ofqual's Sector Subject Areas (SSAs) to T Level routes was as follows:

- Childcare and Education: SSA 1.5 Child development and wellbeing
- Construction: SSA 5.2 Building and construction
- Digital: SSA 6.1 ICT practitioners

²⁰ In 15 cases the subject was not recorded in the administrative data.

²¹ Accessed through the following website in February 2022: [Qualification Downloads - List of Qualifications approved for funding \(education.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/104444/Qualification_downloads_-_List_of_qualifications_approved_for_funding_(education.gov.uk).pdf)

- Health and Science: SSA 1.1 Medicine and dentistry, SSA 1.2 Nursing and subjects and vocations allied to medicine, SSA 1.3 Health and Social Care, SSA 2.1 Science

The A level sample included students from any A level course, taking any number of A levels.

Given that the majority of those taking T Levels are expected to have otherwise taken other level 3 technical courses (as opposed to A levels), this group formed a larger part of the issued sample for the comparison group (80%). A random stratified sample was taken from each learner group (i.e. A level and other level 3 technical). Stratification variables included sex, ethnicity, age, prior attainment and region for both groups, with the addition of broad subject categories for the level 3 technical sample.

In total, 10,167 cases were issued for fieldwork – 8,134 level 3 technical learners and 2,033 A level learners.

There were a number of learners who were enrolled on both A level and level 3 technical courses. Cases were selected for each sample separately, in line with their levels in each population.

Level 4 and 5 – Wave 1

The level 4 and 5 learner group sample was defined as level 4 or 5 courses ending in the 2021/22 academic year. Level 4 learners who are planning to continue onto a level 5 course were eligible, as long as their level 4 course was ending within the academic year. Qualifications being studied for included Certificates of Higher Education, HNC, diploma, NVQ, HND and foundation degrees (apprenticeships were excluded as covered by [another DfE survey](#)). A random stratified approach was taken with disproportionate sampling to ensure that a sufficient number of learners for analysis were enrolled on Digital and Construction subjects.

Stratification variables included qualification type (OfS-registered or other) and subject area as a priority, as well as sex, ethnicity, age and level 4 or 5. In total, 5,167 cases were invited to take part.

For context, [published data](#) shows that 42% of learners who achieved a classroom-based level 4/5 in 2020/21 were based at an FE institution. 29% of all those doing an OfS recognised L4/5 qualification were based at an FE institution.

Fieldwork design

The 2022 surveys were operationalised with a sequential online then telephone fieldwork design. Learners were offered two possible modes of data collection:

- **Web** (or **CAWI**, Computer Assisted Web Interview) involves completing an online survey without the assistance of an interviewer.
- **CATI** (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) is an interview carried out by a trained interviewer over a phone call.

Web was the primary mode given its cost-effectiveness and familiarity with the target group of respondents. Web was also the primary mode of the 2021 surveys. CATI was the secondary mode, beginning once learners had been given sufficient time and reminders to complete the survey via web.

Learners who had not completed by web were called by telephone interviewers, who encouraged them to take part online in the first instance. In this way, telephone interviewers acted as an active reminder, to push those who needed more active persuasion to engage with the study. The interviewers also enabled completion by supporting learners who had difficulty accessing the survey via web on their own (e.g. by providing them with the survey URL and log in details). Interviewers attempted telephone interviews if the learner appeared unable or reluctant to complete via web, or if they had not done so by a week after the first call.

The CATI mode was implemented to ensure greater population coverage and to limit potential bias in the data collection process. CATI does not require internet access, so enables data collection amongst learners who have low IT literacy, do not have internet access, or do not have a device that could be used to complete via web. Telephone interviewers play a crucial role in supporting these study participants who do not have the means to complete via web, as well as those with specific communication support needs.

As in the 2021 survey, a targeted design approach was implemented. To optimise sample representativeness whilst limiting costs, telephone interview resource was prioritised for cases with socio-demographic and course characteristics associated with lower likelihood to participate based on the web phase of fieldwork, based on a logistic regression.

Targeting was also implemented via the value of incentives. This was in relation to the free school meals (FSM) group, known to be less likely to respond in other surveys.

Cognitive testing

For Wave 1, questions were developed with the help of an advisory group at DfE and NFER. Draft questions were tested on the three learner groups which were introduced to

the study in the 2022: level 3 technical learners, A level learners, and level 4 and 5 learners.

In addition to questionnaire testing, alternative branding designs were tested on A level learners. Because the majority of A level learners were not on technical courses, it was felt that the Tech Ed Study branding was unsuitable for that learner group. Alternative branding designs were developed, and A level participants were shown example letterheads and postcards using different colour schemes and were asked their opinions on how engaging they perceived them to be. Learners were also asked probing questions about their opinion of the 'Pathways' study name.

An interview protocol was developed by NatCen's Questionnaire Development and Testing Hub which involved probing techniques at specific questions and encouraging learners to 'think aloud'. This aim was to assess whether the questions included in the survey were clear and easy to answer and to gauge how A level learners felt about the branding. Towards the end of the interview, there was some additional questions about usability. The instrument was built using Blaise 5 software which had not previously been tested on participants at NatCen, so the cognitive interviews provided an opportunity to see how respondents interacted with it.

Cognitive interviews were conducted over Zoom with experienced researchers trained in cognitive testing methods and lasted approximately one hour. At the start of the interview learners were trained in 'think aloud' techniques. Learners were then asked to complete survey questions on either their mobile devices or computer whilst sharing their screen and talking through their decision-making process. Prior to completing the survey questions, A level learners were shown the various branding options via the researcher sharing their screen.

NatCen researchers conducted recruitment via calls and emails, contacting people from a sample file of participants which was taken from the population sample. Interested participants were sent an information sheet which explained what the interviews would involve. The aim was to interview a total of 24 participants split equally amongst the three qualification types, but recruitment proved challenging.

In total, 18 interviews were conducted with:

- Seven A level learners
- Four level 3 technical learners
- Seven level 4 or 5 learners

The interviews included 13 female learners and four male learners, aged between 16 to over 50.

Fieldwork stages

Wave 2

Fieldwork had two stages:

- **Pilot** (100 cases). This was to test web and CATI sequentially.
- **Mainstage** (1,144 cases). All remaining learners were issued at the same time.

Pilot

A pilot survey was carried out with a sample of 100 learners, 50 of which were productive and 50 of which were unproductive at Wave 1 (2021). The pilot lasted 30 days (from 25th May to 23rd June 2022).

The pilot tested the web-CATI sequential design. Telephone interviewers probed learners to find out why they had not taken part by web, and whether they had been aware that the study had been trying to contact them.

Mainstage

The mainstage for Wave 2 of the Tech Ed Study lasted 38 days, from 24th June to 21st July. The sequential design meant that the mainstage had different phases:

- 24th July. All learners invited to complete a Web questionnaire by letter, email and text message.
- 13th July. CATI fieldwork started with the first batch. The Telephone Unit progressed through the batches, beginning each subsequent batch once all cases in the previous batched had been called.
- 31st July. Mainstage fieldwork closed for all learners.

CATI prioritisation groups

All cases who were eligible for a CATI interview, and who did not take part in the study before the beginning of CATI fieldwork (13th July), were divided in four batches based on a logistic regression of non-response to the web survey.

In total, there were 642 cases eligible for CATI fieldwork. Batches which had a lower predicted likelihood to complete the survey online were prioritised. This meant interviewers could spend more time and resource on learners with socio-economic characteristics that are underrepresented in web-only data. Those prioritised were more likely to be male, have SEN, be from an ethnic minority and not be in the FSM group.

The earlier batches included all learners on Construction courses, to try to boost the response rate for this group, who were relatively less likely to take part at Wave 1

compared to Education and Childcare and Digital learners. Within these first two batches, learners who were productive at Wave 1 were prioritised over those who were unproductive at Wave 1. Similarly, those who had taken part in Wave 1 were prioritised over those who had not in the later batches of those who were more likely to complete online.

The Wave 2 CATI batches were as follows:

- **Batch 1:** 178 cases, all productive at Wave 1 (includes all those who are enrolled on the Construction route)
- **Batch 2:** 147 cases, all unproductive at Wave 1 (includes all those who are enrolled on the Construction route)
- **Batch 3:** 176 cases, all productive at Wave 1 (relatively more likely to complete online vs batch 1)
- **Batch 4:** 141 cases, all unproductive at Wave 1 (relatively more likely to complete online vs batch 2)

Wave 1

- **Pilot** (250 cases) to test questionnaire for each learner group
- **Mainstage** (23,288 cases)

Pilot

A pilot survey was carried out with 250 learners, 50 from each learner group. The learners in the pilot sample were selected randomly from the samples of each learner group, except for the level 4 and 5 group where the last year of the course for 25 learners was the 2021/22 academic year, and for the other 25 learners was either the 2020/21 academic year or before.

Mainstage

There were 23,288 cases were issued to the mainstage of the Wave 1 survey. After the pilot, 21 cases were dropped. This is because the learners were found to be in the sample twice due to being enrolled on two courses.

The mainstage of Wave 1 lasted 80 days, from 3rd August to 11th September. As in Wave 2, the sequential design meant that the Wave 1 mainstage had different phases:

- 3rd August. All learners invited to complete a web questionnaire by letter, email and text message.

- 18th August. CATI fieldwork started with the first batch. The Telephone Unit progressed through the batches, beginning each subsequent batch once all cases in the previous batched had been called.
- 11th September. Mainstage fieldwork closed for all learners.

CATI prioritisation groups

A similar prioritisation strategy to Wave 2 was used for Wave 1. The first two batches were almost exclusively made up of Level 4/5 students (100% first batch; 97% second batch). There were four batches in total, with the earlier batches containing cases with socio-economic characteristics associated with a lower likelihood of taking part online. These characteristics were the same as those identified for the Wave 2 prioritisation.

Comms and incentives

For both Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys, communication with participants happened via three different routes: letters, emails and text messages. This was done to maximise the chance of successfully reaching and engaging as much of the sample as possible.

Invitation letters were posted in advance of the start of fieldwork so that they would arrive on the first day of fieldwork, coinciding with the invitation texts and emails. Learners received three batches of reminders over the fieldwork period, arriving at different days of the week to maximise the chance of learners engaging with the reminders. Each batch included a postal reminder, email and text message, and contained a different message designed to motivate learners to participate. For Wave 2, the final postal reminder was a postcard rather than a letter. This was also planned for Wave 1 but was dropped due to Royal Mail strike action meaning that it would not arrive before the end of fieldwork.

Wave 1

For Wave 1, the same letter and text templates were used for all learners, regardless of learner group or voucher eligibility. Textfills were used to ensure that each learner received a personalised, tailored message. For the letters, pre-printed documents were used so that A level learners received the Pathways branding, whilst the other learner groups received the Tech Ed branding.

For the email templates, there were separate Pathways and Tech Ed templates with the different branding used in each. The template wording was otherwise the same, again with textfills so that learners received a tailored message.

Incentives

Wave 2

For Wave 2, the same incentive strategy that was used in the 2021 survey was implemented in the 2022 survey: learners who were eligible for FSM were offered a £10 shopping voucher due to concerns about their response rates to other surveys, whilst the other learners were offered a £5 shopping voucher.

Wave 1

Wave 1 mainstage involved a voucher experiment, to understand the effectiveness of different incentive values on increasing response rate amongst learners. Learners were offered either no voucher, a £5 voucher, or a £10 voucher. The non-FSM learners were randomly assigned to these three conditions. In line with Wave 2, all learners in the FSM group were offered a voucher, but half of the group were randomly assigned to the £5 voucher condition and the other half to the £10 voucher condition.

Survey response

Wave 2

Overall, the second wave of the Tech Ed study achieved a final response rate of 47% (587 complete usable interviews). This figure includes both pilot and mainstage.

The response rate was higher among learners who were offered a higher incentive (53% for the FSM group compared to 45% for the non-FSM group). This gap was initially larger but, once started, telephone fieldwork helped to reduce the gap in response rate between these two groups by two percentage points. In line with what was seen in the first wave of fieldwork for the 2020 T Level starters, response rate was lowest among Construction learners (38% compared to 50% for Education and Childcare learners and 48% for Digital learners). Although boosted by CATI fieldwork, the final response rate was low for learners who did not participate in the Wave 1 survey (21%).

Wave 1

The overall response rate including pilot and mainstage for the Wave 1 survey achieved a response rate of 33% (7,873). Response rate was highest amongst T Level learners (44%, 2,388 interviews) and lowest amongst level 4 and 5 learners (27%, 1,375 interviews). Response rate was broadly similar amongst the other learner groups, with 892 Transition Programme learners (31%), 2,558 level 3 technical learners (32%) and 661 A level learners (33%) taking part.

As expected, response rate increased in line with the value of the incentive being offered. The response rates for learners in the £10 groups were 44% for FSM learners and 45% for non-FSM learners. For the £5 groups, this was 35% for FSM learners and 37% for non-FSM learners. Response rate was 25% for learners who did not receive any incentive.

Interview mode

Wave 2

Web was the most popular mode of completion during both the pilot and mainstage, accounting for 91% of the completed interviews. The remaining proportion of learners completed the survey via CATI.

Wave 1

Web was also the most popular mode of completion for both stages of Wave 1 fieldwork. Of the fully productive cases, 12% had been pushed to complete online by telephone interviewers, and 4% had completed the entire survey on the phone with an interviewer.

Data processing

For both waves, pilot cases were included within the data for analysis given the small populations available for some learner groups (questionnaire changes were minimal between pilot and main stages).

Coding of open-ended responses and 'other specify' answers was carried out by specialist coders and answers were back-coded into the original code frames where appropriate.

Weighting

Wave 2

The census approach meant that no design weights were required for the survey data. As in the 2021 survey, weighting was applied to account for those who did not take part in the 2022 study (unit non-response). Non-response weights were developed using logistic regression based on the population data available in NPD and ILR. The final variables in the model included sex, age, ethnicity and subject.

Wave 1

Non-response weights were also applied to the Wave 1 samples to align with the population, with design weights applied where there was oversampling (level 4/5 subjects).

To allow for analysis between groups, individual weights were calculated for each of the five learner groups. The final sample frames used for sample selection of each learner group were the populations that were weighted to. Variables used in weighting varied between the learner groups, but available variables from sample frames included subject, age, sex, ethnicity, income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI), SEN, FSM, prior attainment.

In addition, a combined weight was calculated to allow for cross-cohort comparisons. This combined weight did not take account of the relative size of each learner group in the population – the mean value of 1 for each learner group was maintained.

Statistical testing

Statistical testing was applied to all findings in the report at the 5% confidence level, taking account of the complex sample design. Where differences were not significant at this level this is stated in the text.

Appendix B – Questionnaire: “2020 T Level starters”

Introduction

{IF MODE = WEB}

Intro1

{IF Wave1Outcome=1}

“Welcome back to the Technical Education Learner Survey! Thank you for your help last year with this important study on behalf of the Department for Education. Updating us on the last year and where you are now will make your contribution even more valuable.

{ELSE}

“Welcome to the Technical Education Learner Survey! Thank you for your help with this important study on behalf of the Department for Education.

{All}

“The survey should take about 15 minutes – your answers will be saved as you go along so you can stop and return at any time.”

DISPLAY

Activity in last year

{ASK ALL}

OnTLevel

“Have you been doing your second year of a T Level over the past academic year since September 2021?”

HELP TEXT: “What’s a T Level?”

“T Levels are two year courses that are an alternative to A levels. They offer technical training and an industry placement in areas such as digital, construction or education and childcare.”

_WEB:””

_TEL:”INTERVIEWER, IF NECESSARY”

1. Yes
2. Yes – but I left the course early
3. No

{IF OnTLevel=3}

TLCheck

Just to check, did you ever start a T Level?

1. Yes
2. No

{OnTLevel=<>1}

CurrentAct

“What have you mainly been doing over the past academic year since September 2021?”

_WEB:””

_TEL:"INTERVIEWER, IF NECESSARY"

1. {IF OnTLevel <> 3: "T Level"}
2. Transition Programme
3. A levels
4. Another type of course or study
5. Paid work
6. Something else

HELP TEXT: "What's a T Level?"

"T Levels are two year courses that are an alternative to A levels. They offer technical training and an industry placement in areas such as digital, construction or education and childcare."

HELP TEXT: "What's a Transition Programme?"

"A Transition Programme is a 1-year course that prepares people for T Levels and provides technical training and work placements in areas such as digital, construction or education and childcare. This course is also known by the names Pre-T, Progression T, T Level Foundation Year/Programme, Route to Three or Pathways to T Levels."

{IF CurrentAct=5,6 AND OnTLevel<>2}

StudyChk

"And did you do any type of course or study in the past academic year since September 2021?"

1. Yes
2. No

{IF CurrentAct=4 OR StudyChk=1}

WhatCourse

"What course have you been doing?"

STRING [xxx]

PROGRAMMING: COMPUTE DV

CTypeptxt

VAR LABEL: "Type of course – confirmed in interview – for textfills"

VAR TYPE: String

VAR DERIVATION: IF TLCheck=2 "course" ELSE "T Level"

{ASK IF StudyChk<>2}

Subject

"What subject area {IF OnTLevel=2: 'was'; ELSE 'is'} your {CTypeptxt} in?"

_WEB: ""

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. Digital
2. Construction
3. Education and Childcare
4. Health and Science
5. Something else (specify)

{ASK IF Subject=5}

Subject_Other

“What other subject area {IF OnTLevel=2: ‘was’; ELSE ‘is’} your {CTypetxt} in?”
STRING [xxx]

{IF OnTLevel=2}

WhyLeft

“Please tell us about why you left the course early and what you did after you left it.”
STRING [xxx]

{IF OnTLevel=2}

WhyLeftInfo

“We are still very keen to hear about your experiences of the course. You can skip any questions that you don’t think are relevant to you.”

DISPLAY

{IF TLCheck=2}

TLStop

Thank you for your help. The rest of the survey is about T Levels so thank you for your time and good luck with your next steps.

DISPLAY

{EXIT INTERVIEW; OUTCOME=780; SHOW DEFAULT PAGE “You have ended the interview”}

Reasons for choosing course

{IF FF_OnTLevelW1=5}

Aspiration

“Thinking back to before you started the T Level, what did you want to do after the course finished?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Study at university
2. Another type of study
3. A paid job
4. Something else
5. I wasn’t sure

{IF FF_OnTLevelW1=5}

Certainty

“And still thinking about that time, how sure were you about the type of occupation you wanted to find work in eventually?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. I was certain about the occupation
2. I was quite sure about it
3. I was considering a few occupations
4. I wasn't sure

{IF FF_OnTLevelW1=5}

TLInstead

"If you had not chosen to do a T Level at that time, what do you think you would most likely have done instead?"

_WEB: ""

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. A different kind of technical or vocational qualification
2. A-Levels
3. A mixture of A-Levels and other courses
4. An apprenticeship
5. Another form of training
6. Don't know

Course content and delivery

....1 **Format of delivery**

{ASK ALL}

TeachingFormat

"How have you been taught since you started your second year in September?"

_WEB: ""

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. Entirely taught online
2. Mostly taught online
3. Roughly the same amount online and in-person
4. Mostly in person
5. Entirely in person

{ASK ALL}

Hours

"Not including the industry placement or any work experience, how many hours of teaching, either online or in-person, did you usually have each week this year?"

_WEB: ""

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. Less than 5 hours a week
2. 5 to 10 hours a week
3. 11 to 20 hours a week
4. 21 to 30 hours a week
5. More than 30 hours a week

•

{ASK ALL}

HoursManage

“Thinking about the T Level overall, how manageable have you found the amount of teaching, whether online or in-person?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Very manageable
2. Mostly manageable
3. Quite manageable
4. Not very manageable
5. Not at all manageable

•

{ASK ALL}

Workload

“How manageable have you found the work you have to do outside the taught lessons?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Very manageable
2. Mostly manageable
3. Quite manageable
4. Not very manageable
5. Not at all manageable

•

{IF Workload=4,5}

WorkloadWhy

“Why was it not manageable?”

_WEB: “Please select all that apply”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY”

1. Too much work given
2. The work was too hard
3. The work set was unclear
4. Not enough support from teacher / tutor
5. Other commitments outside course
6. Other (specify)

{IF WorkloadWhy=6}

WorkloadWhy_Other

“What was the other reason why it was not manageable?”

STRING [xxx]

....2 Course elements delivered

{ASK ALL}

IndPlaceDone

“Have you done, or are you going to be doing, an industry placement during the course?”

The industry placement is a part of a T Level course. You work directly to 1 or 2 employers, in a real-life, work setting. Industry placements can take place in different ways: as one big block of time, several blocks, or as one day a week.”

1. Yes
2. No

•
{IF IndPlaceDone=1}

IndPlaceHrs

“How many hours at your industry placement have you done?”

If you are still doing an industry placement, please answer with the number of hours you have done so far.”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Up to 100 hours
2. 101 to 200 hours
3. 201 to 300 hours
4. 301 to 400 hours
5. 401 to 750 hours
6. More than 750 hours

{IF IndPlaceDone=1}

IndPlaceHow

“As a result of COVID, in some cases T Level learners have been able to do industry placements away from the employer.

What best describes how your industry placement took place?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. All in-person – where the employer is based or undertakes work
2. Mostly in-person – some remote working
3. About the same amount of in-person and remote working
4. Mostly remote working
5. All remote working – no time spent with the employer in person

{IF IndPlaceHow=2,3,4,5}

RemoteWhere

“In general, where did the remote aspects of the industry placement take place?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Your college / school / course provider
2. A training centre
3. Other (please specify)

•

{IF RemoteWhere = 3}

RemoteWhere_Other

“Where else did the remote aspects of the industry placement take place?”

STRING [xxx]

{IF IndPlaceDone=1}

IndPlaceOccSpec

“Was the placement directly related to your course’s occupational specialism?”

EXPANDING HELP LINK: “What does occupational specialism mean?”

“By occupational specialism we mean the component of your T Level that has developed skills specific to a particular occupation. You receive a separate grade for your occupational specialism.”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Yes
2. No

{IF IndPlaceOccSpec=2}

IndPlaceOverall

“Was it related to the overall subject of your T Level?”

1. Yes
2. No

....3 *Level of challenge*

{ASK ALL}

Challenge

“Overall, would you say the course has been...”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Extremely challenging
2. Very challenging
3. Quite challenging
4. Not very challenging
5. Not at all challenging

•

....4 Barriers

{ASK ALL}

Barriers

“Which, if any, of the following have got in the way of your learning during the course?”

_WEB: “Please select all that apply”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY”

1. Lack of materials for studying, for instance: textbooks, workbooks, computer packages
2. Lack of specialist equipment / software for course
3. Lack of reliable IT or online access
4. Lack of in-person teaching
5. Cost of travel to my course
6. Family responsibilities
7. Working part-time
8. Other (please specify)
9. No barriers {EXCLUSIVE}

{ASK IF Barriers=8}

Barriers_Other

“What else has got in the way of your learning during the course?”

STRING [xxx]

Evaluation of course content

....5 Overall satisfaction

{ASK ALL}

SatOverall

“How satisfied with your course are you overall?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Very satisfied
2. Quite satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. Quite dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied

....6 Satisfaction with programme elements

{ASK ALL}

SatTeach [7 items on first page, 3 on second/final page]

{IF FIRST PAGE: “Now we’d like to ask you about some elements of your course.

How satisfied or dissatisfied have you been with...?”}

{IF FINAL PAGE: “Finally,”} how satisfied or dissatisfied have you been with...?”}

_WEB: "Please select one answer on every row"

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH STATEMENT AND THE ANSWER CODES. REPEAT ANSWER CODES AS REQUIRED."

GRID ROWS:

1. The standard of classroom teaching
2. The standard of the practical 'hands on' work
3. Teachers' knowledge and expertise
4. The support you received from tutors or teachers
5. Course organisation and management
6. The skills it covered for your chosen occupation / subject area
7. Equipment, software and resources available
8. The way learners are assessed on the course
9. The careers advice provided
10. The level of employer contact in the course

GRID COLS:

1. Very satisfied
2. Quite satisfied
3. Neither satisfied not dissatisfied
4. Quite dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied
6. Not applicable

....7 *Satisfaction with Industry placement/ work experience*

{IF IndPlaceDone = 1}

SatPlacement

"The next few questions are about your industry placement.

How satisfied were you with your industry placement?"

_WEB: ""

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. Very satisfied
2. Quite satisfied
3. Neither satisfied not dissatisfied
4. Quite dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied

{IF IndPlaceDone = 1}

PlaceRate [7 items on first page, 1 on second/final page]

"{IF FIRST PAGE: "Now think about the industry placement on the course so far."

How much do you agree or disagree with the statement...?}"

"{IF FINAL PAGE: "Finally, how much do you agree or disagree with the statement...?}"

_WEB: "Please select one answer on every row"

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH STATEMENT AND THE ANSWER CODES. REPEAT ANSWER CODES AS REQUIRED."

GRID ROWS:

1. The placement came at the right point in the course
2. I was fully prepared for my placement
3. My employer made sure I got the most I could out of the placement
4. I had all the support I needed from the college / school during the placement
5. The placement was a good challenge for me
6. I felt a valued member of the team during my placement
7. The placement helped me decide what I want to do after my course
8. The placement improved my knowledge of the workplace

GRID COLS:

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

{ASK ALL}

EmpSet

"Have you done an employer-set project as part of the course?"

1. Yes– I have completed one
2. Yes – I am currently doing one
3. No

{IF EmpSet=1,2}

EmpSetSat

"How satisfied have you been with the employer-set project?"

_WEB: ""

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. Very satisfied
2. Quite satisfied
3. Neither satisfied not dissatisfied
4. Quite dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied

Outcomes from course

{ASK ALL}

Recommend

"How likely are you to recommend your course to others?"

_WEB: ""

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. Very likely
2. Quite likely
3. Neither likely nor unlikely
4. Quite unlikely
5. Very unlikely

{ASK ALL}

Outcomes

"Now we'd like to know how much your course has helped you to develop in different areas.

How much has your course helped you to develop...?"

_WEB: "Please select one answer on every row"

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH STATEMENT AND THE ANSWER CODES. REPEAT ANSWER CODES AS REQUIRED."

GRID ROWS:

1. My knowledge of the subject area
2. The practical skills needed for my chosen subject
3. My understanding of how workplaces operate
4. My IT skills
5. My communication skills
6. My confidence
7. My readiness to work in my course's occupational area

GRID COLS:

1. A great deal
2. Quite a bit
3. To some extent
4. Very little
5. Not at all

{ASK ALL}

MatchAdvertised

"How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?"

My experience on the T Level matches what was advertised when I was choosing the course."

_WEB: ""

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

{IF MatcheAdvertised=4,5}

MatchAdvertisedWhy

“You said your experience on the T Level didn’t match what was advertised.

How was it different from what was advertised?”

STRING [xxx]

Future plans

{ASK ALL}

NextStepEd

“Are you planning to do further study or an apprenticeship next year?”

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not decided

{ASK IF NextStepEd=1}

NextStepEdTypYes

“Which of these best describes your plans for further study?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. A university degree
2. {IF Subject=1 (digital): “Higher Technical qualification”}
3. A {IF Subject=1 (digital): “different kind of”} level 4 or 5 qualification (such as HND, HNC)
4. An apprenticeship (including a degree apprenticeship)
5. Another qualification / type of study

•

{ASK IF NextStepEdTypYes=4}

ApprenticeshipLevel

“What level of apprenticeship?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Intermediate (level 2)
2. Advanced (Level 3)
3. Higher (level 4/5)
4. Degree (Level 6+)
5. Not sure

•

{ASK IF NextStepEd=2 OR NextStepEd=3}

NextStepEdTypNo

“Which of these best describes your plans in the year after your course finishes?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. A paid job
2. Voluntary work/unpaid internship
3. Take a break from study and work
4. Something else (please specify)
5. Not decided

•

{ASK IF NextStepEdTypNo=4}

NextStepEdTypNo_Other

Please specify what best describes your plans in the year after your course finishes.

STRING [xxx]

{ASK ALL}

NextStepField

“Are you planning to work or study in the same occupational specialism as your T Level?”

EXPANDING HELP LINK: “What does occupational specialism mean?”

“By occupational specialism we mean the component of your T Level that has developed skills specific to a particular occupation. You receive a separate grade for your occupational specialism.”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not decided

{IF NextStepField=2,3}

NextStepGeneralField

“Are you planning to work or study in the same general field as your T Level?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not decided

{ASK ALL}

NSSupport

“To what extent do you agree with the following statement?”

I have felt supported by my school/college in deciding on my next step”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

{ASK ALL}

Progress

"To what extent do you agree with the following statement?"

My T Level has allowed me to progress to what I want to do"

_WEB: ""

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

{ASK ALL}

Careers [MULTICODE 1..8]

"Which of the following are the most important to you in your career decision-making?"

_WEB: "Please select all that apply"

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY"

1. Secure employment over several years
2. Work that interests and stimulates me
3. Opportunities to further develop my occupational/technical knowledge, skills and competence
4. Opportunities to gain further qualifications
5. A high salary/wage
6. An innovative work culture that promotes creativity
7. An inclusive and supportive work environment
8. A work-life balance that suits me
9. None of the above (EXCLUSIVE)

{IF more than one option select at Careers 1..8}

CareersMain

"And which is the most important to you?"

_WEB: ""

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

List of codes selected at Careers + "None of these – they are equally important"

Data linkage

{ASK ALL}

ConsentLink

“{IF FF_DataLink=1 Last time we spoke to you as part of this study you gave your permission for your survey answers to be linked to} {ELSE: We would like your permission to link information from the} records held by the following government agencies:

- Department for Education – your past and future learning
- Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs – your employment, earnings, tax and benefits
- Department for Work and Pensions – your benefits and participation in government schemes
- Higher Education Statistics Agency – your university participation

Adding information from these records makes the information you have given us even more valuable. It will build a more detailed picture of you now and in the future. This will help researchers to understand what happens to learners like you and help improve things.

Your information is confidential. You will not be identifiable in the data that researchers use. Your name, address or other contact details will never be included in the results.

You can change or withdraw your permissions at any time by contacting NatCen or the Department for Education. If you withdraw your permission data that has already been linked will be retained but no future linking will take place.

“{IF FF_DataLink=1 Are you still happy for} {ELSE: Do you give permission for} a reference number to be passed to the Department for Education, so your records described above can be identified and linked to your survey responses?”

TEL:"INTERVIEWER, IF NECESSARY":

EXPANDING HELP LINK: “Why is it helpful to add this information?”

“Adding extra details from administrative records opens up new possibilities for researchers from universities, charities and within government who all use the data to understand the experiences of learners and improve the services you use.

We learn a lot about your experiences from the questions we ask in the survey but adding extra information from administrative records helps us to build a more complete picture of how your course has helped you.

It also means we can make the data as valuable and accurate as possible, as it allows us to fill in the blanks for any details you may not know or remember and to avoid asking you for some other details during the survey.”

TEL:"INTERVIEWER, IF NECESSARY":

EXPANDING HELP LINK: “What do these records include?”

- “Department for Education’s (DfE) National Pupil Database (NPD) includes information about your participation and achievement in school and further education as well as details about the school, college or training centre you attended.
- Department for Education’s (DfE) Individual Learner Record (ILR) includes information about your participation and achievement in further education from age 16, as well as details about the college or training centre you may have attended.
- Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) records include Income Tax, Tax Credits and Child Benefit data, providing information about employment, earnings, tax, pensions and National Insurance contributions.
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) includes information about benefit receipt and participation in employment programs
- Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) includes information about higher education applications and offers
- Learner Loans Company (SLC) records include information about applications for learner finance
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) includes information about university participation and attainment”

TEL:“INTERVIEWER, IF NECESSARY”:

EXPANDING HELP LINK: “How does this process work?”

“If you give your permission, NatCen Social Research will pass an anonymised reference number to the Department for Education. The Department will be able to identify you in their records and link your information to records from the other government databases listed.”

1. Yes
2. No

{ASK IF ConsentLink<>1}

ConsentLinkIndiv

“Do you give permission for an anonymised reference number to be passed to the Department for Education, so that some of your records can be identified and linked to your survey responses? If so, please can you confirm which records you consent to having your survey responses linked to?”

“Do you consent to have your survey response linked to...?”

TEL:“INTERVIEWER, IF NECESSARY”:

EXPANDING HELP LINK: “What do these records include?”

“Department for Education’s (DfE) National Pupil Database (NPD) includes information about your participation and achievement in school and further education as well as details about the school, college or training centre you attended.

Department for Education's (DfE) Individual Learner Record (ILR) includes information about your participation and achievement in further education from age 16, as well as details about the college or training centre you may have attended.

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) records include Income Tax, Tax Credits and Child Benefit data, providing information about employment, earnings, tax, pensions and National Insurance contributions.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) includes information about benefit receipt and participation in employment programs

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) includes information about higher education applications and offers.

Learner Loans Company (SLC) records include information about applications for learner finance)

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) includes information about university participation and attainment"

_WEB: "Please select one answer on every row"

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH STATEMENT AND THE ANSWER CODES. REPEAT ANSWER CODES AS REQUIRED."

GRID ROWS:

1. Department for Education's National Pupil Database
2. Department for Education's Individual Learner Record
3. Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
4. Department for Work and Pensions
5. Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
6. Learner Loans Company records
7. Higher Education Statistics Agency

GRID COLS:

1. Yes
2. No

Appendix C – Questionnaire: “2021 T Level starters and all other learner groups”

Introduction

{IF MODE = WEB}

Intro1

{IF WEB: “Welcome to the {IF FF_CourseMajor_num=1,2,4,5: “Tech Ed”; If FF_CourseMajor_num=3: “Pathways”} Survey! Thank you for your help with this important study on behalf of the Department for Education.

The survey should take about 15 minutes – your answers will be saved as you go along so you can stop and return at any time.”

[] Select to continue.}

IF TEL: “”

[] INTERVIEWER: Select to continue.

Employment situation (level 4/5 only)

....8 PRE-COURSE

{IF FF_CourseMajor_num=5 (L4/5 Tech)}

StudySitu [COG TESTING]

“Thinking about what you were doing in the months immediately before starting your course, were you...?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Studying – full time
2. Studying – part time
3. Not studying

{IF FF_CourseMajor_num=5 (L4/5 Tech)}

EmpSitu [COG TESTING]

“And in the months immediately before starting your course were you...?”

_WEB: “Please select all that apply”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY”

1. In full time paid employment
2. In part time paid employment
3. Self-employed – full time
4. Self-employed – part time

5. Looking for paid work
6. None of these {EXCLUSIVE}

{IF StudySitu=3 and EmpSitu=6 (not working or studying)}

OthSitu [COG TESTING]

“And in the months immediately before starting your course were you...?”

_WEB: “Please select all that apply”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY”

1. Doing unpaid work / volunteering
2. Travelling
3. Looking after family or children
4. Unemployed and not looking for work
5. Retired
6. Something else

•

•

{IF OthSitu=6 (Other)}

OthSitO “What were you doing in the months immediately before starting your course?”

OPEN

....9 DURING COURSE – THOSE WORKING BEFORE COURSE

{IF EmpSitu=1,2 (employed before course)}

SameEmp [COG TESTING]

“Are you currently still in the same job, with the same employer?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Yes – same employer and job
2. No – same employer but different job
3. No – not with that employer

DURING COURSE – THOSE NOT PREVIOUSLY WORKING

{IF FF_CourseMajor_num=5 AND NOT (SameEmp=1 or 2)}

DuringEmp [COG TESTING]

“Have you done any paid work while attending the course?”

1. Yes
2. No

Reasons for choosing course

{IF EmpSitu= 1 to 4 (working pre-course)}

ReasonHigher (COG TESTING)

“Which of these, if any, were reasons for doing the course?”

_WEB: “Please select all that apply”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY”

1. Employer required it
2. Upskilling in the same line of work
3. Retraining to a different line of work
4. Because of an interest in the area
5. To increase earnings
6. To get promoted
7. None of these {EXCLUSIVE}

•

{ASK IF FF_CourseMajor_num=1 (TP)}

TPTLevel

“Thinking back to when you started this course, did you hope to go on to do a T Level afterwards?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Yes
2. No
3. Wasn't sure

{ASK ALL – EXCEPT IF TPTLevel=1}

Aspiration [COG TESTING]

“Thinking back to {IF FF_CourseMajor_Num=5 ""; ELSE: “last year ”} before you started your {course_s}, what did you want to do immediately after your {course_s} finished?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

6. {IF FF_CourseMajor_Num <> 1: “Study towards a degree”}
7. Another type of study
8. A paid job
9. An apprenticeship
10. Something else
11. I wasn't sure

{ASK ALL}

Certainty

“And still thinking about that time, how sure were you about the type of occupation you wanted to find work in {FF_CourseMajor_Num=5: ""; ELSE: “eventually”}?”

_WEB: ""
_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

5. I was certain about the occupation
6. I was quite sure about it
7. I was considering a few occupations
8. I wasn't sure

{IF FF_CourseMajor_Num=1 (TP only)}

TPActive

"Were you advised to apply for this course, for instance by a teacher or careers advisor?"

_WEB: ""
_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. Yes – advised to apply
2. No – but discussed as an option
3. No – chose it without advice

{ASK ALL}

ReasonSub [COG TESTING]

"Thinking back to when you were choosing your {course_s}, why did you choose the particular subject area(s) that you did?"

_WEB: "Please select all that apply"
_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY"

1. Fitted with the areas I wanted to work in
2. Important for my intended further study
3. I was interested in the subject area(s)
4. I was advised to study this subject area
5. Friends were doing the same subject area
6. Another reason
7. {IF TEL: INTERVIEWER: READ OUT, if No to all above} No specific reason {EXCLUSIVE}

{IF ReasonSub=6}

ReasonSubO [COG TESTING]

"What was the other reason you chose the particular subject area(s)?"

STRING [4000]

{ASK ALL}

ReasonQual [COG TESTING]

"Thinking back to when you were choosing between types of qualification, for instance {IF FF_Coursemajor_Num=5: "HNC, HND, degree and apprenticeship"; ELSE: A level, T

Level, BTEC and apprenticeship”), why did you do your particular type or types of qualification?”

_WEB: “Please select all that apply”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY”

1. It was the only type available in my subject
2. The qualification is important for further study
3. The qualification is important for the kind of job I want
4. The qualification is recognised by employers
5. {IF FF_Coursemajor_Num=1 to 4: “Offered the right mix of classroom learning and practical study”}
6. {IF <> (FF_Coursemajor_Num 3 and JointLEVEL 3=0): “It offered an alternative to academic study”}
7. The industry / work experience element
8. {IF FF_Coursemajor_Num = 4: “I was able to do it part-time”}
9. {IF FF_Coursemajor_Num = 4: “I was able to get funding for it”}
10. I was advised to
11. Other reason
12. {IF TEL: INTERVIEWER: READ OUT, if No to all above} No specific reason {EXCLUSIVE}

{IF ReasonQual=11}

ReasonQualO [COG TESTING]

“What was the other reason you chose the particular type or types of course?”

STRING [4000]

{ASK ALL}

ReasonProv [COG TESTING]

“Why did you end up studying at your {IF FF_Coursemajor_Num=5: “”; ELSE: “school, ”}college or other educational institution?”

_WEB: “Please select all that apply”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY”

1. It was convenient to travel to
2. Its formal rating
3. Informal recommendations
4. {IF FF_Coursemajor_Num<>5: “My friends were going there”}
5. Studied there previously
6. {IF FF_Coursemajor_Num=5: “My employer chose it”}
7. {IF FF_Coursemajor_Num<>5: “My parents/guardians chose it”}
8. It offered the subject(s) I wanted to do
9. Its adverts or open day
10. Another reason
11. {IF TEL: INTERVIEWER: READ OUT, if No to all above} No particular reason {EXCLUSIVE}

{IF ReasonProv=10}

ReasonProvO [COG TESTING]

“What was the other reason you chose your school, college or institution?”

STRING [4000]

{ASK ALL}

ReasonImp [COG TESTING]

“And which of these would you say was **most important** to you when you were making your choice?”

_WEB: “Please select all that apply”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY”

1. The subject or subjects
2. The type(s) of qualification
3. The particular school / college / institution
4. None of these [EXCLUSIVE]

{ASK ALL}

Aware

“Where did you hear about your {course_s}?”

_WEB: “Please select all that apply”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY”

1. Teachers at your school
2. Careers adviser
3. {IF FF_CourseMajor_num= 2: “T Level website”}
4. From a college, school or training provider offering the {IF CType=1: “Transition Programme”; IF CType = 2: “T Level”; ELSE {course_s}} (their website, prospectus, open-day, etc.)
5. Friends
6. Social media
7. Local advertising
8. An employer
9. Somewhere else

{ASK IF FF_CourseMajor_num=1,2,3,4 (TP, TL, AL, LEVEL 3)}

TLInstead

“If you had not chosen to do {IF CType=2: “a T Level”; IF CType=1: “a Transition Programme”; IF FF_CourseMajor_num=3 AND JointLEVEL 3=0 “A-Level courses”; ELSE: “your {course_s}”}, what do you think you would most likely have done instead?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. A {IF FF_CourseMajor_num=3 and JointLEVEL 3=0: ""; ELSE: "different kind of"} technical or vocational qualification
2. IF (FF_CourseMajor_num=3 AND JointLEVEL 3=0) DO NOT SHOW OPTION 2; ELSE SHOW: {"A-Levels only"}
3. {IF FF_CourseMajor_num =1,2 OR (FF_CourseMajor_num=3,4 AND JointLEVEL 3=0): "A mixture of A-Levels and other courses"}
4. An apprenticeship
5. Another form of training
6. Don't know

NODK

{IF FF_PriorTP=1 (on a TP in 2020/21 academic year based on sample data)}

TPConfirm

"Just to check, did you do a T Level Transition Programme before starting your T Level?"

A Transition Programme is a 1-year course that prepares people for T Levels and provides technical training and work placements in areas such as digital, construction or education and childcare. This course is also known by the names Pre-T, Progression T, T Level Foundation Year / programme, Route to Three, or Pathways to T Levels"

1. Yes
2. No

{If FF_PriorTP=1}

TPPrepareTL

"To what extent do you agree with the following statement?"

My previous year of study prepared me well for my T Level"

_WEB: ""

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

{IF TPPPrepareTL=1,2}

TPPrepareHow

"What aspects of the course do you think prepared you best for T Levels?"

_WEB: "Please select all that apply"

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY"

1. Technical knowledge and skills related to my T Level
2. Work experience and preparation for an Industry Placement
3. Developing English or maths skills
4. Developing study skills
5. Doing assessments (e.g. exams, exam preparation, project work)
6. Something else

{IF TPPPrepareHow=6}

TPPrepareHowO

“What other aspect of the course do you think prepared you best for T Levels?”

STRING [4000]

{IF TPPPrepareTL=4,5}

TPPrepareWhyNot

“Why do you think your Transition Programme did not prepare you for your T Level?”

STRING [4000]

T Level courses awareness and interest

{FF_CourseMajor_Num=3,4 (comparator sample)}

TDescription [COG TESTING]

“We would now like to ask you about T Levels.

T Levels are new, 2-year courses, which follow GCSEs and are equivalent to 3 A levels. T Levels were developed with employers and are accepted by universities. T Levels focus on vocational skills and can help learners into skilled employment, higher study or apprenticeships. They include an industry placement that lasts at least 45 days to help build skills in a skilled line of work”

DISPLAY

{FF_CourseMajor_Num=3,4}

TAware [COG TESTING]

“When you enrolled on your {course_s}, were you aware of T Levels?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Yes, I was aware of T Levels
2. No, I wasn't aware of T Levels

{FF_CourseMajor_Num=3,4}

TInterest [COG TESTING]

“Considering what you know about T Levels, how likely would you have been to consider a T Level instead of the {course_s} that you are doing?”

HELP BUTTON “What are T Levels?”

“T Levels are new, 2-year courses, which follow GCSEs and are equivalent to 3 A levels. T Levels were developed with employers and are accepted by universities. T Levels focus on vocational skills and can help learners into skilled employment, higher study or apprenticeships. They include an industry placement that lasts at least 45 days to help build skills in a skilled line of work”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Very likely
2. Likely
3. Neither likely nor unlikely
4. Not likely
5. Not at all likely

Course Funding (level 4/5 only)

{IF FF_CourseMajor_num=5}

CourseFunding [COG TESTING]

“How have you paid for your course’s tuition fee?”

_WEB: “Please select all that apply”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY”

1. Paid the fee directly from own money
2. Took out learner finance supported by government (e.g. an advanced learner loan, or tuition fee loan)
3. Took out another form of loan (not a government loan)
4. Borrowed money from friends or family
5. Employer paid
6. Help from an institution, for instance access funds or bursaries
7. Local authority grant
8. Other government funding
9. Charitable trust or other non-government organisation
10. Other
11. Don’t know [EXCLUSIVE]

NODK

{IF CourseFunding=10}

CourseFundingO [COG TESTING]

“Which other way did you pay for your course’s tuition fee?”

STRING [4000]

{IF FF_CourseMajor_num=5}

FundingInfl

“Did the cost and funding options influence which course you took?”

1. Yes
2. No

Course content and delivery

....10 Format of delivery

{ASK ALL}

TeachingFormat

“How have you been taught since you started in September?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Entirely taught online
2. Mostly taught online
3. Roughly the same amount online and in-person
4. Mostly in person
5. Entirely in person

{ASK ALL}

Hours

“How many hours of teaching, either online or in-person, did you usually have each week{IF FF_CourseMajor_Num=1,2: “, not including an industry placement or any work experience”; ELSE=""?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Less than 5 hours a week
2. 5 to 10 hours a week
3. 11 to 20 hours a week
4. 21 to 30 hours a week
5. More than 30 hours a week

{ASK ALL}

HoursManage

“How manageable have you found the amount of teaching, whether online or in-person?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Very manageable
2. Mostly manageable
3. Quite manageable
4. Not very manageable
5. Not at all manageable

{ASK ALL}

Workload

“How manageable have you found the work you have to do outside the taught lessons?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

6. Very manageable
7. Mostly manageable
8. Quite manageable
9. Not very manageable
10. Not at all manageable

{IF Workload=4 or 5 (not manageable)}

WorkloadWhy

“Why was it not manageable?”

_WEB: “Please select all that apply”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY”

1. Too much work given
 2. The work was too hard
 3. The work set was unclear
 4. Not enough support from teacher / tutor
 5. Other commitments outside course
 6. Other
-

{IF WorkloadWhy=6}

WorkloadWhyO

“What was the other reason why it was not manageable?”

STRING [4000]

....11 Course elements delivered

{IF FF_Coursemajor_num=1 (TP only)}

Clarity

“Were you clear from the start what you needed to achieve to successfully complete the course? For example, achieving a technical qualification, achieving GCSE grade 4 in English or maths, undertaking work experience or developing specific knowledge, skills and behaviours.”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Yes
2. No
3. Can't remember

{IF FF_Coursemajor_num=1 – TP only}

Qualification

“Does your course include any qualifications in your chosen occupation area (for instance in digital, construction, health and science, or education and childcare)?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Yes – one main qualification
2. Yes – more than one qualification
3. No
4. Not sure

{IF FF_Coursemajor_num=1 – TP only}

Tailored

“In which, if any, of these ways was your course tailored to identify and help you address your own specific learning and development needs?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. My learning and development needs were assessed at the start of the course
2. I had an individual learning and development plan
3. I had personalised learning or development goals to achieve
4. Another way
5. None of these

{IF Tailored=4}

TailoredO

“How else was your course tailored?”

STRING [4000]

{IF FF_Coursemajor_num=1 – TP only }

CourseLen

“Would you say the overall length of the course is...?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Too long
2. About right
3. Too short

{IF FF_Coursemajor_num=1 – TP only }

English

“Are you studying English for...”

_WEB: “Please select all that apply”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY”

1. GCSE
2. Functional Skills
3. Neither [EXCLUSIVE]

{IF FF_Coursemajor_num=1 – TP only }

Maths

_WEB: “Please select all that apply”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY”

“Are you studying maths for...”

1. GCSE
2. Functional Skills
3. Neither [EXCLUSIVE]

{ASK ALL}

IndPlaceDone

“Have you spent any time {IF CType=2 (TL): on an industry placement; ELSE: on a work experience placement} during the {course_s}{IF CType=2,3,4: “ so far”}?”

EXPANDING HELP LINK: “What do we mean by {IF CType=2 (TL):industry; ELSE: work experience} placements?”

“{IF CType=2 (TL):An industry; ELSE: A work experience} placement is something organised as part of your course. Do not include paid or unpaid work that hasn’t been organised as part of your course – e.g. a Saturday job.”

1. Yes
2. No

{IF FF_Coursemajor_num=2,3,4,5 AND IndPlaceDone=1}

IndPlaceHrs

“How many hours at your {IF FF_CourseMajor=2 (TL): “industry placement”; ELSE: “work experience placement”} have you done?”

If you are still doing an industry placement, please answer with the number of hours you have done so far.”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. None
2. Up to 50 hours
3. 51 to 100 hours
4. 101 to 200 hours
5. 201 to 300 hours
6. 301 to 400 hours
7. More than 400 hours

{IF IndPlaceDone=1 AND FF_CourseMajor_Num=2 (TL)}

IndPlaceHow

"As a result of COVID, in some cases T Level learners have been able to do industry placements away from the employer.

What best describes how your industry placement took place?"

_WEB: ""

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. **All in-person** – where the employer is based or undertakes work
2. **Mostly in-person** – some remote working
3. **About the same** amount of in-person and remote working
4. **Mostly remote working**
5. **All remote working** – no time spent with the employer in person

{IF IndPlaceHow=2, 3, 4, 5}

RemoteWhere

"In general, where did the remote aspects of the industry placement take place?"

_WEB: ""

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. Your college / school / course provider
2. A training centre
3. Other

•

{IF RemoteWhere = 3}

RemoteWhereO

"Where else did the remote aspects of the industry placement take place?"

STRING [4000]

{IF IndPlaceDone=1 and FF_CourseMajor_Num=2 (TL)}

IndPlaceOccSpec

“Was the placement directly related to your course’s **occupational specialism**?”

EXPANDING HELP LINK: “What does occupational specialism mean?”

“By occupational specialism we mean the component of your T Level that has developed skills specific to a particular occupation. You receive a separate grade for your occupational specialism.”

1. Yes
2. No

{IF IndPlaceOccSpec=2}

IndPlaceOverall

“Was it related to the **overall subject** of your T Level?”

1. Yes
2. No

{IF FF_Coursemajor_num=1 (TP) AND IndPlaceDone=1}

WorkExpHrs

“How many hours of work experience have you done?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. None
2. Up to 21 hours
3. 22 to 35 hours
4. 36 to 70 hours
5. 71 to 140 hours
6. 141 to 280 hours
7. More than 280 hours

{ASK ALL}

OthEmpCont

“Apart from any work experience, {hashave} your {course_s} included other contact with employers?”

Please think about both in-person and online/virtual contact”

_WEB: “Please select all that apply”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY”

1. Visits to employers
2. Talks by employers
3. Contact with employers as part of project work
4. Other types of contact

5. No employer contact {EXCLUSIVE}

{IF OthEmpCont=4}

OthEmpContO [COG TESTING]

“What other contact have you had with employers?”

STRING [4000]

....12 Level of challenge

{ASK ALL}

Challenge

“Overall, would you say the {course_s} {hashave} been...”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Extremely challenging
2. Very challenging
3. Quite challenging
4. Not very challenging
5. Not at all challenging

....13 Barriers

{ASK ALL}

Barriers [COG TESTING]

“Which, if any, of the following have got in the way of your learning during the {course_s}?”

_WEB: “Please select all that apply”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY”

1. Lack of materials for studying, (for instance textbooks, workbooks, online resources)
2. Lack of specialist equipment / software for course
3. Lack of reliable IT or online access
4. Lack of in-person teaching
5. Cost of travel to my course
6. Family responsibilities meant could not study enough
7. Working part-time meant could not study enough
8. Other
9. None of the above {EXCLUSIVE}

{ASK IF Barriers=8}

BarriersO

“What else has got in the way of your learning during the {course_s}?”

STRING [4000]

Evaluation of course content

....14 Overall satisfaction

{ASK ALL}

SatOverall (COG TESTING)

“How satisfied with your {course_s} are you overall?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Very satisfied
2. Quite satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. Quite dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied

....15 Satisfaction with programme elements

{ASK ALL}

SatTeach [COG TESTING] [7 items on first page, 3 on second/final page]

{IF FIRST PAGE: “Now we’d like to ask you about some elements of your {course_s}.

How satisfied or dissatisfied have you been with each of the following on your {course_s}?”}

{“IF FINAL PAGE: “And how satisfied or dissatisfied have you been with...?”}

_WEB: “Please select one answer on every row”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH STATEMENT AND THE ANSWER CODES. REPEAT ANSWER CODES AS REQUIRED.”

GRID ROWS:

1. The standard of classroom teaching
2. {IF <> (FF_CourseMajor_Num =3 and JointLEVEL 3=1): “The standard of the practical ‘hands on’ work”}
3. Teachers’ knowledge and expertise
4. The support you received from tutors or teachers
5. Course organisation and management
6. The skills it covered for your chosen occupation / subject area
7. Equipment, software and resources available
8. The way learners are assessed on the course
9. The careers advice provided
10. {IF <> (FF_CourseMajor_Num=3 and JointLEVEL 3=1): “The level of employer contact in the course”}
11. {IF English = 1,2: “The teaching of English”}
12. {IF Maths = 1,2: “The teaching of maths”}
13. Amount of course content related to your chosen subject area (for instance digital, construction or education and childcare) {TP only – FF_CourseMajor_num=1}
14. Preparation for further study

GRID COLS:

1. Very satisfied
2. Quite satisfied
3. Neither satisfied not dissatisfied
4. Quite dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied
6. Not applicable

....16 Satisfaction with Industry placement/ work experience

{IF IndPlaceDone = 1 – work experience or placement done}

SatPlacement (COG TESTING)

“The next few questions are about your {IF CType=2: “industry placement”; ELSE: “work experience placement”}.

How satisfied were you with your {IF CType=2: “industry placement”; ELSE: “work experience placement”}?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Very satisfied
2. Quite satisfied
3. Neither satisfied not dissatisfied
4. Quite dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied

{IF IndPlaceDone = 1 work experience or placement done}

ExpPlacement

“In which, if any, of the following areas did the {IF CType=2,: “placement”; ELSE: “work experience placement”} meet your expectations?”

_WEB: “Please select all that apply”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY”

1. Given real tasks to carry out
2. Able to apply technical knowledge and skills developed on the course
3. Experience of a real workplace
4. The opportunity to build my confidence in the workplace
5. None of these [EXCLUSIVE]

{IF IndPlaceDone = 1 work experience or placement done}

PlaceRate [COG TESTING]

“{IF FIRST PAGE “Now think about the {IF CType=2 “industry”; ELSE “work experience”} placement on the {course_s} so far.

How much do you agree or disagree with the statement...?”}

{“IF FINAL PAGE: “Finally, how much do you agree or disagree with the statement...?”}

_WEB: “Please select one answer on every row”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH STATEMENT AND THE ANSWER CODES. REPEAT ANSWER CODES AS REQUIRED.”

GRID ROWS

1. The placement came at the right point in the course
2. I was fully prepared for my placement
3. My employer made sure I got the most I could out of the placement
4. I had all the support I needed from the college / school during the placement
5. The placement was a good challenge for me
6. I felt a valued member of the team during my placement
7. The placement improved my knowledge of the workplace
8. {IF FF_Coursemajor_num=1: I benefitted from the placement} {-TP only}
9. {IF FF_Coursemajor_num=1: “It was the right amount of time on the placement ”}

GRID COLS

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

{IF OthEmpCont=1, 2, 3, 4}

EmpSet(COG TESTING)

“Have you done an employer-set project as part of the {course_s}? This could include practice projects.”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Yes – I have completed one
2. Yes – I am currently doing one
3. No

{IF EmpSet=1,2}

EmpSetSat (COG TESTING)

“How satisfied have you been with the employer-set project?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Very satisfied
2. Quite satisfied
3. Neither satisfied not dissatisfied

4. Quite dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied

{ASK ALL}

Recommend (COG TESTING)

“How likely are you to recommend your {course_s} to others?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Very likely
2. Quite likely
3. Neither likely nor unlikely
4. Quite unlikely
5. Very unlikely

Outcomes from course

{ASK ALL}

Outcomes [COG TESTING] [7 items on first page, up to 6 on second/final page]

“{IF FIRST PAGE: “Now we’d like to know how much your course (or set of courses) has helped you to develop in different areas.

How much {hashave} your {course_s} helped you to develop ...?”}

{“IF MIDDLE OR FINAL PAGE: “And,” how much has your course (or set of courses) helped you to develop ...?”}

WEB: “Please select one answer on every row”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH STATEMENT AND THE ANSWER CODES. REPEAT ANSWER CODES AS REQUIRED.”

{4 items on first page, }

GRID ROWS

1. My study skills
2. My IT skills
3. My communication skills
4. My confidence
5. {IF <> (FF_Coursemajor_num=3 and JointLEVEL 3=0) (not A levels only): “And how much {hashave} your {course_s} helped you to develop ...?”}
 - My knowledge of the occupational area that my course covered”}
6. {IF <> (FF_Coursemajor_num=3 and JointLEVEL 3=0) (not A levels only): “The practical skills needed for my chosen subject”}
7. {IF <> (FF_Coursemajor_num=3 and JointLEVEL 3=0) (not A levels only): “My understanding of how workplaces operate”}

8. {IF FF_Coursemajor_num=2,3,4 (T Level and comparator): "And how much {hashave} your {course_s} helped you to develop ...?"
 - Analytical ability"}
9. {IF FF_Coursemajor_num=2,3,4 (T Level and comparator): Ability to present ideas and arguments in structured writing"}
10. {IF FF_Coursemajor_num=2,3,4 (T Level and comparator): Ability to understand complex instructions"}
11. {IF FF_Coursemajor_num=2,3,4 (T Level and comparator): "And how much {hashave} your {course_s} helped you to develop ...?"
 - Problem solving"}
12. {IF FF_Coursemajor_num=2,3,4 (T Level and comparator): Working as a team"}
13. {IF FF_Coursemajor_num=2,3,4 (T Level and comparator): Self-organisation and time-keeping"}

GRID COLS

1. A great deal
2. Quite a bit
3. To some extent
4. Very little
5. Not at all

{ASK IF FF_CourseMajor_num=1 (TP)}

OutcomesTP

"How much has your course helped you to develop in the following areas?"

_WEB: "Please select one answer on every row"

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH STATEMENT AND THE ANSWER CODES. REPEAT ANSWER CODES AS REQUIRED."

GRID ROWS

1. Knowledge of T Levels in my chosen area
2. {IF English = 1, 2: "English skills"}
3. {IF Maths = 1, 2: "Maths skills"}
4. Preparing me for a T Level

GRID COLS

1. A great deal
2. Quite a bit
3. To some extent
4. Very little
5. Not at all

Future plans

{IF FF_CourseMajor_num=1 (TP)}

TPContTL

“Are you planning to continue to a T Level at the end of the Transition Programme?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT”

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

{IF TPContTL = 2 or 3 No / not sure / DK}

TPContTLWhy

“Why {IF TPContTL=3, DK: “might ”; ELSE “will”}you not continue to a T Level?”

_WEB: “Please select all that apply”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY”

1. Would like to but don't have the required grades
2. T Level would be too challenging
3. Prefer to study for a different course
4. Want to do an apprenticeship
5. Want to move into employment
6. Personal reasons
7. Still undecided
8. Other reason

{IF TPContTLWhy=Other}

TPContTLWhyO

“What is the other reason not to continue to a T Level?”

STRING [4000]

{ASK IF FF_CourseMajor_num=2,3,4,5, (TL, A levels, LEVEL 3, L4/5) or TPContTL = 2 or 3 No/Not sure}

NextStepEd (COG TESTING)

“Are you planning to do further study or an apprenticeship of any type {IF FF_CourseMajor_num=1 OR (FF_CourseMajor_num=5 AND FinishYear=1): “in the next 12 months”; IF FF_CourseMajor_num=3: “in the year after your courses finish”; ELSE: “in the year after your course finishes”}?”

_WEB: ""

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. Yes – further study or apprenticeship
2. No
3. Not decided

{ASK IF NextStepEd=1 or 3 (Yes / not decided)}

NextStepEdTypYes [COG TESTING]

"Which of these best describes your plans for further study?"

_WEB: ""

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. A degree (e.g. at a university or higher education institution)
2. {IF Digital at Subject: "Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ)"}
3. {IF Digital at Subject: "A different type of "}Level 4 or 5 qualification (such as HND, HNC)
4. An apprenticeship (including a degree apprenticeship)
5. Another qualification / type of study

{ASK IF FF_CourseMajor_num=5 (L4/5) AND NextStepEd = 1 (Yes)}

RelatedQual (COG TESTING)

"Is the further study you are planning to do in a closely related subject area to the qualification you have been doing {IF SYSTEM DATE<=31/08/2022 "this year"; IF SYSTEM DATE>31/08/2022 "over the past academic year (i.e. from autumn 2021 to summer 2022)}?"

1. Yes
2. No

{ASK ALL}

NextStepWork

"And apart from studying, which, if any, of these describe your plans {IF FF_CourseMajor_num=1 OR (FF_CourseMajor_num=5 AND FinishYear=1): "in the next 12 months"; ELSE: "in the year after your course finishes?"

_WEB: "Please select all that apply"

_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH OPTION AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY"

1. A paid job
2. Voluntary work/unpaid internship
3. Take a break from study and work
4. Something else
5. No further plans {EXCLUSIVE}
6. Not decided {EXCLUSIVE}

{IF SameEmp=1 or 2 (currently working for same employer) AND NextStepWork=1}

ContSameEmp (COG TESTING)

"Are you planning on continuing in your current job?"

_WEB: ""
_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. Yes
2. No – but plan to stay at the same employer
3. No – plan to work elsewhere}

{ASK IF FF_CourseMajor_num=2 }

NextStepField

"Are you planning to work or study in the same occupational specialism as your T Level?"

EXPANDING HELP LINK: "What does occupational specialism mean?"

"By occupational specialism we mean the component of your T Level that has developed skills specific to a particular occupation. You receive a separate grade for your occupational specialism."

_WEB: ""
_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not decided

{ASK ALL EXCEPT NextStepField=1}

NextStepGeneralField [COG TESTING]

"Are you planning to work or study in the same general field as {IF FF_CourseMajor_num= 1,2, 4, 5: "your course"; IF FF_CourseMajor_num=3: "any of your courses"?"

WEB: ""
_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not decided

{ASK ALL}

NSSupport

"To what extent do you agree with the following statement?"

I feel supported by my education provider in deciding on my next step"

_WEB: ""
_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

{IF FF_CourseMajor_num=5 (L4/5)}
PrepareCareer [COG TESTING]

"To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

My course has prepared me for my future career"

_WEB: ""
_TEL: "INTERVIEWER: READ OUT"

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

Data linkage

{ASK ALL}
ConsentLink

"We would like your permission to link information from the records held by the following government agencies:

- Department for Education – your past and future learning
- Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs – your employment, earnings, tax and benefits
- Department for Work and Pensions – your benefits and participation in government schemes
- Higher Education Statistics Agency – your university participation

Adding information from these records makes the information you have given us even more valuable. It will build a more detailed picture of you now and in the future. This will help researchers to understand what happens to learners like you and help improve things.

Your information is confidential. You will not be identifiable in the data that researchers use. Your name, address or other contact details will never be included in the results.

You can change or withdraw your permissions at any time by contacting NatCen or the Department for Education. If you withdraw your permission data that has already been linked will be retained but no future linking will take place.

Do you give permission for a reference number to be passed to the Department for Education, so your records described above can be identified and linked to your survey responses?

TEL:"INTERVIEWER, IF NECESSARY":

EXPANDING HELP LINK: "Why is it helpful to add this information?"

"Adding extra details from administrative records opens up new possibilities for researchers from universities, charities and within government who all use the data to understand the experiences of learners and improve the services you use.

We learn a lot about your experiences from the questions we ask in the survey but adding extra information from administrative records helps us to build a more complete picture of how your course has helped you.

It also means we can make the data as valuable and accurate as possible, as it allows us to fill in the blanks for any details you may not know or remember and to avoid asking you for some other details during the survey."

TEL:"INTERVIEWER, IF NECESSARY":

EXPANDING HELP LINK: "What do these records include?"

- "Department for Education's (DfE) National Pupil Database (NPD) includes information about your participation and achievement in school and further education as well as details about the school, college or training centre you attended.
- Department for Education's (DfE) Individual Learner Record (ILR) includes information about your participation and achievement in further education from age 16, as well as details about the college or training centre you may have attended.
- Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) records include Income Tax, Tax Credits and Child Benefit data, providing information about employment, earnings, tax, pensions and National Insurance contributions.
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) includes information about benefit receipt and participation in employment programs
- Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) includes information about higher education applications and offers
- Learner Loans Company (SLC) records include information about applications for learner finance
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) includes information about university participation and attainment"

TEL:"INTERVIEWER, IF NECESSARY":

EXPANDING HELP LINK: "How does this process work?"

"If you give your permission, NatCen Social Research will pass an anonymised reference number

to the Department for Education. The Department will be able to identify you in their records and link your information to records from the other government databases listed.”

1. Yes
2. No

{ASK IF ConsentLink=2,ref,DK}

ConsentLinkIndiv

“Do you give permission for an anonymised reference number to be passed to the Department for Education, so that some of your records can be identified and linked to your survey responses? If so, please can you confirm which records you consent to having your survey responses linked to?”

TEL:“INTERVIEWER, IF NECESSARY”:

EXPANDING HELP LINK: “What do these records include?”

“Department for Education’s (DfE) National Pupil Database (NPD) includes information about your participation and achievement in school and further education as well as details about the school, college or training centre you attended.

Department for Education’s (DfE) Individual Learner Record (ILR) includes information about your participation and achievement in further education from age 16, as well as details about the college or training centre you may have attended.

Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) records include Income Tax, Tax Credits and Child Benefit data, providing information about employment, earnings, tax, pensions and National Insurance contributions.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) includes information about benefit receipt and participation in employment programs

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) includes information about higher education applications and offers.

Learner Loans Company (SLC) records include information about applications for learner finance)

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) includes information about university participation and attainment”

_WEB: “Please select one answer on every row”

_TEL: “INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH STATEMENT AND THE ANSWER CODES. REPEAT ANSWER CODES AS REQUIRED.”

GRID ROWS

1. Department for Education’s National Pupil Database
2. Department for Education’s Individual Learner Record
3. Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs

4. **Department for Work and Pensions**
5. **Universities and Colleges Admissions Service**
6. **Learner Loans Company records**
7. **Higher Education Statistics Agency**

GRID COLS

1. Yes
2. No

Appendix D. Terminology

The courses

Term	Definition
T Level	The T Level became available in England as an alternate option for further studies in academic year 2020/21. It is a level 3 qualification. The course lasts for two years. The average age of learners on starting the programme is 16 years old.
T Level Transition Programme	The T Level Transition Programme became available in England in academic year 2020/21. It was introduced as a preparatory one-year level 2 course for learners who want to progress onto a T Level, providing additional study time and preparation. The average age of learners on starting the programme is 16 years old.
Level 4/5	Level 4 and 5 programmes are Higher Technical Education options after the completion of a level 3 course that offer further vocational training. The average age of learners on starting the programme is 25+ years old. Courses usually last for 1-2 years full-time, with part-time study options available.
Level 3 technical	These programmes include Applied General Qualifications (AGQs) such as BTECs. Average age of learners on starting the programme is 16 years old.
A level	These are subject-based level 3 qualifications. The average age of learners on starting the programme is 16 years old.

Learner groups

Term	Definition
2020 T Level starters	T Level learners that started the programme in September 2020. This was the first year the T Level became available in England as an alternate option for further studies. The '2020 T Level starters' are therefore the first cohort of T Level learners in England.
2020 TLTP starters	T Level Transition Programme learners that started the programme in September 2020. This was the first year the T Level Transition Programme became available in England as an alternate option for further studies. The '2020 TLTP starters' are therefore the first cohort of T Level Transition Programme learners in England.

Term	Definition
2021 T Level starters	T Level learners that started the programme in September 2021. This is the second cohort of T Level learners in England.
2021 TLTP starters	T Level Transition Programme learners that started the programme in September 2021. This is the second cohort of T Level Transition Programme learners in England.
2021 level 4/5 learners	Learners scheduled to finish a level 4/5 programme in the academic year 2021/22. Higher Technical Education is currently under reform, with new courses beginning delivery from autumn 2022. This cohort completed their courses before the reforms. Due to different programme lengths and part-time study, the cohort may have started in different academic years but all finished their programme in 2021/22.
2021 other level 3 technical starters	Other level 3 technical learners (not T Level learners) that started their programme in 2021.
2021 A level starters	A level learners that started their programme in 2021.
Cohort	Identified group of learners starting at a specific point in time and followed through the study.

T Level pathways

Route name	Pathway courses
Construction	Design, surveying and planning for construction (from 2020) Building services engineering for construction (from 2021) Onsite construction (from 2021)
Digital	Digital production, design and development (from 2020) Digital business services (from 2021) Digital support and services (from 2021)
Education and Childcare	Education and childcare (from 2020). NB. The name of this route / pathway has changed to Education and Early Years.
Health and Science	Health (from 2021) Healthcare science (from 2021) Science (from 2021)

Acronyms and other useful terms

Term	Definition
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
HTE	Higher Technical Education
HTQ	Higher Technical Qualification
TLTP	T Level Transition Programme
T Level route	High level sector area for T Level e.g. 'Construction'
T Level pathway	Occupational subject of T Level e.g. 'Onsite Construction'
Occupational specialism	Specialised component of T Level that develops skills specific to a particular occupation e.g. 'Carpentry & Joinery'



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