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Policy paper

Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ): an introduction

Updated 21 September 2023

Applies to England

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This guidance is for:

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

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

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

What a Higher Technical Qualification is

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

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

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

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) will approve each new HTQ as meeting the knowledge and skills needed by the sector. Approved courses show the HTQ quality mark logo.

Watch our video to get an [introduction to the HTQ](#).

Available subjects

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

From September 2023, students will also be able to take HTQs in the following sectors:

- construction, design and build
- health and science

From September 2024, students will also be able to take HTQs in the following sectors:

- business and administration
- education and early years
- engineering and manufacturing
- legal, finance and accounting

From September 2025, students will also be able to take HTQs in the following sectors:

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

Two occupational routes do not currently have level 4 and 5 occupational standards in scope for HTQ approvals. These are:

- hair and beauty
- transport and logistics

This will remain under review with the aim of launching these routes once relevant

standards are available.

Funding

We are investing up to £117million to support providers to grow high-quality level 4 and 5 provision and HTQs. This includes:

- up to £10 million to fund the Open University to support further education providers to expand level 4 and 5 courses in under-served areas, to meet local employer demand
- £14 million for over 90 providers through the [higher technical education provider growth fund](#) in financial year 2021 to 2022, to support learners who start studying HTQs between September 2022 and January 2024
- up to £21 million through the [higher technical education skills injection fund](#) in financial year 2023 to 2024, to support around 85 providers to grow provision with a focus on levelling up areas
- up to £48 million through the higher technical education skills injection fund, to support providers across all 15 occupational routes and to also grow provision with a focus on levelling up areas
- £8 million through the [strategic priorities grant](#) for level 4 and 5 courses in financial year 2022 to 2023, and a further £16 million of investment announced for financial year 2023 to 2024

We also provided the Office for Students with [£450 million of capital funding for financial years 2022 to 2025](#). £400 million of this was available through a bidding exercise to target funds at the government's strategic priorities, including HTQs.

Additional funding for the modular acceleration programme

Total funding of up to £5 million is also available for HTQ providers who are registered with the Office for Students and taking part in the modular acceleration programme. This is a targeted programme designed to support delivery of individual HTQ modules ready for the launch of the lifelong learning entitlement (LLE) in 2025.

The programme will grant fund tuition fees for students studying an eligible HTQ

module in academic years 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025. It will also provide up to £20,000 to each successful bidder for bespoke activity, including information and guidance for learners, to promote modular HTQs. This fund is separate from the higher technical education skills injection fund which closed to applications on 21 July 2023.

To find out more and apply see [lifelong learning entitlement: modular acceleration grant](#). Applications close Friday 3 November 2023.

Student finance

HTQs started from September 2023 onwards are eligible for the higher education student finance offer. This means that full-time and part-time students starting an HTQ that is a minimum of a year will be able to apply for both tuition fee and maintenance loans.

HTQ courses that are shorter than a year in duration will be eligible for the [Advanced Learner Loan](#), which covers the tuition fee loan but not maintenance loan.

For the 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025 academic years, some Ofqual-regulated HTQ courses will be [eligible for both the higher education student finance offer and the Advanced Learner Loan offer](#).

Find out more

Providers interested in offering HTQ courses should check the list of [approved HTQs](#).

A [toolkit](#) is available for providers of HTQs.

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