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Policy paper

Technical Excellence Colleges: launch of Wave 2

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Applies to England

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The government has committed to establishing Technical Excellence Colleges (TECs) in the Industrial Strategy growth-driving sectors and DfE has opened applications for Wave 2 TECs.

Applications

Further Education colleges that meet the essential criteria can now [apply to become a Technical Excellence College as part of Wave 2](#)

Deadline for applications: **Monday 16 February 2026**

Wave 1: TECs in Construction

10 Construction TECs were launched in August 2025 to deliver high-quality construction skills provision.

Wave 2: expanding the TEC programme

In the [Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper](#) the Department for Education (DfE) committed to expanding the TEC programme to a further 4 sectors:

- 5 TECs in Defence
- 5 TECs in Digital and Technologies
- 5 TECs in Clean Energy industries
- 4 TECs in Advanced Manufacturing

These TECs will work with employers, representative bodies, trade unions, strategic authorities, and local government to provide people with better training and job opportunities, and to provide the highly trained workforce that local economies need.

TECs will be existing further education colleges that are awarded 'technical excellence status' to recognise deep specialisms in priority skills areas. For example, a general further education college that delivers specialist skills provision

for the Defence industry would be awarded TEC status for Defence skills specifically.

TECs will earn their status and be set apart from other Further Education (FE) colleges through their demonstration of excellence in their provision of specific priority technical skills. They will act as system leaders, driving greater coordination and collaboration in the skills system around their specialism so that their model of innovative teaching and curricula excellence can be shared and scaled across the sector.

Each TEC will be a hub of excellence in a specific sector, with advanced facilities and resources, including expert staff, cutting-edge course materials, and strong employer and industry partnerships. Colleges appointed as TECs will support other providers that deliver provision in their sector, so that the opportunities and benefits that TECs create are spread across regions and learners.

Objectives

TECs will work with government, strategic authorities, and industry partners to deliver against 5 core objectives:

Objective 1: to boost skills provision in direct response to local and national employer needs

Output: skilled workforce

Co-creation of a sustainable skilled pipeline that helps fix the leaky transition of learners into industry through better alignment with industry needs, ensuring the skills people are getting are in-demand and will lead to well-paid work.

Objective 2: to deliver high quality teaching practice and curricula , including specialist continuous professional development for staff

Output: increased quality of provision

More consistent and high-quality delivery of sector-specific education and teacher training, including potential for design and uptake of new specialist courses tailored to employer needs.

Objective 3: to leverage employer engagement and investment in sector

skills provision

Output: strong employer engagement

Increased number of employers actively involved in curriculum design, delivery, and learner support; greater financial and in-kind investment; stronger partnerships that shape provision to meet evolving sector needs and help drive innovation.

Objective 4: to collaborate with a network of providers (via a hub and spoke model) to boost sector-specific skills provision and quality both locally and nationally

Output: collaborative delivery

Mobilisation of a hub and spoke model to share and scale innovative practice across a range of providers, locally and nationally, with targeted collaboration to meet subsector needs, expanding reach across the country and maximising the breadth and quality of opportunities and benefits offered to learners.

Objective 5: to promote clear pathways for learners to progress into work in growth-driving industries or into higher level courses in the wave 2 sectors

Output: progression

Increase in learners progressing to higher levels of sector-related learning (for example Level 4+), and into related employment, through clearer, flexible pathways developed with industry and HE providers, aligned to sector specialisms and workforce needs.

Supporting priority city regions and clusters

Colleges applying to become a TEC must be able to demonstrate that their skills provision supports one of the priority city regions and clusters for their chosen sector as set out on pages 30-31 of the [Industrial Strategy technical annex](#) (England only). They must also demonstrate relevance to one or more of the subsector specialisms associated with that area as set out in the Industrial Strategy [sector plans](#) (see individual application form for further detail for each sector). Please note, applicants do not need to be actually located within one of the cluster areas to apply,

they could be located in a bordering area, but would need to demonstrate alignment.

Hub and spoke model of delivery

TECs will act as hubs of excellence, raising standards across the FE sector through a ‘hub and spoke’ model. Each TEC ‘hub’ will offer advanced facilities, expert staff, and high-quality curricula developed with industry. These hubs will support other FE partner providers (‘spokes’, including FE Colleges, Independent Training Providers and University Technical Colleges) by sharing specialist training, resources, and expertise—uplifting teaching quality, expanding learner access, and aligning provision with employer and industry needs. They will also work closely with Higher Education institutions to support learner pathways.

We would expect Wave 2 TECs to work with providers locally and nationally. Locally, the TEC could work with providers to help address the skills needs of sector employers in the area by boosting the number of learners in the skills pipeline, aligned with the menu of skills that those employers require, as well as the quality of provision.

Nationally, we will expect TECs to establish networks with other providers across the country in subsector areas where there are similar sector needs (for example, the automotive subsector for an Advanced Manufacturing TEC, the maritime capabilities subsector for a Defence TEC) to share curricula, CPD, resources and expertise with providers to help support quality of provision and/or where a provider wants to grow their provision in a specific subsector. These networks will increase the reach of TECs across the country and maximise the breadth and quality of opportunities and benefits offered to learners.

Spokes and delivery partners

Spokes are FE providers delivering sector or subsector-specific courses. TEC hubs work with a broad network of spokes to share TEC-endorsed curricula, sector-focused CPD and resources, raising quality across the sector and collaborating to address industry needs and skills gaps.

Delivery partners are FE colleges that a TEC hub may choose to work more closely with to support the delivery of their objectives with a deeper role in shaping and

delivering TEC provision. Delivery partners may work closely with the TEC hub on curricula design, collaborating on innovation, sharing facilities or directly delivering TEC courses.

TEC - spoke relationship

Examples of activities include:

- sharing specialist curricula across spoke providers
- establishing a digital infrastructure to share resources with providers across the country
- facilitating and hosting network events, webinars, conferences to:
 - collectively share best practice and innovative ideas
 - enable providers to collaboratively come together to identify and problem solve solutions to existing barriers to addressing sector skills gaps or targeting under-represented groups
- provide access to resources for teacher training and continuous professional development, including bespoke training for educators and train the trainer opportunities
- broker partnerships between 'spoke providers' and employers to facilitate industry placements for learners and ensuring partner colleges are taking all opportunities available to offer industry placements to their learners
- work with SAs and ERBs to facilitate teacher-industry exchange programmes
- build partnerships with careers hubs, job centres, and/ or schools to strengthen learner pathways into sector-specific courses and highlight the opportunities available at the TEC and partner providers
- design career pathways for learners mapping onto priority sector occupations

TEC - delivery partner relationship

Examples of activities include:

- participating in establishing and agreeing collaborative working arrangements (for example, working groups convened by the TEC)
- helping to identify, develop, and embed best practice in course content and pedagogy (for example, through participating in test and learn initiatives led by the TEC)
- contributing to innovations for sharing access to facilities, for example for learners to upskill in the latest equipment and/ or for use by employers for research
- coordinating national CPD calendar with shared training events, mentoring, exchange programmes
- coordinating collaborative engagement between the TEC, key delivery partners and national employers and sector bodies to co-design training solutions for emerging frontier industries
- working with delivery partners to collectively facilitate national employer forums to ensure training provision is responsive to industry trends
- partnering on joint innovation projects

TECs could also collaborate with key delivery partners to develop targeted provision in specific subsectors within other regions. These partners would then engage with their own local stakeholders and organisations to extend the reach and impact of the provision within their area, creating regional nodes. These sites could act as feeder locations into the main TEC hub.

We expect that TEC hubs should be located in or near one of the priority city regions and clusters identified in the Industrial Strategy. Spokes, however, can be located anywhere in the country and do not need to be located in one of the priority city regions and clusters.

Please note, only the colleges appointed as TECs will have TEC status.

Funding

In the [Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper](#), the government committed £175 million (£137 million capital and £38 million revenue funding) over 4 years to support the establishment of new TECs. This is a joint package funded by the Department for Education, Ministry of Defence, and the Department for Business and Trade.

Subject to the development and submission of a high-quality costed delivery plans,

each TEC will receive a mix of capital and revenue funding to enhance facilities, develop specialist curricula, and build strong partnerships with employers and other providers.

Revenue funding will be awarded to the TEC hubs to support them in developing, scaling and sharing specialist curricula and training with other partner providers and to support coordination activities, such as brokering industry placements across providers and collaboration through mobilising the hub and spoke model.

Capital funding will be awarded for the procurement and installation of specialist equipment and reconfiguration, refurbishment, and upgrading of existing facilities that directly support the delivery of a reformed curriculum aligned with priority skills needs. To support the spread of excellence, capital funding should benefit both TEC hubs and partner providers (for example, the delivery partner and 'spokes').

Once the TECs have been selected, they will be asked to develop delivery plans outlining the specific activities they intend to undertake, along with the associated capital and revenue costs. TECs must demonstrate to DfE active engagement and support from employers, industry bodies, and strategic authorities relevant to the proposals set out in their delivery plans. TECs should also seek match funding or other commitments from employers.

Revenue funding will be allocated equally to TECs (approximately £2 million per TEC over 3 years). The specific allocations of capital funding to each TEC will vary, reflecting the nature of the proposed activity, geographical spread and concentration of industry being supported, the specific specialisms benefiting from capital investment and location capital costs.

This model will ensure that TEC funding is used not only to build excellence at the hub, but also to mobilise a wider network of delivery partners and increase capacity and capability across the FE sector to meet growing demand for skills in priority growth industries.

Selection process for Wave 2 TECs

The decision to appoint TECs will be made by the Secretary of State for Education, in agreement with the Secretary of State for the Department for Work and Pensions, and the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Defence. Other relevant departments and organisations will also be closely consulted throughout the selection process

including the Department for Business and Trade, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, Skills England, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, strategic authorities and relevant councils with Level 2 Devolution Deals.

DfE will select colleges based on an assessment of overall merit and strategic considerations, ensuring the best fit for the programme's goals, including evidence of:

- previous delivery against the 5 TEC objectives
- expected outcomes that will contribute to measurable progress against TEC objectives
- existing partnerships with industry sector employers and how applicants plan to harness these to drive the co-creation of a skilled sector workforce
- initial plans to mobilise a hub and spoke model, including how the college plans to work closely with a range of FE providers regionally and nationally to raise quality, standards, and capacity across the selected sector

Each application will be independently scored. A shortlisting panel, led by the Further Education Commissioner alongside representatives from other government departments, will recommend the final colleges to become TECs based on the scores received in the application process and responses to the 4 qualitative application questions, as well as considering overall strategic fit based on:

- sub-sectoral spread within each sector, to ensure broad coverage of the frontier industries outlined in [the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy 2025](#) and accompanying sector plans
- geographical spread to support alignment with the priority city regions and clusters set out on page 30 and 31 of the [Industrial Strategy Technical Annex](#)
- recommendations from strategic Authorities
- written endorsements from Further and Higher Education institutions delivering sector-related courses, sector employers in their chosen sector and Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) designated Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs)
- Ofsted reports and achievement rates

Involvement of strategic authorities

We will consult strategic authorities to gather their views on which applicants should be designated as TECs in each wave 2 sector. This includes both Mayoral Strategic Authorities (MSAs) and non-mayoral Combined Authorities with a Level 2 devolution deal. Their input will be based on an assessment of local contextual factors, which may include considerations such as the location of key employers and employer projects, the scale and scope of planned projects in each area, and the strategic importance of the applicant within both the regional and national skills system. Their advice will be considered alongside other evidence when assessing applications.

Colleges can find out which strategic authority covers their area by referring to the [Local Government Association's Combined Authorities page](#). This resource includes an overview of all existing Combined Authorities and links to their websites, where colleges can identify the relevant authority for their region.

In areas without an established strategic authority, the absence of a recommendation will not be viewed negatively.

Ways of working for TECs

We will work with TECs, strategic authorities and other partners in the skills system to refine and evaluate the programme and share best practice to drive innovation. Colleges applying should be willing to:

- make a substantial ongoing commitment to work with Government via regular workshops, meetings, collaborative sessions
- engage actively in the TEC programme, contributing to the development of solutions and sharing best practices
- complete relevant evaluation processes and requirements for the TEC programme, including providing detailed feedback, and data on their progress and outcomes
- lead peer learning and support activities for sector skills provision on behalf of their sector specialism, including engaging with and providing support to other providers, and working with employers, strategic authorities and ERB-led LSIPs at either existing regional and national forums or through new engagement structures.
- operate inclusively with recognition of other local priorities including Local Growth plans, LSIPs, and initiatives such as Get Britain Working, Youth Guarantee

- dedicate sufficient resources, including staff time and expertise, to ensure the successful implementation of the programme's objectives

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