



Open consultation

# Accreditation of Technical Qualifications within T Levels and other updates

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**Applies to England**

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## Proposals at a glance

Following the creation of Skills England and abolition of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE), Ofqual has been notified by the Secretary of State for Education that it may determine whether Technical Qualifications within T Levels should be subject to an accreditation requirement. This consultation therefore sets out our proposal to add Technical Qualifications within T Levels to the list of qualifications subject to [Ofqual's accreditation requirement](#).

The abolition of IfATE and creation of Skills England also means that some parts of Ofqual's [Qualification Level Conditions, requirements and guidance for Technical Qualifications within T Levels](#) need to be updated to amend or remove outdated references. This consultation proposes minor changes to do this.

# Audience

This consultation is open to anyone who may wish to make representation but may be of most interest to:

- awarding organisations who offer, or intend in future to offer, Technical Qualifications within T Levels, and their representative bodies
- schools, colleges, students, and their representative bodies
- employers and their representative bodies

# Consultation arrangements

## Duration

This consultation will open on 21 January 2026 and end on 4 March 2026 at 11:59pm.

## Respond online

Responses should be submitted through [the online consultation platform](#).

### Other ways to respond

If for exceptional reasons you are unable to use the online consultation platform, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is incompatible with the platform, you may request an alternative format. Please email [consultations@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:consultations@ofqual.gov.uk) to request this. For information on how Ofqual will use and manage your data, please see Annex B.

# Introduction

## Technical Qualifications within T Levels

Technical Qualifications (TQs) are the Ofqual-regulated qualifications within T

Levels. Each TQ is delivered by a single awarding organisation, managed through a contract. Until recently, these contracts were managed by IfATE, but following its abolition, are now managed by the Department for Education (DfE). Ofqual regulates TQs against the [General Conditions of Recognition](#) and the [Qualification Level Conditions for Technical Qualifications within T Levels](#).

Before a TQ is first delivered, it must be approved. Previously, this approval was done by IfATE against tests set out in legislation, but is now done by DfE. TQs were also previously subject to an Ofqual accreditation requirement<sup>[\[footnote 1\]](#)</sup>, meaning that an awarding organisation could not award a TQ unless Ofqual had accredited it. This required an awarding organisation to demonstrate to Ofqual's satisfaction that it could comply, on an ongoing basis, with the relevant General and Qualification Level Conditions.

Ofqual's power to accredit TQs was removed following the commencement of the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022. This set out that Ofqual could no longer exercise its accreditation power in relation to Technical Education Qualifications<sup>[\[footnote 2\]](#)</sup>, which would instead be approved solely by IfATE. Since this change, Ofqual has continued to review TQs submitted for approval, but this has not been part of an accreditation process. It has instead been to provide feedback upfront as part of IfATE's, and subsequently DfE's, approval process. Ofqual reviews have also informed its monitoring of ongoing compliance with its requirements.

## Transfer of functions

As part of the creation of Skills England and the transfer of functions that were previously the remit of IfATE, the IfATE (Transfer of Functions etc) Act 2025 gave the Secretary of State discretionary power to allow Ofqual to make a determination as to whether Technical Education Qualifications should be subject to an accreditation requirement. In October 2025, the Secretary of State notified Ofqual that it may make such a determination to accredit Technical Qualifications within T Levels with immediate effect.

The transfer of functions also meant that some parts of our Qualification Level Conditions for Technical Qualifications within T Levels became outdated, as they refer to IfATE, which no longer exists to perform the functions referred to. They therefore require updating to amend or remove these references.

## Proposals

## Accreditation of Technical Qualifications within T Levels

Following the Secretary of State's notification, we propose to add TQs to the list of qualifications that are subject to an accreditation requirement under section 138(1) of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. This will help ensure that T Levels continue to meet the highest standards for students, employers, and the wider education sector. Accreditation will provide an important additional safeguard for quality and consistency as a key check of these ahead of delivery, aligned with the approach we take to A levels. We are confident this change for T Levels will strengthen the long-term credibility of these qualifications.

This will mean that, in future, an awarding organisation may not award or authenticate a TQ until the TQ has been accredited by Ofqual. We will only accredit a TQ submitted by an awarding organisation if:

- that awarding organisation has been recognised to offer TQs, and
- the TQ meets the relevant accreditation criteria.

We propose that TQs should be subject to the same [accreditation criterion](#) that applies to other qualifications subject to an accreditation requirement. The accreditation criterion we propose to apply is:

An awarding organisation must demonstrate to Ofqual's satisfaction that it is capable of complying, on an on-going basis, with all of the General Conditions of Recognition that apply in respect of the qualification for which it is seeking accreditation, including all relevant Qualification Level Conditions and Subject Level Conditions.

Our view is that it should be clear to an awarding organisation at the start of the development process for a TQ that it will be subject to an accreditation requirement. Taking into account the time needed for an awarding organisation to go through the process of developing a TQ, the earliest we could impose an accreditation requirement, while ensuring awarding organisations are aware of this at the start of the process, would be for TQs (reprocured as relevant for first teaching) from September 2028. We therefore propose that our accreditation requirement will apply to TQs first taught from September 2028.

While the introduction of the accreditation requirement for TQs is an important way of ensuring the quality of TQs, we do not anticipate this proposal will have a significant impact on awarding organisations intending to offer TQs beyond that which already exists. Ofqual already reviews TQs submitted for approval as part of DfE's approvals process and, until the accreditation requirement is introduced, we will continue to review submissions, and provide feedback into DfE's approval

process, as we do now.

### Question 1

Do you have any comments on the proposal to add Technical Qualifications within T Levels to the list of qualifications subject to Ofqual's accreditation requirement?

## Other updates to the Qualification Level Conditions for Technical Qualifications within T Levels

To reflect the transfer of functions from IfATE to Skills England and DfE, some minor updates are needed to our Qualification Level Conditions for TQs to amend or remove references to IfATE. These changes will not alter the nature of what is required of awarding organisations but will ensure our regulatory framework remains up to date.

We propose to amend existing references to IfATE, to refer to:

the Secretary of State, or an organisation on their behalf

We will adapt this formulation as necessary to reflect the context in which it appears in the Qualification Level Conditions.

References to IfATE we propose to amend occur in the following Conditions, requirements and guidance:

- Guidance on Condition D3 (Reviewing approach)
- Guidance on Condition H6 (Issuing results)
- Assessment strategy requirements (specified under TQ3 (Assessment strategies))
- TQ4 (Qualification titling)
- TQ5 (Total Qualification Time)
- Guidance on TQ5 (Total Qualification Time)
- Assessment requirements (specified under TQ6 (Assessment))
- Guidance on use of centre marking
- Guidance on recognition of prior learning
- TQ23 (Interpretation and Definitions)

We also propose to remove the definition of IfATE that appears in TQ23

(Interpretation and Definitions). We have set out these amendments in Annex A.

We propose to make these changes as soon as is practical following this consultation.

### **Question 2**

Do you have any comments on the proposed amendments to, and removal of, references to IfATE in the Qualification Level Conditions for Technical Qualifications within T Levels?

## **Impact assessments**

### **Equality impact assessment**

Ofqual is a public body and, therefore, the public sector equality duty in the Equality Act 2010 applies to it.

We have considered the impact of these proposals on those who share a particular protected characteristic and have not identified any negative impacts. The changes are minor and do not impact what awarding organisations delivering TQs are required to do.

The introduction of the accreditation requirement will give Ofqual the power to prevent TQs being delivered that do not meet its requirements, including those related to equalities considerations. This could have a small positive impact given we would be able to prevent TQs that do not meet our equalities requirements from being awarded. In practice, this impact will be negligible, as although Ofqual does not currently have the power to prevent TQs being awarded, the feedback we provide into the approvals process would identify such issues ahead of TQs being approved.

### **Question 3**

Are there any potential equality impacts (positive or negative) that we have not identified?

### **Question 4**

Are there any additional steps Ofqual could take to mitigate any potential

negative impacts resulting from the proposals?

## Regulatory impact assessment

Ofqual has a duty under the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 to avoid introducing or maintaining unnecessary regulatory burden. We have considered the burden associated with these proposals and do not consider these changes will significantly impact awarding organisations.

While introducing an accreditation requirement for TQs has the potential to impose a burden on awarding organisations, which will be required to submit materials to Ofqual for the purposes of accreditation, in practice these materials are already submitted as part of the approvals process and reviewed by Ofqual. We therefore consider any additional burden caused by introducing the accreditation requirement for TQs to be manageable and proportionate. We do not consider there will be any additional burden as a result of the minor amendments to amend or remove references to IfATE.

### Question 5

Are there any impacts of these proposals (individually or combined) that we have not identified? Please outline any additional costs or benefits that you foresee.

### Question 6

For all identified impacts (including any additional ones identified), what do you expect their scale to be? This could include the activities required, the level of resource commitment, financial outlay, or the nature and value of any benefits.

### Question 7

Do you have any suggestions for reducing or mitigating the costs associated with these proposals?

## Innovation

Ofqual has a duty under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 to have regard to the desirability of facilitating innovation relating to the

provision of regulated qualifications. Ofqual has committed to surveying awarding organisations' views of the impact of its regulatory requirements on innovation and to consider any revisions required in response. We do not expect these proposals to impact innovation by awarding organisations but would welcome views on this.

### Question 8

Do you have any comments on the impact of the proposals on innovation by awarding organisations?

## Annex A: Proposed amendments to Qualification Level Conditions for Technical Qualifications within T Levels

Condition, requirement or guidance	Text to be amended
Guidance on Condition D3 (reviewing approach) – Amendment	<p>The Outline Content on which each Technical Qualification will be based will be subject to periodic review by <b>the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education</b>.</p> <p>As part of the evidence to inform its own review of a Technical Qualification under Condition D3.1, an awarding organisation should have regard to the outcomes of any review of the Outline Content by <b>the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education</b>, as well as any feedback from <b>the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education</b> or Ofqual on the Technical Qualification itself.</p>
Guidance on Condition H6 (issuing results) – Amendment	<p>Where Learners are assessed in England, we expect an awarding organisation to issue results to <b>the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education or the Education and Skills Funding Agency</b>, as relevant, which will then issue the Learner with a T Level certificate, or Statement of Achievement, where appropriate, on behalf of the Secretary of State.</p>
Assessment strategy requirements (specified	<p>Where <b>the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education</b> specifies additional requirements in relation to an awarding organisation's assessment strategy, the awarding organisation may include that additional material in a single</p>



under TQ3 – Assessment strategies) – Amendment	version of its assessment strategy which it provides to Ofqual when required.
TQ4 – Qualification titling – Amendment	In respect of each Technical Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, without prejudice to the requirements of Condition E2, an awarding organisation must ensure that the title of that qualification on the Register complies with any requirements which may be published by <b>the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education</b> and revised from time to time.
TQ5 – Total Qualification Time – Amendment	<p>TQ5.2 In respect of any element of Total Qualification Time (including Guided Learning) for a Technical Qualification, where <b>the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education</b> specifies –</p> <p>TQ5.3 In respect of those elements of Total Qualification Time (including Guided Learning) for which <b>the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education</b> has not set a range or number of hours, an awarding organisation must assign a number of hours by – (a) having regard to any guidance in that regard published by <b>the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education</b></p> <p>TQ5.4 An awarding organisation must –</p> <p>(a) keep under review the number of hours it has assigned to each Technical Qualification for each of Total Qualification Time and Guided Learning,</p> <p>(b) in particular, review the numbers of hours assigned following any revision –</p> <p>(i) by <b>the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education</b> to the range, or number, of hours it has set for any element of Total Qualification Time (including Guided Learning),</p> <p>(ii) by <b>the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education</b> to any guidance in that regard that it has published, and...</p>
Guidance on TQ5 – Amendment	Under Condition TQ5.2(a), where <b>the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education</b> specifies a range in respect of any element of Total Qualification Time for a Technical Qualification,...

An awarding organisation must use the TQT Criteria to determine

the appropriate number of hours within the range specified by **the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education**.

Under Condition TQ5.2(b), where **the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education** has specified a single value for the number of hours in respect of any element of Total Qualification Time...

An awarding organisation should promptly notify Ofqual where it considers that the range or number specified by **the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education** would generate a value which is significantly different ...

Under Condition TQ5.3, where **the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education** provides guidance in respect of any element of Total Qualification Time for a Technical Qualification,...

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Assessment requirements (specified under TQ6 – Assessment) – Amendment

In its specification for a Technical Qualification, an awarding organisation must set out the combinations of Occupational Specialisms that may and may not be taken together as part of the same qualification. Those combinations must be in line with any requirements specified by **the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education**.

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Guidance on use of centre marking – Amendment

Furthermore, an awarding organisation must have due regard to any requirements that form part of the contract between it and **the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education**.

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Guidance on recognition of prior learning – Amendment

In doing so, an awarding organisation should take account of the content, and follow any requirements set by **the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education** in this respect, and revise its policy where **the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education** revises its requirements.

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TQ23 – Interpretation and Definitions – Amendment

Outline Content

The outline content developed for a Technical Qualification published by **the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education or the Department for Education** and revised from time to time.

Technical Qualification

A qualification approved (or treated as approved) by **Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education** under section

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TQ23 – Interpretation and Definitions – Removal	Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education The body corporate established by section ZA1(1) of the Act (or any successor body).
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## Annex B: Privacy Notice for Consultations

### Why we collect your personal data

As part of our consultation process, you are not required to provide your name or any personal information that will identify you. However, we are aware that some respondents would like to provide contact information. If you or your organisation are happy to provide personal data, with regard to this consultation, please complete the details below. We seek to reach as broad a range of people and institutions as possible to inform our proposals. For us to monitor this, understand views of different groups and taking steps when reaching out to specific groups, we may ask for sensitive data such as ethnicity and disability to understand the effectiveness of our approach. However, it is optional to provide this information.

If there is any part of your response that you wish to remain confidential, please indicate at the appropriate point in the survey.

Where you have requested that any part of your response remains confidential, we will not include your details (or your organisation's details) in any published list of respondents. However, we may quote from the response anonymously to illustrate the kind of feedback we have received.

### Your data

Your personal data:

- will not be sent outside of the UK unless there are appropriate safeguards in place to protect your personal data
- will not be used for any automated decision making

- will be kept secure

We implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect your personal data against accidental or unlawful destruction, accidental loss or alteration, unauthorised disclosure or access and any other unlawful forms of processing.

## Your rights

You have the right to:

- be informed that your personal data is being processed by Ofqual
- access the information we hold about you
- request that we rectify any information about you that is incorrect
- request that data we hold about you are erased. There are certain conditions which apply to the erasure of personal data, depending on the purpose of processing. You will be informed if your request has been declined and the reason for this
- restrict processing in certain circumstances

If you would like to exercise your rights, please contact us using the details below. You can also find out [more about Ofqual's privacy information](#).

## Freedom of Information Act and your response

Please note that information in response to this consultation may be subject to release to the public or other parties in accordance with access to information law, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). We have obligations to disclose information to particular recipients including members of the public in certain circumstances. Your explanation of your reasons for requesting confidentiality for all or part of your response would help us balance requests for disclosure against any obligation of confidentiality. If we receive a request for the information that you have provided in your consultation response, we will take full account of your reasons for requesting confidentiality and assess this in accordance with applicable data protection rules.

Members of the public are entitled to ask for information we hold under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. On such occasions, we will usually anonymise responses, or ask for consent from those who have responded, but please be aware that we cannot guarantee confidentiality.

If you choose 'no' in response to the question asking if you would like anything to be kept confidential, we are able to release the content of your response to the

public, but we won't make your personal name and private contact details publicly available.

## How we will use your response

We will use your response to help us shape our policies and regulatory activity. If you provide your personal details, we may contact you in relation to your response. We produce and publish reports on [Ofqual - GOV.UK](#) setting out an analysis of the consultation responses and decisions made as a result of that analysis. In the course of analysis, we will avoid using your name and contact details. We will only process the body of your response, but we are aware that in some cases, this may contain information that could identify you.

## Sharing your response

Your response will be shared internally within Ofqual to analyse the responses and shape our policies and regulatory activity. We may also share your response with The Department for Education (DfE) and Skills England where the consultation is a joint consultation or part of work involving those organisations. We may share responses with them to ensure that our approaches align. If we share a response, where possible we will not include any personal data (if you have provided any). Where we have received an organisational response to a consultation, we will provide DfE and Skills England with the name of the organisation that has provided the response, although we will consider requests for confidentiality.

Where we share data, we ensure that adequate safeguards are in place to ensure that your rights and freedoms are not affected. We will not share your information with any third parties for the purposes of direct marketing.

We use data processors who are third parties who provide elements of services for us. We may share data with them so they can analyse and summarise responses for us that may use technology, such as artificial intelligence. We have contracts in place with our data processors. This means that they cannot do anything with your personal information unless we have instructed them to do it. They will hold it securely and retain it for the period we instruct. Where we transfer any personal data outside the UK, we make sure that appropriate safeguards are in place to ensure that the personal data is protected and kept secure.

We use Citizen Space, which is part of Delib Limited, to collect consultation responses and they act as our data processor. You can view [Citizen Space's privacy notice](#).

We may also publish an annex to the analysis listing all organisations that provided a non-confidential response, but this will not include personal names or other contact details.

## **Use of AI for consultation analysis**

To support the analysis of consultation responses, we may use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, such as Microsoft Copilot. This is a secure AI tool, which uses a combination of Large Language Models (LLMs) to assist in identifying themes, summarising feedback, and generating insights. This tool has appropriate safeguards in place that ensure the privacy and security of confidential responses. All personal and special category data will be robustly anonymised before analysis. Any use of AI is solely for enhancing the efficiency and quality of our consultation analysis and reporting. Copilot does not make decisions about individuals but supports human-led analysis and decision-making by providing summarised information and insights. All final outcomes and decisions arising from the consultation analysis are determined by humans.

Where AI tools are used to process personal data, this is done in accordance with the original purposes for which the data was provided and processed in accordance with this notice. Copilot has the same security, compliance, and privacy settings configured within Microsoft 365.

## **How long will we keep your personal data?**

Unless otherwise stated, Ofqual will keep your personal data (if provided) for a period of 6 years after the consultation closing date.

## **Our legal basis for processing your personal data**

Where you provide personal data for this consultation, we rely upon the public task basis as set out in Article 6(1)(e) of UK GDPR which allows processing of personal data when this is necessary for the performance of our public tasks. We will consult where there is a statutory duty to consult or where there is a legitimate expectation that a process of consultation will take place. Where you provide special category data, such as ethnicity and disability data, we process this in accordance with Article 9(2)(g) of UK GDPR where processing is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest.

## **The identity of the data controller and contact details of our Data Protection Officer**

This privacy notice is provided by The Office of Qualifications and Examinations

Regulation (Ofqual). The relevant data protection regime that applies to our processing is the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 ('Data Protection Laws'). We ask that you read this privacy notice carefully as it contains important information about our processing of consultation responses and your rights.

## How to contact us

If you have any questions about this privacy notice, how we handle your personal data, or want to exercise any of your rights, please contact our data protection officer at [dp.requests@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:dp.requests@ofqual.gov.uk)

We will respond to any rights that you exercise within a month of receiving your request. If the request is particularly complex, we will respond within 3 months.

Please note that exceptions apply to some of these rights which we will apply in accordance with the law.

You also have the right to lodge a complaint with [the Information Commissioner](#) (ICO) if you think we are not handling your data fairly or in accordance with the law. You can contact the ICO at:

ICO  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

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1. Section 138(1) of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (ASCL Act) allows Ofqual to specify qualifications, or descriptions of qualifications, that are subject to an accreditation requirement. [↪](#)
  2. This includes Technical Qualifications that form part of T Levels and other technical qualifications within IfATE's remit to approve. [↪](#)

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