



Consultation outcome

Accreditation of Technical Qualifications within T Levels and other updates: consultation response analysis and decisions

Updated 12 May 2026

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Background

Technical Qualifications within T Levels

Technical Qualifications (TQs) are the Ofqual-regulated qualifications within T Levels. Ofqual regulates TQs against the [General Conditions of Recognition](#) and the TQ-specific [Qualification Level Conditions \(QLCs\) for Technical Qualifications within T Levels](#). The Department for Education (DfE) approves TQs before they are first delivered, with Ofqual also reviewing TQs submitted for approval and providing feedback as part of DfE's approval process.

Ofqual previously required TQs to be accredited before delivery but this requirement was removed following the commencement of the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022. Responsibility for approval of Technical Education Qualifications (which include the TQs in T Levels) then sat with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical education (IfATE), and subsequently with DfE. 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. We [consulted, between 21 January and 4 March 2026](#), on adding TQs to the list of qualifications subject to an accreditation requirement. At the same time, we consulted on other minor updates to our rules to remove and replace references to IfATE from our Qualification Level Conditions for Technical Qualifications within T Levels.

Summary of feedback and decisions

We received 8 responses to the consultation, and overall respondents agreed with our proposals.

In relation to the proposal to add TQs to the list of qualifications subject to an accreditation requirement, respondents agreed with the approach saying it was proportionate to supporting quality, given the high-stakes nature of T Levels. Respondents commented that it would help ensure public confidence in the qualifications. While supportive of the approach, some respondents sought clarification on how Ofqual's accreditation process and DfE's approvals process will align.

In relation to the proposal to remove or amend references to IfATE from Ofqual's Qualification Level Conditions for Technical Qualifications within T Levels, respondents agreed with these changes, noting that it was a necessary step to ensure the Conditions remain accurate.

In relation to the impact of the proposals, respondents considered that there would be limited impact and did not identify any additional regulatory or equalities impacts of the proposals.

We have decided to implement the proposals as consulted on. We will therefore:

- add Technical Qualifications within T Levels to the list of qualifications subject to an accreditation requirement
- amend or remove references to IfATE throughout the Qualification Level Conditions for Technical Qualifications within T Levels, and refer instead to “the Secretary of State, or an organisation on their behalf” (adapted as necessary to reflect the context of where the wording appears)

Approach to analysis

The consultation consisted of 8 questions (including questions on equality and regulatory impact assessments, and innovation) and was published on Ofqual's website. Respondents could answer as many or as few questions as they wished.

Respondents to this consultation were self-selecting, so the sample of those that chose to reply cannot be considered as representative of any group. Efforts were made to engage as many interested parties as possible, including those awarding organisations currently offering TQs.

Who responded

Ofqual's consultation was open between 21 January 2026 and 4 March 2026. We received 8 responses. All responses have been considered as part of this analysis.

Not all respondents chose to answer all questions. One response was submitted by an individual; 7 responses were submitted on behalf of organisations, consisting of:

- 4 awarding organisations
- 2 representative bodies
- one trade association

Seven respondents were based in England and one in Wales. The full list of organisations that submitted responses can be viewed in Annex A.

Analysis and decisions

Accreditation of Technical Qualifications within T Levels

What we proposed

We proposed 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 means that in future, TQs would have to meet the following accreditation criterion:

“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.”

Consultation Feedback

Respondents supported the proposal to add TQs to the list of qualifications subject to an accreditation requirement. Respondents commented that:

- the proposal is a proportionate quality measure reflecting the purpose and high-stakes nature of T Levels
- it ensures consistency and strengthens public confidence in T Levels
- it helps ensure consistency and quality across the post-16 landscape

Some respondents, while supporting the approach overall, commented on issues relating to the processes needed to support accreditation, and the roles of DfE and Ofqual within this. These comments included:

- the need for clarity on the nature of Ofqual’s accreditation process and DfE’s approval/procurement process, and how these will align
- assurances about whether DfE’s existing procurement model would change
- the need to take account of wider activities affecting awarding organisations, such as post-16 qualification reform

Decision

We have decided to proceed with the proposal to add Technical Qualifications within T Levels to the list of qualifications subject to an accreditation requirement. This will help ensure the quality and consistency of TQs, strengthening the long-term credibility of these qualifications. This will apply to TQs being developed for first teaching from September 2028.

We will continue to work with DfE in relation to Ofqual and DfE’s respective accreditation and approval processes, aiming to ensure roles are clear, that any overlap is minimised or removed and that there is alignment with wider activities.

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

What we proposed

We proposed to amend or delete references to IfATE in the TQ Qualification Level Conditions, to reflect its abolition and the transfer of functions to Skills England or DfE. We proposed to replace these with references to:

“the Secretary of State, or an organisation on their behalf”

Consultation Feedback

Respondents were supportive of the proposed amendments, noting that they were necessary to ensure the TQ Qualification Level Conditions remain accurate. Respondents noted that by referring to the Secretary of State and not a specific organisation, this may reduce the need for future updates in the event of any further changes to the roles and responsibilities relating to the oversight of T Levels.

In addition to the specific changes identified, respondents commented on further

changes that could have been considered. These related to requirements that exist in both Ofqual's Conditions and the contract between DfE and the awarding organisation, and areas where they considered there to be unnecessary references to IfATE within Ofqual's requirements.

Decision

We have decided to implement the proposal to amend or remove references to IfATE set out in the consultation, and to refer instead to "the Secretary of State, or an organisation on their behalf", as the context dictates. These changes will, as far as possible, reduce the need for further changes should responsibilities change in the future.

In relation to the further changes identified for consideration within Ofqual's Conditions and between Ofqual's Conditions and the contract between DfE and the awarding organisation, we do not propose at this time to make any further changes. While it may be possible in future to make such changes, we consider that to do so now would require a wider review of both sets of requirements, and we do not consider the benefit of doing to so be proportionate to the potential disruption this may cause at this time.

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. In the consultation we considered the impact of these proposals on those who share a particular protected characteristic. We identified a small positive impact of the proposal to accredit TQs, in that the accreditation process would enable Ofqual to prevent qualifications that do not meet the equalities expectations set out in Ofqual's General Conditions from being delivered. We did not identify any negative impacts of the proposals on those who share a protected characteristic.

Respondents to the consultation did not identify any additional equality impacts of the proposals. One respondent commented more generally in relation to the industry placement within the wider T Level programme, which is outside of the scope of Ofqual's regulation.

We consider that these provisions in the General Conditions will enable Ofqual to ensure fairness for students with protected characteristics, and accreditation will enable us to prevent TQs from being delivered which would not do this.

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 set out in the consultation our view that these proposals would have a minimal regulatory impact and that this will be proportionate to the benefits of making these changes. We also set out that we did not consider the proposals would impact on the potential for innovation by awarding organisations.

Respondents agreed that the proposals themselves would have limited impact. They noted the need for clarity on the respective roles of Ofqual and DfE on any future accreditation and approvals processes to avoid unnecessary burden or duplication. One respondent noted that there was opportunity for Ofqual to further reduce burden on awarding organisations by reviewing and removing requirements from Ofqual's regulatory framework which are not relied on, or which duplicate requirements in the contract between DfE and the awarding organisation.

Our view remains that the impact of these proposals on awarding organisations will be minimal but note the comments about reducing duplication where possible and will consider further how this might be achieved.

Annex A: List of organisational respondents

When completing the consultation, respondents were asked to indicate whether they were responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation. These are the organisations that submitted a response.

- The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
- City & Guilds
- Federation of Awarding Bodies

- NCFE
- Pearson
- UK Fashion and Textile Association Ltd.
- WJEC

There were no confidential responses.

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