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Open consultation

Part 5 – Retaking Core Exams in Technical Qualifications within T Levels – proposals to allow additional flexibility

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Applies to England

Technical Qualifications (TQs) are the regulated qualification within T Levels. The TQ is made up of:

- Core Exam – one or more assessments of core knowledge and understanding, set and marked by the awarding organisation
- Core Project (also referred to as the employer-set project) – a project based on a brief set by the awarding organisation, working with relevant employers, assessing core skills
- Occupational Specialism – a substantial assessment relating to a particular occupational area, allowing students to draw together knowledge, skills and

behaviours.

Each TQ is currently offered by a single awarding organisation. The TQ Core Exam normally consists of 2 exam papers, and students must take both in the same assessment series. This is the case the first time they attempt the Core Exam, and for any subsequent retakes – a student wishing to retake their Core Exam must retake both papers (where there is more than 1) and must retake both in the same assessment series.

DfE has set out its intention to refine T Levels to enhance deliverability. Ministers have decided to change the way in which TQ Core Exams can be retaken. Instead of students having to retake both Core Exam papers (where there is more than 1), students will instead be able to retake only 1 paper. This change will apply to retakes only – the first time a student takes their Core Exam, they will continue to have to take all papers.

The way in which the Core Exams must be taken is reflected in Ofqual's [Qualification Level Conditions for Technical Qualifications within T Levels](#). To permit the updated approach we will need to make some changes to these requirements. Our proposed amended wording is set out in [Annex D](#).

Ofqual has considered whether making these changes could present any risks which might negatively affect students taking TQs. Given the way that standards are currently set and maintained in the Core, we do not consider that the proposed changes materially increase any current risks in relation to the maintenance of standards. While the proposals may make setting and maintaining standards slightly more difficult, this slight increase in risk is outweighed by the greater flexibility for education and training providers and students. The change will offer additional flexibility for those students and centres who wish to use it but will not require a change in the way the Core Exams are retaken, for those students who want to continue to retake both papers.

We propose any change to our rules will be made in September 2026. The exact date by which awarding organisations will be required to implement the change may vary due to the way TQs are procured and the time needed for awarding organisations to make any system changes to implement the change. We will work with DfE and the relevant awarding organisations to determine the implementation approach for each TQ and would welcome views on this.

Question 46

Are there any impacts caused by the changes proposed to Ofqual's Qualification Level Conditions for Technical Qualifications within T Levels, which have not been identified?

Question 47

Do you have any comments on the timing of the implementation of this change?

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