

# Quick guide to the future of post-16 Level 2 qualifications in England

The 16-19 and adult level 2 vocational qualifications landscape in England is undergoing major reform.

This document, along with the information on our website provides you with an overview of these reforms, and what we know so far about what they will mean for you and your post-16 level 2 full time vocational curriculum.

Please be reassured that you can continue to teach your BTECs with confidence in 2024/25. Very few qualifications will be affected in 2025/2026.

We will update you as we know more about the removal of funding for qualifications, and new qualifications in development.

Over the coming months we will provide you with all the support you need to make any changes necessary to your curriculum in the future as the result of these reforms.



# What are the DfE's Level 2 and below Reform proposals?



The proposal divides level 2 qualifications into 8 groups according to their primary purpose.



The first wave of new qualifications will commence September 2025. All other level 2 qualifications (excluding ESOL and PSE) for September 2026 or 2027. All ESOL, PSE, level 1 and entry level for September 2027 and September 2028.



DfE will approve and defund qualifications in line with the reform timetable (this will not apply to qualifications which form part of an apprenticeship).



GCSEs, English, Maths, and Digital Functional Skills qualifications, Essential Digital Skills qualifications (EDSQ), Higher Project qualifications, Foundation Project qualifications and Performing Arts Graded Examinations, are all out of scope.

# New Level 2 landscape

Level 2 qualifications should prepare 16-19-year-olds and adult learners for further study or training at level 3 where possible, including apprenticeships. They will also lead directly to employment in some occupational routes.

## Technical

Qualifications that provide the knowledge, skills, and behaviours a student needs to progress to further technical study at level 3 or to skilled employment.

### Group 2

#### Occupational Entry qualifications

Extended technical qualifications delivered over two years, providing contextual understanding of a route, transferable skills and occupationally specific knowledge, skills and behaviours.

540 GLH

### Group 3

#### Occupational Entry qualifications

Technical qualifications that provide the knowledge, skills and behaviours a student needs to progress to skilled employment at level 2.

200 – 540 GLH

### Group 4

#### Additional Specialist qualifications

Technical qualifications that support individuals to develop specialist knowledge and skills beyond an employer-led occupational standard.

200 GLH [max.]

### Group 5

#### Cross-cutting functions

Technical qualifications which support employability by developing skills that are relevant across several different occupational standards.

150 GLH [max.]

### Group 6

#### Employer-proposed qualifications

Technical qualifications leading to recognised occupations where there is clear demand from employers, but no occupational standard exists.

## Technical and Academic Progression

Qualifications that support progression to level 3 (A Level, T Level, Occ Entry, and AAQ)

### Group 1

#### Qualifications based on NTOs delivered as part of the T Level Foundation Year

Technical qualifications supporting progression to T Levels.

120 - 150 GLH

### Group 1

#### Qualifications supporting progression to level 3 technical study

Technical Qualifications supporting progression to level 3 technical programmes (e.g. T Levels and Technical Occupational Entry).

120 – 240 GLH

### Group 7

#### Qualifications supporting progression to level 3 academic study

Qualifications providing introductory content to a subject area where GCSEs do not provide preparation for level 3.

120 – 240 GLH

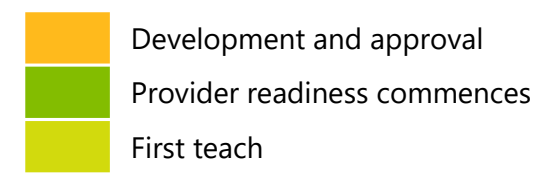
## Basic Skills

### Group 8

ESOL qualifications

**Group 4** will be funded for 16-19 and adults, but learners must be occupationally competent or working towards it. **Group 6** will be funded for adults only.

# Level 2 development, approval and first teach timeline



Cycle	Group and purpose	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28
Cycle 1	<b>Group 2:</b> Occupational entry qualifications [Construction, Education & Childcare, Engineering/Manufacturing, Health and Science]					
	<b>Group 3:</b> Occupational focus qualifications [Construction, Education & Childcare, Engineering/Manufacturing, Health and Science]					
	<b>Group 4:</b> Specialist qualifications					
Cycle 2 <small>Groups 2 - 6 all other qualification areas</small>	<b>Group 1:</b> Progression to technical level 3 qualifications [all L3 routes/academic subject areas reformed 2025 and relating to all wave 1-5 T Levels]					
	<b>Group 2:</b> Occupational entry qualifications [2-year qualification]					
	<b>Group 3:</b> Occupational entry qualifications					
	<b>Group 4:</b> Specialist qualifications					
	<b>Group 5:</b> Cross-sectoral skills					
	<b>Group 6:</b> progression to recognised occupations where no standard exists					
	<b>Group 7:</b> Progression to level 3 academic study [all L3 routes/academic subject areas reformed 2025 and relating to all wave 1-4 T Levels]					
Cycle 3	<b>Group 1:</b> Progression to technical level 3 qualifications [all L3 routes/academic subject areas reformed 2026]					
	<b>Group 7:</b> Progression to level 3 academic study [all L3 routes/academic subject areas reformed 2026]					

# Technical Qualifications

Technical qualifications will be based on the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) set out in the occupational standards co-designed with employers and approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE).

This will ensure they are linked much more closely to employers' needs and meet specific criteria to improve quality and learner outcomes.

A list of qualifications that are approved for funding, and which will be available to teach in the 2025 to 2026 funding year, will be published in July 2024.

This list will be updated in September 2024 to include any additional qualifications approved following procedural review.

Technical qualifications based on the following occupational standards will be available from first teach 2025 and 2026.

## IfATE standards in scope for first teach 2025:

Construction

Education and childcare

Engineering and manufacturing

Health and science

## IfATE standards in scope for first teach 2026:

Agriculture, environmental and animal care

Catering and hospitality

Creative and design

Hair and beauty

Care services

Protective services

Sales, marketing and procurement

Transport and logistics

Legal, finance and accounting

Business and administration

# Technical and Academic Progression Qualifications

This will include the following:

**Academic Progression Qualifications** which support progression to mixed programmes containing Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) at level 3.

**Technical Progression Qualifications** which support progression to a technical qualification at level 3 and is not delivered as part of a T Level.

**T Level Foundation Qualifications** which support progression to any T Level in a relevant occupational route.

T Level Foundation Qualifications for first teach 2026
Digital
Construction
Education and early years
Healthcare and science
Engineering and manufacturing
Legal, finance and accounting
Business administration
Media, broadcast and production / craft and design
Agriculture, environmental and animal care
Hair, beauty and aesthetics
Hospitality
Sales, marketing and procurement

*Please note; subject/sector areas could change depending on level 3 qualifications submitted and approved.*

Academic Progression Qualifications Subjects in scope for first teach 2026
Applied science / medical science
Engineering and engineering principles or technology
Health and social care
IT / computing
Healthcare professions
Building construction
Child development and well-being
Learning support / teaching lecturing

Academic Progression Qualifications Subjects in scope for first teach 2027
Art, craft and design / sound engineering / animation and visual arts
Creative digital media production / digital games, film and video production
Performing, production and creative arts / music performance, production and technology / music practitioners
Sport, exercise science, physical activity, sporting excellence and performance
UPS / policing

Technical Progression Qualifications Subjects in scope for first teach 2026
Engineering and manufacturing
Construction and the built environment
Health and science
Education and early years
Digital

Technical Progression Qualifications Subjects in scope for first teach 2027
Agriculture, environmental and animal care
Catering and hospitality
Creative and design
Hair and beauty
Care services
Protective services
Sales, marketing and procurement
Transport and logistics
Legal, finance and accounting
Business and administration



Pearson