

# Quick guide to the future of post-16 below Level 1 qualifications in England

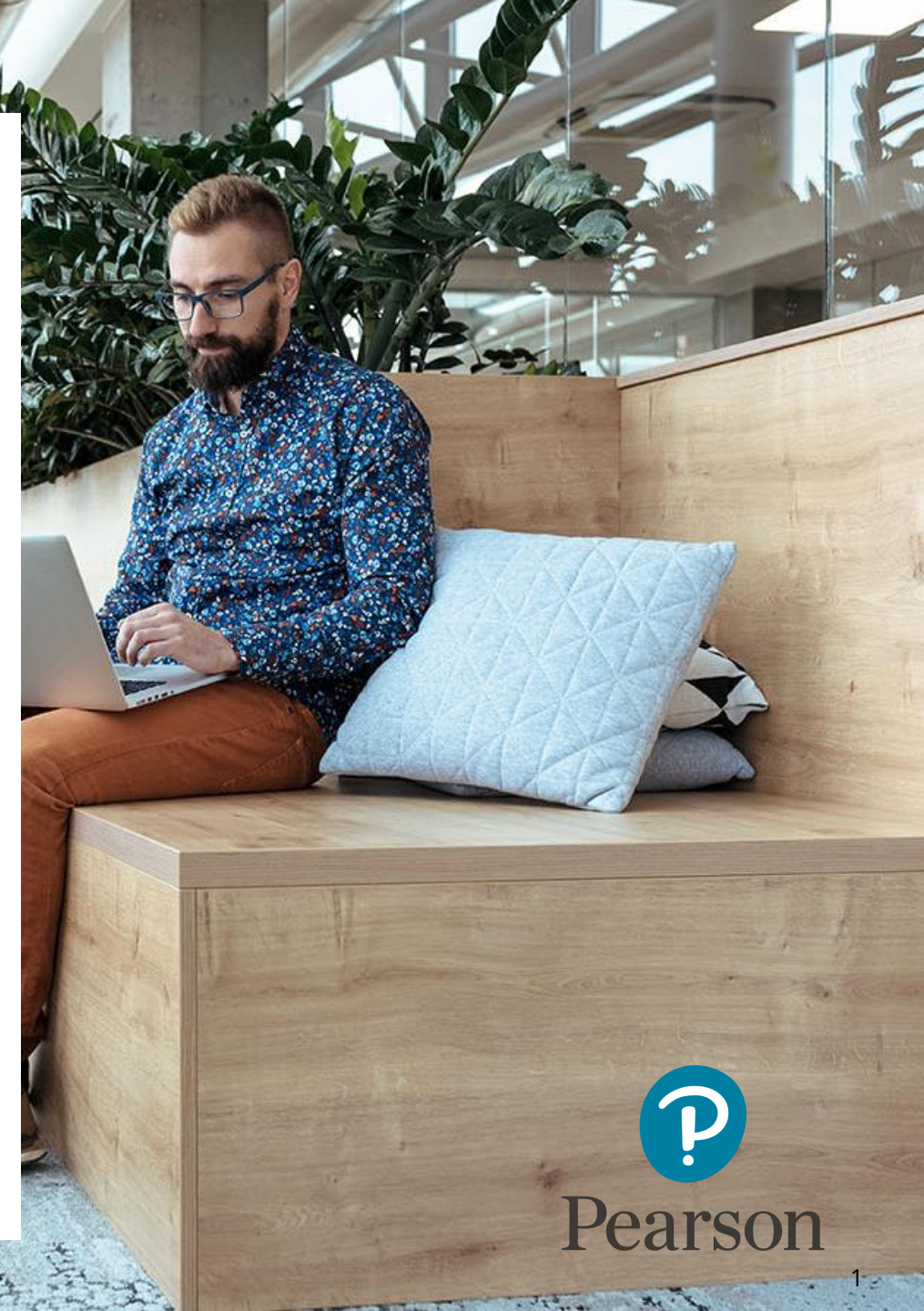
The 16-19 and adult level 1 and entry level vocational qualifications landscape in England is undergoing major reform.

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 this will mean for you and your post-16 level 1 and below vocational curriculum.

Please be reassured that you can continue to teach your BTEC level 1 and entry level qualifications with confidence until August 2027.

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 owing to these reforms.



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# What are the DfE's Level 1 and below Reform Proposals?



The proposal divides level 1 qualifications into 5 groups according to their primary purpose

The proposal divides entry level qualifications into 4 groups according to their primary purpose.



The first level 1 and entry qualifications will commence for first teach in 2027 in cycle 3.

It is also expected that PSE, life and employability qualifications will also be in this cycle.

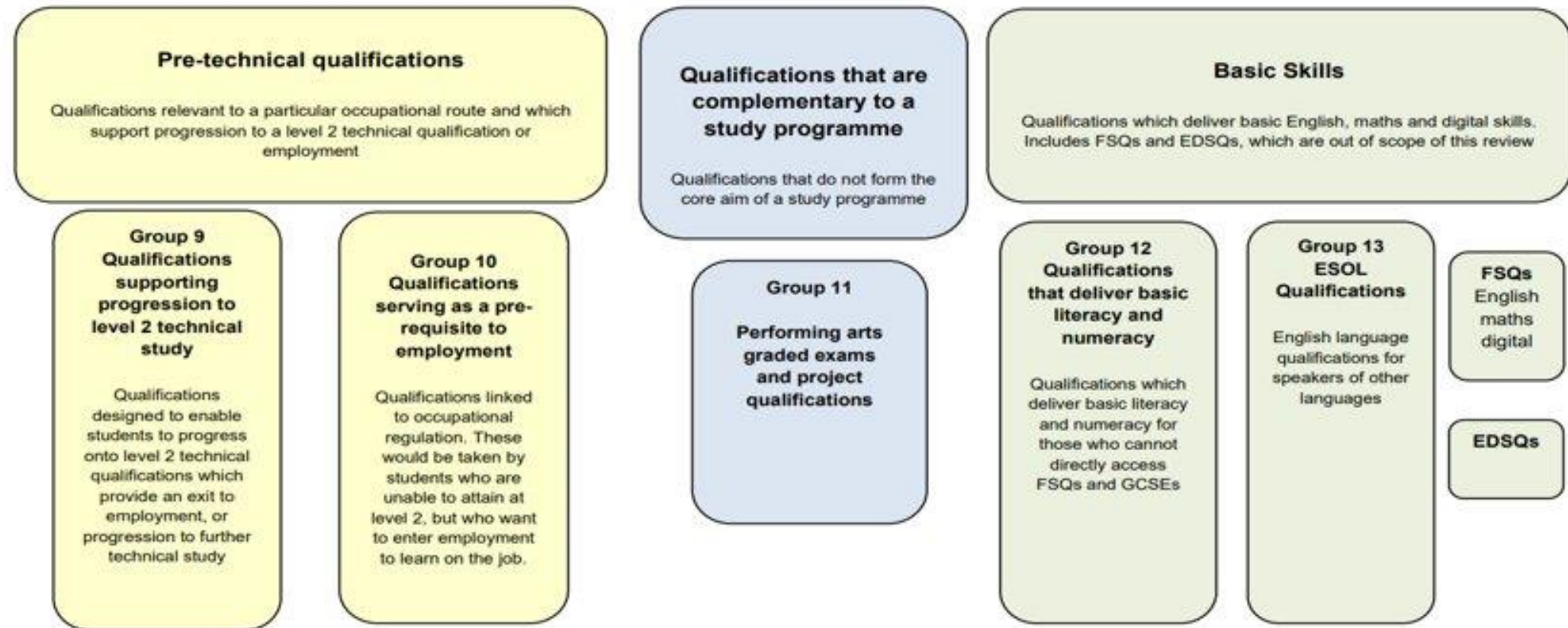


DfE will approve and defund qualifications in line with the reform timetable.

GCSE's, English, Maths, and Digital Functional Skills qualifications, EDSQ, Higher Project qualifications, Foundation Project qualifications and Performing Arts graded examinations are all out of scope

# New Level 1 Landscape

**Level 1 qualifications should prepare 16-19 year olds and adult learners for further study or employment/apprenticeship (this may be supported)**



# New Entry Level Landscape

Entry Level qualifications should prepare 16-19 year olds and adult learners for further study or supported internship.

## Pre-technical qualifications

Qualifications relevant to a particular occupational route and which support progression to pre-technical qualification at level 1, traineeships or supported internships

## Qualifications that are complementary to a study programme

Qualifications that do not form the core aim of a study programme

## Basic Skills

Qualifications which deliver basic English, maths and digital skills  
Includes FSQs and EDSQs, which are out of scope of this review

## Group 14 Qualifications supporting progression to level 1 leading to technical study at level 2

Qualifications which support progression onto level 1 pre-technical qualifications.  
These qualifications are for students who are not ready to start a level 1 qualification but who will benefit from being on a clear pathway to their desired career

## Group 15 Performing arts graded exams

## Group 16 Qualifications that deliver basic literacy and numeracy

Qualifications which deliver basic literacy and numeracy for those who cannot directly access FSQs and GCSEs

## Group 17 ESOL Qualifications

English language qualifications for speakers of other languages

**FSQs**  
English  
maths  
digital

**EDSQs**

# Level 1 and Entry development, approval and first teach timeline

| Level             | Groups and purpose   | 2025/26                  | 2026/27                      | 2027/28  |
|-------------------|--|--------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Level 1 and Entry | Group 9: progression to level 2 technical study                        | Development and approval | Provider readiness commences | First introduction of new, reformed technical qualifications (including both those for 16–19-year-olds and adults) |
|                   | Group 10: pre-requisite to employment                                  | Development and approval | Provider readiness commences | First introduction of new, reformed technical qualifications (including both those for 16–19-year-olds and adults) |
|                   | Group 11 and 15: graded performing arts qualifications                 | Development and approval | Provider readiness commences | First introduction of new, reformed technical qualifications (including both those for 16–19-year-olds and adults) |
|                   | Group 14: progression to level 1 leading to technical study at level 2 | Development and approval | Provider readiness commences | First introduction of new, reformed technical qualifications (including both those for 16–19-year-olds and adults) |

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|--|--|
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# L1 Progression to Level 2 Technical Study qualifications

120- 280 GLH

Suitable for 16-19 and Adults

Qualifications will be aligned to at least one of IfATE's occupational routes

Broad skill approach

Purpose is to prepare learners for Level 2 Technical Study



# L1 as Prerequisite to employment qualifications

Maximum of 100 GLH

Suitable for 16-19 and Adults

Qualifications will be aligned to at least one of IfATE's occupational routes

Broad skill approach

Purpose is to re-engage learners and prepare for exit to employment

Learners can progress to Level 2 Technical Study but this likely to be rare



# Entry Level- Pre-Technical qualifications

Equivalent to Entry 3

May add Entry 1 and 2 "Taster Options"

120-280 GLH

Suitable for 16-19 and Adults

Qualifications will be aligned to at least one of IfATE's occupational routes

Broad skill approach

Purpose is to prepare learners for Level 1 Technical Study





Qualifications that are complementary to a study programme- level 1 and entry level

Small qualifications

Focused on Performing arts, Graded exams and Project Qualifications

Not a core part of study programme



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