

Technical Education Programme

‘Update on Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs)’ webinar (26/02/26) – Q&A

Many thanks to colleagues from the Department for Education (DfE), West of England Institute of Technology and the Gatsby Foundation for their input to the answers below.

Disclaimer: Please note that the information in this document reflects the policy situation at the time of the webinar recorded in February 2026 and is subject to change over time.

Q: Where can students study an HTQ?

A: HTQs can be studied at Further Education colleges, universities, independent training providers or at specialist [Institutes of Technology \(IOTs\)](#). Courses and further information can be found on the [UCAS website](#) or by checking with your local providers.

Further information on HTQs can be found on the [HTQ Toolkit](#)

Q: Are all HTQs listed on ucas.com?

A: The Department for Education (DfE) work closely with providers to encourage them to list all relevant qualifications on the [UCAS website](#). Work is also being done with UCAS to ensure that HTQs are easily identifiable and easily searchable on their website.

The DfE hold a list of [approved higher technical qualifications](#). However, it is important to check both with local providers and on UCAS to confirm which courses are running (just because a course is approved, doesn't necessarily mean it is currently on offer).

Q: What funding is available to study an HTQ?

A: Students wishing to study an HTQ are entitled to apply for student finance on the same terms as for other undergraduate study. From January 2027, individual modules of HTQs will be eligible for funding through the [Lifelong Learning Entitlement \(LLE\)](#), allowing learners to progress flexibly and at their own pace.

HTQs can be studied on a part-time basis, depending on the availability of a relevant local provider and offer a high quality alternative to a degree or an apprenticeship route. Students should discuss their individual requirements with local providers to determine which route best meet their needs. It is important to know that part-time learners on HTQs have the same eligibility for tuition fees and maintenance loans as part-time learners on degree courses. This may not be the case for non-approved level 4 and 5 qualifications.

Q: Can a graduate access funding for an HTQ?

A: Under the current student finance system, a graduate would not normally be eligible for student loan funding for another HE course. When the [Lifelong Learning Entitlement \(LLE\)](#) is introduced, the situation may change. The key shift is that whole courses and individual modules of HTQs will be eligible for funding under the LLE, which will change how funding works for people who already hold degrees.

Q: Do certain sectors value HTQs more than a degree?

A: Evidence suggests that the number of employers requiring a degree is getting less, and those who do often ask for 'degree or equivalent', which opens up opportunities for those with HTQs. The DfE HTQ team is working with employers to show that level 4/5 HTQ qualifications provide valuable preparation for the world of work. Level 4/5 qualifications provide the necessary theory and practice to meet the needs of employers and offer a high quality progression route for students who do not necessarily want, or need to undertake a degree.

As many HTQs are existing qualifications that have been around for a long time, employers already know and value many of them, like Higher Nationals in Construction and Engineering. HTQs have been developed in partnership with employers and have been well received as they provide relevant training, knowledge and skills to succeed in the workplace. HTQs are quality marked by [Skills England](#) to indicate that they align with employer-led occupational standards.

Q: How flexible are HTQs?

A: HTQs provide flexibility as they can be studied full-time or part-time and help businesses support their employees by enabling them to retrain, learn new skills and improve their existing skills. Providers have autonomy to decide on delivery methods, in order to meet local needs.

Q: How do HTQs compare to level 4/5 apprenticeships?

A: HTQs are level 4/5 qualifications and can lead to similar pathways as apprenticeships at this level, including high-skilled employment. The difference is in funding and delivery and they suit different students depending on their needs and interests. HTQs are classroom-based technical qualifications and provide students with the knowledge and skills for a technical role, whereas apprenticeships are jobs with training, enabling students to develop competence in a specific job role.

