

Technical Education Programme

'Update on Qualifications Reform' webinar (03/02/26) – Q&A

Many thanks to colleagues from the Department for Education (DfE) 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: Will V levels replace existing level 3 qualifications?

A: Yes, eventually V Levels will replace AAQs (Advanced Academic Qualifications) and AGQs (Advanced General Qualifications) for 16-19 year olds, such as BTECs and other similar qualifications. V Levels are being introduced as a 'third pathway' alongside A levels and T levels, to simplify and streamline the level 3 post-16 landscape. It is proposed that V Levels will be available from 202: the DfE are working with the sector on the transition and will set out plans in due course.

Q: Can students combine V Levels and A Levels?

A: V Levels will be for students who are still deciding which career path to take and who want to keep their options open. Where students are less sure of their career choice, they should be encouraged to take a broader study programme, encompassing a range of subjects. To support the development of broader study programmes, the DfE proposed in their recent [consultation into level 3 and below pathways](#) that V Levels will be equivalent in size to A Levels, so students are able to take multiple qualifications and have greater options. The DfE are now considering responses to that consultation and will publish their response in Spring 2026.

Q: Will courses still be available in performing arts and dance (including specialist providers)?

A: The responses to the consultation are currently being analysed, with decisions to be made around which subjects will be in offer. All current qualifications will remain in place until new qualifications are available. The DfE recognise that providers, awarding organisations and other stakeholders need clarity to plan effectively and will publish a timeline as soon as possible. Updates will be provided on the [qualifications reform webpages](#) or sign up [here](#) for the monthly Newsletter.

Q: If a student completes a study pathway, will they be able to receive funding to progress to a two-year level 3 pathway?

A: Yes, the study pathways are proposed to be one year in length. [16-19 funding](#) would cover the students for the 3 years of their study.

Q: Will it be possible for students to change from an occupational pathway to a study pathway?

A: It is recognised that students may want to change pathways and the responses from the consultation are being considered to determine how this would work in practice.

Q: What proposals are in place for students who cannot access level 2 courses?

A: A range of level 1 courses are still available, as they are currently not under reform. The DfE is committed to ensuring that students at entry level and level 1 have access to high-quality qualifications that support progression – whether into further study, employment, or the development of essential life and work skills.

Q: Is the Higher Education sector involved in the consultation into new qualifications, specifically V Levels?

A: Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) were invited to participate in the government consultation into V Levels. The DfE will ensure that new qualifications are equal in value to T Levels and A Levels, that they have sufficient rigour and are designed with providers, employers and higher education institutions to enable progression to higher education. Ofqual will also consult with higher education providers to ensure V Levels support progression. As V Levels will carry UCAS points, they are directly relevant to university admissions. The DfE is working with universities to ensure they understand V Levels and include them in entry requirements.

Q: What provision is in place to support students to complete a T Level?

A: As T Levels mature, the DfE are continuing to refine them to enhance deliverability, whilst maintain rigour and quality. On an ongoing basis, the content and assessment of T Levels is being reviewed to ensure they are deliverable at scale. This includes:

- Deploying education experts to review T Level specifications to identify any areas of possible duplication in the Core and Occupational Specialism, or content that could be better delivered in alternative parts of the T Level.
- Commissioning surveys to providers and bringing together Curriculum Reference Groups including colleges teaching T Levels and industry experts, to suggest improvements to T Levels and form a sounding board for potential changes.
- Working in consultation with awarding organisations to further rationalise T Level content, and to minimise the assessment burden to learners, whilst ensuring that skills can appropriately be measured.

Q: Has there been an increase in the number of universities that accept T Levels? Some universities still ask for an A Level alongside the T level, which isn't possible.

A: Yes, the number of universities formally accepting T Levels has increased, particularly for courses that are directly aligned to technical education, e.g. in STEM, health, digital and education. The DfE continue to work closely with sector bodies such as UCAS and [Universities UK](#) to ensure that T Levels are understood by HE providers as a high-quality offer.

The DfE has created a [list of higher education providers that accept T Level for entry](#) and are working with providers to help them understand more about T levels and to encourage them to be explicit in their entry requirements about their acceptance of T Levels. They have also produced specific [guidance for higher education providers](#) to help them better understand T Levels and outline how T Levels can support students to progress to Higher Education.

Q: Will the T Level Foundation Year course still be available?

A: The current T Level Foundation Year will run as normal in 2026/27. The consultation proposes that from 2027/28 it will broaden into a wider 'Foundation Year' supporting progression to level 3, during a transition period, and will gradually be replaced by the new Further Study pathway and Foundation Certificates. Once the Foundation Study pathway has been rolled out in a particular subject, the Foundation Year would no longer run in that subject.

Proposed Occupational Certificates (Occupational pathway) are for students who want to study for a particular occupation and need to develop their skills in a classroom-based setting, with the aim of progressing into employment in relevant level 2 roles.

Proposed Foundation Certificates (Further Study pathway) are for students who want to pursue further level 3 study, whether on T Levels, V Levels or A levels, but did not meet the entry requirement to progress directly, usually because they did not achieve five grade 4s at GCSE, including English and maths, at age 16. They therefore require more time to develop their knowledge and skills before moving up to the next level. Setting out clear qualification options in this way should help students to understand their options and support teachers and careers professionals in giving good advice.

Q: What is the best way to keep up to date with qualifications reform?

A: Please sign up to the DfE's [Qualifications Reform mailing list](#) and visit the [CDI Technical Education Resource Hub](#)

The two most recent policy announcements include the [Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper](#) and the [Curriculum and Assessment Review](#)