

## Technical Education Programme 'Update on T Levels' webinar (06/11/24) – Q&A

*Many thanks to colleagues from the 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 November 2024 and is subject to change over time.*

**Q: Where is the best place to find information on T Level Foundation Year courses?**

A: Just over 1/3 of T Level providers offer the Foundation Year course and many also offer other level 2 programmes. It is best to contact T Level providers directly to discuss their offer.

**Q: If a student requires a GCSE grade 5 to undertake a T Level, does the Foundation course enable them to resit? What are the options for progression to level 3 study if they fall slightly short of the grades needed for T Levels?**

A: Providers have flexibility to shape their foundation year offer for their learners, which can include GCSE resits.

**Q: Are there qualifications other than GCSEs which would be acceptable for progression to a T Level? Currently, some BTEC First Diplomas offer progression to BTEC National Diplomas: would these be accepted instead of GCSE grades?**

A: There are no nationally set entry criteria for T Levels, so it is up to individual schools and colleges to determine their own entry requirements, as is the case for other post-16 courses such as A levels. Providers have the freedom to set entry requirements based on the course content, their institution's strategic approach and their assessment of individual students.

**Q: Can you search for T Levels by occupational specialism? This would be useful for T Levels which have lots of career pathways, e.g. Health. Being able to help for individual specialisms, e.g. Adult Nursing or Dental Nursing would be really helpful for students to find a course which meets their specific interests.**

A: The [T Levels website](#) allows students to search available T Level courses and providers. Providers' own websites or prospectuses are currently the best source of information on which occupational specialisms are available.

**Q: Has there been any improvement in employers' awareness of RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) in terms of reducing the time required to complete a related apprenticeship?**

A: Work is underway to increase awareness in areas where this would be especially valuable. For example, this has begun in Engineering and Construction, where IfATE has determined an accelerated apprenticeship to be a useful outcome on completion of a T Level. Gatsby are currently working with employers and providers to develop accelerated apprenticeships in these routes. This work involves mapping T Level content to in-demand apprenticeships (as defined by employers) to aid with RPL, and helping providers create appropriate programmes for cohorts of T Level graduates.

**Q: Have progression rates for the T Level Foundation course improved? In 2022, only 8% of students progressed from a foundation course to a T Level course.**

A: Progression on to a T Level remained around 10% for the following cohort. However, progression on to other level 3 pathways is higher for the Foundation Year course than from other level 2 study programmes. Approximately 50% of Foundation Year students progress to a level 3 qualification, compared to about 1/3 for other level 2 courses.

The Department for Education (DfE) is working with providers to better understand why students are not moving on to T Level courses and to discover what support can be put in place to assist this as the programme becomes more established over the coming years.

**Q: Has there been an improvement in the drop-out rates for T Levels? They have been much higher than for A levels and level 3 vocational courses.**

A: Yes, this has improved and gives us confidence that providers are getting more familiar with the delivery of T Levels and are taking advantage of the support available. The gap is also narrowing when comparing drop-out rates for technical education pathways (currently 71% retention rate for T Levels; 78% for other level 3 technical qualifications).

The [Where are they now?](#) report from the Gatsby Foundation provides insight from the first cohort of T Level students, showing a range of progression pathways followed by students.

**Q: Do providers still have to be 'approved' to deliver T Levels?**

A: From 2026, providers currently funded to offer 16 to 19 study programmes and with existing students funded in band 5 (the full-time national funding band) will be eligible to offer all T Levels. They will need to register [here](#)

**Q: Are industry placements sourced for the student or do they have to find their own?**

A: Providers are responsible for sourcing the industry placement and must make sure that it is the right match for both students and employers. The placement must be linked to the content of the T Level to provide students with the opportunity to develop and apply the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours at Level 3, in the workplace. Providers may also encourage students to find their own placement. In this scenario, it is important that providers help students to identify suitable employers that are relevant to their chosen T Level. Providers and students may also wish to refer to the [self-sourcing guidance](#)

**Q: Do industry placements have to take place in school/curriculum time?**

A: Most placement hours take place in term time, dependant on provider timetabling and employer availability. Some young people split their placement across academic years, e.g. they complete part of their placement towards the end of their first year and resume in the autumn term. It is also possible, upon agreement between the provider, student and employer, for placements to continue outside of term time.

**Q: Do you have any examples of young people with EHCPs successfully completing T Level industry placements?**

A: One of the case studies shown in the presentation today includes [Joseph](#), who has a sight impairment.

**Q: Do universities accept T Levels?**

A: Yes – as the T Level rollout has continued, more universities are accepting T Levels. The DfE has published a [list](#) of higher education providers that have confirmed they accept T Levels on at least one course. This list includes over 160 higher education providers, including several higher tariff institutions as well as Further Education Colleges offering high quality level 4 and 5 higher education. It is expected that this list will grow as T Levels become more established. This list is not exhaustive, nor an official register of all Higher Education providers that accept T Levels. It is strongly recommended that students look at the UCAS Course Directory and their preferred higher education provider's website for more information on entry requirements.

**Q: Are T Levels replacing BTEC Diplomas?**

A: The DfE is currently undertaking a review of post-16 [qualifications reform](#), with the aim of ensuring that there are a range of high-quality qualifications at level 3, alongside T Levels and A levels, to meet the needs of learners and employers. The focus of the review is the level 3 qualifications on the 2025 defunding lists, which includes Applied General Qualifications (AGQs) such as BTECs. The outcome of this review will be announced before the end of the year.

To join the mailing list of updates from the DfE, register here: [Post-16 Qualification Reforms - Updates](#)

**Q: Will there be clarity in the DfE's qualification review on what combination of subjects are able to choose, e.g. can a student choose to study two AAQs (Alternative Academic Qualifications) and one AGQ (Applied General Qualification)?**

A: Once the review is completed, more details and guidance around possible combinations of qualifications will be provided, with the aim of supporting providers in planning study programmes for the 2025/6 academic year. The DfE will ensure that they respond to specific questions related to rules of combination for new and existing qualifications.

The DfE is also planning to host a joint webinar with the CDI on the outcome of the review in January 2025.