



Department  
for Education

# **Review of higher technical education: glossary of terms**

**Accompanying document for the  
government consultation on the review  
of higher technical education at levels 4  
and 5**

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## Summary

This document is issued alongside the government consultation on the review of higher technical education in England and is intended to be read alongside the consultation document. It provides a glossary of terms used within the consultation document and the accompanying document looking at the current system and the case for change.

## Who this is for

The consultation is for anyone with an interest in technical education and training for young people and adults in England. This includes:

- Students, including Adult Learners
- Parents and carers
- Employers
- Awarding Organisations/Bodies
- Schools
- Further Education providers
- Higher Education providers
- Adult Education providers
- Head teachers and college principals
- Teachers and trainers
- Careers advisers
- Regulatory bodies
- Equality organisations
- Local authorities
- The devolved administrations
- Representative bodies, including sector bodies, employers' representative bodies and trade unions
- Governors of Education and Skills Providers
- Local Enterprise Partnerships

## Glossary

Term	Definition
Advanced Learner Loan	An Advanced Learner Loan helps eligible adults (aged 19 and above) with the costs of a course at a college or training provider in England. Further information can be found on <a href="#">GOV.UK</a> . Qualifications for which an individual can take a loan out are known as qualifications that are designated for loans. These can be found in the <a href="#">Advanced Learner Loans qualifications catalogue</a> .

Term	Definition
Alternative Providers	Refers to providers that deliver higher education courses but that did not receive direct annual public funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), and is not a further education college. Term is now defunct but is used in this consultation (and accompanying documents) to delineate the types of institution that currently provide Level 4 and 5 courses.
Apprenticeship	An apprenticeship is a job that combines practical training with study. See <a href="#">“A guide to apprenticeships” on GOV.UK</a> for further information.
Approved	This refers to the proposed higher technical education system reform involving higher technical qualifications gaining approval from the Institute where their content aligns with Institute-approved occupational standards.
Awarding Bodies	Umbrella term referring to Awarding Organisations and Higher Education Providers with Degree Awarding Powers or Foundation Degree Awarding Powers.
Awarding Organisations	Refers to individual organisations that design, develop, deliver qualifications but are not themselves education providers.
Degree Awarding Powers	Providers that wish to award their own degrees (as opposed to delivering courses that lead to a degree from another provider) must first apply for and obtain Degree Awarding Powers, commonly referred to as DAPs. It is an offence to offer degrees that are not awarded by or on behalf of a provider with DAPs. There are different types of DAPs, which entitle the holder to award different types of degrees. For example, providers with Foundation DAPs can only award Foundation Degrees, but not higher degrees, such as Bachelor degrees.
Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)	The ESFA is an executive agency sponsored by the Department for Education. It is accountable for funding education and skills for children, young people and adults. See the <a href="#">ESFA website</a> for more information.

Term	Definition
Foundation Degree	Combined academic and vocational qualification in higher education, equivalent to two thirds of an honours bachelor's degree, introduced by Government in September 2001.
Further Education College (FEC)	Refers to institutions conducted by Further Education Corporations. Further Education Colleges (FECs) offer a variety of courses from entry level through to higher level qualifications.
Higher Education Institution (HEI)	Refers to institutions that were eligible for annual grant funding from HEFCE, including universities. Term is now defunct but is used in this consultation (and accompanying documents) to delineate the types of institution that currently provide Level 4 and 5 courses.
Higher Technical Education (HTE)	Refers to technical education delivered at Levels 4 and 5.
Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ)	Qualifications aimed at providing the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for a higher technical occupation. Higher technical occupations vary widely but include, for example, construction site supervisors, nuclear technicians, cybersecurity analysts, facilities managers, nursing associates and sales executives.
Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)	<p>Impartial, practical support provided to students enabling them to make suitable educational and employment decisions. This can help minimise potential costs associated with uninformed and unsuccessful choices.</p> <p>Information, advice and guidance to support employers in identifying appropriate HTQs that match their skills needs.</p>
Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (Institute)	The Institute is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Education. It approves and publishes standards for occupations (and their associated apprenticeship assessment plans), approves technical education qualifications, and advises government on funding for each standard. See the <a href="#">Institute website</a> for more information.

Term	Definition
Institutes of Technology (IoT)	High-quality, employer-led institutions specialising in providing higher-level technical skills for employers.
Knowledge, skills and behaviours	These are the outcomes, as set out in occupational standards, that demonstrate competence in an occupation. In order to be successful, an individual will need to demonstrate achievement of all outcomes. These are expected to be gained on conclusion of studying a higher technical qualification.
Level (L)	Refers to the 9 qualification levels in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. See <a href="https://www.gov.uk">GOV.UK</a> for more information.
Level 4-5	Level 4 and 5 qualifications sit between Level 3 (e.g. A Levels and T Levels, amongst others) and Level 6 (e.g. bachelor's degrees). They are typically, but not exclusively, technical in nature.
Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)	A legal relationship between two or more local authorities by way of partnership or otherwise, created for the purposes of identifying, determining and facilitating economic opportunities that generate economic growth, prosperity and job creation in a particular area.
Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA)	An authority established under section 103(1) of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 or an authority to which a delegation of the Secretary of State's functions has been made under section 39A of the Greater London Authority Act 1999.
National Colleges	National Colleges are new institutions, created by employers to support high-level skills training in those sectors that are economically and strategically important to UK growth (i.e. High Speed Rail, Nuclear, Digital, Creative & Cultural). Courses are predominantly between Levels 4 to 6, with employers involved in developing the curriculum, and industry professionals teaching the content in simulated workplaces.
Occupational standards	Occupational standards are developed by an employer (trailblazer) group and are approved and published by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.

Term	Definition
	They set out the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for competence in an occupation.
Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation/(Ofqual)	The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England. It was set up in April 2010 under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and is also covered by the Education Act 2011. Ofqual is a non-ministerial government department with jurisdiction in England. At Level 4 and 5, Ofqual covers Awarding Organisations. See the <a href="#">Ofqual website</a> for more information.
Office for students (OfS)	The OfS is a non-departmental public body and is the independent regulator of higher education in England. See <a href="#">OfS website</a> for more information.
OfS regulatory framework	The OfS regulatory framework for higher education in England is required under section 75 of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA). See <a href="#">OfS Regulatory Framework</a> for more information.
Post-16 Skills Plan	The government's plan to support young people and adults to secure skilled employment and meet the needs of the economy, including through bringing forward technical education reforms based on the work of Lord Sainsbury's independent panel. See <a href="#">GOV.UK</a> for more information.
Review of Post-18 Education and Funding (Post-18 Review)	The Post-18 Review was announced by the Prime Minister on 19 February 2018. It will consider how Government can ensure that the education system in England for those aged 18 years and over is: accessible to all; supported by a funding system that provides value for money and works for students and taxpayers; incentivises choice and competition across the sector; and encourages the development of the skills that we need as a country.  Terms of reference can be found <a href="#">here</a> .
Study based provision	Provision delivered in a college, university or other training provider as part of a study programme or as a standalone qualification. Training may be delivered through a mixture

Term	Definition
	of classroom-based activity and simulated workplace environments, for example workshops.
Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)	The QAA safeguards standards and improves the quality of UK higher education. See <a href="#">QAA website</a> for more information.
Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF)	The RQF provides a single, simple system for cataloguing all qualifications regulated by Ofqual. Qualifications are indexed by their level and size. Ofqual maintains a register that provides more detail on each qualification. See the <a href="#">Register of Regulated Qualifications</a> for more information.
Sainsbury Review	The Independent Panel on Technical Education, chaired by Lord Sainsbury, reported its findings in April 2016. The recommendations were accepted in the Post-16 Skills Plan and form the basis for technical education reforms. See the <a href="#">Report of the Independent Panel on Technical Education</a> for more information.
Technical Education	Technical education encompasses any training, such as qualifications and apprenticeships, that focuses on progression into skilled employment and require the acquisition of both a substantial body of technical knowledge and a set of practical skills valued by industry. Technical education covers provision from level 2 (the equivalent of GCSEs at A* to C or 9 to 4) to higher education (level 6) but it differs from A Levels and other academic options in that it draws its purpose from the workplace rather than an academic discipline.
T Level	A T Level is a rigorous, stretching programme of study at level 3 based on recognised, employer-led standards. T Levels will offer a high quality, prestigious technical alternative to A Levels and be aligned with work-based technical education also delivered at level 3 through apprenticeships. T Levels will be introduced in phases from September 2020.



# Department for Education

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