



Department
for Education

T Level Action Plan 2018

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Foreward by the Secretary of State for Education and the Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills

A world-class system of technical education is crucial to both increasing the skills of young people and our nation's productivity, and improving social mobility. But that is not what we have today – instead we have a system characterised by complexity, with many young people entering the world of work without the skills they need to get on in life. We can do better. T Levels, alongside reformed Apprenticeships, will help us to deliver high quality technical education to ensure that young people have the skills they need to move into the fulfilling careers they want.

It has been just over a year since we published the first T Level Action Plan and the progress made has been remarkable. Working with providers, employers, awarding organisations and other partners, we have consulted on and confirmed the final pieces of policy, worked with employers to develop and refine outline content, recruited providers to deliver the first T Levels in 2020, launched a procurement process to award single licences for T Level qualification development and made significant investment in preparing providers and employers to deliver Industry Placements. We are delighted to announce £38m capital funding for providers to improve their facilities and equipment to bring them up to current industry standards. We have appointed the Education and Training Foundation to develop and offer training for T Level teachers and lecturers using £8m of investment, and also launched a consultation on T Level funding.

This progress demonstrates government's continued commitment to making sure T Levels achieve great results for young people and employers. It shows the dedication and commitment from all our partners to make sure that T Levels are a success. Developing and delivering T Levels together in partnership will make sure that they offer a world-class technical education to our young people.



Summary

The purpose of this document, the T Level Action Plan 2018, is to provide an implementation update for individuals and organisations interested in T Levels. It provides information on the progress we have made over the past year, working with a wide range of delivery partners in the development and delivery of T Levels. We intend to publish a version of the action plan each autumn as part of our wider communications and engagement programme.

Expiry or review date

This plan will be reviewed during autumn 2019.

Who is this publication for?

This plan is for:

- Industry, employers and their representative bodies
- Further and higher education providers, training providers, and their representative bodies
- School leaders, school staff and governing bodies in all maintained schools, academies, free schools, studio schools and University Technical Colleges
- Local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, Mayoral Combined Authorities, Skills Advisory Panels, and other local partners.

Main points

This action plan includes updates on:

- Progress on deliver of T Levels in 2020
- T Levels for delivery in 2021
- How providers will be selected to deliver T Levels in 2021
- Clarification on outstanding qualification design issues, including grading, flexibilities for SEND students, UCAS points for T Levels
- The assurance and regulatory system for the Technical Qualifications within T Levels
- The workforce support that will be made available from spring 2019

Continuing our technical education reforms

The first [T Level Action Plan](#)¹, published in October 2017, provided an update on our progress since the publication of the [Post-16 Skills Plan](#)² in the development and implementation of T Levels. The Skills Plan committed to implementing all of the recommendations of the Independent Panel on Technical Education (the Sainsbury Report) to introduce a new system of technical education to provide a high quality technical option alongside an academic option for students aged 16 to 19. Parliament legislated to deliver these reforms through the Technical and Further Education Act 2017.

To ensure we can deliver the skills needed for Britain to continue to compete on a global platform, we need to develop our home-grown technical skills in the same way that we develop our academic skills.

T Levels are new 2 year technical programmes for young people aged 16 to 19. They have been developed with employers and will combine classroom study with workplace experience, from which students can progress directly into work or further study. T Levels, alongside apprenticeships, will provide young people with a high-quality technical alternative to A levels.

Over the past year we have made huge progress, working with a large number of delivery partners to ensure that T Levels are implemented successfully from 2020 and that they deliver great outcomes for students and employers. We are hugely grateful for the energy, enthusiasm and creativity of our many partners and are clear that continuing to work with them over the next few years will remain a central characteristic of the programme.

The T Level Action Plan 2018 sets out the details of that progress, provides an update on remaining technical qualification (TQ) design questions and gives information about what we expect our next steps will be over the coming months. It reflects our strategy for the next phase of roll out – developing TQs and identifying providers to implement them in phases to ensure high quality delivery which grows coverage across the country in a managed way.

On commencement of the relevant provisions of the Technical and Further Education Act 2017 (date to be confirmed) the Institute for Apprenticeships (the Institute) will have responsibility for approving the TQs that form part of T Levels, including making arrangements to secure the availability of qualifications for approval. Ofqual, as the statutory regulator for qualifications, will have responsibility for regulating the TQs collaboratively with the Institute.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/t-level-action-plan>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-skills-plan-and-independent-report-on-technical-education>

The Institute will also have responsibility for determining the additional steps towards occupational competence that make up each T Level programme. In carrying out their functions the Institute will have regard to the policy decisions taken by Ministers.

Rollout of T Levels

We recognise that these reforms will be challenging for providers to deliver, and so we are introducing T Levels in phases starting from September 2020, starting small to ensure high quality from the start.

T Levels from September 2020

The first three T Levels will be delivered from September 2020 by a small number of high performing providers across the country. Those T Levels are:

Digital route	• Digital Production, Design and Development T Level
Construction route	• Design, Surveying and Planning T Level
Education and Childcare route	• Education T Level

T Levels from September 2021

We have been carefully considering the approach to rollout beyond 2020 and are now able to confirm, by working with the Institute, that the T Levels which will be delivered from September 2021 are:

Digital route	• Digital Support and Services T Level • Digital Business Services T Level
Construction route	• Onsite Construction T Level • Building Services Engineering T Level
Health and Science route	• Health T Level • Healthcare Science T Level • Science T Level

Delivering these T Levels in 2021 will enable us to complete delivery of the Digital and Construction routes and to deliver a further full route.

The outline content for these T Levels has been developed by panels of employers, who have worked intensively with the department and the Institute to create content relevant to occupations in their industry. Employers taking part include Fujitsu, IBM, EDF, GlaxoSmithKline, KPMG, and the British Army. We have already tested the content for

further pathways from the Construction and Digital routes with providers and employers more widely throughout October and will be consulting on content from the Health and Science route.

As with the first 3 T Levels, the full qualification specification for each of these T Levels will be developed by an awarding organisation (AO). The Invitation to Tender (ITT) process for these T Levels will commence in spring 2019, with a view to announcing the successful bodies in autumn 2019.

The remaining T Levels will be introduced from 2022 onwards and we will set out further details in due course of our plans for delivery in 2022 and 2023. Our aim is for all remaining T Levels to be introduced by September 2023.

ROUTES	2020 DELIVERY	2021 DELIVERY	2022 ONWARDS (roll out to be confirmed)
Education and Childcare	Education		
Construction	Design, Surveying and Planning	Onsite Construction	
		Building Services Engineering	
Digital	Digital Production, Design and Development	Digital Support and Services	
		Digital Business Services	
Health and Science		Health	
		Healthcare Science	
		Science	
Legal, Finance and Accounting			Legal
			Financial
			Accountancy

ROUTES	2020 DELIVERY	2021 DELIVERY	2022 ONWARDS (roll out to be confirmed)
Engineering and Manufacturing			Maintenance, Installation and Repair
			Design, Development and Control
			Manufacturing and Process
Agriculture, Environmental and Animal Care			Animal Care and Management
			Agriculture, Land Management and Production
Business and Administration			Management and Administration
			Human Resources
Hair and Beauty			Hair, Beauty and Aesthetics
Creative and Design			Craft and Design
			Cultural Heritage and Visitor Attractions
			Media, Broadcast and Production
Catering and Hospitality			Catering

T Level providers

We are committed to ensuring that providers have the support they need for successful delivery. We will begin with small numbers of providers, so that we can work closely with them to understand and develop the capacity and capability they will need to deliver T Levels, before increasing numbers in later years.

Providers delivering in September 2020

Earlier this year we invited providers who met a set of quality criteria to [express an interest](#)³ in delivering one or more of the three 2020 T Levels. We received over 200 applications and selected a group of around 50 who met these criteria. We have published a list of the [successful providers](#)⁴, which includes a broad range of post-16 providers including further education (FE) and sixth form colleges, University Technical Colleges (UTCs), independent learning providers and schools. We are delighted to have started work with these providers already to support their planning for 2020 T Level delivery and are already using their expertise, experience and innovation to inform our policy development, planning and rollout programme. Working with a broad range of providers will enable us to test and refine T Level delivery in a range of provider settings – ranging from large urban colleges to smaller rural providers, and including providers in Opportunity Areas.

We have been working closely with this group to design a programme of support and activities to make sure they have what is needed to implement and deliver high quality T Levels from the very start, including making available a capital fund of £38 million to eligible providers and an £8 million continuing professional development programme for their workforce. Between now and next September this work will focus on planning for delivery, working together to finalise policy, initial communications at a national and local level and building really strong working relationships. From September 2019 this will move into a more detailed implementation phase to ensure robust preparations are well in hand for the first students taking T Levels the following September.

These activities will include close engagement with other delivery partners. For example we will expect AOs who are successful in the wave 1 invitation to tender to start sharing drafts of the TQ specification with 2020 providers during spring 2019, both for their comment and input, and also to support the providers with their planning. The final draft TQ specifications will be available by late 2019 and the final approved version by February 2020.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/invitation-to-express-an-interest-to-deliver-t-levels-in-2020-to-2021-academic-year>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providers-selected-to-deliver-t-levels-in-academic-year-2020-to-2021>

By working in close partnership with these providers for the first teaching of T Levels, we aim to maximise the opportunities to learn from what works in preparing, planning and implementing the teaching of these new qualifications. This approach will be crucial for shaping our approach to the future rollout and to developing the core products and best practice that will benefit providers who start offering T Levels in later years.

Providers delivering in September 2021

The aim in selecting providers for 2020 T Level delivery was to identify a small number of high-performing providers across as many provider types as possible.

As we move into the second year of the programme, the criteria to select providers for T Level delivery in 2021 has been developed to focus on larger providers, to increase the number of students taking T Levels in the second year of rollout. It also ensures that we are able to select a relatively small number of providers so we can continue providing the right level of support in the early stages of rollout. We are aiming to select an additional 50 to 75 providers for 2021.

To express an interest, providers will need to:

- Have an Ofsted rating of Good or Outstanding (or be able to demonstrate that they have an equivalent standard of quality – for providers which do not yet have an Ofsted rating) (providers with an Ofsted rating of Outstanding will not be given priority over those with a Good rating in this round), and
- Have at least satisfactory financial health, and
- For UTCs, National Colleges, and providers in Opportunity Areas only:
 - Currently be delivering to a minimum of 10 qualifying students per T Level subject area they are applying to deliver; and
 - Currently be delivering to a minimum of 50 qualifying students across all pathways they are applying to deliver, or
- For all other providers:
 - Currently be delivering to a minimum of 10 qualifying students per T Level subject area they are applying to deliver; and
 - Currently be delivering to a minimum of 100 qualifying students across all pathways they are applying to deliver

If the response to the expression of interest (EoI) is greater than 50 to 75 eligible providers, then to ensure we are able to select a manageable number we may raise the minimum student number threshold. Providers that do not meet this criteria or are not

selected through the process will have the opportunity to begin T Level delivery in later waves.

Providers will be asked to submit an EoI, which we will launch in January 2019, and we will set out the detail of these criteria as part of that process. The EoI will remain open until the end of February, and we expect to announce the successful providers in June 2019.

The 2020 providers will be able to expand their offer to deliver any of the additional T Levels introduced in 2021, as long as they are currently delivering to a minimum of 10 qualifying students per T Level subject area they are applying to deliver. We will set out the details of how providers can do this when we launch the EoI.

Rollout of T Levels and selection of providers from 2022 onwards

We expect to announce which T Levels will be available from September 2022 next Autumn, and will continue to work closely with the Institute to agree which T Levels will be ready for delivery. We will also confirm at that time which providers will be able to deliver from 2022. We currently expect roll out to be significantly increased at this stage as T Levels become a more 'main stream' part of the qualifications offer.

We understand that the reforms to the wider technical education system will have an impact on when providers decide to begin delivering T Levels.

T Level design and structure

We ran a public consultation from November 2017 to February 2018 to obtain views on the major aspects of our proposals for implementing T Levels. The consultation generated 430 responses from a wide range of organisation types and individuals, spanning educational institutions at all levels, industry, AOs, representative bodies, local authorities and others. We also held a series of ten consultation events, with over 500 people attending.

The [Government responses](#) to the T Level consultation set out the basis and policy principles for the development of T Levels. Further detailed information has been provided as part of the ITT, which seeks to identify organisations that will develop and deliver the first three TQs from September 2020, and in Ofqual's proposed rules for regulating TQs. This section provides confirmation of and updates to some of the key features of T Levels.

T Level programmes

Maths & English requirements

We set out in the T Level consultation response that we would expect students to attain at least level 2 maths and English by the time they complete their T Level programme.

The minimum T Level exit requirement will be GCSE grade 9-4 or a Functional Skills level 2 pass, to align with the existing policy on maths and English requirements for level 3 apprenticeships.

For some T Levels where higher levels of achievement are required for the associated occupations, the maths and/or English requirement may be higher.

The policy relating to the condition of funding that applies to providers delivering other 16 to 19 year study programmes will not apply to T Level students.

We also committed in the consultation response to consider whether the flexibility that exists for some apprentices with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) in relation to maths and English should be extended to T Level students. Given the similarities between apprenticeships and T Levels, we agree that the same requirement should apply. As such, our policy is that the maths and English exit requirement for some

⁵
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/711472/Implementation_of_T_Level_programmes-Government_consultation_response.pdf

T Level students with SEND will be Entry Level 3 in Functional Skills. We would expect the same conditions to be satisfied as for apprenticeships, including that the student has either an existing or previously issued education, health and care (EHC) plan, a statement of special educational need (SEN) or a learning difficulty assessment (LDA), and that the provider holds an evidenced assessment that the student is not able to study these subjects at level 2.

The technical qualification

As set out in the [Technical Annex6](#) to the T Level consultation, each T Level will include a new TQ. The content for each TQ will be assessed through two separate components:

- a core component that assesses underpinning knowledge, understanding and core skills relevant to the occupations covered by the T Level;
- one or more occupational specialist components focussed on assessing occupationally specific knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to each occupation covered by the T Level.

Core component

To ensure the breadth of core knowledge and understanding can be reliably assessed in sufficient depth, this component will be assessed externally through an examination which is set and marked by the AO. We believe an external examination is essential if we are to secure sufficient rigour, and this approach was supported by employers and others in the recent T Level consultation. We recognise that some providers have concerns about external assessment but we want to be ambitious both for young people taking T Levels and for their reputation and future prestige.

A set of core skills identified by the T Level panels will be fundamental to all of the occupational specialisms covered by the T Level. Their overall assessment will be through an occupationally-relevant project set by the AO in conjunction with relevant employers. This approach will ensure that students develop and apply core skills in occupationally relevant contexts. The employer-set project will be marked by AOs, although in exceptional circumstances it may be marked by providers and subject to rigorous external moderation arrangements.

Occupational specialisms

The level of competence that young people are expected to achieve through the occupational specialism will be enough to enter skilled employment whilst being reasonable for 16 to 19 year olds to gain in the time given as part of the qualification

specification. AOs will use assessment methods that allow judgements to be made about whether students have met the level of competence expected. Assessments will be set and marked by AOs. In exceptional circumstances the Institute may permit internal marking – this will be subject to robust external moderation to ensure independence in assessment.

To ensure students have sufficient time to develop skills to the expected level of competence, occupational specialisms will have much larger specified guided learning hours than traditional qualification units. As a result, we would expect most TQs to require students to complete just one occupational specialism in the time available overall.

Providers will need to design their curriculum in a way that supports students to make a choice between different occupational specialisms. We do not expect students to have decided at the outset of their T Level course which occupational specialism they wish to pursue, and providers will play an important role in facilitating that decision. Most T Levels have a number of specialisms. For example, the Education pathway includes specialisms in Early Years Education and Childcare; Assisting Teaching; Supporting and Mentoring Students in Further and Higher Education.

Assessment timings

Ofqual has confirmed that AOs can offer a maximum of two assessments each year for the core component and for each occupational specialism within the TQ. A key dates schedule will be agreed with AOs, setting out when the assessment series will be.

We expect there to be a summer assessment and for T Level results to be provided in August, at the same time as A level results. AOs may decide to offer an additional assessment, perhaps earlier in the academic year to facilitate retakes. The timing is likely to vary between T Levels, depending on the nature of the content and the size of components.

Incorporating level 2 occupational specialisms

As the majority of young people have pursued a broad based academic curriculum to age 16, most will have very limited exposure to the basic skills they will acquire during their T Level. This is supported by feedback from employers which has indicated that for some pathways it may be appropriate to include content derived from level 2 standards. This is because the T Level would otherwise be incoherent or incomplete as a young person will need to build up and then build on more basic levels of skills.

We are asking T Level panels to consider this question when developing outline content, with the essential caveat that the final assessment demonstrates the student's overall level of competence at level 3. Work will be done with employers to consider how this should work in practice.

Progression to and from T Levels

Transition offer

We are developing a transition offer which will be focused on providing effective preparation for students to complete a T Level. It will be targeted at young people who are not ready to start a T Level at age 16, but who can realistically achieve a T Level by age 19.

We confirmed in the T Levels funding consultation published in November 2018 that we plan to fund T Levels for 18 year olds at the same rate as for 16 and 17 year olds because the hours required for the TQs will be fixed, and 18 year olds will need the same amount of funded time to achieve threshold competence as other students. This arrangement will apply to 18 year olds on T Level programmes only. We will keep our approach to 18 year olds under review to ensure our plans are affordable within the budget available.

We are currently working with the sector to gather existing good practice of transition programmes. If you are a provider running programmes aimed at supporting young people to complete technical level 3 courses and would be happy to share information with us, please contact us at post16.Level3AndBelowReview@education.gov.uk.

Higher level study after T Levels

T Levels are primarily designed to train young people to a level where they are ready to enter skilled employment. With content designed by expert panels, based on existing industry designed occupational standards, additional teaching hours, and a substantial relevant industry placement, we are confident that T Levels will be excellent preparation for entry into skilled employment in the relevant occupation, or for progression to higher levels of education, such as level 4 apprenticeships where appropriate, level 4 or 5 classroom-based technical education, degrees, or further training.

T Levels and apprenticeships are born from the same occupational standards. T Levels will train young people to a level where they are able to access skilled employment in their chosen field. As a result, we have an ambition that students moving from a level 3 T Level to an apprenticeship could be expected to progress into an apprenticeship at levels 4, 5 or 6, if an appropriate apprenticeship exists and is being offered by an employer. As apprenticeships are jobs, we cannot guarantee that all T Level students wishing to progress onto one will be able to, but we will make it clear that this is a suitable and expected progression option within the wider offer.

As the content for T Levels is developed with the Institute and employers, we will consider how they provide a suitable base for higher and degree apprenticeships and if any facility needs to be made in a college course or workplace setting to allow further learning to take place.

We have confirmed with UCAS that they will allocate tariff points to T Levels in line with 3 A levels. This is to reflect the size and complexity of the programme, and we are discussing with UCAS exactly how these will be awarded.

We are also working with UCAS and others to raise awareness of T Levels and subsequent pathways into higher education, including level 4 or 5 classroom-based technical education and degrees.

This includes exploring how UCAS qualifications information services can support students to understand their options should they decide to undertake a T Level.

Now that the outline content for the first T Levels has been published, we are also stepping up our engagement with Higher Education institutions to find out more about how they might use T Levels for admission purposes and plan to say more about this and our discussions with UCAS over the coming months.

T Level grading and certification

Technical qualification grading

The Technical Annex to the T Level consultation confirmed that TQs will use component grades rather than a single overall grade. This means that grades for the core and each occupational specialist component will be recognised separately on the T Level certificate.

Occupational specialisms will have a three point scale (plus ungraded), using Distinction, Merit and Pass, with Pass being the threshold grade and Distinction being the highest grade.

The core component will use a six point grading scale (plus ungraded), using A* to E plus U, with A* being the highest grade. More information on the proposed arrangements for TQ grading were included in [Ofqual's consultation](#)⁷ on TQ conditions and requirements.

T Level grading

As set out in the Technical Annex, to achieve an overall T Level pass grade, students must:

- achieve at least an E in the Core Component of the TQ
- achieve at least a Pass in each TQ Occupational Specialism studied

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/ofqual-approach-to-regulating-technical-qualifications>

- complete their industry placement
- achieve at least a grade 4 GCSE in English and maths and/or a Pass in maths and English Functional Skills
- meet any other occupation-specific requirements identified by T Level panels.

An overall grade will be awarded for the T Level, which will be either Pass, Merit or Distinction. The grade will be derived by awarding points for the grade on the core and occupational specialism, and aggregating these to determine the overall grade. This model allows for some compensation across the core component and occupational specialisms and for the total grade scores to be adjusted to reflect the relative sizes of the core and specialist components, as determined by the T Level panels.

T Level certificates

There was strong support in the T Level consultation for our proposed approach to the format of T Level certificates. Students who pass their T Level will receive a nationally-recognised T Level certificate. The certificate will specify the title of the T Level and the overall grade that has been achieved.

We confirmed in the government response that we would also list attainment of individual T Level components. Taking this approach will mean that a student's full set of achievements and experience are reflected and that employers have a greater range of information available about prospective employees.

There will not be a separate certificate for the TQ, although AOs will provide a breakdown of marks, typically in the format of a results slip, to allow students to make decisions about re-takes and appeals, etc.

Students who don't pass a T Level will receive a Statement of Achievement that lists their achievements for the different components of the T Level, including the TQ and the industry placement. This should help students to progress onto a related area of study or apprenticeship or to return to their T Level at a later date.

Students with SEND

To meet our commitment of making T Levels accessible to all students, in addition to the changes to the English and maths exit requirement for students with SEND, the ITT specifies that any content and assessment developed must support fair access and requires the AO to work with SEND organisations to make sure of this. Alongside this, AOs have a duty, under the Equality Act 2010, to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities, to remove or reduce the disadvantage they would otherwise experience. The requirement for AOs to make reasonable adjustments will therefore apply in relation to the TQ.

We have also set up an advisory group of specialist sector representatives and are working with them and the first T Level providers to ensure successful delivery of T Levels for students with SEND or who otherwise have a disability. As set out later in this document, we are also considering whether different models and approaches might be needed for students with specific needs, such as SEND or young adult carers, undertaking industry placements.

Awarding Organisation procurement

The ITT for the development of the TQs that form part of the T Levels for the wave 1 pathways, to be delivered from September 2020, closed on 26 October and we are currently in the process of evaluating the bids. The successful bidders will be awarded the exclusive right to develop and deliver the qualifications for the wave 1 pathways for four cohorts of students. Our intention remains that contracts to develop the TQs will be awarded in spring 2019, with the qualifications gaining approval from the Institute in spring 2020.

For the wave 2 pathways, our intention is that the ITT will be published in spring 2019 and the contracts awarded in autumn 2019. Qualification approval is expected in autumn 2020 which would allow one academic year for providers to prepare for first teaching in 2021.



Assurance and regulation: governance and requirements

We are very grateful to the Institute and Ofqual for their work to date to develop this robust set of quality assurance arrangements.

The Institute and Ofqual have developed a joint approach to quality assure TQs. This approach will ensure the TQ is subject to rigorous assurance and regulation, and that the public and employers can be confident that T Levels are a reliable indicator of technical occupational competence.

The Institute and Ofqual – overall responsibilities

The Institute has overall responsibility, as set out in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 as amended by the Technical and Further Education Act 2017, for setting and approving the occupational standards relevant to T Levels and apprenticeships. On commencement of the remaining technical education provisions of the 2017 Act (date to be confirmed), the Institute will also have responsibility for approving the qualifications that form part of T Levels and for making arrangements for securing their availability for approval.

In carrying out its functions the Institute will have regard to the policy decisions taken by Ministers.

The TQs within T Levels will be Ofqual-regulated qualifications. Ofqual, as the statutory regulator for qualifications, is responsible for assuring the maintenance of standards in qualifications over time and across the country. There will not, however, be a separate certificate for the TQ, though AOs will provide a breakdown of marks (see page 20 for more details).

The two organisations will work together to ensure that TQs measure what is intended, are high quality, and meet the needs of those who will use them – particularly employers and learners.

The Institute will ensure TQs are high quality through the Service Requirements, which form part of the ITT documents and that form the basis of the contract with AOs for the design, development and delivery of TQs. The contract will require AOs to keep the content of qualifications up to date – we would expect the TQ to evolve throughout the contract period so that it continues to meet the requirements of industry. The Institute will need to carry out regular reviews to identify any changes to the TQ that are required.

It is a condition of the contract that an AO must be recognised by Ofqual in order to deliver a TQ. Potential suppliers who are already recognised by Ofqual will need to have their recognition extended to cover the specific TQ they intend to deliver. Potential

suppliers who are not currently recognised need to secure Ofqual recognition for the TQ they intend to deliver.

AOs delivering TQs must comply with Ofqual's regulatory requirements, set out in its General Conditions of Recognition and in specific Conditions set specifically for TQs. Ofqual published the principles for how they will regulate TQs in September and its [consultation](#)⁸ on the specific details of the Conditions that will apply to TQs closed in October. The final Conditions will be published before the end of the year.

The Service Requirements and the Conditions Ofqual is consulting on have been developed carefully to ensure that there is consistency between the two.

The Institute and Ofqual are putting in place joint governance structures to enable them to work together efficiently and effectively to assure quality and to manage risks and issues that may arise whilst minimising the burden on AOs.

The TQ approvals process

Awarding organisation selection

The Department has led the tender process for wave 1. In parallel to the procurement process, Ofqual will run a process for the recognition of AOs, and feed the outcome of this process back to the Institute. AOs will submit one set of documents that will be used for both processes.

Qualification development

During the process of qualification development the Institute and Ofqual will provide feedback on the draft qualification at two key checkpoints, before the final product is submitted for approval, including Ofqual accreditation.

Qualification approval

Once an AO has developed a TQ and has been through the two checkpoints, they will submit their final TQ to the Institute for approval. The Institute will assess the TQ against criteria in relation to the qualification specification and check that it provides rigorous implementation and sustainable resource plans as well as a thorough equalities assessment.

As part of the approval process, the Institute will share the qualification with Ofqual for an accreditation decision.

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/implementation-of-technical-qualifications>

The TQ will need to demonstrate that it can meet, on an ongoing basis, all relevant Ofqual Conditions, including those specifically for TQs, in order to be accredited. These cover elements of the qualification such as certification, setting and marking of assessments and grading.

The Institute will take Ofqual's accreditation decision into account when making a decision on the approval of a TQ.

Qualification delivery

When in delivery, each AO delivering TQs will need to fulfil their contractual obligations to the Institute, which includes continuing to meet Ofqual's regulatory requirements. If any issues arise, these will be addressed in a way that is most effective, particularly to protect learners, be that through contractual levers, regulatory levers or a combination of the two.

The Institute and Ofqual have a Memorandum of Understanding in place that underpins this joint approach. This approach will inform any future legislation in relation to their regulation and quality assurance of TQs.

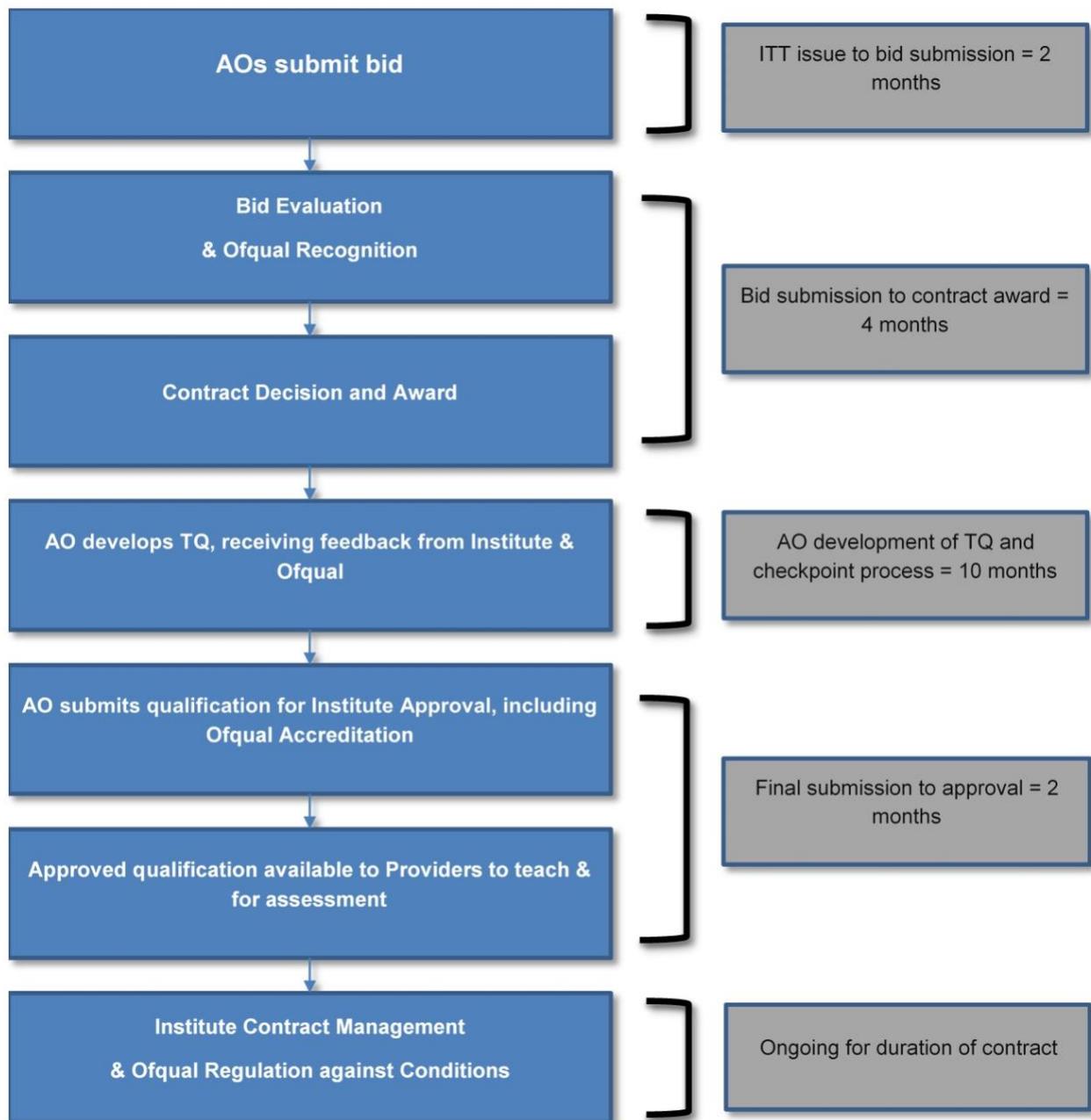
Review of TQs

AOs will be contractually required to keep under review, and entitled to amend and update, the TQ and TQ deliverables throughout the term of the contract to ensure it remains of a high quality and up to date. Contracts will include a TQ Content Updating Schedule that sets out on a month by month basis the requirements for keeping the TQ updated, including points at which the Institute can require the AOs to make changes. AOs will also be required to highlight to the Institute any proposed amendments or updates to the TQ that they will would like to make.

We have also included provision for "exclusive changes" – changes that need to be made if we have a new occupational specialist component added to the pathway or a revision to a relevant standard arising out of a statutory review.

AOs must create and maintain a full and accurate version control log recording all TQ changes made during the term of the contract. This will be important when it comes to re-tendering and ensuring continuity to a new supplier.

TQ approvals process



Working with Ofsted

Learning providers will be accountable for the quality of their T Level offer, and we expect the new programmes to be included in Ofsted's inspection framework once they have been fully rolled out. The development of T Level inspection will be aligned with the wider implementation timetable.

Subject to the outcomes of Ofsted's proposed consultation in January 2019, we do not expect the new Ofsted framework from 2019 to cover inspection of T Levels explicitly. During the rollout phase, whilst the numbers of T Levels and T Level providers increases we will be working closely with Ofsted as it develops the final inspection arrangements for T Levels.

We will also review with Ofsted what contribution it can make to assessing providers' early experiences, the lessons to be learned from teaching the new programmes, and the readiness of the sector for full rollout.

Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

The Institute has been building its capacity in preparation for taking on its new functions in relation to technical education. The Institute now has responsibility for the T Level panels and the outline content they produce, and for the Occupational Maps. It is closely involved in planning for T Levels. This planning and the work of the T Level panels is carried out by way of provision of advice and assistance to the department, and the Institute will assume responsibility for technical education in due course when the relevant provisions of the Technical and Further Education Act 2017 are commenced.

T Level panels

[T Level panels](#)⁹ for the first 16 T Levels were convened in autumn 2017 to prepare the outline content that will form the basis of the T Levels. These panels are made up of employers, practitioners, providers and representatives of trade organisations. The panels build on existing apprenticeship standards which were also put together by employers to develop the outline content, identifying the knowledge and skills that should be taught as part of the T Levels.

We are grateful to the work of employers in setting out their expectations for T Levels, and will continue to work in partnership to test the qualification specification developed by an AO for the TQ within each T Level to ensure they continue to play a vital role in developing these new programmes. These employers have worked with enthusiasm and creativity in order to create high quality content that will support young people into skilled jobs in their sectors. We will be asking panel members to play a crucial role in championing T Levels as part of our wider communications and engagement strategy, building on the work of the Apprenticeship Ambassador Network. We will also be working closely with professional bodies to ensure that their role in maintaining and promoting professional standards aligns with the expectations set by T Level panels.

In September this year we convened nine additional [employer panels](#)¹⁰ to begin preparing outline content for the remaining T Levels which will be rolled out from 2022 onwards.

Development of outline content

Outline content created by the T Level panels is tested before being formally approved; with providers and higher education institutions to begin to identify the size of each T Level and the funding it may attract and to test progression options beyond the

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/t-level-panels-membership>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/t-level-panels-membership>

programme; and with employers to ensure that it will equip young people with the knowledge and skills that industry needs.

In May, the Institute consulted on the [outline content for the Education & Childcare, Digital, and Construction T Levels](#)¹¹ which will be delivered from September 2020.

Testing for those T Levels with the potential for delivery in 2021 has taken place this autumn, to identify those that are most ready to deliver and have a large pool of expected learners. The [outline content for two further Construction and one Digital T Levels](#)¹² was published in October, and the remaining content for T Levels to be delivered in 2021 will be published in December to seek wider views.

Occupational Maps

The concept of the Occupational Maps arose from the Sainsbury Report where the Independent Panel on Technical Education recommended the development of a framework of 15 routes to skilled employment. The Occupational Maps were developed to articulate this common framework across all technical education covering both employment based (apprenticeships) and college based (T Levels) learning. The maps document all the skilled occupations that can be achieved through an apprenticeship or T Level. Occupations are grouped together to show linkages between them and possible routes for progression.

The Institute took responsibility for the Occupational Maps in November 2017. It then conducted a public consultation to capture employer and industry feedback on the accuracy of the maps, whether all relevant occupations were included, and whether the occupations were grouped in the most meaningful way.

Route panels reviewed the recommendations and approved changes to the maps as a result. The Institute published [updated maps](#)¹³ in May 2018. The English economy is dynamic, so the Occupational Maps are intended to be live documents and will continue to be updated regularly as occupations evolve and new ones emerge.

However, we are keen to develop the occupational maps further so that they provide a more coherent and informative representation of the reformed technical education system, including T Levels and higher technical education. The Institute will be advising the department on how this might be achieved during the early part of 2019.

¹¹ <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/about/news-events/first-three-t-levels-outline-content-published/>

¹² <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/about/news-events/public-consultation-launched-on-outline-content-for-t-levels/>

¹³ <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/about/occupational-maps/>

Industry placements

A substantial, meaningful industry placement will be an essential part of each T Level, giving students the chance to put into practice what they have learnt as part of their T Level, developing and honing the knowledge and skills they need to progress in their chosen career. The longer duration, a minimum of 45 working days, ensures students are given enough time to master the essentials, and that the employer has the opportunity to develop and shape young people's skills. For the employer, it means a young person can genuinely contribute to their workplace once they've settled in.

The responses to the T Level consultation showed that, while there are challenges in delivering industry placements, post-16 providers recognised that industry placements are a really important part of T Levels and that they have a genuine desire to make them work. They recognised the hugely positive impact a placement with industry can have on a young person, in terms of developing their confidence, their skills and giving them crucial experience to use when applying for future jobs or training.

We also spoke to more than 700 students in years 10 to 13 who echoed this enthusiasm, telling us they see the opportunity to get experience in industry as the most valuable feature of a T Level, improving their confidence, competency and employability.

"I find this new [industry] placement idea so much better than the standard work experience because you actually have something to show for it at the end, as well as great skills learned. These skills will be transferable, and in fact invaluable, to my future career." - Digital Student, part of the Industry Placement Pilot 2018/2019

As part of the industry placement pilot in 2018/2019, one Health and Science student spent time learning about epigenetics and assisted with a groundbreaking experiment in the lab. The results from this were very exciting and the employer now hopes to publish them in a scientific journal, with the student as one of the co-authors. *"The student was dedicated and conscientious and has proved herself to be a real asset to the research team. Overall I have been very impressed with the student and she is a great ambassador for the T Level programme as a whole"* – Line Manager, Medical Research Council

Industry placements pilots

During the 2017/18 academic year we ran an industry placements pilot, in partnership with The Challenge, with 21 post-16 providers across England, which completed at the end of the 2017/18 academic year. The aim of the pilot was to test different approaches and models of industry placements across all technical education routes to better understand what a meaningful placement looks like, and how to overcome the initial challenges of planning and implementation.

Approximately 2,000 students were involved, with over 1000 employers offering placements. A [full independent evaluation](#) was carried out and has been published today.

Programme of support

The evaluation of the pilots has helped to shape the substantial programme of support in place in 2018/19 to help post-16 providers and employers to build their capability and capacity to deliver placements. This includes:

Best practice sharing

- Based on the findings from the pilot, The Challenge produced comprehensive '[how to' guides](#)¹⁴ for post-16 providers and employers. These guides contain best practice on many areas of placement implementation, including how to plan industry placements within the curriculum and prepare students for the placements, along with practical step by step processes for organising the placements.
- We also worked with the Association of Colleges (AoC) to run a series of Open Days with a number of providers who took part in the industry placement pilot to share their learning with other providers

Capacity and Delivery Fund (CDF)

- This year, we have made a substantial investment in the capacity and capability of providers to get ready for delivery of placements under T levels and start providing T Level style placements for their current eligible vocational students from 2018/2019 onwards.
- Almost £60m of CDF has been allocated to around 400 post-16 providers for the 2018/19 academic year.
- Funding for 2019/20 was also announced in July, and a number of post-16 providers have submitted bids to receive this.

¹⁴ <https://www.aoc.co.uk/industry-placements-guidance-resources>

Equality of access to placements

- We have expanded the existing travel bursary fund in 2018 to 2019 for post-16 providers receiving CDF to support students with their travel and subsistence during industry placements. We are also keen to look at how we can support all students to access industry placements relevant to their course in areas where there are not employers to offer relevant industry placements nearby, subject to funding constraints.
- We are working with other government departments, including the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Department for Transport to understand the extent of the support students may need in rural, coastal and remote areas to access industry placements. We are learning from the industry placement pilot scheme and are discussing with providers what practical solutions may need to be put in place.

Support for providers

- The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) field force teams have made contact with providers receiving the CDF in 2018/19 and will continue to provide support and guidance throughout the academic year.
- Where post-16 providers are struggling with industry placements, the local field force team are now also able to make an assessment on the level of support required and arrange more intensive support if this is needed.
- We have also recently appointed the AoC and The Challenge to deliver industry placement workshops across the country. These workshops will cover fundamental implementation themes and challenges, highlight good practice, and help providers to pre-empt problems by putting in place effective processes and forward planning, drawing on lessons learned from the pilot.

Support for employers

- We recognise that industry placements are a new ask for employers but think they will have real benefits for them. They will be a great opportunity for employers to develop the skills of young people and see what they are capable of before potentially taking them on as an apprentice or a permanent member of staff. The high quality T Level content will also ensure that, whilst on the placement, students will be able to add real value.
- We have expanded the role of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) to provide support and guidance to employers offering industry placements. So far, they have secured commitment from a large number of employers who have expressed an interest in hosting placements in the 2018/2019 academic year and beyond and continue to ramp up this activity. This autumn, NAS has run seven employer roadshows around the country, with a reach of nearly 700 employers, that included a session on T Level industry placements. The reception to industry placements has been extremely positive.
- They will also offer a 'matchmaking' service between employers and providers, and NAS has created a database of providers across the country whose students will be

undertaking industry placements in the 2018/2019 academic year. NAS will use this database to direct employers towards relevant providers who are looking for industry placements in their area.

- As highlighted above, we have given providers £60m in 2018/2019 with further funding for 2019/2020 to enable them to put in place resources and systems needed to establish and organise placements with employers. This support will remove the administrative burdens from employers and make the process more streamlined.

An approach that recognises that ‘One Size Doesn’t Fit All’

- In the consultation response earlier this year, we recognised that different models and approaches might be needed for different occupational areas, geographies and student circumstances.
- In order to develop an appropriate framework of models and approaches and to ensure placements are meaningful and reflective of industry needs and practices, we have been carrying out an extensive engagement exercise with post-16 providers, employers and other key stakeholders over the last few months.
- This work will continue and these models will be trialled in the 2019/2020 academic year so we can work with industry to make any further tweaks before T Levels rollout.

Employer capacity research

- In August, the qualitative research project exploring employer engagement and capacity to support industry placements completed and a [report](#)¹⁵ was published. This research examined employers’ level of engagement with existing work-based learning opportunities, their initial reactions to industry placement policy and their perceived barriers and solutions to providing placements.
- It found that employers were broadly positive about the policy principles of industry placements, although they wanted more information on the costs and benefits of offering placements. This information will be gathered from the evaluation of the CDF and associated support running during the 2018/2019 academic year.

Evaluation

- We recently commissioned a full-scale evaluation of the industry placement support that has been put in place for both post-16 providers and employers with the planning and implementation of industry placements during academic year 2018/2019. This will enable us to establish how well our interventions are working and whether there are any gaps in support that need to be filled before T Level rollout.

¹⁵https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/737471/Employer_Capacity_Report.pdf

Support for delivery

We have previously committed to working closely with all our delivery partners to ensure they have the support they need to deliver T Levels. The section above on industry placements sets out some of this activity, and the section below provides more details.

Provider Survey

Earlier this year the T Level data collection gathered valuable information, from a wide range of providers, that is essential for planning the delivery of T Levels. We understand this was a significant task for providers and want to thank them for providing this essential insight.

We have used the information to help identify the equipment and facilities requirements for providers in delivering each T Level route. We have already secured capital funding of [£38 million¹⁶](#) based on this analysis to help support eligible providers delivering in 2020. This information will continue to be used, alongside the details provided on anticipated student numbers, to support future bids for capital funding (see page 36).

We are also using the information to identify FE and sixth form college capital funding requirements to address estates condition and help understand planned maintenance needs and capital investment strategies. This analysis is ongoing.

Providers indicated how many staff they anticipated being involved in the delivery of T Levels; the current qualifications of their teaching staff and any additional qualifications they believed they would need to deliver T Levels effectively. They also outlined the continuing professional development (CPD) they expected their teaching staff to need, and also gave us information about which current CPD they believed was most effective. This data has informed the initial conceptual design of the T Level Professional Development programme (see page 37) which will help teachers, leaders and support staff prepare for T Level delivery.

The other sections of the T Level data collection concentrated on marketing, barriers to implementation and how providers plan to overcome them and any areas they may need support with or clarity on from the ESFA to support implementation.

The main areas where providers requested clarity were; the content of T Levels, funding, industry placements and assessment. Providers identified the key barriers to the successful implementation in the same areas and on teaching/staffing and employer engagement. Helpfully, over 80% of providers who identified a barrier to introducing T

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-education-and-skills-measures-announced--2>

Levels also identified a means of addressing it including the support they would welcome to do so.

Within the marketing section, most providers suggested they would deliver open days and evenings, launch campaigns and information sessions targeted at a range of audiences and many identified social media, web promotion and other digital avenues as being valuable marketing tools. Most providers suggested that the department should undertake a national T Level marketing campaign and provide promotional T Level resources. Work on this is currently underway and the department will make resources available by the end of the year.

We are progressing work in all of these areas working closely with the 2020 providers. The actions we are taking to address the issues raised in the data collection are addressed throughout this action plan.

Funding for T Level delivery

In the 2017 spring budget, the government announced that funding would be provided for the delivery of T Levels to take account of the additional planned taught hours that will be required to teach the new T Levels, as well as to organise the substantial Industry placements – an additional £500m per year once fully rolled out.

As part of our public consultation on the implementation of T Levels, we invited initial views on how to distribute funding for the delivery of T Levels. Feedback from the majority of respondents was that we should adapt the existing arrangements for funding education for 16 to 19 year olds, rather than design a new system. In our published response we confirmed our intention to build on the existing arrangements to distribute funding for T Levels and gave a commitment to consulting further in the autumn.

We launched our funding specific public consultation [Provider funding for the delivery of T Levels](#)¹⁷ on 27 November 2018. This consultation concerns the per-student funding for providers to deliver T Levels only and will run until 19 February 2019.

We plan to publish our response to this consultation in spring 2019 followed by the detailed funding arrangements in summer 2019. At this time we will also provide detailed funding information to the 2020 providers including an indicative T Levels funding allocation to aid planning. Firm allocations for these providers will follow by the end of March 2020 in accordance with the usual 16 to 19 funding timetable.

There is sufficient funding to provide the additional planned taught hours that will be required to teach the new T Levels, as well as to organise the substantial industry placements.

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/funding-for-the-delivery-of-t-levels>

We expect to pay the additional planned taught hours at the same basic rate per hour as we pay for current 16 to 19 study programmes with funding formula factors applied as set out in the consultation document.

As mentioned earlier, we plan to fund T Levels for 18 year olds at the same rate as for 16 and 17 year olds because the hours required for the TQs will be fixed, and 18 year olds will need the same amount of funded time to achieve threshold competence as other students. This is in contrast to other study programmes for 18 year olds which can be adjusted to fit within the lower number of funded hours for that age group. This arrangement will apply to 18 year olds on T Level programmes only. Funding arrangements for 18 year olds on other study programmes will be unchanged. As with other aspects of our funding proposals, we will keep our approach to 18 year olds under review to ensure our plans are affordable within the budget available.

Capital funding

Delivery of high-quality technical education requires cutting-edge, industry-standard facilities and equipment. From January 2019 a capital fund of £38m will open to bids from eligible providers delivering the first three T levels in 2020. This will support them to make the investments needed in facilities and equipment, ready to deliver high quality, industry relevant programmes from September 2020. We are considering the most appropriate method of allocating this funding and will publish details in due course.

We are currently considering the capital requirements for 2021 onwards in the context of spending review 2019, and will use the information from providers who completed the T Level data collection to inform this.

Support for teachers and leaders

The introduction of T Levels is a major change programme. T Levels will be high quality, work-relevant skills training programmes that are far more rigorous, and will involve substantially more teaching hours, than existing qualifications.

Increasing the quality of teaching and leadership are two of the biggest factors in improving outcomes for learners, therefore ensuring there are sufficient numbers of highly skilled teachers able to teach T Levels will be crucial to success, and a 2013 report by the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning argued that ‘the best vocational teaching and learning is a sophisticated process; it demands ‘dual professionals’ – teachers and trainers with occupational expertise and experience, who can combine this with excellent teaching and learning practice’.

We also know from our engagement with providers and other stakeholders, including through the data collection, that providers agree that one of the barriers to the success of T Levels is around staffing. This includes not being able to recruit enough teachers from

industry, and not being able to access good quality training and professional development in order to upskill staff.

Government is committed to ensuring that teachers have the support they need for successful introduction and delivery of T Levels. Up to 2020, we have committed up to £20 million to help providers prepare for the delivery of T Levels and to help teachers and leaders prepare for the change.

T Level Professional Development (TLPD)

It is vitally important that we support, prepare and upskill existing staff – teachers, leaders, and other staff involved in T Level delivery. We have appointed the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) to design and deliver the first phase (up to March 2020) of a [professional development offer](#)¹⁸ to support T Level delivery. The ETF are working with the sector to design the training, which we anticipate will be available from spring 2019. The programme will have five strands:

1. **Ongoing professional development needs analysis:** Building a clear understanding of professional development needs. This will be an ongoing process that will inform the development of the programme and learn from the excellent practice that already exists.
2. **Understanding of T Levels:** Ensuring that all staff understand T Levels and what the introduction of T Levels means for their job.
3. **Teacher development programme:** Focusing on pedagogy (core teaching skills and methods); practice (subject knowledge and subject specific teaching); professional knowledge (industrial and employability understanding for teachers); and developing teachers' capacity to embed maths, English and digital skills in technical teaching environments.
4. **Knowledge hubs:** Embedding learning from the teacher development programme through teacher development networks, focussed on T Level pathways and regions, and with input from industry and professional bodies, in order to change teaching practice.
5. **Organisational readiness:** Focussing on professional development around leading and managing educational change, targeted at middle managers, with a particular focus on teaching leadership and curriculum planning / timetabling.

¹⁸ <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/tlevels/>

Within these broad elements there will be a menu of options that different staff can draw from depending on their specific needs. Different providers will be able to access the elements they determine their staff need and will be supported by the ongoing needs analysis to help ensure the offer remains right for their organisation. The offer will differ for 2020 providers, 2021 providers, and beyond, as T Levels are steadily rolled out.

Taking Teaching Further (TTF)

As part of our package of support for FE teaching, government made a manifesto commitment to create a new national programme to attract experienced industry professionals to work in FE - aiming to boost the quality and industry-relevance of teaching. The resulting programme - Taking Teaching Further - was launched on 20 June 2018.

Over the course of the next two years the programme will test how to attract experienced industry professionals into teaching in FE, and how best to support an ongoing exchange between FE and industry, so students can gain the knowledge and skills that industry needs.

It will be focussed on supporting priority sectors, including the technical routes that will be taught first (Education and Childcare, Digital, Construction); Engineering and Manufacturing; and other STEM technical routes.

Successful projects from round 1 were announced in October, and the next round of the programme will open in December 2018.

We know from our conversations with providers, employers and learners that there are inspiring examples of successful collaboration between industry and FE. TTF aims to test how to make these work more widely, and to support further innovation. Lessons learned over the next two years of the programme will inform our longer-term plans.

Support for employers

At this stage in the programme the vast majority of the support we are offering to employers is through our work to promote and embed industry placements, the detail of which is outlined above. We will begin to steadily increase our engagement with employers as recruiters of T Level graduates, providing information on the content of T Levels and what they can expect from a T Level student if they choose to employ them. More information about this can be found in the section below on Communications and Marketing.

Skills Advisory Panels

Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) aim to strengthen the relationship between local employers and skills providers; helping local areas better coordinate provision and address mis-matches between skills supply and employer demand. They will do this through local areas using robust skills and labour market analysis to understand local skills gaps. It is important to ensure that SAPs have the tools to influence local provision to better meet local skills needs. Thus, as part of the wider T Level funding consultation, “*Provider Funding for the Delivery of T Levels*” [T Level Funding Consultation](#)¹⁹ the department is currently consulting on a requirement for T Level providers to have due regard for the skills analysis, local plans and strategies published by their local SAPs. In addition, where skills gaps cannot be met by local providers, ESFA would be able to run a formal process to fill gaps either through existing local providers or a tendering process, which will be available to them through the relevant local authority route.

This would strike a balance between providers offering a range of T Levels locally that meet local and regional skills priorities, whilst at the same time allowing providers to take account of other factors such as national skills needs, breadth of provision and social mobility. We will consider all stakeholders’ views to the consultation in developing a suitable approach.

Communications and marketing

Communications, marketing and engagement are critical part of the implementation plan for T Levels. The department is developing a phased marketing campaign so that young people, parents, teachers and employers understand what T Levels are and where they fit among other choices after GCSEs.

A campaign will launch in 2019, aligned to the provider recruitment calendar, to further increase awareness of T Levels, help employers to support their delivery and enable young people to decide if they are right for them. The campaign will roll out with the delivery timetable and include both national and local communications. Communications will ramp up each year as more T Levels are introduced and student numbers increase.

The department will use the information from the T Level data collection and will work closely with the 2020 providers to develop and implement the campaign. Current and ongoing communications activity includes:

¹⁹ https://consult.education.gov.uk/fe-funding/t-level-funding-methodology/supporting_documents/T%20Levels%20funding%20consultation.pdf

- Creating communications toolkits for 2020 providers to support regional awareness raising and recruitment, to include messages and graphics for marketing materials
- Developing engaging content for social media, press and digital channels, including supportive messages from T Level panel employer ambassadors
- Integrating T Levels into the work of the National Apprenticeship Service, by extending the Apprenticeship Ambassadors Network to include T Level contacts and promoting T Levels to schools as part of the outreach programme.
- Research into key audiences and messages to inform and track the effectiveness of the communications strategy.

More widely, we are considering how we can support young people in making choices after the age of 16 and how this fits in with programmes such as Apprenticeships, the Careers Strategy, the qualifications review at level 3 and below, the review of higher level technical education (level 4 and 5) and the review of post-18 education and funding. These wider policies will have an impact on how T Levels are promoted and understood by young people, their parents and their influencers. As part of this, the department will consider how to improve perceptions of technical education as a valuable way for young people to reach their potential.

Wider qualification reform programmes

Qualifications review

In the T Level consultation response, we committed to carrying out a review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below, excluding A levels and GCSEs. The review aims to simplify the current qualification landscape so that all qualifications continuing to receive public funding meet 3 principles: have a distinct purpose; are good quality; and support progression to good outcomes. The consultation will address how these principles will apply to qualifications from entry level to level 3.

T Levels will offer a world class option for students who want to choose technical study over academic study. Through the consultation we will explore the rationale for alternative qualifications to be offered alongside these options. And, with the objective of simplification in mind, the review will consider how the principles described above should apply to qualifications that are similar to T Levels. We recognise concerns about the potential removal of qualifications that are well-established and for this reason we will be consulting in two stages. This will allow time to engage widely and work closely with schools, colleges and others who will be affected by the review. This will include a consideration of all students who might be affected by the outcomes of the review, including those with SEND and adults.

We will consult in two stages. The first stage of the consultation will be published in early 2019 and will focus on the principles, scope and the broad process the review will follow. The second consultation will follow later in 2019, and will set out the proposed criteria that will be used to determine whether a qualification continues to receive public funding.

As a first step towards improving the quality of qualifications available, we intend to remove funding from older versions of qualifications where newer versions have been developed in order to meet performance tables rules, where both versions operate in parallel. We will consult on the timescales and process for the withdrawal of these qualifications as part of our wider consultation on the qualifications review.

Higher technical education

Following the recommendations set out in the Wolf and Sainsbury reviews, and the commitments made in the Post-16 Skills Plan and Industrial Strategy to support routes to higher-earning technical roles, the government is undertaking a review of higher technical (level 4 & 5) education.

The review is looking across the higher technical education landscape, focusing on how technical qualifications at this level can better address the needs of learners and employers.

This includes ensuring that learners can progress from the government's new T Levels, and other full time education, into the workplace. It is also considering how these qualifications work for those in the workforce looking to upskill or retrain.

Good progress has been made so far. We have recently curated quantitative and qualitative evidence on higher technical education, as well as speaking to over a hundred employers, providers, learners, and others with expertise in this area. These findings are all contained in our [Review of level 4 and 5 education: interim evidence overview](#)²⁰

Our emerging findings show that there is a growing need for skills at this level. Higher technical qualifications are valued by employers in some sectors. However, overall employer awareness, understanding and confidence in higher technical qualifications is poor. In the absence of a clear understanding of what skills higher technical qualifications deliver, employers don't recruit to these qualifications. All of this has led to uptake of higher technical qualifications that is very low by historical standards, by international standards, and compared to other levels of education.

That is why we intend to establish a system of employer-led national standards for higher technical education, overseen by the Institute. We plan to identify and recognise existing and new qualifications that deliver the knowledge and skills needed by employers. The new system will build on higher occupational standards and utilise existing good practice.

We want to ensure these qualifications are clearly badged and easily recognised. This will enable employers to recruit people with higher technical qualifications with confidence, and in turn give learners confidence that employers want their skills and that there is the prospect of a good job at the end of it.

We will continue to build our evidence base and work with stakeholders to inform the review, and our proposals as they develop.

The Review of Post-18 Education and Funding is looking at how we can provide a joined up system that is accessible to all, and provides value for money for both students and taxpayers.

Our review of higher technical education will continue to work closely with the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding to ensure a coherent vision for Further and Higher Education. Skills at this level are important, and we want to consider the role that qualifications, funding and the operation of the higher technical education market play in the full context of the wider post-18 work that is happening.

²⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-level-4-and-5-education-interim-evidence-overview>

We expect to publish our higher technical education reform proposals for formal consultation alongside the conclusion of the post-18 review in 2019.

Careers guidance

The government's careers strategy sets out how we will support people from all backgrounds to access opportunities, including those created by the introduction of T Levels.

We are improving the quality of careers guidance for all young people by asking schools and colleges to adopt The Gatsby Benchmarks and meet them in full by the end of 2020. This means that careers programmes will include more work experience and employer visits, a greater focus on careers in the curriculum and personal guidance interviews for everyone.

Backed by new legislation, we are helping young people to find out more about T Levels and other technical options. Schools must give opportunities for other providers to visit and talk to all pupils about their technical education and apprenticeship offer. This will help young people to make more informed choices at every stage.

Based on a successful pilot in the North East, the Government is supporting schools and colleges to achieve the Gatsby Benchmarks. Working closely with The Careers & Enterprise Company, we are training Careers Leaders to develop careers programmes in their school or college. We are establishing Careers Hubs to encourage schools and colleges to work together with training providers, universities, employers and career professionals to transform careers provision for young people in their area.

In October 2018, we announced that we will more than double the number of Careers Hubs and training places for Careers Leaders set out in the [Careers Strategy](#)²¹. We are investing £13 million to train 1400 Careers Leaders and establish 40 Careers Hubs. Careers professionals and Careers Leaders in schools will be key in disseminating messages about T Levels and are a central part of our engagement strategy.

²¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-strategy-making-the-most-of-everyones-skills-and-talents>

Next steps

	Jan – Jun 19	Jul – Dec 19	Jan – Jun 20	Jul – Dec 20	Jan – Jun 21	Jul – Dec 21
2020 Delivery						
2020 provider support programme						
Contract award for the development of the 2020 qualifications						
Publish funding arrangements						
Development of the 2020 qualifications by AOs						
Final approval of the 2020 technical qualification						
Provide firm funding allocations for 2020 providers						
First teaching of T Levels for 2020						
2021 Delivery						
Launch the application process for 2021 providers						
Launch the ITT for 2021 T Levels						
Announce 2021 providers						

2021 provider support programme						
Contract award for the development of the 2021 qualification						
Final approval of the 2021 Technical Qualifications						
Teaching of T Levels for 2021						

Key:

2020 Delivery 

2021 Delivery 



Department
for Education

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