



Department
for Education

Strategic Guidance to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

March 2019

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

Strategic Guidance to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education 2019-2020

Presented to Parliament pursuant to section ZA2(9)(b) of the Apprenticeships,
Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, as inserted by paragraph 2 of
Schedule 4 to the Enterprise Act 2016



Rt Hon Anne Milton MP
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25 March 2019

Dear Gerry,

STRATEGIC GUIDANCE TO THE INSTITUTE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION 2019-2020

I am pleased to issue you with strategic guidance for the financial year 2019-2020. This gives you a steer concerning the government's priorities for the coming year in apprenticeships and technical education reform. It also sets out established policy in relation to T Levels.

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (the Institute) must have regard to the matters set out in this document when performing its functions (the legal basis for the guidance is at annex D). I expect the Institute to include this guidance as part of its business planning process and objective setting. I look forward to receiving updates on progress through our regular conversations and review meetings.

The government has set itself an ambitious agenda of skills reform to drive an increase in productivity. The Institute has played an essential role over the last year: maintaining and improving the quality of apprenticeships through high quality standards and assessment plans and leading work through the Quality Alliance; accelerating approvals processes for standards; and providing independent advice to government on funding provision for apprenticeship training and assessment.

I would like to thank you for the significant progress the Institute made in 2018-2019, working with the Department for Education (the department), to prepare for commencement of the remaining provisions of Schedule 1 to the Technical and Further Education Act 2017. From 31 January 2019, the Institute's remit has expanded to include these responsibilities, which I have set out in more detail at annex B.

The Institute's expanded role is putting employers at the heart of our reforms so they take ownership of setting the content, and supporting the quality, of both

apprenticeships and T Levels to reflect the needs of the economy and the skills priorities set out in the government’s Industrial Strategy.

The Institute’s remit is England-only. There may be occasions where it would be beneficial for the Institute to participate in discussions with devolved administrations to address issues facing employers who work across borders, in accordance with its legislative remit and the priorities and objectives set out in its business plan.

I expect the Institute to continue to work with employers and to build strong relationships with government, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), Ofqual, Ofsted and Office for Students (OfS), including through the Quality Alliance. As you know, the roles and responsibilities of each organisation are set out in the accountability statements for apprenticeships and T Levels. Similarly, you should work with, and where appropriate consult, other organisations who do not have a statutory role, but represent groups with significant involvement or interest, such as professional bodies, providers and assessment organisations. I expect the Institute to discharge its functions in a manner that ensures employers and others are clear about its approaches, rules and procedures.

Priorities for 2019-2020

The Institute will continue to deliver its apprenticeship and technical education functions. I expect the Institute to take account of policy decisions made by the department and to make operational changes required to accurately reflect and deliver policy. The department will work with the Institute during the policy development process to make sure operational and delivery requirements are taken into account.

I expect the Institute to deliver the priorities set out in the table below with regard to the further detail provided in annexes A, B and C.

Development of standards and apprenticeship assessment plans	
Improving quality	<p>The Institute will continue to improve the quality of standards and uphold robust approvals criteria to deliver employer-led quality.</p> <p>All remaining apprenticeship frameworks will be withdrawn to new starts on 31 July 2020. All new starts from 1 August 2020 will need to be on standards and whilst we do not wish the Institute to develop a standard to replace every framework, we expect standards to be in place to meet employer needs by that point.</p> <p>Following the implementation of the Faster and Better programme, the Institute is to continue to monitor and continuously improve the standards approval process to ensure standards are delivered at pace to meet employer and apprentice needs.</p>
End-point assessment	<p>The Institute is to continue to support trailblazers as they develop their assessment plans. In particular, the Institute will want to consider how it supports trailblazers to develop cost effective and manageable assessment plans while continuing</p>

	<p>to secure the validity of assessment outcomes.</p> <p>It is also important for the Institute to endeavour to ensure that standards are accessible to people with a learning difficulty and/or disability and that reasonable adjustments are made to support participation in apprenticeships.</p>
Funding bands for standards	The Institute will continue to provide advice to ministers on the appropriate funding band for standards. Funding band advice should focus on providing value for money to employers and government.
Reviews of standards and funding	
Reviews of standards and apprenticeship assessment plans	<p>The Institute will continue with its programme of statutory standards reviews. Building on the evaluation of the digital pilot and early reviews, we expect the Institute to prioritise delivery of 3 route reviews in 2019-2020, drawing on evidence sources it has identified. The Institute may also wish to prioritise other standards for early review on the basis of ESFA, employer, provider, End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) and External Quality Assurance (EQA) feedback.</p> <p>In line with the Institute's wider duty to have regard to assessing value for money, the statutory standards review process must also include an assessment of the funding band, considering whether the current funding band continues to represent value for money.</p>
Level 6+ apprenticeships	
Level 6+ and degree apprenticeships	We expect the Institute to make sure that level 6+ and degree apprenticeships are sufficiently occupationally specific to meet the requirements of an apprenticeship and are assigned to the correct occupational levels.
Apprenticeship quality and assurance	
Apprenticeships Quality Strategy	The Institute will continue to lead work through the Quality Alliance to develop and maintain the Apprenticeships Quality Strategy and quality criteria; working with Quality Alliance members to convert the Quality Strategy into an action plan to clarify to stakeholders what 'good' looks like. This will help promote the importance of provider, employer and EPAO roles in delivering high quality apprenticeships. The respective roles and responsibilities of the Institute and other bodies are set out in the Apprenticeship Accountability Statement.
External Quality Assurance	We expect the Institute to review and strengthen its framework for EQA of apprenticeship assessment, setting out requirements for all bodies delivering EQA. We expect the Institute to communicate with ESFA on EQA during 2019-2020 to ensure that current arrangements continue to deliver the most cost-effective approach that assures the right outcomes and offers good value for money.

T Levels	
T Level content and technical qualifications	<p>With regard to T Levels, the Institute will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make arrangements for T Level panels of employers to be convened for the purposes of developing the content of a T Level. • Make decisions about how best to translate occupational standards into technical qualifications. This includes which standards should be incorporated within occupational specialisms and the manner in which they should be incorporated in order to achieve the highest possible levels of occupational competence; whilst having regard to potential demand, viability and value for money considerations. • Make arrangements for procuring Awarding Organisations (AOs) to develop and deliver technical qualifications for inclusion in T Levels, having regard to the policy statements the government has already published in relation to the structure and operation of technical qualifications. • Manage the contracts with AOs to secure that high quality technical qualifications are available for approval. • Work with AOs to ensure they share draft qualification materials with providers in a timely manner, and take account of the needs of users (providers and young people) during the development of technical qualifications. • Approve technical qualifications based on occupational standards, ensuring their content and quality is sustained once approved, and maintaining a list of approved technical qualifications. • Determine and publish the additional components that constitute each T Level programme, having regard to policy statements the government has already published. • Support Ofqual as it develops and operates the regulatory arrangements to establish and maintain high standards for technical qualifications, including Ofqual’s recognition of AOs and accreditation of technical qualifications. • Work with the department and provide advice and assistance on a range of matters relating to T Level delivery and technical education reform more broadly.
Occupational maps	
Reviewing the content of occupational maps	<p>Whilst the Secretary of State retains responsibility for the framework of technical education routes,¹ the Institute is responsible for populating this framework in the form of occupational maps.² The introduction of T Levels and</p>

¹ s. ZA9 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (“the 2009 Act”)

² s. ZA10 of the 2009 Act

	proposed reform to other parts of the technical education system provide an opportunity to review the content of the occupational maps. Such a review should result in occupational maps that are an accurate reflection of the occupations within the technical education system. It should also be able to illustrate the different types of provision that would enable a person to access such occupations and ensure that they are properly aligned. Further information is set out in annex C.
Higher technical qualifications	
Consultation on reforms to higher technical education	We expect the Institute to prepare for implementation of these reforms by working together with the department, Ofqual and OfS to develop the proposals in more detail.

Other functions and responsibilities

Working with employers

The Institute's work is employer-led through its board and its network of industry leaders who form its route panels. Through its relationship managers, it works closely with employers who are developing standards and the content of T Levels. Building on this, the Institute must continue to promote understanding of its work and foster good relationships with employers. The Institute should respond constructively to employer feedback and be receptive to improving their experience. This includes working closely with employers to develop funding band recommendations and ensuring employers fully understand the process and the reasons for the decisions made. The Institute should work to ensure that it regularly monitors and reports to its board the satisfaction of employers and employer groups which are impacted by the services it provides.

Communications and promotion of new standards

The Institute is to work with the department to align key strategic messages and make sure proactive and reactive external communications are consistent and mutually supportive, including through press, speeches, social media and key stakeholders. External communications relating to specific areas of mutual interest (including framework withdrawals, standards development and pricing) should be shared as appropriate to ensure they align with the principles above.

The Institute should collaborate with the department to support wider respective communications priorities and plans, including by sharing details of standards coming through the approvals process and in the pipeline on a regular basis. The Institute is to support the department's wider work to promote standards to relevant sectors, and consider the extent to which it can take a greater lead in ensuring that employers in relevant sectors are aware that high quality new standards are, or soon will be, available.

As the technical education landscape develops, the Institute should support the department to explain the technical education offer, and to define the progression routes between T Levels, apprenticeships and the wider technical education system to all key audiences.

The Institute is responsible for clearly communicating that its remit is restricted to English apprenticeships.

Resources

The Institute will allocate its resources effectively to successfully deliver its part in the apprenticeship and technical education programmes.

Programme

The Institute will continue to participate in the department's apprenticeship and technical education programme boards, contribute to benefits mapping, benefits realisation and risk profiles for these programmes, and report on its contribution to the programmes' performance indicators and benefits. This will include reporting on progress against the quality plan, and operational issues that could require escalation to the apprenticeships programme board.

Research

The Institute and department will work together to coordinate relevant research programmes, agree priorities, avoid duplication and provide value for money. The Institute and the department will share emerging and final findings and agree appropriate publication and handling plans for any research conducted.

Data

The Institute and department will continue to share data and information, where appropriate, to facilitate delivery of apprenticeship and technical education functions, subject to data protection legislation and the legislation governing each body's functions. The Institute will follow the rules on the pre-release of statistics and consult the department prior to releasing any data concerning the broader apprenticeships and technical education programmes.

Reporting performance to the department

As set out in the framework document between the department and Institute, the ESFA Chief Executive and the Senior Responsible Officers for the apprenticeships and technical education programmes will meet with the Institute Chief Executive on a quarterly basis to discuss performance against budgets and objectives. The Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills will meet with the Chair and Chief Executive twice a year as part of an annual performance review and at other points in year as necessary.

At the end of the financial year, the Institute must report to the Secretary of State on how it has carried out its core functions and what it has done as a result of the strategic guidance, any other statutory notices issued and the framework document. The department will lay the annual report before Parliament and publish it



Rt Hon Anne Milton MP Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills

ANNEX A: APPRENTICESHIPS

Development of standards and apprenticeship assessment plans

The Institute will continue to work with trailblazers to develop high quality standards and apprenticeship assessment plans to meet the needs of employers and apprentices. This should include reflecting the needs of the English economy, addressing skills gaps in the public, private and voluntary sectors, and reflecting the government's skills priorities as set out in the Industrial Strategy. The department maintains open dialogue with the devolved administrations regarding skills policy. We encourage the Institute to participate as appropriate in these conversations and liaise with the devolved administrations to consider common interests and how English occupational standards can work best for employers and apprentices alongside apprenticeship programmes elsewhere in the UK.

As we approach the removal of all apprenticeship frameworks, we expect the Institute to approve one standard for each occupation where the Institute considers there to be a need. The Institute is to collaborate extensively with trailblazers to ensure that the required standards are available in good time, and has a critical role to play in communicating openly to enable employers and providers to prepare for delivery. This is particularly important where occupations that were previously served by apprenticeship frameworks do not require sufficient content to meet our requirements around duration, off-the-job training, and quality, and there will therefore not be an apprenticeship standard to 'replace' the framework.

The Institute is to continue to work with trailblazers to bring forward and develop new standards that reflect the knowledge, skills and behaviours that employers require for individuals to be competent in the relevant occupations. As well as focussing on occupational competence through this process, the Institute will want to support trailblazers in securing the viability of an approved standard through their appropriate engagement with apprenticeship training providers and assessment organisations.

For apprenticeship assessment plans, which inform End-Point Assessment (EPA), developing processes which secure the view of assessment organisations before approving new standards, will be of particular benefit. This will allow apprentices to progress on programme and undertake EPA in a timely manner. It is an important part of getting a standard ready for delivery that the ESFA and Institute work collaboratively on bringing forward EPAOs for new standards. For existing approved standards, where no EPAO has yet been approved, the ESFA and Institute will work together to remove any unnecessary barriers to EPA.

The Institute is to continue to support trailblazers as they develop their assessment plans. In particular, the Institute will want to consider how it supports trailblazers to develop cost effective and manageable assessment plans while continuing to secure the validity of assessment outcomes. The Institute should respond to intelligence gained about standards and their associated apprenticeship assessment plans to consider redeveloping those where EPAOs or EQA bodies identify significant concerns about the quality of plans, or where there is evidence that the assessment plan is the reason the standard has not attracted the necessary training and assessment organisations.

Funding bands should aim to reflect the anticipated costs of training and assessment required for each standard to deliver occupational competence, as set out in ESFA's Funding and Performance Management Rules. We expect the Institute to consider the wider affordability of the apprenticeships programme when making funding band

recommendations.

Reviews of standards and funding

The Institute is to prioritise delivery of 3 route reviews in 2019-2020, drawing on evidence sources it has identified. The Institute may also wish to prioritise other standards for early review on the basis of ESFA, employer, provider, EPAO and EQA feedback.

The statutory review process requires consideration of the content of standards, including any mandatory qualifications in standards and, depending on the scale of the change to the content of standards, the design of apprenticeship assessment plans, and the funding allocated to the standards. We also expect the reviews process to consider each standard in the broader context of the route to ensure that the standards that are being developed are sufficiently broad to be applied across sectors and to develop viable markets for training and assessment. The review process should reflect the variable impact of technological change on different sectors, where for some, more frequent reviews will be required. The review process should take into account alignment with technical education developments. In the majority of cases, changes to published standards should be completed within 8 months of the Institute publishing its report on the relevant standard and apprenticeship assessment plan review. This may be longer in specific circumstances, for example, if a new trailblazer group needs to be convened.

The Institute has agreed to provide advice on appropriate levels of funding for standards under review, considering whether the current funding band continues to represent value for money. The Institute must also consider whether changes to the content of apprenticeships, information about the actual cost of delivery, or changes to apprenticeship funding rules would make a full review of the funding band necessary.

We expect the Institute to continue running the second round of funding band reviews, considering whether a further 30 standards, allocated to funding bands prior to the Institute's creation, are in the most appropriate funding band in the 30 band structure introduced in August 2018. We request that the Institute provides as many recommendations by the end of May 2019 as possible, noting that these timescales may not be feasible depending on trailblazer availability and any appeals received. These reviews were commissioned as distinct projects, prior to the roll out of the Institute's statutory reviews programme.

Level 6+ and degree apprenticeships

To make sure that level 6+ and degree apprenticeships are sufficiently occupationally specific and are assigned to the correct occupational levels, the Institute is to, in due course, review this content in existing level 6+ and degree apprenticeships. We expect the Institute to make sure that the inclusion of a degree is appropriate, when assessing standards proposals or undertaking a statutory review.

We expect the Institute to work collaboratively with OfS as it develops its approach to quality assessment and its data strategy, to maintain quality throughout the transition to the new HE regulatory framework from academic year 2019/2020 and satisfy itself that the quality assessment delivers high quality apprenticeships. In doing so, the Institute is to make sure that the EPA delivers independent and appropriate

judgements of occupational competence that takes account of on and off-the-job training, underpinned by an effective grading system.

Apprenticeship quality and assurance

Through its stewardship of the Apprenticeships Quality Alliance, we expect the Institute to drive up and maintain quality across the end-to-end apprenticeships delivery system. The Quality Alliance, and its operational group, should continue as a forum for the relevant bodies to develop robust quality measures and share intelligence about trends in quality.

The Institute will continue its work to quality assure apprenticeships assessments (including integrated and non-integrated approaches for degree apprenticeships) including how the Institute improves quality and ensures stakeholders strive for high quality provision. The Institute should share information from EQA reports and evaluation with ESFA on a regular basis to maintain our line of sight on the quality of EPA.

The Institute should endeavour to ensure that standards are accessible to people with a learning difficulty and/or disability and that reasonable adjustments can be made to support participation in apprenticeships.

The Institute should work with the sector and disability organisations to develop and maintain guidance for EPAOs to support the application of reasonable adjustments in EPAs for apprentices with a learning difficulty and/or disability.

ANNEX B: T LEVELS AND HIGHER TECHNICAL QUALIFICATIONS

Section 1: T Level policy background

This annex sets out the policy of the department in relation to T Levels. The Institute must have regard to this in performing its functions.

Given the Secretary of State's responsibility for a high quality education system and in particular for the provision of financial resources for T Levels, the department would expect to be consulted in relation to any proposed departure from this policy.

This annex should be read in conjunction with a number of policy documents that have been published by the department to which the Institute should also have regard:

- Post-16 Skills Plan³
- Government response to the T Level consultation⁴
- Government consultation response technical annex⁵
- T Level Action Plan October 2017⁶
- T Level Funding Consultation, published November 2018⁷ and the Government's response to this which is planned for publication in June
- T Level Action Plan December 2018⁸

T Levels are technical study programmes for 16-19 year olds, with outline content developed and approved by employers through the Institute's T Level and route panel process. They are designed to ensure students have the knowledge and skills needed to progress into skilled employment or to higher level technical training relevant to the T Level. Ministers have agreed the following description of T Levels:

T Levels are new courses coming in September 2020, which will follow GCSEs and will be equivalent to three A Levels. T Levels will combine classroom theory, practical learning and a minimum 45-day placement with an employer to make sure students have real experience of the workplace. The 2-year T Level courses have been developed in collaboration with employers and businesses so that the content will meet the needs of industry and prepare students for work. They provide the knowledge and experience needed to open the door to highly skilled employment, an apprenticeship or higher-level study.

Section 2: Purpose and structure of T Levels

Each T Level will consist of four components that must be achieved or completed in

³https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/536043/Post-16_Skills_Plan.pdf

⁴https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/711472/Implementation_of_T_Level_programmes-Government_consultation_response.pdf

⁵https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/711475/Technical_Annex_-_Technical_Qualification_Design.pdf

⁶https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/760829/T_Level_action_plan_2017.pdf

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/funding-for-the-delivery-of-t-levels>

⁸https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/762137/T_Level_action_plan_2018.pdf

order for a T Level grade and certificate to be awarded. The technical qualification (TQ) will be approved by the Institute⁹, having regard to the reasonable requirements of employers and others¹⁰, and the other elements of the programme will be determined by the Institute where there is an approved qualification¹¹:

- an approved *Technical Qualification*
- an *Industry Placement*
- *level 2 maths and English*
- any other *occupation-specific requirements/qualifications*, as identified by the T Level panel (or the Institute), that are needed for entry to employment or to commence an industry placement

T Levels are based on the same standards as apprenticeships. T Level panels use these standards as the basis of developing the outline content; this ensures alignment with employers' skills and knowledge requirements. The content of T Levels should provide students with the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills to a level that is as close to full occupational competence as can be reasonably expected from a course of classroom-based study.

As well as meeting employers' needs and supporting the development of skills in a range of sectors, T Levels must be of the highest quality. The Sainsbury panel recommended that there should be a significant change in the way qualifications are designed and delivered in order to ensure that the skills that employers need are identified and supported through the delivery of high standards. The panel was clear that a single national framework of qualifications that are defined, approved and quality assured centrally is essential for an effective education and training system.

Students who have achieved or completed all of the required components of a T Level will receive an overall grade of Pass, Merit or Distinction. The methodology for calculating the overall grade will be finalised by the department during 2019. Although AOs are required to generate grades for the core component and the occupational specialism(s), they are not permitted to issue a separate certificate for the TQ.

Where possible, T Levels should be designed to facilitate transferability. The inclusion of core content within the TQ will give students transferable knowledge and skills, increasing their adaptability, resilience and ability to work effectively in multi-disciplinary teams. This will be particularly important for students who decide to switch from one pathway to another or, potentially in exceptional cases, from one route to another. The Institute should consider whether there are other ways in which T Levels can allow for transferability.

T Level programmes will differ in length to reflect the requirements of different occupations and will on average be around 1800 hours over two years, although the TQ size will be less than this (see below). As well as the TQ (including any occupation specific requirements), T Level programmes will include an industry placement, and the requirement to complete level 2 maths and English where students are yet to meet the minimum requirement. The department will also fund Employability, Enrichment and Pastoral (EEP) hours as it does for other programmes. The size of a T Level has a direct impact on the funding that is made available to education providers, so the Institute must therefore advise the department on T Level content as it is developed so funding considerations can be

⁹ s. A2DA of the 2009 Act

¹⁰ S. ZA2 of the 2009 Act

¹¹ s. A2DB of the 2009 Act

taken into account at an early stage. This includes the hours to be included in the TQ, where evidence from employers and education providers will be particularly important.

The components of a T Level are set out in more detail below.

I. Technical Qualification

The TQ is a substantial, level 3 qualification based on outline content devised by T Level panels to reflect employer requirements. As set out in the wave 1 ITT, the purpose of the TQ is to ensure students have the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to progress into skilled employment or higher level technical training relevant to the T Level.

To achieve this, each level 3 TQ should:

- provide reliable evidence of students' attainment in relation to:
 - the core knowledge and skills relevant to the route and occupational specialist component(s) covered by the TQ; and
 - the knowledge, skills and behaviours (where they can reasonably be attained through a course of education) required for at least one occupational specialist component relevant to the TQ;
- be up-to-date, ensuring the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed for the occupations have continued currency among employers and other end-users;
- ensure maths, English and digital skills are developed and applied where they are essential to achieve occupationally relevant outcomes;
- ensure the minimum pass grade standard for occupational specialist components meets employer expectations and allows a student to attain as many of the outcomes set out in the standards as may reasonably be expected through a course of education;
- allow employers and other end users to accurately identify students' level of attainment and effectively differentiate their performance;
- provide a clear and coherent basis for development of suitably demanding high quality level 3 courses, which enable students to realise their potential;
- provide students with the opportunity to manage and improve their own performance; and
- support fair access to attainment for all students who take the TQ, including students with special educational needs and disabilities.

The Institute may only approve the TQ "if satisfied that by obtaining the qualification a person demonstrates that he or she has attained as many of the outcomes set out in the standards as may reasonably be expected to be attained by undertaking a course of education"¹².

Each TQ has two separate components:

- *A core component*, which is expected to make up 20-50% of the TQ, planned time. This develops underpinning knowledge, understanding and core skills that are relevant to the T Level route, the pathway and the associated occupations.

Core knowledge and understanding must provide students with the opportunity to understand the wider context to working in the relevant

¹² s. A2DA(3) of the 2009 Act

occupations.

Core skills are those that are fundamental to all of the occupational specialisms covered by the TQ. All students that study the T Level must be equipped with a coherent set of core skills, to support progression, adaptability and movement between different job roles once in work.

- *Occupational specialism(s)*, which are expected to make up 50-80% of the TQ planned time. A student must be required to take one or more occupational specialisms that focus on developing occupationally specific knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to each occupation covered by the TQ.

Each occupational specialism must cover content that will ensure students can achieve a level of competence that will enable them to gain entry to employment, evidenced by meeting defined 'performance outcomes'. These indicate what the student will be able to do as a result of learning and applying the specified knowledge, skills and behaviours. To ensure training providers properly prepare students for the level of demand required at threshold competence, TQ suppliers should be required to provide guidance that exemplifies the expected standards of attainment.

TQ suppliers must be required to specify any appropriate combinations or prohibited combinations for the occupational specialisms.

TQ assessment & grading

Assessment of the TQ must provide confidence in the quality and rigour of T Levels. This will be determined through the regulatory arrangements set out in Ofqual's TQ Conditions and the contractual requirements in the contracts issued by the Institute to the AOs

The core component is assessed through two separate assessments:

- Core knowledge and understanding is assessed through one or more examinations, which are set and marked by the AO. This assessment must test students' knowledge and understanding to an appropriate level of depth expected for a level 3 qualification, ensuring effective differentiation across the full range of potential attainment. It must effectively sample across the full breadth of assessed content to ensure content is covered to an appropriate extent. Compensation across the breadth of knowledge and understanding assessed is permitted. If necessary, the assessment should include optional tasks or questions to accommodate underpinning knowledge relevant to sub-pathways or clusters within the T Level.

Core skills are assessed synoptically through a practical 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 rather than in the abstract. The employer-set project must ensure students can generate evidence that covers the associated assessment objectives.

Given the nature of the content, the core must be assessed through compensatory assessment methods, that is, where high performance in one aspect of assessment compensates for lower performance in another -

resulting in an overall score for the component. The scores for the core knowledge and the core skills assessments must be combined to produce a single overall score for the core component, on a six-point scale of A*-E.

- Assessment of the occupational specialism(s) must require students to be able to achieve each performance outcome specified in outline content to a minimum standard that is in line with employer expectations. The assessment approach should allow students to demonstrate that they have met this threshold. Where possible, performance outcomes should be assessed together to ensure that students are able to demonstrate that they can select and draw together knowledge, skills and behaviours together in an integrated way to achieve outcomes. A degree of compensation can operate across performance outcomes as long as an overall judgement can be made about the minimum expected level of competence and higher levels of achievement can be rewarded. Each occupational specialism will be graded on a three-point scale of Pass, Merit, or Distinction.

TQ size

To accommodate legitimate differences in content across T Levels, the total planned hours for the TQ are expected to be between 900 and 1400 hours and be no less than 50% and no more than 75% of the time for the T Level programme as a whole. In exceptional circumstances, the total time for the qualification may fall outside the set parameters.

It is likely that students will need a significant amount of time to achieve the level of competence required to enter employment. Therefore, occupational specialisms will be substantial, and we would expect that students will typically undertake one or possibly two occupational specialisms within a single T Level.

II. Industry placement

The industry placement element of the T level is to be at least 45 days. This represents a significant opportunity to give students the chance to put into practice what they have learnt as part of their T Level and to develop the knowledge and skills they need to progress in their chosen career.

The duration of the industry placement must be sufficient to ensure that students are given enough time to master the essentials and that the employer has the opportunity to develop and shape their skills. For some T Levels, this may mean that the industry placement is determined to be longer than 45 days and if such a determination is considered the Institute will advise the department. The industry placement will be high quality and relevant to the student's course of study. The department will develop measures to ensure that the industry placements delivered by providers are of sufficient quality.

The department will continue to work with the sector and will review evidence from the experience of delivering industry placements under 2018/19 and 2019/20 capacity and delivery funding to refine and finalise the policy and review what further support may be needed to help the delivery of industry placements. In light of this experience, it will provide further policy updates and guidance to help providers plan industry placements into the curriculum and to explain the processes required to set up a placement and make sure students are prepared to undertake an industry placement.

As the policy on Industry placements is still in development, further statutory notices to the Institute on industry placement policy will follow in due course, for example on arrangements for ensuring the quality of industry placements.

III. *Maths and English*

T Level students must obtain either GCSE grade 9-4 or a Functional Skills level 2 pass in both maths and English in order to successfully complete their T Level. Students may have met this requirement before starting their T Level course, but the policy on entry requirements is for individual providers to determine.

For some T Levels where higher levels of achievement are required to meet the outcomes set out in the standards for the associated occupations, the T Level panel may stipulate a higher maths and/or English requirement. Where this is the case, it should be built into the TQ rather than a bolt-on stand-alone maths or English qualification.

The maths and English exit requirement for T Level students with SEND should be Entry Level 3 in Functional Skills. The student will need to have 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 the provider will need to hold an evidenced assessment that the student is not able to study these subjects at level 2.

IV. *Other occupation-specific requirements/qualifications*

For some T Levels, there may be additional occupation-specific requirements, such as qualifications that are regulatory or mandatory requirements for entry to employment or to commence the industry placement (for example, a licence to practise). Where such requirements are identified, T Level panels should incorporate the content of these within the outline content, in agreement with the relevant professional body where appropriate.

Additional qualifications as part of a T Level programme are expected to be determined as an element of the programme only by exception and such determinations must therefore be discussed with the department before being made.

Section 3: Decision to develop a T Level

The starting point for any decision to develop a T Level should be that the occupations to which it relates exist as part of a technical education route on the occupational maps and there is alignment to approved standards. The Secretary of State has responsibility for the overarching framework of technical education routes, as set out in the occupational maps, and will keep these under review with advice from the Institute. The Institute has responsibility for maintaining and updating the content of the occupational maps. Should the Institute identify occupations that are not captured on the occupational maps and for which it believes it may be appropriate to develop a T Level to meet employer and industry needs, it will advise the department, with supporting evidence. The development of a T Level ought to depend on a number of factors, including evidence of demand from employers for the occupations within the route.

A route or pathway may be identified as apprenticeship-only because none of the

occupations within it is deemed appropriate for a T Level. For an occupation to be included in a T Level there must be a genuine need for substantial technical knowledge and skills that would merit a two-year full-time classroom-based course of study. An occupational specialism (or the combination of occupational specialisms that a student might take) is expected to represent 50-80% of the qualification's content, and the Institute should consider the volume of content in the standard as well as the recommended duration of the associated apprenticeship.

The Institute should determine whether each standard is appropriate for inclusion in a T Level, recognising that there may be grounds for omitting some standards. Where a standard is identified for inclusion within a T Level, and having regard to the reasonable requirements of employers and others, the Institute should exercise its judgement in determining whether a separate occupational specialism is developed. In some cases, the content of one standard might be merged with others, taking account of what could reasonably be covered within the available teaching hours, and without prejudice to the requirement for a TQ. This allows the student to attain as many of the outcomes set out in the standards as may reasonably be expected by a course of education. This might happen where the knowledge and skills contained within a standard are deemed to be essential to all occupations within a T Level, in which case the associated content might be incorporated within all occupational specialisms. The 'shared skills' should not be separated out into a separate generic component as this will mean they are not being applied in an occupationally specific context, and so do not explicitly contribute to evidence of competence in a defined occupation. If the student still has time to do more than one specialism, the shared skills must, as far as possible, be contextualised to the occupation so that the assessment evidence requirements will be different.

The Institute may identify a level 2 standard with content that it would be appropriate to include in the T Level because, for example, the T Level would be incoherent or incomplete without it or not sustainable as a credible T Level. This may be appropriate in cases where it allows a student to build up and then build on more basic levels of skills and should be considered with the proviso that the final assessment demonstrates the student's overall level of occupational competence at level 3.

It must also be a realistic proposition that 16-19 year olds would be able to access all of the content of a standard, including through learning in the workplace. There may be occupations within a route where that is not possible because the content is inappropriate for that age group or because of legal restrictions. The Institute will also need to consider the likelihood of sufficient providers being able to teach potential occupational specialisms, particularly where specialist expertise would be required to deliver the content.

In assessing the value for money and viability factors of occupational specialisms the Institute and the department will adopt an evidence-based approach drawing on internal and external data sources. This approach will include a cost benefit analysis of factors including sector skills gaps, employer requirements, provider capacity and capability, user demand and Awarding Organisation (AO) considerations. In determining the agreed occupational specialisms for each pathway, the evidence will be agreed through the Institute's and department's programme governance and approvals processes. For T Levels that are already well advanced, the Institute should carefully consider this in a timely manner as part of the final approval process. In the case of new or emerging occupations, there may be no existing qualification enrolment data, and evidence of demand from employers and the relevant sector will be important in such cases.

The Institute will provide timely advice and assistance to the department in relation to ministerial functions regarding the introduction and sequencing of T Levels (including the sequencing of those to be taught from 2022 onwards). This will include advice on the readiness of content developed by T Level panels. Further statutory notices may follow in relation to the sequencing and introduction of T Levels.

In undertaking its statutory functions, the Institute must have regard to the department's protocol in relation to changes to qualifications and the curriculum. In response to the 2014 Workload Challenge¹³, the department committed to introducing a lead in time of at least a year¹⁴ for any accountability, curriculum or qualifications initiative coming that will have an impact on the workload of staff in education providers.

T Level panels

Where the Institute is satisfied that a T Level should be developed, it may convene a group of employers and other experts to assist in the development of outline content. This group should be broadly representative of the occupations in question and should have sufficient knowledge and expertise to be able to identify from the associated standards the outcomes that a student can reasonably be expected to achieve from a course of education.

TQ procurement

Following commencement of the Institute's powers in relation to technical education, it has assumed responsibility for the procurement and contract management activities for T Levels being introduced from September 2020. It will need to manage those contracts proactively to ensure that the timetable set out by the department can continue to be met.

The government has committed to the single licensing proposals made within report of the Independent Panel on Technical Education chaired by Lord Sainsbury. Legislation designed to deliver these reforms has been passed by Parliament in the form of the Technical and Further Education Act 2017. Under the single licensing arrangement, each occupation or group of occupations will have a single T Level for which there is only one TQ. The copyright in the relevant course documents in that TQ will be vested in the Institute and the qualification will be offered by an AO under exclusive licence, for which the Institute will manage the contract.

The single licensing T Level model is a key ingredient of the department's wider reforms to technical education that will include a comprehensive review of the technical and vocational qualifications that should continue to attract public funding. Single licensing marks a new approach to qualification delivery in England, designed to address the disadvantages of a qualifications market, and it should be recognised that the full benefits will only be realised once the qualification review has been completed. The department would welcome the Institute's assessment of the effectiveness of single licensing as it becomes established through T Level delivery.

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-teachers-workload/reducing-teachers-workload>

¹⁴ For Wave 1 T Levels only, a 6 months lead time is planned to enable the T level to be introduced from September 2020.

In procuring an AO to develop and deliver the TQ, the Institute will focus on achieving value for money and ensuring effective performance by AOs through the lifetime of the contracts. To ensure that ongoing delivery of the TQ can be guaranteed, the Institute should determine which are the relevant course documents, the copyright in which will transfer to the Institute¹⁵.

The department has recruited schools and colleges to teach the first T Levels from September 2020, and is undertaking a recruitment process for T Levels taught from September 2021. The Institute should consider how any such providers will be consulted on and have sight of draft qualification materials and the final qualification specification.

The Institute should consider the additional services that the AO should be required to provide and maintain. These should ensure that ongoing delivery of the qualification is underpinned by contractual requirements that will provide efficient services to students, providers and the Institute.

The Institute will need to develop a role whereby providers and employers can seek advice from it in connection with its functions. The department will want to agree with the Institute what its role should be in providing such advice, taking into account other support programmes that are put in place by the department, including through other delivery partners.

TQ assurance and regulation

Assurance and regulation of TQs is to be conducted in a collaborative way by the Institute and Ofqual. Application of the powers and duties of each organisation will follow the framework, roles and responsibilities, and processes already agreed in discussions between the Institute, the department and Ofqual. This is set out in separate documentation, including the government's response to the T Level consultation, the December 2018 Action Plan, and the ITT for the first three TQs.

The Institute and Ofqual will work closely together to develop further and operate this framework to establish and maintain high educational and delivery standards for TQs. The government intends to seek an opportunity to legislate in due course to establish a new statutory framework for regulation of T Levels. Experience of the current collaborative framework will inform the substance of any further legislation.

Section 4: Other T Level policy considerations

Keeping T Levels current

To ensure that T Levels have continued currency with employers, the Institute should review their content on a regular basis. This should particularly look at the nature and focus of occupational specialisms, as well as the effectiveness of individual T Level programmes and components. Such reviews will need to be informed by destination data, but should also involve consultation with a representative range of employers including, but not restricted to, the employer panels convened by the Institute. The Institute may also wish to consider developing a systematic approach to gathering evidence of employer needs and skills shortages across the routes. This activity – and the sharing of feedback with the department - should be managed through the Institute's internal governance arrangements.

¹⁵ s. A2DA(4)(a) and s. A2IA of the 2009 Act

T Level providers

The department will remain responsible for setting the criteria and for determining which providers can offer T Levels, as well as for providing support to the teaching profession. Only providers approved by the department for delivery of T Levels will receive funding for their students to take T Levels. Contractual arrangements with AOs to develop and deliver TQs should therefore reflect those arrangements, including the requirement for AOs to work with approved providers in developing draft qualification materials.

Funding for T Levels

Responsibility for the policy on and distribution of funding for T Levels sits with the department, and is dependent on funding levels agreed with HM Treasury. A public consultation, launched in November 2018, set out proposals for funding T Level programmes from 2020, based on the policy position established by the department. The government's response to this consultation is planned for publication in June 2019, with further operational details to follow in July. Ministers will make final decisions on the allocation of T Levels to the funding bands set out in the consultation but may take advice and assistance from the Institute in connection with the exercise of this function

T Levels need to be affordable and to fit within the framework for funding. Any changes to T Level programmes may have implications for affordability and funding. The Institute must, therefore, discuss any proposed changes to specific T Levels with the department to ensure that they are affordable, offer value for money and are in line with government policy.

The Institute should be aware that the programme of study being undertaken by a T Level student is likely to include other funded components, including Employability, Enrichment and Pastoral provision. A small number of students may also take additional qualifications, for example A Levels, alongside their T Level programme.

T Level data

The department will agree with the Institute the data that it will require in relation to T Levels, including for the purposes of monitoring T Level take-up, attainment and certification.

The Secretary of State has responsibility for issuing T Level certificates¹⁶ and will agree their format with the Institute. Certificates will be provided to students who have achieved and/or completed all of the components set out in section 2 of this annex. In designing the certification arrangements, the department will work with the Institute to ensure that the ensuing system accommodates T Level attainment and completion data. The department will agree with the Institute the method and frequency for the sharing of T Level component results in order that certificates can be issued in a timely manner.

T Levels for adults

As set out in the government response to the T Level consultation, the department is considering whether there is a case for T Levels to be made available to learners aged 19-23 who do not yet have a level 3 qualification. Feedback from some

¹⁶ s. A3A of the 2009 Act

respondents suggested that the needs of 19-23 year olds are not significantly different to 16-19 year olds and that the two cohorts are taught together in some institutions. The priority should be to develop T Levels for 16 to 19 year olds, but the Institute should be mindful of the possibility that they may be extended to 19 to 23 year olds at a later date and should therefore ensure that the content of T Levels is suitable for both age groups. T Levels and the associated funding are currently only available for 16-19 year olds. Any future decision to extend T Levels to students other than 16-19 year olds (for example 19-23 year olds) will be made by the department as it is subject to the relevant funding being made available.

Transition framework

The department has committed to developing an effective transition framework to make sure that as many students as possible can complete T Levels. 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. The department recognises that, through its engagement with employers involved in developing T Level content, the Institute has relevant expertise to inform the development of the transition framework. The department will therefore seek the advice and assistance of the Institute in relation to this programme and its proposed technical content to inform its phased implementation from 2020. This advice and assistance should be given in a timely manner. The Institute should also ensure that development of T Levels allows for the introduction of a transition framework.

Devolved administrations

Whilst the Institute's statutory functions are confined to delivery of technical education in England, it is recognised that the devolved administrations may have an interest in the availability of T Levels and their component parts. In implementing its reforms to technical education, including the qualification review, the department will maintain close contact with the administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In doing so, it may seek the views of the Institute. The Institute should consult with the department if an AO seeks agreement from it to deliver the TQ in one of the devolved administrations.

Communications

The department is responsible for developing the T Level 'brand' and associated marketing, and for ensuring that parents, students and teachers are informed about the full set of reforms to technical education and do not find the new system confusing. This will include supporting young people to understand the different post-16 options that are available to them, including A Levels, T Levels and apprenticeships. This activity will be delivered in advance of the phased introduction of T Levels so that Year 11 students are supported in making decisions on their options for Year 12 and 13. In developing its communications, the department will work with the Institute to ensure that T Level messaging and implementation are aligned.

In line with its statutory responsibilities, the Institute should publish a list of any TQs that it approves¹⁷ and should also publish a statement of the other components that it determines should make up the programme¹⁸. The Institute should work with the department to consider how to present this information in a way that illustrates the

¹⁷ s. A2HA of the 2009 Act

¹⁸ s. A2DB(4) of the 2009 Act

components of T Level programmes clearly and aligns with the department's communications strategy. The Institute should work closely with the department on its communications strategy on technical education, to ensure all messages are aligned and consistent.

Higher technical qualifications

The Secretary of State announced in December 2018 that the department intends to consult on reforms to higher technical education, focusing on recognition of higher technical qualifications against Institute-approved standards.

Preparation to implement the reforms will include assessing the readiness of the system (such as the coverage of existing standards), and the resource requirements and timelines to deliver the proposals. We will work with the Institute to better understand how these proposals can be implemented and anticipate issuing further guidance on the Institute's role ahead of implementation.

ANNEX C: OCCUPATIONAL MAPS

Context and vision

As part of his 'future vision' for technical education, the Secretary of State is keen that our apprenticeships, T Levels and qualification reforms work together to create a system that:

- Enables people to easily understand and navigate the system – so it is clear what is needed to enter certain occupations, and the different work-based and college-based pathways they can take to get there.
- Ensures the content of apprenticeships, T Levels and technical education qualifications properly fits what the jobs market needs both now and in the future – so the content of our technical education offer is both high quality, aligned with the needs of the occupations in our labour market, and is regularly reviewed so that it is 'future proofed'.
- Helps learners to progress to different levels and modes of learning if they choose for example a T Level graduate would have studied the right content to enable them to move on to a level 4/5 apprenticeship or qualification in their specialist area, if that is what they want to do.

In order to deliver this vision, the occupational maps should be evolved to ensure they describe the whole of technical education and can play a more significant role in ensuring its quality. This includes ensuring that the occupational standards that underpin both apprenticeships and technical qualifications are fully in line with labour market needs now and in the future.

The occupational maps were originally developed at some pace to support the introduction of T Levels, and were largely based on groupings of apprenticeship standards from that time, so are unlikely to provide a comprehensive reflection of the labour market. We are still in a period of transition, where new standards are being developed, but the long term aim should be to ensure that the occupational maps contain all of the occupations that are in scope for technical education. The standards should articulate an agreed set of required knowledge, skills and behaviours for each occupation (which underpin the creation of apprenticeships and technical qualifications) and the maps should, ideally, describe the education and training pathways that lead to these occupations.

Purpose

The purpose of this work is to provide a clear picture of the current and potential technical education landscape from level 2 to level 6+. The completed maps and the occupational standards that sit alongside them are critical to ensuring technical qualifications (especially T Levels and Level 4/5 qualifications) and apprenticeships are developed to align and articulate with each other and properly reflect the needs of the economy.

Research questions and methodology

The work is expected to include, and report upon, the following steps to achieve the Secretary of State's aims:

- What methodology (including data / evidence / other factors) should be used to define, select and group occupations for inclusion in the maps, considering the opportunities presented by the proposed transition to a 5-digit SOC code.

- What occupations exist at each level (2-7); how the levels are applied to different occupations; and what standards currently exist for each of those occupations.
- What the high level description is of each occupation.
- What knowledge, skills and behaviours are required by each occupation.
- How the current range of Technical Education provision at different levels and types could best be presented within the occupational maps.
- How the occupational maps might be digitised in such a way as to be accessible, in the future, to a wider range of future users / customers

The department recognises that a lot of this work is already being scheduled to occur through the Institute's route reviews. As such, we would not expect this work to duplicate this effort, but that the two processes should be mutually beneficial, and timed to benefit from the other.

The government recognises the importance of creating a single health and social care system, with appropriate technical education provision to develop a skilled workforce. The Institute should actively and publicly consult with relevant employers and others to support the development of high quality occupational standards and associated technical education provision in this sector as a priority in 2019/20.

The Institute should connect with other organisations to inform and assist with this work to ensure that the resulting maps have widespread credibility. The expertise of employer groups, professional bodies and others should all be exploited to the full.

Outputs

- To provide the department with the Institute's 'Occupational Map Review Proposal' including a high-level timeline of activity and milestones.
- A quarterly progress report, detailing the current position and changes to methodology, work plan or delivery schedule.
- A revised occupational map for each route, including any new occupations that have been identified and showing how the different types of technical education (for example T Levels, apprenticeships, etc.) apply to the route.
- An agreed set of knowledge, skills and behaviours for each occupation within the map.
- A database of the information captured through the occupational map review in a standardised format such that it can be utilised by third parties at the department's discretion.

Governance

The Institute's CEO will be the Institute's Senior Responsible Officer accountable for delivery. Updates will be provided through the Institute's Technical Education (Technical Qualification) Programme Board (attended by the department).

The Institute should use monthly meetings with the department's director of professional and technical education to provide any updates.

Timings and early milestones

Re-developing the maps is clearly a long-term process and we want to ensure there is time to do it properly – by involving experts and employer groups.

The department recognises the Institute's route review process will provide

significant synergy with the work outlined within this annex and that the timings of outputs will largely coincide with these reviews. However, there are additional factors which we would expect the Institute to take into account when scheduling the activity.

The main interdependency is to ensure the new maps can inform the department's review of qualifications, which is expected to launch shortly and run alongside T Level roll out. Where possible, the maps should also facilitate reforms to higher technical qualifications (at levels 4 and 5), starting with the work to identify the standards that qualifications at these levels should meet.

The Institute should provide an 'Occupational Map Review Proposal' and a high level timeline of the proposed work within a month of formal receipt of this strategic guidance.

ANNEX D: LEGAL BASIS FOR THE GUIDANCE

The strategic guidance is a 'statutory notice' to which the Institute must have regard and is given by the Secretary of State under section ZA2(2) to the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). Under ZA2(9) of the 2009 Act, a copy of this notice will be laid before Parliament and published on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications>. The Institute is legally obliged to report, to the Secretary of State, on its activities once a year through its Annual Report.

Strategic guidance enables government to give the Institute steers and advice about elements of policy that it considers fundamental to which the Institute must have regard. The Institute is an independent organisation, able to choose how to operationalise that advice.

The Secretary of State is able to update and reissue this guidance at any time, usually only when further clarity or policy changes are required. We will endeavour to keep changes to once a year except where we have specifically indicated in this document that further guidance will be forthcoming in relation to specific aspects of policy.

The Institute has a number of core functions set through legislation:

- setting quality criteria for the development of all standards and apprenticeship assessment plans, irrespective of level for occupations which the Institute considers appropriate;
- reviewing, rejecting or approving (and publishing) standards and apprenticeship assessment plans;
- for each standard, describing the occupation and the outcomes which a person will be expected to attain to successfully achieve the standard;
- maintaining and publishing occupational maps in relation to the 15 occupational routes;
- ensuring all apprenticeship assessments are quality assured, including quality assuring some itself;
- developing and approving technical qualifications based on occupational standards, maintaining their content and quality where there is an approved technical qualification, and determining additional steps towards occupational competence;
- operating the procurement process; and
- awarding and managing the contracts which will involve Awarding Organisations delivering the technical qualification within T Levels.

In addition, the Institute will provide advice and assistance to the Secretary of State in relation to:

- funding provision for apprenticeship training;
- technical education funding (in particular, the allocation of T Levels to funding bands) and policy;
- the T Level transition framework; and
- the introduction of T Levels (including the sequencing of those to be taught from 2022 onwards).

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