



Department  
for Education

# **Implementation of T Level programmes**

**Government consultation response  
technical annex**

**May 2018**

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## T Level programmes

T Levels are technical study programmes, which will each follow the same broad framework. Each programme will consist of five components:

- a Technical Qualification (TQ)
- a T Level industry placement
- maths and English (set at level 2 to align with requirements for level 3 apprenticeships)
- any other occupation-specific requirements/qualifications, as set out by the relevant T Level panel e.g. licence to practise
- any further employability, enrichment and pastoral (EEP) provision (as required in all study programmes)

This technical annex to the Government’s consultation response covers the full details of the Technical Qualification component.

## The Technical Qualification<sup>1</sup>

Each T Level will include a new, substantial, level 3 technical qualification based on outline content devised by T Level panels. We set out the high-level design for Technical Qualifications below. This annex provides further technical detail regarding the design of the Technical Qualification and should be read in conjunction with the Government Response to the public consultation on T Level implementation.

## Summary of changes following public consultation

A summary analysis of the consultation responses is included in Annex A of the Government Response. We have carefully considered the responses and have made the following changes:

- provided a clearer qualification purpose statement
- removed the classification of core content into ‘core 1’ and ‘core 2’, and we now refer to these as core knowledge and understanding and core skills

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<sup>1</sup> The Technical Education Qualification approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships under section A2DA of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (the “2009 Act”).

- clarified expectations regarding the external assessment of core knowledge and understanding
- clarified the role of awarding organisations and employers in setting projects and placed greater emphasis on the assessment of core skills in context
- introduced an overall Pass grade for the T Level
- provided a clearer statement on the purpose of Technical Qualification grading and confirmed the use of component grades for the Technical Qualification
- clarified the role of employers in establishing grade standards

## 1. The purpose of the Technical Qualification

The purpose of the level 3 Technical Qualification 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.<sup>2</sup>

To achieve this, each level 3 Technical Qualification must:

- provide reliable evidence of students' attainment in relation to:
  - the core knowledge and skills relevant to the route and occupational specialisms covered by the qualification
  - the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for at least one occupational specialism relevant to the qualification
- 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 specialisms attests to threshold competence, meets employer expectations, and is as close to full occupational competence as possible
- allow end users to accurately identify students' level of attainment and effectively differentiate their performance

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<sup>2</sup> The Institute may only approve the qualification "if satisfied that in 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" (sA2DA(3) of the 2009 Act).

- 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
- support fair access to attainment for all students who take the qualification, including those with SEND

## 2. Technical Qualification assessment components

In designing a Technical Qualification, the approved awarding organisation (AO) must ensure the outline content produced by T Level panels is appropriately covered by the qualification so that the quality standard for approval set out in the legislation can be met.

In developing full Technical Qualification content, AOs may need to elaborate on the outline content, providing further detail to ensure providers are clear about what needs to be taught and what will be assessed.

The content for each Technical Qualification must 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
- occupational specialism components focussed on assessing occupationally specific knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to each occupation covered by the T Level

When developing the full detailed content, AOs must ensure:

- the content is validly and reliably assessed through the above assessment components
- any material they add is faithful to the outline content. So, for example, additional more detailed content must accurately reflect the outline content in nature, and must not introduce entirely different assessment constructs

We would expect an AO's assessment strategy to explain why, in designing the full qualification and assessments, it has been necessary to add new content or move outline content from one component to another. These changes would be subject to the Institute's approval.

Although each component may feature separate assessment tasks (see sections 2.1.2; 2.2.2), AOs must not 'unitise' the Technical Qualification, that is break the core component or occupational specialisms into smaller separately assessed and graded units or sub-components.

## 2.1 Core component

### 2.1.1 Core content

The core component must offer sufficient breadth of knowledge and skills to ensure students are able to apply what they have learned in a variety of contexts and for a variety of different purposes relevant to occupations linked to the T Level.

#### **Core knowledge and understanding**

The core knowledge and understanding in each qualification must:

- be relevant to the route, the pathway and occupations covered by the T Level
- provide students with the opportunity to understand the wider context to working in occupations covered by the T Level, for example, impacts on society and the environment and how people in different occupations often work together in multidisciplinary teams

#### **Core skills**

- the core skills must be relevant to the route the pathway and occupations covered by the T Level
- the content must help to ensure all students who study the T Level are equipped with a coherent set of core skills, to support progression, adaptability and movement between different job roles once in work

The title of the core component must correspond to the T Level programme title, which will be determined by T Level panels.

### 2.1.2 Assessment of core content

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.

To secure valid and reliable assessment, the main body of core knowledge and understanding must be assessed separately to the core skills. The scores for each must then be combined to produce a single overall score for the core component.

Although compensation will apply across both parts of the core, AOs must develop mechanisms that avoid situations where students can attain the component without having made a genuine attempt at each part. To support this we would expect an AO's descriptions of minimum performance of the component overall to cover both core knowledge and core skills.

## **Assessment of core knowledge and understanding**

To ensure the breadth of core knowledge and understanding can be reliably assessed in sufficient depth, this content must be assessed through an externally set test, which is set and marked by the AO.

The externally set test must:

- test students' knowledge and understanding to an appropriate level of depth expected for a level 3 qualification
- ensure effective differentiation across the full range of potential level 3 attainment
- effectively sample across the full breadth of assessed content to ensure, where required, content is covered to an appropriate depth
- allow for compensation across the breadth of knowledge and understanding assessed
- if necessary, include optional tasks or questions, to accommodate underpinning knowledge relevant to sub-pathways or clusters within the T Level

## **Assessment of core skills**

Core skills specified are fundamental to all the occupational specialisms covered by the T Level. They must be assessed synoptically through a practical employer-set project. This approach will ensure that students develop and apply core skills in occupationally relevant contexts rather than in the abstract.

To ensure consistency in project scope and demand, the AO will need to develop assessment objectives, which require learners to:

- plan their approach to meeting the brief
- apply core knowledge and skills as appropriate
- select relevant techniques and resources to meet the brief
- use maths, English and digital skills as appropriate
- realise a project outcome and review how well the outcome meets the brief

To devise the set brief for each project, AOs must work with a relevant employer, that is, one who employs staff working in occupations relevant to the T Level. The brief must:

- ensure a motivating starting point for students' projects, for example, a real-world problem to solve
- ensure students can generate evidence that covers the assessment objectives
- be manageable for providers to deliver

- be officially approved by the AO and employer

AOs must manage the assessment process. Employers will not be required to formally assess or comment on students' work.

AOs will also need to:

- avoid briefs becoming predictable and ensure outcomes expected of students continue to keep pace with the needs of industry
- offer students more than one employer-set project brief to choose from. This is important because depending on the breadth of the Technical Qualification, it may be necessary to accommodate differences in students' occupationally specialist interests within the T Level

### **2.1.3 Duration of the core component**

The time required to deliver and assess the core component will vary depending on the content requirements. The core must be no less than 20% and no more than 50% of the total qualification planned time.

Following advice from providers and other experts, the Institute will recommend a range of planned hours needed to deliver the core component. In exceptional circumstances, the total time recommended by the Institute for the core may fall outside these parameters.

The recommended planned hours will ensure:

- the contribution of the core to the overall qualification is proportionate to the demand on students
- an appropriate overall balance between core and specialist learning

In developing the full qualification specification, AOs will need to identify a specific recommended number of planned hours for the component within these parameters.

## **2.2 Occupational specialist components (occupational specialisms)**

### **2.2.1 Occupationally specialist content**

The specialist content must be described and assessed through separate occupational specialist components. Each 'occupational specialism' will help to ensure students develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary to achieve threshold competence in the occupation. Achievement of threshold competence signals that a student is well placed to develop full occupational competence, with further support and development, once in work.



Threshold competence is as close to full occupational competence as can be reasonably expected of students studying the qualification in a classroom-based setting (for example in the classroom, workshops and simulated working environments).

Although the qualification is not exclusively for 16 to 19 year old students, threshold competence must be set at a level of proficiency that is reasonable for students starting the Technical Qualification aged 16, to attain in the time specified in the qualification.

To ensure employers recognise which roles a student is qualified to start work in, the title of an occupational specialism should be linked to the title of the corresponding standard.

The knowledge, skills and behaviours for each occupational specialism must ensure that students can achieve 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.

In essence, they describe, at a high level, what the student 'can do' to have achieved threshold competence in an occupational specialism. T Level panels will specify the expected performance outcomes for each occupational specialism. Indicative examples include:

- plan and conduct laboratory experiments to achieve scientifically valid results
- evaluate systems to find faults and recommend appropriate solutions
- plan and lead activities, purposeful play opportunities and educational programmes
- plan and carry out suitable physical care routines
- deliver planned activities to meet additional needs, working in partnership with others

Maths, English and digital skills are only included in outline content for occupational specialisms if they are essential to achieving performance outcomes.

### **2.2.2 Assessment of occupationally specialist content**

To be threshold competent, students must be able to achieve each performance outcome specified in outline content to a minimum standard, in line with employer expectations.

AOs must therefore use assessment methods that assess whether students have met this threshold. To support validity and reliability, where possible, performance outcomes should be assessed together (synoptically). This ensures that:

- students are able to demonstrate that they can select and draw together knowledge, skills and behaviours together in an integrated way to achieve goals (as they would in the workplace)

- an atomistic ‘tick box’ approach to assessment is avoided, where students are set numerous unrelated tasks which don’t add up to the student being able to achieve outcomes recognised by employers
- a degree of compensation can be afforded across performance outcomes (as long as minimum requirements for threshold competence are met) and
- an overall judgement about threshold competence can be made across performance outcomes and higher levels of achievement can be rewarded (see section 5.1.3)

To support this, where appropriate, AOs are encouraged to review approaches to assessment for the corresponding apprenticeship standard.

### **2.2.3 Duration of occupational specialisms**

The content of each occupational specialism directly links to the corresponding standard(s) used for an apprenticeship. Therefore, in the same way that different apprenticeships take varying amounts of time to complete, the time required to deliver and assess each occupational specialism will vary depending on how long it will typically take students to develop threshold competence.

Like the core component, the Institute will recommend the planned hours for each occupational specialism. It is likely that students will need a significant amount of time to achieve threshold competence. Therefore, occupational specialisms will be substantial – much larger than traditional qualification units. Our current expectation is that students will typically undertake one or possibly two occupational specialisms within a single T Level. We recognise that for some Technical Qualifications, as occupational specialisms may be very large, students will not have time to study all the specialisms in the time available. For example, it would take longer than two years to learn all the trades in construction. Therefore, where necessary, students are able to select one or more occupational specialisms from a defined set of optional occupational specialisms.

To ensure the selection is coherent and supports students’ progression opportunities, where necessary, AOs must specify any required combinations or prohibited combinations for optional occupational specialisms.

Being able to offer students a range of options, from which they must select at least one, should also allow the provider to tailor their provision to local employer needs, for instance where particular occupational specialisms are in demand.

To ensure students are well placed to demonstrate threshold competence, we may expect training providers to design courses that ensure much of the core is delivered before students are assessed on their occupational specialism(s). Depending on the requirements of the T Level, students will be expected to start developing practical

technical skills early in the course even if occupational specialisms are assessed later in the second year.

To ensure training providers properly prepare students for the level of demand required at threshold competence, we would expect an AO to provide guidance that exemplifies the expected standards of attainment.

### 3. Technical Qualification assessment principles

In devising and delivering assessment, AOs will need to find the 'optimal' balance of the assessment principles below. In meeting these principles, AOs will need to pay special attention to mitigation of known risks (for example, relating to malpractice and unreliable assessment) and other factors that may have adverse effects on the qualification.

**Validity** – The extent to which assessments effectively measure what they are intended to measure. This includes the extent to which assessments allow students to produce assessment evidence that clearly corresponds to the content, and ensures content is not under-represented or misrepresented.

**Reliability** - This is about consistency and so concerns the extent to which the various stages in the assessment process generate outcomes that would be replicated were the assessment repeated. The reliability of an assessment is affected by a range of factors, such as the sampling of assessment tasks and inconsistency in marking by human assessors. Reliability is central to the extent to which standards of attainment are equivalent over time (comparable performance).

**Comparable performance** - The extent to which the same award (for example grade), for a qualification/qualification component with the same title indicates the same level of student performance across providers (nationally) and over time.

**Minimising bias** - Ensuring that an assessment does not produce unreasonably adverse outcomes for students who share a common attribute. The intention is to ensure all students are treated fairly and reflects statutory equality duties.

**Minimising malpractice** - Ensuring the design and processes relating to the delivery of assessment limit malpractice such as attempts by candidates to communicate with each other during an exam and failures by school or college staff to comply with AO instructions regarding storage of work.

**Appropriate demand** – This relates to the level of difficulty of an assessment task and the requirements of content which are to be assessed. Demand should be appropriate to the size and level of the qualification.

**Manageability** - The feasibility of carrying out particular assessment processes. A manageable assessment process is one that places reasonable demands on students,

providers and AOs. This will be based on the scale of the assessment process on the participants, balanced by the usefulness of the outcomes.

## 4. Further assessment requirements

Once outline content has been finalised by T Level panels, to ensure effective implementation of the high-level assessment requirements set out above, further more detailed requirements will be produced, to ensure that:

- AOs put systems, plans and controls in place to mitigate known risks (for example relating to malpractice, authentication and the reliability of assessment) and minimise other factors that may have adverse effects on the qualification
- any assessment requirements and controls specific to a Technical Qualification are clear, for example, those relating to assessment timings or proportions of internal and external assessment methods

We expect an AO's assessment strategy to demonstrate how their qualification specification, systems and assessments meet these requirements.

## 5. Technical Qualification grading

Attainment of the T Level programme is a significant achievement. T Levels will have an overall Pass grade. A T Level Pass grade will only be awarded if a student successfully completes the industry placement, attains the qualification, and achieves the other specified elements of the T Level programme. We believe an overall T Level grade, with supplemental grades for the Technical Qualification components and attainment information about the other T Level elements, will provide sufficient clarity about students' capabilities and achievements. We are exploring how higher grades could be awarded above an overall Pass.

As above, the Technical Qualification grades provide supplemental 'second tier' information about student attainment in addition to the overall T Level grade. Technical Qualification grading aims to:

- ensure the minimum grade standard for threshold competence in occupational specialisms is reliable, meets employer expectations and is as close as possible to full occupational competence
- ensure employers and higher level education providers can use Technical Qualification grades to differentiate between candidates for jobs/further training
- be simple for end users to understand and support the positioning of T Levels relative to other provision, for example, apprenticeships and A levels

- does not place a cap on achievement, enhances students' motivation and supports providers' attempts to stretch and challenge performance
- provides the basis for indicators that may be used for accountability purposes

## 5.1 Component grades

To ensure the aims above are met, Technical Qualifications 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.

As the same recruiters may select students from a range of T Levels, the same grading system and terminology will be used to describe grades for each type of technical component for all Technical Qualifications across T Levels.

### 5.1.2 Core component grade

Assessment of the core component must ensure students have the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills to the depth expected of level 3 learners. Given the breadth of knowledge, there is potential for a wide variance in overall achievement across a cohort of students taking the assessments.

Assessment of core knowledge and skills will result in a single overall score for each student, aggregated across the externally set test and the employer-set project. As long as the assessments are appropriately demanding, we expect the full range of potential level 3 attainment to be in the scope for the distribution of these scores.

Therefore, to reflect this breadth of attainment, it is appropriate for this component to be graded on a **six point scale** (plus ungraded), using A\*-E plus U descriptors, with A\* being the highest grade.

### 5.1.3 Occupational specialism grades

Each specialism will assess whether a student has achieved threshold competence. It is essential that grading signals whether this minimum threshold has been achieved, so therefore, this component will be graded using a minimum threshold 'pass' grade.

Threshold competence in each occupational specialism will be demonstrated when students perform a number of different, but closely linked activities together to a sufficient standard. This will mean that threshold competence is not demonstrated by performing one activity in isolation, for example, fixing a piece of software or constructing a brick wall.

Trained assessors must decide whether a student has met threshold competence using a number of different performance outcomes, and (as above) these must be assessed as far as possible together, synoptically.

Inevitably, there may be some variance in how well students perform each performance outcome, above the minimum threshold, that is student 'A' may exceed the threshold on all performance outcomes to a significant extent, whereas student 'B' may exceed each to a lesser or greater extent. Both have demonstrated threshold competence but the overall quality of student A's work is better than student B's.

To reflect variances in students' overall achievement above the threshold, two higher grades will be awarded to signal higher levels of performance outcomes. The higher grades above pass will also support providers' efforts to stretch and challenge students and provide a stronger basis for end users to differentiate candidates' performance.

For these reasons, occupational specialisms will use a **three point scale** (plus ungraded), using Distinction, Merit and Pass, with Pass being the threshold grade and Distinction being the highest grade.

To support this model, we would not expect AOs to devise a scheme of assessment for occupational specialisms, which differentiates candidates by the number of tasks completed, that is, where higher grades are awarded to students who have been set more tasks.

#### **5.1.4 Overall Technical Qualification attainment**

Alongside the other programme requirements (see main consultation document), in order to achieve an overall T Level pass, students must attain the Technical Qualification. To attain the Technical Qualification students must achieve:

- the minimum passing grade ('E') or above in the core component
- the minimum passing grade ('Pass') or above in each occupational specialism (if more than one is required)

AOs will not be required to issue separate Technical Qualification certificates. Instead, Technical Qualification component grades will be listed, alongside the other completed programme requirements on a successful student's T Level certificate.

If a student's performance is below that which is required to achieve the minimum grade for the core or for each required occupational specialism, the student will not achieve the Technical Qualification and the relevant component(s) will be ungraded.

The qualification components that a student has passed would be listed alongside other achieved programme requirements on the student's T Level partial attainment transcript (see section 9).

#### **5.1.5 Other options considered for grading Technical Qualification components**

Consultation respondents have questioned the use of two different grading scales in the Technical Qualification. Different models have been carefully considered for grading the

components of the Technical Qualification, including using A\*-E and Distinction, Merit and Pass for both types of component. Some of the arguments for and against are set out below. Following further consultation with employers, training providers and assessment experts, both of these models have been ruled out.

- i) **Separate component grades (one grade for the core and one for each specialism) both using the same six point scale (for example A\*-E plus U).**

### ***Supporting argument***

- A six-point scale means higher grades demonstrate significantly higher achievement when compared to the 'average' student's level of achievement. Lower grades demonstrate lower levels of achievement compared to the mean performance
- The use of the same six-point grading scale across both the core and occupational specialisms could allow end users a strong basis for differentiation and increase student motivation
- The same grades would also allow for a clear and straightforward read across between the core and occupational specialisms, for example, a student receives an A for the core and a C and B for their specialisms, giving a grade profile of A, C, B

### ***Argument against and conclusion***

- The purpose of Technical Qualification grading is to ensure students who achieve a T Level are sufficiently competent to secure skilled employment. Therefore the grading scale for occupational specialisms must include a minimum 'threshold' or hurdle which students need to reach since this indicates they are threshold competent
- The threshold will be deliberately demanding in order to be sufficient to secure skilled employment in level 3 occupations. In a six point scale, if the threshold were set at the mid-point, at 'C', it would mean that the lower grades D and E would have no differentiation function – both signalling or being interpreted as a fail
- Grade comparison between occupational specialisms and the core would be misleading as they attest to very different types of attainment. A 'C' for the core is an aggregate score across a number of different assessment criteria and indicates an 'average' understanding of a subject relative to other students. Whereas a 'C' for an occupational specialism is intended to indicate performance relative to an absolute standard, therefore, demonstrating whether the student is sufficiently skilled or not (threshold competent)
- Without this threshold for occupational specialisms, there is a risk that the grading system would have little validity or relevance for employers

ii) **Separate component grades both using the same three point scale (e.g. Distinction, Merit, Pass and Fail).**

***Supporting argument***

- This grading model aligns well with the approach needed for occupational specialisms, where a threshold for sufficient competence to secure employment is essential. Differentiation can be achieved through the use of higher grades, for example, Merit and Distinction
- Using the same grading system for the core and occupational specialisms, could enable a simple read across between the core and the occupational specialisms whilst also allowing for grade profiles to support overall differentiation
- This model, if using Distinction, Merit and Pass rather than A, B and C, also avoids misleading end-users and ensures the difference between T Levels and A levels is clear

***Argument against and conclusion***

- The pass grade for occupational specialisms must signal a level of competence to secure employment in a level 3 occupation. It will, therefore, correspond with a relatively high level of demand
- If a three grade model were used for both the core and specialisms, the pass grade for each would need to be broadly comparable with each other, that is, a 'pass' grade for the core could not signal an entirely different level of ability to an occupational specialism
- This would mean that a pass grade for the core would need to be set at a much higher level of notional ability than the minimum to pass an A level (an 'E' grade). Moreover, as per option 1, a pass would likely to be understood as notionally equivalent to a 'C' grade
- Based on 2016-17 results<sup>3</sup> on average 20.4% of students who took A levels achieved a D or an E grade and for Applied A levels 29.1%. The number of students not achieving an E grade (ungraded or absent) for A levels is on average 1.8%
- Using these results as a proxy, if Pass for the core were set at an equivalent to a 'C' there is a risk that between 20 and 30% of students would fail a T Level compared with 1.8% of A level students. Given the intended rigor of T Levels, the number of

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<sup>3</sup> A level and other 16-18 results (revised): 2016/17 DFE/National Statistics



other pass 'hurdles' a student needs to complete - occupational specialisms, English and Maths and the work placement - the overall failure rate could be significantly higher

## 6. Technical Qualification size

T Level programmes will differ in length to reflect the requirements of different occupations. To accommodate these differences, the total planned hours specified for each Technical Qualification will vary. The Institute will determine the overall planned hours for the Technical Qualification to be developed by the relevant AO(s).

T Level programmes are expected, on average, to be 1800 hours over two years. To accommodate legitimate differences in content across T Levels:

- the total planned hours for the Technical Qualification will fall within a defined range of between 900 and 1400 hours and
- be no less than 50% of the time for the T Level programme as a whole
- be no more than 75% of the total time for the programme as a whole

In exceptional circumstances, the total time for the qualification may fall outside the set parameters.

## 7. Standards of performance

In devising outline content, T Level panels including employers and other interested parties, will define what students must learn to achieve threshold competence for each occupational specialism.

Passing an occupational specialism must signal what a student 'can do' to the level of competence required to secure employment. Therefore, to ensure the continued currency of the qualification, comparable standards of *actual student performance* for each occupational specialism, will need be maintained at the pass grade threshold.

As well as specifying outline content, employers must also have a role in ensuring that when pass grade standards are established for occupational specialisms, the minimum standard of actual student performance at threshold competence meets their expectations.

To ensure fairness to students, a grade for a Technical Qualification component (for example a pass) with the same title should be consistent with the grades awarded to other students (by the same and different training providers) in the year it was awarded and in continuing years.

To ensure that attainment of Technical Qualifications with the *same title* signals a comparable level of achievement overall, the total planned hours (the time for core and

specialism(s) added together), for a Technical Qualification with the same title, must fall within defined parameters.

Given the importance of reliable grade standards to Technical Qualifications, it is critical that AOs apply rigorous assessment monitoring systematically and methodically to ensure continued public confidence in the grade standards.

## **8. Switching T Levels**

We recognise that in some instances students may want to switch to another T Level, either within the same route or in a completely different route.

To support students' progression chances, if they choose to switch from one T Level to another, they will still need to complete the minimum required occupational specialisms and meet the assessment requirements for that T Level, irrespective of what they have attained in another T Level Technical Qualification.

However, the level of recommended prior learning (as now) will be at the provider's discretion, including how to allocate planned contact hours for the component; that is it may take students with significant prior learning less time to complete some components.

As above, AOs must provide guidance on contact hours to providers. They will also need to produce exemplification materials for occupational specialisms, to ensure providers can properly prepare students for the assessments.

To support flexibility, if the content of the core is the same (or only has marginal differences) across T Levels within a route, attainment of this could count towards attainment of the common core for any T Level within the route. However, this principle would only apply within the route and not across routes.

The details of which core components can count as prior-attainment across T Levels within a route will only be determined once the Technical Qualification specifications and assessments have been developed for all Technical Qualifications in a route.

## **9. Recognising partial attainment and re-taking components**

We believe it is important that students who do not complete the qualification are able to use evidence of their partial attainment if they choose to continue technical education.

Where a student does not meet the minimum requirements to be awarded a qualification or leaves the course part way through, they will instead receive a partial attainment transcript that registers the assessment components that they have achieved. This should enable them to progress more easily onto a related area of study or apprenticeship or to

return to their T Level at a later date. An example transcript is included as an annex in the main consultation document.

As the Technical Qualification comprises different components, students will be able to re-take separate components and do not need to re-take the whole qualification. The better grade for the component will be listed on their final T Level certificate.

As indicated above (Section 5.1.3) we will also explore whether a further grade below pass should be cited on a student's partial attainment transcript, which signals that a student is close to achieving threshold competence.

An example of a T Level certificate and a transcript are included as an annex to the main consultation document.

## **10. Updates to Technical Qualification content**

Given the pace of change in many industries, to ensure the continued currency of the qualifications, when standards are updated, if the Institute deems it necessary, they will re-develop the relevant outline content. This will trigger an update process for the approved AO to amend the corresponding occupational specialist component(s).

If entirely new standards and outline content are developed, the Institute will commission the AO to develop a new occupational specialism. This will mean that the suite of specialist components available in the first year of delivery may change over time as new apprenticeship standards and corresponding qualification outline content is developed.

## 11. Technical Qualification summary

T Level programmes will differ in length to reflect the requirements of different occupations, but are expected to last 1800 hours over two years.

To accommodate legitimate differences in content across T Levels:

- the total time for the Technical Qualification will fall within a defined range of between 900 and 1400 hours and
- be no less than 50% of the time for the T Level programme as a whole
- be no more than 75% of the total time for the programme as a whole

Component	Content	Assessment	Grading	Planned Hours
<b>Core</b> Students complete one component which covers all the core content	Knowledge and understanding of contexts, concepts, theories and principles relevant to the T Level  Ability to apply core knowledge and skills, through a project, to meet employer-set requirements	Assessed through an externally set test and an employer-set project	Six point scale plus ungraded (U)  A* – E and U	Between 20% and 50% of the qualification time
<b>Occupational specialisms</b> Students must complete at least one, or more depending on the specific minimum requirements of the qualification	Knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to achieve threshold competence	Synoptic assessment of performance outcomes, to determine whether a student meets the minimum requirements for threshold competence	Three point scale plus ungraded (U)  Distinction, Merit, Pass and Ungraded	Between 50% and 80% of qualification time



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