



Department
for Education

T Levels accountability statement

March 2019

Contents

Overview	3
Overall accountabilities for the T Level Programme	5
Policy and Strategy	6
Awarding Organisation (AO) procurement and contract management	7
Qualifications Development, Management and Quality Assurance	8
Funding and Compliance	9
Industry placements management	10
Certification Management	11
Overall Marketing, Communications and Engagement	12
Governance	13

Overview

The delivery of a single technical education system, which operates in conjunction with apprenticeships to deliver high quality learning, will help increase productivity, improve social mobility and better meet the skills needs of employers and support the career aspirations of young learners.

The reform of the technical education provision in England, as recommended by Lord Sainsbury's independent panel on technical education¹, will see the introduction of fifteen high-quality routes to skilled employment. Eleven of these routes will include study-based technical training in the form of new T Levels. These reforms will have a significant impact on England's technical education provision and will help deliver valuable skills reform.

Delivery of T Levels is part of the overall Technical Education Reform Programme that will transform technical education in this country, developing our home grown talent so that our young people have the world-class skills and knowledge that employers need.

T Levels are a technical study programme aimed at 16-19 year olds and are a key milestone in transforming technical education in the UK. They will be available alongside apprenticeships as part of a high quality technical education offer. T Levels are 2-year programmes designed with employers to provide the skills that industry needs and expand future career opportunities for young people.

T Levels, which will be introduced over a number of years from 2020 will give students aged 16 to 19 a technical alternative to A Levels and will help them to progress into skilled employment or higher level education and training. T Levels will provide a mixture of:

- technical knowledge and practical skills specific to their chosen industry or occupation;
- an industry placement of at least 45 days in their chosen industry or occupation;
- relevant maths, English and digital skills; and
- common workplace skills.

Students who achieve a T Level will receive a certificate recognised nationally by employers that will set out what they have achieved as part of the overall programme.

T Levels will be introduced from 2020 and rolled out across several years. The first rollout for teaching from September 2020 is known as Wave 1 and will introduce three T

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-skills-plan-and-independent-report-on-technical-education>

Levels. The next phase is Wave 2 for first teaching from September 2021, subsequent waves will follow.

This document sets out the responsibilities for each government organisation with a role in the introduction of T Levels and may be subject to amendments in line with future policy changes. It should be read alongside the Strategic Guidance to the Institute for Apprenticeships (which provides guidance from the Government on matters to which the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (as it is now) must have regard when performing its functions).

This document has been agreed by the Permanent Secretary for the Department for Education (“the Department”), the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (“the Institute”) and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Overall accountabilities for the T Level Programme

This section sets out what each organisation is accountable for. All these bodies have a responsibility to ensure value for money when spending public funds. They should discharge their duties in line with *Managing Public Money*.

The **Department for Education, through the Education and Skills Funding Agency**, has overall accountability for the T Level programme. It sets the policy strategy for the programme to enable the sustainable delivery of new high quality T Levels for 16-19 year olds within time, cost and quality parameters. The Department will guide the Institute by way of the annual strategic guidance and any statutory notices it issues in relation to T Level policy.

The **Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)** is an executive agency of the Department and is responsible for the operational management of the T Level funding system. It is responsible for publishing funding guidance and the allocation of funding via grants to schools, sixth forms and colleges, and through contracts with independent learning providers. The ESFA is accountable for funding education and training for children, young people and adults. It will oversee and ensure effective delivery and day-to-day management, and the successful introduction of the T Level Programme in partnership with the Institute.

The **Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (the Institute)** is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department. The Institute is accountable for developing and maintaining the agreed content and quality of T Level qualifications based on occupational standards. The Institute will have responsibility for approving technical education qualifications (TQs) that form part of T levels, and for determining the additional steps towards occupational competence, i.e. the components that make up the T Level study programme which are determined where there is an approved qualification. The Institute is responsible for operating the procurement process and managing the contracts which will involve Awarding Organisations (AOs) delivering the TQ elements of the T Level Programme. In doing so the Institute will have regard to the policy decisions taken by Ministers.

The **Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)** is a non-ministerial government department. Ofqual is independent of government and reports directly to Parliament. Ofqual has a number of objectives that include statutory duties to secure and maintain qualification standards, to promote public confidence in and awareness of regulated qualifications, and to secure the efficiency of regulated qualifications.

Ofqual will be responsible for recognising AOs and during the delivery of the AO contracts will accredit the qualifications. The Institute and Ofqual will work collaboratively to quality assure and regulate the TQ during the implementation of the T Level Programme.

Specific accountabilities for the T Level programme

Policy and Strategy

The Department (through the ESFA) is responsible for:

- Defining the policy framework within which the Institute should operate and exercise its technical education functions, setting this out through annual Strategic Guidance and any other statutory notices.
- Determining the framework of routes within which technical education provision and Apprenticeships sit, and the scale and pace of T Level roll-out and growth.
- Leading on the resolution of novel policy questions arising from T Level delivery.
- Feeding in to the design of T Level programmes, including qualifications and other components.
- Policy and delivery of the additional requirements of the T Level Programme, e.g. English and maths requirements and securing sufficient Industry Placements.
- Owning the FE provider market strategy and creating the policy framework to support a healthy market of good quality providers.
- Designing, in partnership with the Institute, a transition offer, alongside a review of L2 and below qualifications, to support as many students as possible to complete T Levels.

The Institute is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the standards underpinning T Levels have continuing relevance and currency to employers.
- Executing TQ requirements including ensuring currency with existing standards, developing outline content, and determining the additional steps towards occupational competence, i.e. the components that make up the T Level study programme which are determined where there is an approved qualification, having regard to government policy and employer input.

Awarding Organisation (AO) procurement and contract management

The Department (through the ESFA) is responsible for:

- Agreeing with the Institute the arrangements for procuring TQs for delivery from 2021 onwards.

The Institute will be responsible for:

- Awarding contracts to successful suppliers (Awarding Organisations) to develop the TQs for Wave 1 first teaching in 2020 and for subsequent waves.
- Effective contract management of suppliers, ensuring delivery of the services are in accordance with contractual terms and conditions.
- Developing the procurement / commercial strategy for future roll-out of TQs, in line with Ministerial decisions on growth and roll out and future retendering, ensuring any lessons learnt are taken into account.
- Managing the procurement and contract award for the development of TQs, (including development of specifications based on employer-led approved outline content, all supporting competition documentation; supplier/market engagement; tender evaluation and contract award).
- Executing intervention on AOs not meeting the original requirements of recognition and/or accreditation as agreed with Ofqual.
- Making payments to AOs for development costs and approved changes to the TQ in line with the terms and conditions of the contract.
- Advising ESFA of policy questions arising from live running of the contracts and responding in an appropriate and timely fashion to Ministerial steers on these issues.

Qualifications Development, Management and Quality Assurance

The Department (through the ESFA) is responsible for:

- Working with the Institute and Ofqual to ensure a robust quality assurance and regulatory regime is in place for TQs.

The Institute is responsible for:

- Identifying the occupations that populate each of the routes, publishing these in the format of occupational maps.
- Managing existing occupational routes and proposals for new occupational pathways with Route Panels, and engagement with employers.
- Building on the occupational maps by determining which occupational standards will form the basis of T Levels.
- Developing, approving and reviewing standards, and prioritising them to reflect the needs of employers, the economy, and young people and to address skills gaps.
- Marketing and recruitment of Route Panels to oversee the occupational maps and consider standards and outline content for T Levels.
- Marketing and recruitment of T Level Panels to develop the outline content of the TQs in accordance with the planned roll-out.
- Setting out the criteria against which qualifications will be approved in collaboration with Ofqual, within the context of high level Ministerial decisions on the approach to assessment and grading of T levels.
- Management of AOs in the development and approval process, and managing approvals taking into account Ofqual accreditation.
- Working in partnership with Ofqual to develop the system for quality assurance and regulation of TQs; and to take corrective action in the event a qualification fails to meet relevant quality criteria.
- Review of outline content (including external consultation/review) for T Levels to assess where updates may be required, working with Ofqual to ensure qualifications can be regulated in line with agreed processes.

Funding and Compliance

The Department (through the ESFA) is responsible for:

- The development of T Level funding policies.
- Putting in place effective mechanisms to fund 16-19 technical education which support implementation of the reforms.
- Allocating and transferring budgetary provision to the Institute to fund the TQ contract requirements and any future Authority approved changes.
- Producing, publishing and maintaining funding guidance and enforcing these rules in systems to implement policy.
- Developing and implementing funding calculations for allocations and paying providers.
- Developing and implementing validation processes to ensure compliance with funding guidance.
- Making allocations and payments to providers, monitoring providers' compliance with funding guidance, and identifying areas for investigation/intervention.
- Maintaining and publishing funding data on the funding for 16-19 provision.
- Developing capital funding policy.
- Designing and implementing capital funding bid rounds to support T Level delivery.

The Institute is responsible for:

- Working closely with the ESFA to advise and assist in relation to the implementation of Departmental funding policy.
- Sharing information and data with the ESFA to assist with allocation of T Levels to funding bands.
- Advising ESFA through the annual budgeting process of contractual requirements to fund the development and delivery of TQs.

Industry placements management

The Department (through the ESFA) is responsible for:

- Development and delivery of industry placement policy as a key element of the overall T Level Programme to enable the sustainable delivery of high quality industry placements, including:
 - Developing and managing industry placement policy;
 - Developing and managing industry placement funding policy;
 - Developing and managing employer engagement strategy;
 - Developing and managing employer quality assurance policy.
- Managing funding with providers for T Level industry placements, including calculating and communicating funding allocations.
- Delivering local and national campaigns on T Levels and industry placements for employers and providers, and creating and providing advice and guidance.
- Creating and maintaining a matching service to support employers in finding suitable providers to service their industry placement offer.
- Assessing and approving providers to deliver industry placements through ensuring they have robust implementation plans, and monitoring and reviewing provider progress in implementing these.
- Managing provider interventions where industry placements are deemed substandard.
- Compiling and sharing data on planned and actual industry placement starts, dropouts and completions.

The Institute is responsible for:

Working with the Department to develop industry placement policy and delivery plans, having regard to departmental policy when making determinations regarding the components of the T Level.

Certification Management

The Department (through the ESFA) is responsible for:

- Development of the assessment, overarching grading and certification policy.
- The collection of assessment results from providers, including remarked and resits, collating data and issuing overall T Level results and certificates to providers.
- Setting the process and criteria providers must follow in order to request certificates.
- The issuing of T Level certificates.
- Reporting to the Institute on assessment results and certificates / statements issued.

The Institute is responsible for:

- Working with the ESFA to ensure quality assured certification of T Levels.
- Advising the ESFA on the overall integrity and quality of the system for awarding certificates.
- Advising the ESFA on the design of certificates.

Overall Marketing, Communications and Engagement

The Department (through the ESFA) is responsible for:

- Developing and implementing an overarching communications and engagement strategy for the T Level programme, working closely with the Institute.
- Marketing the T Level brand to raise awareness and establish T Levels as a viable alternative to the academic route.
- Developing and implementing a marketing, communications and engagement strategy for providers, employers, parents and young people, with a clear role for the Institute.
- Raising awareness of T Levels with providers, employers, parents and young people, delivering local and national campaigns.
- Developing and implementing a national triage process for all employers to contact on T Level enquiries.
- Inspiring and engaging with employers, of all sizes, to engage with T Levels from 2020, and conducting capacity development activity from September 2018.
- Communicating key developments and announcements to providers.
- Creating and managing T Level information, advice and guidance for AOs, employers and providers on gov.uk.

The Institute is responsible for:

- Maintaining a Relationship Management function for T Levels, engaging with employers, including the recruitment of employer panels to oversee the development of T Level content.
- Working closely with Department and ESFA, playing an active role in communications in line with the overall strategy to ensure key stakeholders are aware, endorse and participate in the T Level reforms. Publishing and refreshing a list of approved TQs.

Governance

The Department (through the ESFA) is responsible for:

- Overall responsibility for the T Level programme as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO).
- Agreeing with the Institute, objectives and reporting criteria, reflecting priorities set out in the TE Reform Programme mandate.
- Establishing how the Institute will account for its responsibilities for delivery of the T Level Programme and the escalation routes available to address issues of concern.

The Institute is responsible for:

- Reporting to the Department on progress against agreed objectives for its responsibilities on T Levels.
- Establishing governance arrangements to ensure timely delivery of the procurement process, development of high quality TQs and effective contract management.
- Providing regular TQ performance updates to the Department, including quarterly (or more frequently as the need arises) meetings with the Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills.



Department
for Education

© Crown copyright 2019

This publication (not including logos) is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

To view this licence:

visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3

email psi@nationalarchives.gov.uk

write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

About this publication:

enquiries www.education.gov.uk/contactus

download www.gov.uk/government/publications

Reference: DFE-00055-2019



Follow us on Twitter:
[@educationgovuk](https://twitter.com/educationgovuk)



Like us on Facebook:
facebook.com/educationgovuk