



Department  
for Education

# **T Level Transition Programme**

**Supporting young people to progress  
onto and succeed on a T Level**

**Framework for delivery from academic  
year 2022 to 2023**

**December 2021**

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## Foreword by Alex Burghart MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills



We are at an exciting stage in the widest reaching and most significant reforms to technical education in a generation, with T Levels at the heart of these. Plans are becoming reality and young people, education providers and employers are already learning and taking part in delivery. It is critical to our nation's economy, productivity and future success on the world stage that we have a world-class technical education system: to help young people to develop the higher skills and knowledge to succeed in rewarding careers, and to give employers the skilled workforce that they need.

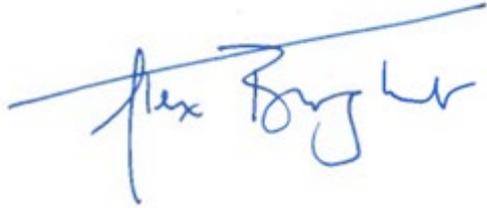
T Levels will be the new gold standard for technical education – and we want as many young people as possible who would benefit from T Levels, to have the opportunity to do one. I am delighted that in September 2020, alongside T Levels, we launched the T Level Transition Programme, an exciting new preparatory programme to provide a high-quality route into T Levels for students.

The first year of delivery has successfully finished and the second year is underway. The number of education providers delivering the programme is growing – increasing the number of young people benefitting from it. We have seen a wide range of practice from early delivery and we have been learning from this early practice to refine the programme, to ensure all students can benefit from a high-quality and more consistent experience, wherever they are taking it. In addition to working closely with T Level and Transition Programme providers, we have also worked with a wider network of other education providers, employers, education specialists and sector stakeholders, and I am very grateful for their time and expertise in informing and scrutinising the changes we have made to the programme.

Alongside the introduction of T Levels, we are implementing changes to streamline and improve the quality of the level 3 and level 2 qualifications systems. We will soon be launching a consultation on our proposed reforms to post-16 qualifications at level 2 and below in England. The T Level Transition Programme is an integral part of the education

landscape at level 2. We look forward to hearing the views from the sector on these proposals.

I look forward to working with you as the T Level Transition Programme grows and supports more young people to progress to a T Level.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alex Fowler". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned below a horizontal line that extends across the width of the signature.

## Introduction

1. The T Level Transition Programme provides a high-quality route onto T Levels, for students who would benefit from the additional study time and preparation that it will give them before they start their T Level. We are delighted that around 70 T Level providers are now delivering the programme for the first four T Level routes.
2. We are taking a phased approach to implementing the programme alongside the introduction of T Levels. We are working closely with a subset of early T Level providers to explore different approaches to delivery, to help determine the shape of the programme.
3. In April 2021 we announced our plans for firming up the programme for implementation from September 2022. This is to ensure we have the right balance between consistency in how students are prepared for a T Level and the flexibility the programme needs to support each student individually.
4. Over the last year, we have used evidence from the first year of delivery and wider evidence and research to refine the Framework for Delivery. We have worked with a wide range of T Level Transition Programme providers, other education providers, employers, education specialists and other sector stakeholders to test and refine our proposals, to help ensure that we have captured the right minimum expectations and outcomes that enable student progression to T Levels.
5. As a result, we have strengthened the Framework for Delivery in several ways, to help education providers design and deliver high-quality T Level Transition Programmes for their students. We have:
  - set out some key principles for the programme
  - identified the core knowledge, skills and behaviours we expect students to learn or develop, including technical outcomes for each T Level route
  - brought more clarity and detail to the delivery expectations
6. We have published this revised Framework for Delivery for implementation from September 2022 onwards, as well as:
  - national technical outcomes for the first seven T Level Transition Programme routes
  - a [work experience placement template](#) that education providers can use if they wish, to design and deliver work experience placements
  - a [resource to support the delivery of high-quality route-based projects](#)
  - a [guide for students](#) setting out what they can expect from the programme
7. T Levels are new and substantively different to the rest of the technical education offer. We encourage education providers to see the T Level Transition Programme as something different also; and as an opportunity to think afresh about how to give this cohort of students the best support and most relevant foundation to help them progress onto and do well on T Levels. The Framework includes a small number of examples of good practice from the first year of delivery.

8. This document applies to England only and should be read alongside the [16 to 19 funding guidance and rules](#) and the [16 to 19 study programme guidance](#). In this document, we refer to “T Level Transition Programme” and “Transition Programme” interchangeably. We confirmed in April 2021 that “T Level Transition Programme” is the national name for the programme.
9. We will update the Framework to reflect any relevant policy changes. For example, we will consider any relevant implications of the qualifications review at level 2 and below and the SEND Review.

## Themes from early delivery

10. Many early Transition Programme providers have embraced the freedom to tailor their programmes to meet students’ individual needs and the needs of their own settings. The programmes are varied, but certain themes have emerged:
  - **Increased importance of diagnostic assessment:** There has been a greater emphasis on measuring distance travelled throughout the year against the initial assessment. English and maths, study skills, employability skills and digital skills have been key themes for every provider, with many producing in-house skills matrices to assess students and identify gaps.
  - **Importance of work preparation:** Many providers increased time spent on work preparation activities, to address the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on students’ skills and confidence ahead of sending them on work experience.
  - **Shift towards smaller qualifications:** Most providers are choosing to include qualifications in the technical component, with a trend towards offering smaller qualifications to allow more time to be spent on the other components.
  - **Using assessment methods to prepare for T Levels:** Providers have used a wide range of assessment methods including assignments, projects and exams throughout the programme, to develop students’ confidence in these methods for success on T Levels.
  - **Significance of English and maths:** These subjects have played a central role in providers’ programmes and some providers are refining their approach to contextualisation of these subjects. Where contextualisation of English and maths has worked well, there has been effective collaboration between employers, technical, English and maths specialists.

### Student quote from the first year

*“The T-Level transition childcare programme has been amazing and I feel as though it has set me up to be a good childcare teacher in the future”* – T Level Transition Programme student, Education and Childcare route

# Purpose of the T Level Transition Programme and who it is for

11. The T Level Transition Programme is a preparatory programme for level 2 students who aspire to progress onto a T Level. Its purpose is to help students develop a broad range of knowledge, skills and behaviours that will help them to progress onto, and succeed on, their chosen T Level route.

## Age range

12. The programme is available for young people aged 16 to 19 and for those with education, health and care (EHC) plans up to age 24. However, when enrolling students onto the programme, education providers need to take into account that students will need to be eligible to receive 16 to 19 funding throughout their subsequent T Level. This would require them to start their T Level no later than the academic year in which they are 18, unless they have an EHC plan.

## Target group

13. The T Level Transition Programme is one of a range of programmes for young people, so we want to ensure it is targeted at those who will benefit from it most. The core target group are students who have the potential to progress onto a T Level with the extra support and preparation that the programme can provide. Specifically, it is for students who, for example:

- demonstrate an aptitude and keenness to progress onto a T Level
- could realistically be prepared, during the course of the programme, for the step up to level 3 technical study on a T Level
- would benefit from the additional time the T Level Transition Programme allows to build their knowledge and skills in English and/or maths, where they don't already have a GCSE grade 9 to 4 in these subjects
- learn better in a predominantly classroom/workshop-based environment rather than the workplace

14. The T Level Transition Programme is not intended for:

- students who are ready to start a T Level without the need to take a level 2 programme first
- students who are not expected to be ready for a T Level by the end of the Transition Programme, for example where their learning or development needs cannot realistically be addressed within a transition year
- students whose study aim on enrolment is not progression to a T Level
- students with a desire for, and who might be better suited to, other more work-based technical provision such as an apprenticeship or traineeship

15. Within the core target group, education providers can decide their specific enrolment criteria, to enable them to recruit the students who need this programme before progressing onto a T Level. We will monitor enrolment,

completion and destinations data to ensure that students are being enrolled on the programme in line with its intended target group, and that it is meeting its policy aim of supporting progression to T Levels. We will review whether we need to make further changes in light of this monitoring. See section on Monitoring at paragraph 76 for further information.

16. We will also monitor information on age, disability, sex, ethnicity and other relevant protected characteristics, to ensure that young people in the core target group with these characteristics are able to access the T Level Transition Programme, and to monitor the impacts upon them to inform future development of the programme.

# What the T Level Transition Programme should include

## Key principles

17. The programme is underpinned by a set of key principles that reflect what we think a good programme looks like to prepare and support students for their chosen T Level route, or alternative next step. We would expect strong T Level Transition Programmes to reflect these key principles.

### Key principles for the T Level Transition Programme

- 1) Provide relevant preparation for what students will experience on T Levels, with motivational opportunities to interact with employers and a line of sight between what students do on the T Level Transition Programme and T Levels
- 2) Develop core knowledge, skills and behaviours that prepare students for progressing to level 3 study in their chosen T Level route. This includes industry-relevant technical knowledge and skills and, particularly important, developing the broader skills and positive behaviours that students will need for success on T Levels and in the workplace
- 3) Ensure students are clear about what they need to achieve for successful completion of the programme and progression onto their chosen T Level route, and develop a sense of ownership about their learning, development and progress
- 4) Be responsive to students' individual needs and allow sufficient time in the programme to help them meet their development goals and support their pastoral needs, to give them the best chance of being ready for level 3 technical study
- 5) Provide a holistic and integrated approach to developing core knowledge, skills and behaviours where different components of the programme complement and reinforce students' development and T Level preparation
- 6) Help students to make the right decision about what to do after the programme. Whether they are deciding on the right T level or an alternative destination, all students should be supported to make the right decision for them

## Core knowledge, skills and behaviours

18. The T Level Transition Programme is expected to develop students' knowledge, skills and behaviours in five key areas to help prepare them for a T Level in their chosen route (see diagram 1 on the next page). These areas are also important for success in the workplace and will be valuable whatever students' next steps after the programme.

**Diagram 1: Areas of core knowledge, skills and behaviours for the T Level Transition Programme**



19. Within each of these five areas, we have set out the core knowledge, skills and behaviours we expect students to develop on the programme, as a minimum (see table 1 below). Education providers have discretion to augment this core with additional knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, where it reflects the specific needs of students, is relevant to their particular T Level route, or in response to local employer needs. Generic skills such as problem solving and critical thinking should not be taught in isolation but developed in the context of knowledge acquisition, for example through the teaching of technical content.

<b>Table 1: List of core knowledge, skills and behaviours for the programme</b>	
<b>Area</b>	<b>Core knowledge, skills and behaviours</b>
Industry-relevant technical knowledge and skills	Core technical knowledge and skills <b>relevant to students' chosen T level route</b> as set out in the <b>national technical outcomes</b> for the programme <b>Knowledge about different T Levels</b> and their associated careers
Skills for successful study	<b>Skills and behaviours to prepare for the type of level 3 study and assessments encountered on a T Level</b> , including how to plan, monitor and review the effectiveness of their learning, and time management

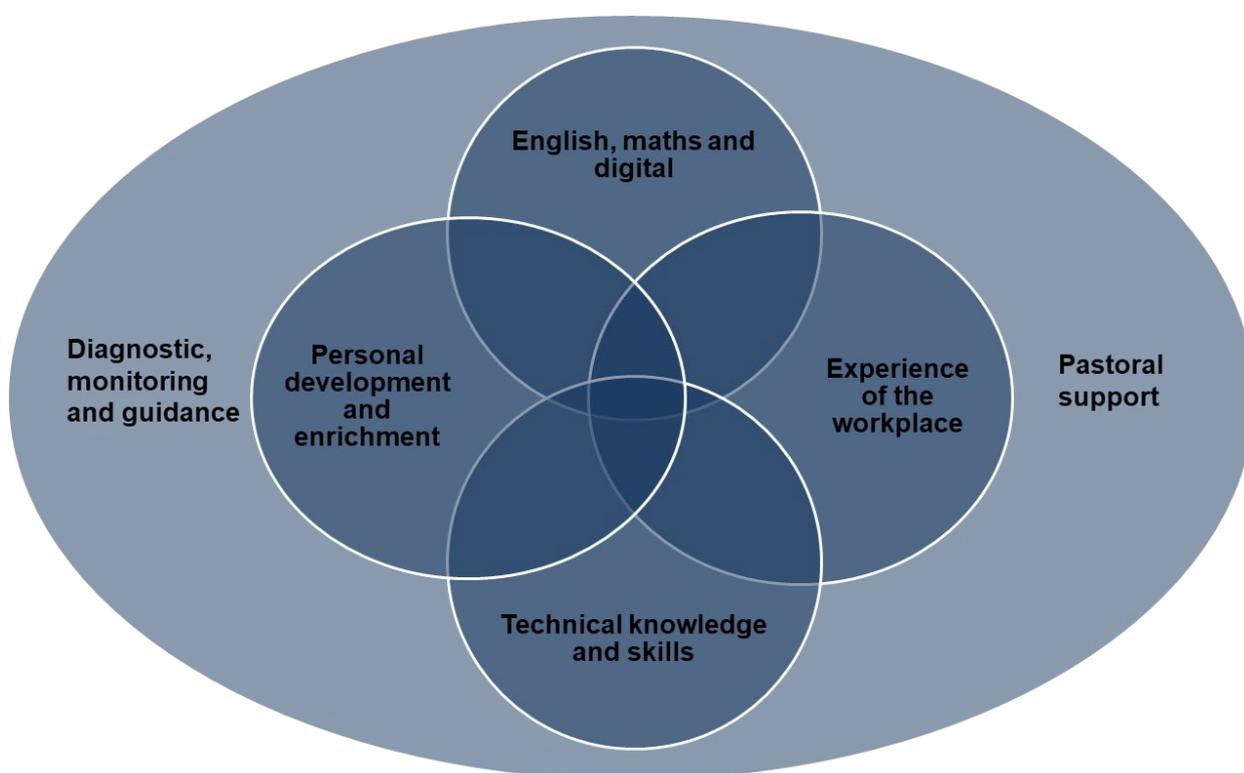
<b>Table 1: List of core knowledge, skills and behaviours for the programme</b>	
<b>Area</b>	<b>Core knowledge, skills and behaviours</b>
	<p><b>Study and assessment techniques</b> to prepare students for their chosen T Level route. For example, formal writing, researching and referencing, critical thinking and problem-solving techniques, and exam strategies, such as responding to command verbs</p>
English, maths and digital skills	<p><b>GCSEs or Functional Skills in English and/or maths (depending on prior attainment)</b> where students do not already have a grade 4 GCSE in these subjects</p> <p><b>Application of contextualised English and maths skills</b> relating to a student’s chosen T Level route</p> <p><b>Basic digital skills</b> where a student needs to develop them</p>
Knowledge and skills for the workplace	<p><b>Professional workplace behaviour.</b> Introduction to the standards expected for T Level industry placements, for example professionalism, taking responsibility, producing results</p> <p><b>Effective communication,</b> including listening and speaking skills, use of formal language, positive body language and presentation skills</p> <p><b>Teamwork and relationship building.</b> This could be developed through, for example, group projects, workplace scenarios or enrichment activities</p> <p><b>Organisational policy and procedures.</b> Awareness of, for example, importance of dress code, adhering to health and safety policies, confidentiality, drugs and alcohol policies</p> <p><b>Travel training.</b> Time keeping and punctuality, how to plan travel to work journeys</p>
Positive attitude and behaviours	<p><b>Strategies to build resilience, confidence and self-esteem,</b> such as positive mindset techniques and reflecting on their progress throughout the programme</p> <p><b>Managing stress and coping with setbacks,</b> for example, through mindfulness and meditation techniques, understanding the link between a healthy lifestyle and good mental health, and knowing how to access additional mental health support if needed</p> <p><b>Setting goals and reflecting and responding to feedback.</b> Setting and planning how to reach learning and development goals. Learning how to seek, respond to and use feedback and self-reflection to increase self-awareness and achieve development goals</p>

## Delivery components

20. To support the development of these core knowledge, skills and behaviours, this Framework sets out corresponding expectations of providers in delivering the programme, brigaded into six delivery components (see diagram 2 below). We expect education providers to design and combine the components into a holistic programme to engage and support students, provide stretch and challenge, and prepare them effectively for T Level study in their chosen route. Education providers will therefore need to consider how the programme may need to differ from other level 2 provision they offer.

21. The delivery components are inter-related and can reinforce each other. We do not expect them to be delivered sequentially or in isolation, although we expect some initial diagnostic and guidance activities at the start of the programme.

**Diagram 2: Delivery components for the T Level Transition Programme**



22. Whilst we expect this to be a tailored programme to prepare students for a T Level in their chosen route, we recognise that education providers will need to deliver their programmes in a viable way that fits their circumstances. For example:

- running separate Transition Programmes for each route, where student volumes permit
- grouping students across routes for some components, when this is the most practical (for example for English and maths or personal development classes) or grouping across specific routes (for example for technical skills)

- tailoring the programme through setting route-specific projects, where student volumes are small

23. However education providers organise its delivery, students should understand that they are on the T Level Transition Programme – and their core aim should be recorded as such in data returns (see section on Core aim at paragraph 70) – and understand that its purpose is to prepare them for a T Level in their chosen route.

24. An element of tailoring to individual need is also an important part of the programme, to give all students the best opportunity of achieving their individual learning and development goals and progressing to a T Level. Education providers can decide how to weight each component within the overall programme, as the emphasis may differ for students according to their starting points, ongoing progress and development. For example, tailoring the amount of English and maths support, the type of work experience they have or their pastoral care, depending on what each student needs.

## Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

25. Tailoring to need will be particularly important for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), to ensure they are able to benefit from the programme. The [16 to 19 study programme guidance](#) includes guidance on tailoring study programmes to the individual aspirations and needs of students with SEND. The [SEND Code of Practice](#) sets out the responsibilities of post-16 providers for young people with SEND, both with and without an EHC plan.

## Diagnostic, monitoring and guidance

### At the beginning of the programme

26. At the beginning of the programme, education providers are expected to identify students' learning, development and pastoral support needs – including for any inter-agency support – in order to tailor the rest of the programme to meet the student's needs, including students with SEND. Specifically, we expect education providers to ensure that:

- Students appreciate the knowledge, skills and behaviours they are aiming to develop (at what stages), what they will be doing on the programme to achieve this and how it will prepare them for a T Level in their chosen route;
- Students' needs are identified through appropriate diagnostic activities – for example, one-to-one supervision, assessment activities including self-assessment, assignments, self-reflection – including for work readiness. Education providers may wish to develop knowledge, skills and behaviour matrices to facilitate their diagnostic activities; and
- Students are supported to take ownership of their learning and development, through having a clear understanding of their development goals and

agreeing an individual development plan with their tutor setting out their key goals and milestones.

27. Education providers should also use this period to ensure students can make an informed choice about which T Level route to prepare for. Where students have a preferred T Level in mind when they enrol, they should be supported to determine whether this is the right one for them; for example, in terms of whether it will be what they expect, and whether they feel they will have the motivation and aptitude for it. Where they are undecided, they should be supported to consider different options. We would expect students to be supported in these decisions through:

- learning about different T Levels and their associated careers
- curriculum time or early exposure to work settings to assess their aptitude and appetite for a route, for example through tasters, contextualised assignments, mini-projects, early exposure to work settings or employer encounters

28. Education providers can determine the duration of the initial diagnostic and guidance period based on the needs of their cohort. After this period, the Transition Programme should be tailored to support students in preparing for their chosen T Level route.

29. During this initial period, a student (in agreement with their education provider) may decide that another programme would be better suited to them. If this decision is taken before the student completes the funding qualifying period, and their preferred programme is available to them, the student can move without any impact on funding. After this, normal 16 to 19 funding rules apply.

## During the programme

30. Ongoing monitoring of students' progress and guidance is expected to continue throughout the programme, to ensure they are receiving appropriate support to successfully complete the programme. This is expected to include:

- regular reviews of students' progress across the programme, against their development plans, ideally through one-to-one tutorial time where this is feasible, with progress reviews reflected in their development plans
- ensuring students receive clear feedback and are supported to develop reflective practice to build confidence and agency in their own development
- further support and signposting to specialist support where needed

31. We also expect education providers to ensure students are well supported to decide their next steps after the programme and to support students to take ownership of their decisions on next steps, through:

- careers guidance and planning throughout the programme, tailored to their strengths and aspirations, and taking into account the Gatsby Benchmarks for good careers guidance (see Annex A)

- information, advice and guidance about different T level pathways, including considering the full range of careers associated with different options, and support to choose the right pathway
- information, advice and guidance about alternative progression options and, where a T Level is not the right choice, support to decide the right next step for them

## Ongoing monitoring and assessment

32. Education providers will need to consider their overall approach to assessment across the programme – for example, diagnostic, formative and summative assessment – as part of their monitoring and review of students' progress at the beginning, during and at the end of the programme. Education providers have discretion over the assessment methodologies they use and are encouraged to consider how they can use assessment on the Transition Programme to help prepare students for how they will be assessed on T Levels.
33. On T Levels, students will be assessed on broad knowledge of their chosen route and pathway through exams, as well as through practical summative assessments that test their overall competence in an occupation. T Level students will need to practice applying knowledge and skills, honing skills and building up to the required performance standard, in advance of the formal summative assessments. The national technical outcomes developed for the T Level Transition Programme are aligned with knowledge and skills requirements of T Levels. Although these outcomes are pitched appropriately for level 2 students, and are not about gaining occupational competence, assessing students on these summatively (after they have learned and practised applying knowledge and skills) should provide Transition Programme students with opportunities to gain relevant experience of this type of learning and assessment before they start T Levels.

## **Using a knowledge, skills and behaviours matrix to monitor students' progress during the programme**

An FE college in Yorkshire and the Humber is delivering a non-qualification Transition Programme for the Construction route. The college wanted to support students' development by measuring their distance travelled over the year, rather than just a pass or fail against a set of outcomes. To do this, the college developed their own knowledge, skills and behaviours matrix to support initial and ongoing diagnostic activities for all aspects of the programme. The matrix covers for example study skills and behaviours, both in terms of tools for learning and developing assessment techniques; employability skills and behaviours, both analytical and interpersonal; other important behaviours, such as appropriate use of social media; essential English, maths and digital skills; and technical knowledge, for example the application process for the approval of a construction project.

The matrix is aligned with T Level curriculum performance outcomes and industry standards derived from feedback from labour market information and employers. The recording of students' development throughout the year against the knowledge, skills and behaviours is structured around three competency levels: level A, level B and T Level ready, each of which includes several stages. This allows the provider to chart students' starting points, progress to date and targets, which supports the tailoring of students' learning to focus on their areas for development. The college believes the positive impact of this approach is reflected in 100% of Transition Programme students successfully completing the programme and progressing to level 3 destinations, including T Levels.

## **Motivating students through focusing on effort and student ownership of their own development**

An FE college in the South West delivered Transition Programmes in the Digital and Education and Childcare routes. They saw the diagnostic period as an opportunity for students who might feel disenchanted with education to reset and take ownership of their development. The college chose to focus on monitoring student effort to encourage adaptive behaviours and attitudes, which they measured throughout the programme. Students undertook a self-assessment activity that explored attitudes to learning and typical student behaviours at the outset to understand their academic and personal development needs better; and they were supported to explore career and progression options based on their aspirations. The college developed a grid of adaptive behaviours (for example independent work ethic, organisation and punctuality) to measure effort across the programme and awarded students 'effort grades' at six intervals in the year. Students were also given qualitative feedback and specific goals to work towards, while parents were given suggestions of how to support their child's progress. The college reports that this approach has led to a marked decrease in disciplinary issues and strong attendance on the T Level Transition Programme. Students have described the focus on effort as encouraging and the college feels that students are committed, with a sense of purpose and a drive to attain success.

## English, maths and digital

34. English and maths are crucial employability skills and they are imperative for higher level study, including T Levels. We therefore expect education providers to support Transition Programme students to develop their knowledge and skills in English and maths, where they do not already have a GCSE grade 9 to 4 in these subjects. Education providers can tailor the size and duration of this component according to students' individual needs.
35. As the T Level Transition Programme is a type of 16 to 19 study programme, the 16 to 19 English and maths [condition of funding](#) applies to students who do not already have a grade 4 in these subjects. This is consistent with T Levels, where the condition of funding has replaced the English and maths exit requirement. Effective early diagnostic assessment and ongoing monitoring of progress will be needed to determine what support students need. Where students already have a grade 4 – or achieve it early in the programme – providers could consider how to maintain or build on students' English and maths knowledge and skills.
36. GCSE and Functional Skills qualifications in English and maths are clear on the knowledge and skills students should learn, to build confidence and recognise the importance of English and maths in work and life. We also expect education providers to support T Level Transition Programme students to develop an appreciation of the importance and application of English and maths to their chosen T Level route and future career path, by making students aware of:
- the contextualised applications of English and maths that naturally occur within the national technical outcomes (and any additional technical content) they are studying on the programme
  - how these contextualised applications link back to the GCSE or Functional Skills English and maths qualifications they are studying
37. Like English and maths, basic digital skills are important to everyday life and work, and some young people still do not have these skills. Where students lack basic digital skills, we would expect them to be supported to develop these skills as part of the Transition Programme. An initial assessment of a student's digital skills will be needed to determine this. We would expect education providers to integrate basic digital skills development, where it is needed, into other elements of the programme, to engage and support individual students. This could include using naturally occurring opportunities to develop [Essential Digital Skills](#) and the General Digital Competencies set out in the [Operating Instructions for Creation of Outline Content](#), within the relevant national technical outcomes for their chosen T Level route.

## **Timetabling classes for GCSE and contextualisation, and strong collaboration between technical and English and maths teams**

This FE college in the South West is delivering Transition Programmes for the Digital and Education and Childcare routes. The Transition Programme has been an opportunity for the college to refresh their offer in these two routes and address the main barrier preventing students from progressing to level 3: GCSE maths and English. In this way the college can also address social disadvantage. The college has timetabled 96 hours per year for each of English and maths GCSE for students who are required to study these subjects. GCSE classes are taught by English and maths specialists. Students are grouped into their T Level routes for GCSE teaching. All students, including those who already have achieved a grade 4 in English and maths, attend an additional 36 hours of contextualised classes for each subject, tailored to their T Level route. Where possible, GCSE and contextualised teaching classes take place on the same day to support those students retaking to embed key concepts and skills in their long-term memory and apply them consistently. English and maths specialists and technical staff collaborate closely, with English and maths leads supporting technical staff to deliver contextualised classes. This ensures that key skills and concepts can be built upon, practised, and recalled. Technical staff are not expected to deliver the GCSE maths or English curriculum. All staff meet regularly to discuss progress and to ensure that contextualisation is delivered as effectively as possible. The college believes that this approach has resulted in a marked improvement in attainment, with more than 50% of Transition Programme students achieving a grade 4 or higher in their GCSE maths and/or English.

## **Experience of the workplace**

38. This is an important component of the T Level Transition Programme to prepare students for a T Level industry placement. We expect all students to undertake appropriate work experience activities and workplace preparation tailored to what each student needs, informed by an assessment of their work readiness.

## **Preparation for the workplace**

39. Effective work preparation is crucial in supporting students to build up the skills and confidence they need for work experience and a challenging industry placement. Education providers should ensure that all students take part in relevant, tailored activities to prepare them for entering the workplace in advance of their work experience to ensure students and employers get the most out of their work experience. Examples of preparation activities include talks, pre-visits and help with planning travel to the workplace. See the section below for our expectations on work experience.

40. Education providers and employers will need to agree any specific workplace preparation requirements. However, we expect this workplace preparation to include, as a minimum, the core knowledge and skills for the workplace that have

been set out for all T Level Transition Programme students (see section on core knowledge, skills and behaviours at paragraph 18), as well as any individual preparation identified through assessment of students' work readiness. Some students with SEND may require a more tailored programme of work preparation activities. Annex A includes links to useful resources for supporting preparation for the workplace.

## High-quality work experience

41. We expect all students to have high-quality work experience that:

- Includes as many meaningful interactions with real employers as possible during the programme, through a range of activities, for example mentoring, site visits and work tasters or shadowing. Ideally, activities should be in-person or through remote working where appropriate. Remote working can either take place at the provider setting or, where appropriate, in an employer training centre, which simulates the working environment and is supervised by the employer. The students should not work from their home setting;
- Includes an in-person placement with an external employer, wherever possible. Placements can be through remote working where necessary, to ensure students have the opportunity of a placement, but they should include some in-person engagement. The rules for remote working set out above apply;
- Is related to their chosen T Level route where appropriate and feasible.

42. Work experience placements with an employer should:

- Have clear goals aligned with their development needs. Education providers could use the Transition Programme [work experience placement template](#) published alongside this Framework to agree these with the student and employer;
- Be appropriately tailored in duration and structured to their specific goals and work readiness needs. Work placement hours must be reasonable for a student of that age, and should reflect the most suitable pattern for the student and employer's capacity;
- Give students the opportunity to reflect on their work experience and receive employer feedback after their work experience.

43. In setting up work placements and other types of work experience, education providers must comply with their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, including provisions for reasonable adjustments, so that students with SEND can benefit from high-quality work experience as much as their peers. Education providers must consider, in discussion with the student and the employer, whether a young person with complex needs and/or SEND requires more support in the workplace than their peers. Education providers must also ensure adequate support is in place for these students, and that employers understand their needs.

44. The ask of employers is significantly increasing through T Level industry placements, so education providers need to consider employer capacity when arranging work experience for T Level Transition Programme students; and consider broader opportunities for work experience outside their chosen T Level route where necessary. The [16 to 19 study programme guidance](#) includes guidance on work experience, including in light of COVID-19.

### **Using a work placement readiness programme to prepare students for their work experience placement**

This FE college in Yorkshire and the Humber delivered increased work preparation hours for their Education and Childcare and Digital Transition Programmes, in response to the challenges in securing external placements in light of COVID-19, and to address the impact of COVID-19 on students' skills and confidence ahead of sending them out on placement. Students participated in a range of work preparation activities, including internal placements and collaboration with T Level students to embed stretch and challenge. For example, teams comprising T Level and Transition Programme students competed on the delivery of a project set by an employer. The employer then acted as a judge to determine the winning team.

The college ran a placement readiness programme for Transition Programme students led by placement readiness assessors. These are mainly subject specialists and skills and employability trainers who organise, monitor and debrief industry placements and deliver workshops in work readiness, to prepare for placements. Clear expectations were set for students prior to placement as part of this programme: for example, that they knew how to keep themselves safe in the workplace, and had a good understanding of the expectations of the work environment they would be joining. Mock environments were created to simulate placements and give students the opportunity both to observe and carry out simulated practice as early years practitioners, before going out on external placement. The placement readiness assessment involved observation of students' practical application of vocational theory (for example, building a PC) and their development of employability skills (for example, through practising interview techniques). The college feels that the placement readiness assessor-led programme was extremely successful in enabling students to go out on external placement with confidence and relevant skills. As a result, the college has decided to continue running an increased programme of work preparation prior to placement in the future.

## **Technical knowledge and skills**

45. The Transition Programme should give students a broad introduction to their chosen T Level route through industry-relevant technical knowledge and practical skills. The purpose of this component is to give students some introductory content as a stepping-stone to what they will cover on a T Level in their chosen route. For example, this might include producing digital solutions using programming principles for Digital students; designing, surveying and planning a building project for Construction students; observing children's development for Education and Childcare students. This component will be a strong motivator to

engage and interest students. As the Transition Programme is not about gaining occupational competence, we do not expect that it will be the biggest component in terms of hours.

46. To provide a minimum level of consistency for students, we expect the programme to cover the national technical outcomes for the T Level Transition Programme, relevant to their chosen T Level route. These include a small number of outcomes, each with underpinning knowledge, skills and behaviours, that we expect students to be able to demonstrate by the end of the programme. The national technical outcomes for each route have been published alongside this Framework.
47. The national technical outcomes are intended to be used by education providers to inform their decisions about what technical content to cover. They are intentionally high-level to provide a minimum foundation and retain a level of flexibility. Education providers could include additional technical content, further breadth and/or depth or more stretching level 3 'bridging' content towards the end of the programme. Including some level 3 content could be motivating for students and it allows education providers to formatively assess their readiness for level 3 study.
48. Education providers have discretion over how to ensure students achieve the national technical outcomes and how they use these outcomes to inform their approaches to delivery. Based on what they consider to be most appropriate for their students in preparing them for T Levels, education providers can deliver the national technical outcomes using a qualification, non-qualification delivery or a combination of both:
  - Through an existing level 2 qualification that is both on [ESFA's list of approved qualifications for 14 to 19 year olds](#) and available for 16 to 19 year olds. Education providers have discretion to determine which qualification(s) they wish to use. Vendor-certificated courses are not ESFA-funded, as per the [16-19 funding guidance](#);
  - Non-qualification-based delivery of the national technical outcomes. This could be delivered, for example, as discrete modules, workshops, projects or as part of other components. Education providers will need to consider their approach to summative assessment.
49. Final decisions on the exact size of the technical component and the role of qualifications on the programme in the long-term are still to be made. We will consider this alongside the level 2 and below qualifications review.

## **Route-based project**

50. To support the application and/or development of their knowledge and understanding and help them prepare for a T Level employer-set project, we expect education providers to provide an opportunity for students to complete a small project relevant to their chosen T Level route. This should be based on a real issue relevant to employers and, if feasible, informed by an employer, with opportunities for meaningful employer interaction during the project. This could be,

for example, through employer visits, presenting project outputs to employers, or having an industry mentor during the project.

51. Projects need to be well-focussed, realistic and manageable for students to complete during the programme and students need to be clear about the knowledge and skills the project will allow them to demonstrate (for example technical, transferable, English, maths and digital skills). To help students prepare for T Level employer-set projects, and ensure consistency for students, education providers are expected to ensure that route-based projects support students to:

- plan their approach to the project brief
- conduct research using appropriate techniques
- apply appropriate knowledge and skills
- produce a project outcome

52. Alongside this Framework, we have published a [resource to help education providers design and deliver effective route-based projects](#).

### **Using T Level-aligned curriculum and assessment methods to deliver non-qualification Transition Programmes**

An FE college in the North West is delivering non-qualification Transition Programmes for the Digital and Education and Childcare routes, valuing the level of flexibility this gives them to weight and tailor their programmes. Students study a modern programme co-designed with employers and a technical curriculum which links directly to their prospective T Level.

The curriculum focuses on the key knowledge and skills that underpin the relevant T Level and is taught and assessed in a way which incorporates applied skills and employer-set projects. The college has developed a skills matrix to identify the knowledge, skills and behaviours that students will need to develop during the programme, which is informed and endorsed by their partner employers. For example, given that the digital sector is largely project-based, their Digital Transition Programme aims to embed relevant skills and behaviours such as time management, participation in professional meetings, presenting to clients and initiative. Students follow a repeating schedule of two weeks' technical delivery, one week of assessment, and one week incorporating individual target-setting and identification of support needs. Students are assessed regularly by examinations to mirror T Level assessment methodologies, preparation which is considered by the provider to be just as important as the technical content itself.

The college was pleased with its first year of delivery, with positive feedback from students, successful progression to level 3, and opportunities to reflect and amend the model so that it works for each curriculum area and its students.

## Using a project approach to deliver non-qualification Transition Programmes

An FE college in the South East is delivering non-qualification Transition Programmes for the Digital and Education and Childcare routes, using an approach focussed on the completion of small work-related projects every three weeks. This allows students to apply and demonstrate learnt knowledge, which the college sees as a key study skill for T Level success. Projects include taster opportunities for students to study all potential T Level occupational specialisms, helping them identify their preferred T Level route. The college's Education and Childcare Transition Programme, for example, introduces students to the most important aspects of childcare and the behaviours and attributes required of an early years practitioner, followed by safeguarding and health and safety units necessary for securing work experience. Student assessments are designed to become more challenging towards the end of the programme, to be more in line with the T Level. Overall, their project-based approach has been well-received by students, viewed as confidence-building and providing strong preparation for progression to T Levels.

## Personal development and enrichment

53. The T Level Transition Programme should include relevant and meaningful personal development and enrichment opportunities to support students to develop the study skills they will need for success on T Levels and the positive behaviours and key transferable skills for success in the workplace. As set out in the core knowledge, skills and behaviours for the programme, this should include supporting students to:

- develop the study skills and behaviours that will prepare them for the type of level 3 study and assessments they will encounter on a T Level, to help students approach independent learning tasks and assessments with confidence
- develop positive social behaviours and transferable skills that underpin learning and employability, tailored to students' development plans and career goals

54. Study skills and transferable skills should be developed through practical application in the context of knowledge acquisition, not taught in isolation. This could be through, for example, group tutorials and activities or integrating skills development into other elements of the programme (such as developing communication skills via the route-based project or developing study skills through the technical component).

55. Education providers should also provide additional opportunities for wider enrichment to support students' personal development. Enrichment activities should ideally be tailored to a student's T Level route and career aspirations. This

could include trips, youth social action activities like volunteering, or participation in programmes like National Citizen Service (see Annex A).

### **Using project-based and exam assessment designed to mirror T Level assessment methodologies**

An FE college in the South West recognised that their Transition Programme students lacked exam experience and study skills due to the impact of COVID-19. The provider felt it was important to give students opportunities to develop and practise these skills and build their confidence in preparation for a T Level.

For their Education and Childcare programme, the college uses a mixture of project-based and exam assessment designed to mirror the T Level assessment methodology. As part of their work placement, students research the benefits of physical activity and develop a lesson plan under timed conditions. They then implement their plan, receive constructive feedback, and are encouraged to reflect on their effectiveness as practitioners. This helps to develop the skills students will need for the employer-set project and industry placement components of a T Level. To prepare students further for level 3 study, each Transition Programme student collaborates on a project with a T Level student and, towards the end of the year, joins T Level classes. To give students practice revising for and answering exam questions, the college uses half-termly quizzes and has chosen to assess students' knowledge of education and childcare legislation with an exam. Students are also supported to explore their preferred learning styles and coping strategies for exam conditions. The college reports that attendance and attainment is high for the Transition Programme, and student feedback has been positive.

### **Taking a personal, evidence-based approach to developing employability skills**

An FE college in the South West identified that developing industry-relevant employability skills is vital for students to succeed on T Levels and in the workplace. The college engaged local employers and used labour market information to identify the core skills, behaviours and values needed most in the digital and high-tech industries. They use a project-based approach in the initial diagnostic period, including a 'pitch a product' activity, to evaluate students' strengths and areas for development against the skills most valued by industry. This informs students' individual development targets. Core skills and behaviours are then developed through designated sessions as well as integrated into all schemes of learning, including an employer-set project. Distance travelled is measured at three points in the year, when students self-assess their skills development progress with tutors. A final 'end-point assessment' based around the employer-set project allows students to showcase both their technical knowledge and soft skills to a panel that includes employers. The college reports that taking an evidence-based approach to personal development means students are well-prepared for their next steps. Developing skills holistically across the programme and involving employers has kept students motivated and engaged with their self-development.

## Pastoral support

56. The T Level Transition Programme should provide responsive pastoral care; and develop knowledge and behaviours that promote wellbeing and support students' engagement with their learning on the programme. It is important that sufficient time is dedicated to this component from the start, with ongoing review, to ensure students receive support or signposting to relevant services, where they are facing issues that are affecting their ability to engage with and progress on the programme.

57. We expect education providers to ensure that:

- pastoral support is responsive to individual student needs, as identified through initial and ongoing diagnostic activities, including inter-agency support where this is needed
- students are supported to take an active role in their wellbeing, through the teaching of strategies that promote good mental and physical health and support learning and development
- students learn how and when to access mental health support, including, where needed, signposting to online resources (see Annex A for examples) and to counselling services and/or the senior mental health lead where available

58. We would expect the above to be delivered alongside wider pastoral provision applicable to all students, such as Citizenship, safeguarding, Prevent Strategy and British values.

### **Developing confidence, resilience and positive behaviours through social psychology**

An FE college in the South West identified broader wellbeing issues as crucial to students' success on the Transition Programme, work placement, and T Levels. To support students' wellbeing and their engagement with the programme, the college is delivering a self-designed social psychology module as part of their pastoral support. This is delivered over the academic year, with each term exploring why people behave as they do from a biological, social or cognitive perspective. The module aims to develop confidence, resilience and positive social and professional behaviours and equip students with coping strategies and techniques, such as mindfulness and conflict resolution techniques. For example, students tend to cover the social perspective to coincide with the beginning of their work placements as this includes confidence, social skills and conflict resolution strategies. Opportunities to self-reflect and set goals are embedded throughout to encourage a growth mindset. Students have responded very positively to this approach, with high attendance and strong engagement at lessons.

## **Additional flexible content**

59. In addition to the above delivery expectations, education providers have the flexibility to add elements to the T Level Transition Programme, where this supports the needs of their students or provides important preparation to support progression to a particular T Level route. For instance, content or qualifications in science, health and safety or first aid at work, or a food hygiene certificate.

# Achievement

## Progress and achievement on the Transition Programme

60. Education providers are expected to ensure that a student's progress in each component is recorded to allow students to reflect on what they have learnt and to assist the education providers' monitoring, tracking and intervention practices. We would also expect education providers to consider how students will be able to demonstrate what they have achieved at the end of the T Level Transition Programme. If they wish, education providers may award their own certificates for achievement of the T Level Transition Programme and can decide what these certificates include.
61. Education providers have discretion about how to determine successful achievement of the T Level Transition Programme, as they do for other 16-19 study programmes. We are collecting evidence on how education providers are currently doing this, and the approaches they are taking to record and certificate achievement. We will take this evidence into account when reviewing our future approach to achievement and certification for the Transition Programme.

## Progression from the T Level Transition Programme

62. The aim of the T Level Transition Programme is to prepare students to progress onto and successfully complete a T Level, so we want and expect most students to progress to T Levels. It is essential therefore that education providers enrol students onto the programme in line with the core target group set out in this Framework.
63. Whilst completion of the Transition Programme should support progression to a T Level, it will not in itself lead to automatic enrolment onto a T Level. Students will need to apply for entry to a T Level as part of an education provider's normal enrolment practices. Education providers retain the discretion to make the final decision on their T Level cohort. They will need to make this clear to students at the outset.
64. Where progressing onto a T Level is not the right choice for a student, they will need to be supported to determine the most appropriate next step for them. This may include considering, for instance, other level 2 or level 3 study programmes, apprenticeships, traineeships, or direct entry to the workplace as appropriate (if compliant with the raising of the participation age). The Transition Programme should have developed a broad range of transferable knowledge, skills and behaviours to support students, whatever their next steps, and given them valuable work experience they can reference in their CV. We expect education providers to ensure that these students are given the appropriate careers guidance to help them secure appropriate next steps and that they are supported to complete any qualifications, including English and maths, begun on the Transition Programme.

## Planned hours and funding

### Duration

65. In most instances, we would expect the T Level Transition Programme to be a meaningful programme delivered in up to a standard academic year. Education providers will have the flexibility to move students onto a T Level during the Transition Programme, where they have progressed sufficiently to be ready and where this is a viable option. Where progressing early is not viable, students should be engaged with meaningful, stretching and challenging activities in further preparation for their chosen T Level route.
66. Education providers have the discretion to determine how best to meet the needs of students with SEND, in line with the broader [16 to 19 study programme guidance](#). For students with an EHC plan this might mean delivering the programme over a longer duration. As referenced in paragraph 25, the [SEND Code of Practice](#) sets out the responsibilities of post-16 providers for young people with SEND, both with and without an EHC plan.

### Planned hours

67. The T Level Transition Programme must be delivered within the [existing study programme funding rules](#). We expect it to be a full-time study programme (see [funding guidance](#) for details of planned hours) to allow sufficient time to deliver the expectations set out in this Framework. A part-time programme may be agreed in certain circumstances, as per the [16 to 19 study programme guidance](#).
68. [Planned hours](#) are timetabled and supervised by the education provider and are agreed between the institution and the student at the start of their study programme. Education providers must ensure that the number of hours is realistic, deliverable and sustainable within the funding rules. Education providers have the flexibility to consider how to use planned hours effectively to balance the different aspects of the programme.
69. Planned hours are a fundamental element of the funding allocation process, which uses data recorded in the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and the school census. This data is used to calculate future funding allocations so it must accurately reflect the learning activities taken by each student. Errors in recording planned hours are likely to have an impact on an institution's funding allocation.

### Core aim

70. All study programmes must have a recorded core aim, which is the principal activity or core purpose of a student's programme. See the [ILR Provider Support Manual](#) or the [school census guidance](#) for the main recording guidance and [How to record T Level transition programmes](#) for a summary of the recording details

that are specific to T Level Transition Programmes. For Transition Programme students, the key points are:

- There is a new programme aim – the T Level Transition Programme aim – that must be used;
- There is a new core aim that must also be used, which records the T Level route that students are preparing for. This is different to most other 16-19 study programmes, where the core aim is either one or more substantial academic, applied or technical qualification(s) which prepares the student for further education or employment, or a substantial work placement to prepare the student for an apprenticeship or other employment. The core aim must be agreed between the student and the education provider;
- Subsidiary aims should also be recorded for additional qualification or non-qualification activity.

71. It is important that education providers record T Level Transition Programme students accurately in their ILR and school census returns. The new programme and core aims should only be used for students who are enrolled on the T Level Transition Programme. Education providers will need to complete the outcome field on the ILR for the new programme aim and new core aim.

## **Retention**

72. The retention criteria for 16 to 19 study programmes will apply to the T Level Transition Programme. Each student who remains to the planned end date of their study programme, or who is recorded as completed or continuing, is classed as 'retained' and receives full funding. Each student who is not retained attracts 50% of the full funding rate, as long as they have completed the qualifying period (6 weeks for full-time students and 2 or 6 weeks for part-time students depending on programme length).

## Ensuring quality

73. To ensure a focus on getting the best outcomes for young people, we will use data on progression from the T Level Transition Programme from the early years of delivery, to support the development of accountability measures that will be published following national rollout. The data to be reviewed will be from our monitoring processes (see Monitoring section below) and will include:

- the number of students that start a T Level Transition Programme
- how many students complete the T Level Transition Programme
- where students go after completing the T Level Transition Programme, including the percentage that progress to and complete a T Level

74. As accountability measures for the T Level Transition Programme have yet to be determined, Transition Programme students have not yet been included in the Qualification Achievement Rates (QARs) or school and college performance tables, and will not be included in the QARs or performance tables for academic year 2022 to 2023. The treatment of T Level Transition Programme students in the QARs and performance tables for subsequent years will be communicated in due course.

75. The Transition Programme will be subject to Ofsted inspection under the [Education Inspection Framework](#) (in place from September 2019), just as 16 to 19 study programmes are and as T Levels will be.

## Monitoring

76. Education providers have some discretion about who they enrol onto the T Level Transition Programme, as they are best placed to decide which individual students are most likely to benefit from it and progress onto and succeed on a T Level. As part of their assurance processes, the Education and Skills Funding Agency monitors education provider behaviour in relation to funding rules. We are enhancing this monitoring for the Transition Programme, to assess how well its delivery reflects the intended target group. This includes internal in-year monitoring of data on the volumes and characteristics of students enrolled on the programme, as well as data on subsequent completion and progression onto T Levels. We are using this monitoring to identify where education providers may not be enrolling students in line with the intended target group for the Transition Programme. We will contact education providers, as with other funded study programmes, should this monitoring highlight unusual enrolment patterns and we may consider whether controls may be needed in future.

## Annex A: Useful links

This list is not meant to be exhaustive – education providers may wish to consult other resources and may choose not to use all the resources set out below.

The [Gatsby Benchmarks](#) provide a framework around which education providers can deliver their careers programmes.

The [Careers & Enterprise Company](#) provides useful careers support and resources, including guidance on the Gatsby Benchmarks.

The [skills builder framework](#) provides a tool that education providers can use with their students to assess and develop key employability skills that are needed for the workplace.

The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) provides some useful [guidance on implementing work experience](#).

Research by the Department for Education (DfE) into [work experience and related activities](#), including good practice in providing effective work experience.

Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) have produced a useful [guide](#) on engaging employers to find work experience for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

[Barclays' Life Skills](#) and [Accenture's Skills to Succeed Academy](#) provide some useful resources to help with employability skills preparation.

The [Operating Instructions for Creation of Outline Content](#), intended for use by T Level Panels developing outline content, include the T Level employability skills framework. This is not a teaching and learning tool but may be of interest.

The [National Citizen Service](#) is a part-residential youth programme to develop the skills and confidence of young people.

The Association of Colleges (AoC) has published [Shaping communities – colleges and social action](#) to provide examples of community action. The website for the [#iwill](#) campaign on youth social action is also a useful resource.

DfE provides statutory guidance for schools and colleges on providing [careers guidance](#).

DfE has put together [a list of sources of mental health support](#) for young people, parents and carers, and education provider staff. The AoC has a [web page](#) on supporting health and wellbeing in colleges, with links to case studies and resources.

The [National Careers Service](#) provides free, up to date, impartial information, advice and guidance on careers, skills and the labour market in England. Young people aged 13 to 18 can access ongoing in-depth information, advice and guidance from the service via the website or local telephone-based advisers.



Department  
for Education

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