**United Kingdom: England set to introduce T Level qualifications**

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**The Department for Education has announced that new T Level qualifications will be rolled out in England from the 2020-21 school year onwards. These qualifications are aimed primarily at 16 to 19 year-olds and are set to become one of the main choices for post-16 education alongside apprenticeships and GCE-Advanced Level (A Level) academic qualifications.**

**Reforms to VET to ensure high-quality outcomes for learners**

The Department for Education (DfE) has indicated that it would like there to be clearer and simpler high-quality options for students who opt to follow a technical education route after GCSEs. The DfE is currently undertaking a review of qualifications at EQF level 4 and below (excluding GCSEs and A Levels), which aims to ensure that every qualification is necessary and has a distinct purpose, is of high quality and supports progression to positive outcomes. [**T Levels**](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-t-levels) will offer a high-quality option for students who want to choose technical study over academic study.

**Involving employers in VET design**

[**T Levels**](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-t-levels) are based on the same standards as reformed apprenticeships. The outline content for T Levels is  designed by T Level panels led by the [**Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (the Institute)**](https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/t-levels/), made up of groups of employers and other experts. The courses are approved by the Institute, before awarding organisations turn the content into a qualification which can be assessed.

The panels define the skills and knowledge requirements for each T Level to ensure that students taking T Levels will develop the technical knowledge and skills required by employers in the respective industry. Employers taking part include Fujitsu, IBM, EDF, GlaxoSmithKline, KPMG, and the British Army.

[**T Level**](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-t-levels)programmes will include the following compulsory elements:

* a technical qualification, which will include core theory, concepts and skills for an industry area, specialist skills and knowledge for an occupation or career;
* a meaningful industry placement with an employer;
* a minimum standard in maths and English if students have not already achieved these;

[**T Levels**](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-t-levels) will take two years to complete, with the total time necessary for the course estimated at 1 800 hours, including a 315-hour (45 days) industry placement.  As most current VET courses are significantly shorter in duration, this will be a considerable increase in both duration and level of demand.

Industry placements will make up 20% of the course, with students spending 80% of their time in the classroom. This is different from an apprenticeship where learners typically spend 80% on the job and 20% in the classroom. An industry placement is also different from work experience, which is typically much shorter and usually involves a learner job-shadowing rather than taking on greater responsibilities, which would be expected in an apprenticeship.

**Assessment and progression opportunities**

Students who pass all the elements of their T Level (technical qualification and basic skills assessed in the VET institution and industry placement completed in the workplace) will receive a nationally recognised certificate at EQF level 4 showing an overall grade of pass, merit, distinction or distinction\*. T Levels aim to lead to skilled employment, but will also allow access to further study at EQF level 5, higher degree apprenticeships and to degree courses (at institutional discretion).

**Gradual implementation and sectors involved**

T Levels are being introduced in waves. The first three programmes in digital, construction, and education and childcare (wave 1) will start in 2020; [**50 high-performing providers**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providers-selected-to-deliver-t-levels) have been selected to deliver the courses. The second wave of seven more T Levels will be introduced in 2021 to be taught by around 64 providers, with the third and fourth waves following in 2022 and 2023.

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