

Delivering technical education reform

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Department
for Education

The current skills system isn't meeting our country's needs...

The UK faces a long-standing productivity challenge

- The UK's **productivity performance is poor** compared to international competitors, and our relative position has worsened since 2007.



Part of this is directly attributable to weaknesses in our skills base

- The UK is in the **bottom four OECD countries for literacy and numeracy skills** among 16–24 year olds.¹
- The UK also performs poorly on **intermediate professional and technical skills**, and is forecast to fall to 28th out of 33 OECD countries for intermediate skills by 2020.²

Addressing this is a matter of economic and social imperative

- We live in **an age of increasing global competition** and ever-faster technological change.
- **Skilled employment leads to prosperity and security** for individuals while unskilled employment often means the opposite.



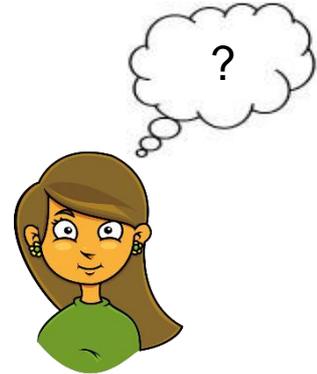
....it isn't meeting learner needs...

Post-16 academic education follows a clear, well-established and respected path

- A levels enable access to undergraduate degree courses. In contrast.....

The post-16 skills system is complex and of variable quality

- There is a **lack of clear progression routes** to employment.
- Students face a **bewildering choice** of qualifications:
 - Over 13,000 qualifications are currently available for 16–18 year-olds, including 33 in plumbing alone.³
 - Many of the existing qualifications are **low-quality**:
 - Only 173 meet the DfE tech level requirements.⁴
 - Competition between awarding organisations can lead to a 'race to the bottom' on standards.
 - They do not prepare students for work
- Careers education and guidance provides **insufficient information and support** for those wishing to access technical training for skilled employment.





Employer engagement in the current system is limited

- The current system has **limited employer engagement** in defining qualifications and curricula. Intermediary bodies have not provided an effective voice for business and many employers have disengaged from the skills system.

Many employers do not understand the system

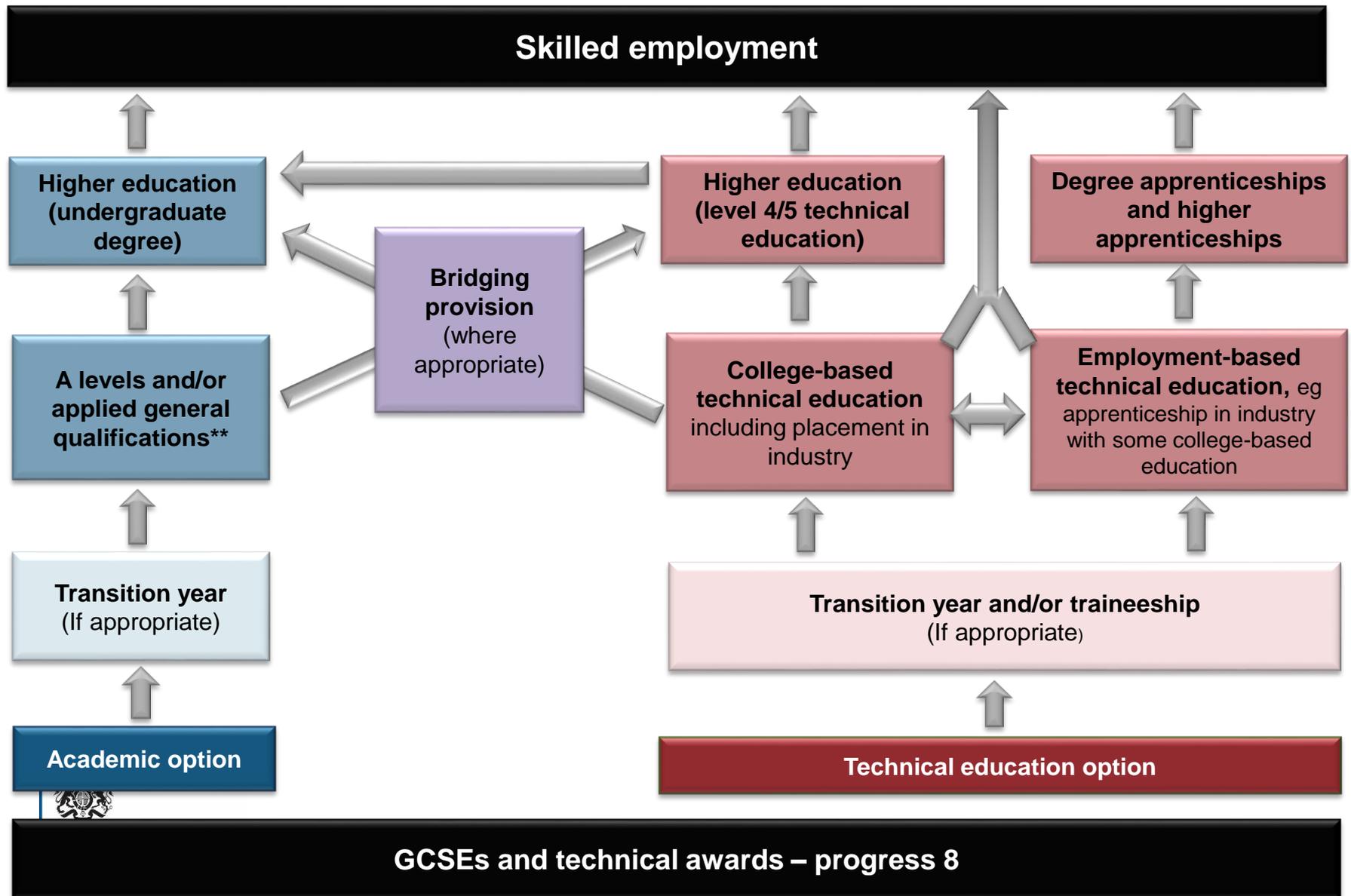
- Many employers do not know what to expect from a person with a particular qualification – what do they know and what level of skills do they have? Current qualifications therefore have **limited labour market currency**.

Provision is not aligned with local and national economic needs

- There are **not enough apprenticeship opportunities to meet potential demand** in the economy and the wider availability of training opportunities frequently doesn't reflect employment market demand.



The academic and technical options



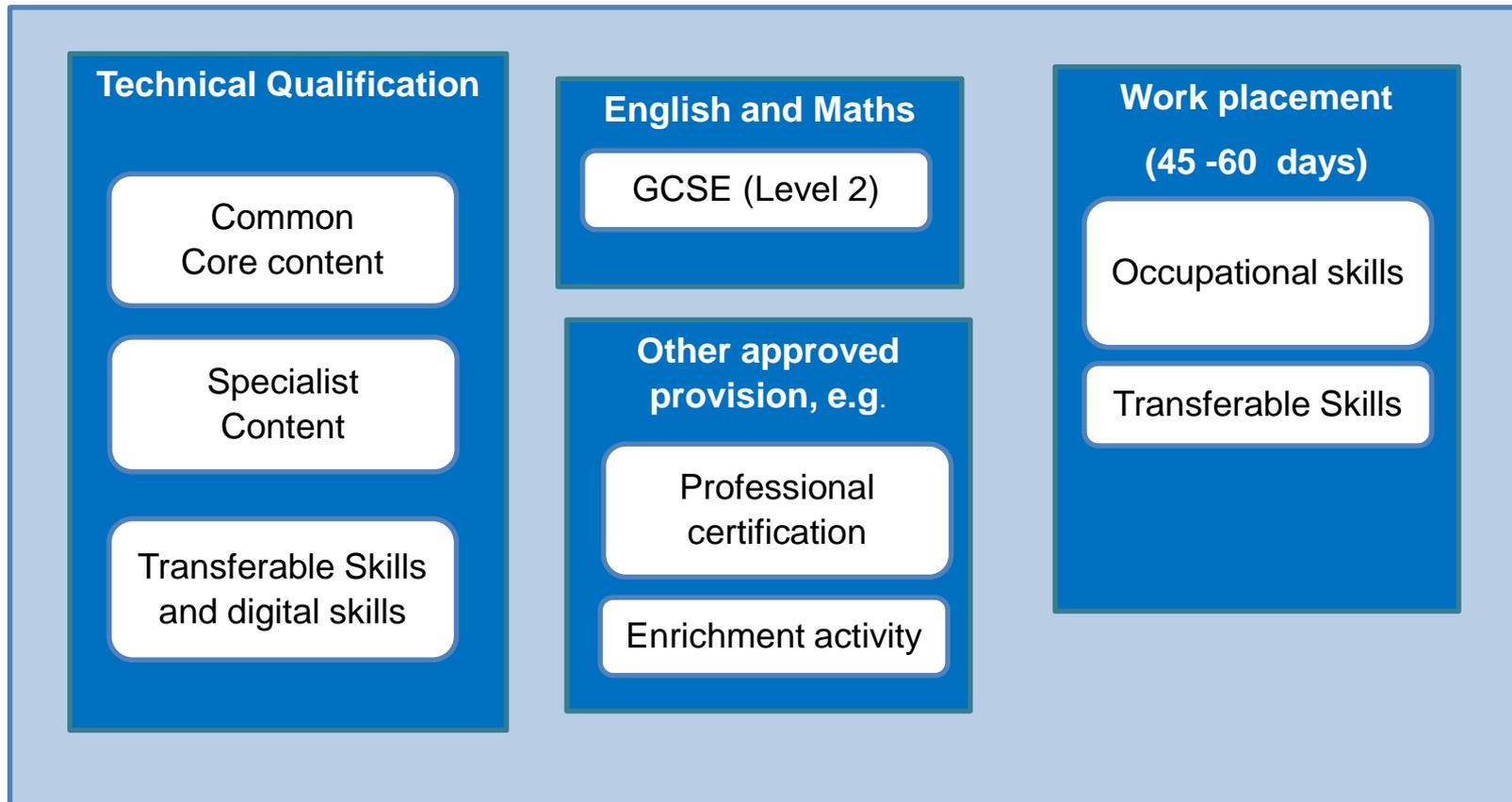
A new technical education offer

Together, T levels and apprenticeships will form the new technical education offer at level 3, and will act as two different routes to skilled employment.

- **Employers are at the heart of these reforms** and the co-creation of T level programmes – meaning that T levels will be recognised by employers and students as prestigious and meaningful qualifications.
- **A T level is classroom based.** It is designed to train young people with the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to enter skilled employment in a particular occupational area, for example software development, or to continue to study that technical subject at a higher level.
- T levels will have **more teaching time built in** to enable students to acquire more and better knowledge, skills and behaviours than can be achieved through other current vocational qualifications.
- **Apprenticeships are work based.** They are for students who want to get the specialist knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to progress to highly skilled employment in a particular occupation.



T level structure



Average 900 hrs per year over two years including time for work placement.



T level action plan: published 11 October 2017 confirmed the high level timeline for introducing T levels

2020
LIMITED
PATHWAYS

- Digital
- Construction
- Education and Childcare

2021
FULL
ROUTES

- Digital
- Construction
- Education and Childcare
- Legal, Finance and Accounting
- Engineering and Manufacturing
- Health and Science

2022
FULL
ROUTES

- Hair and Beauty
- Agriculture, Environment and Animal Care
- Business and Administrative
- Catering and Hospitality
- Creative and Design

APP
ONLY

- Transport and Logistics
- Sales, Marketing and Procurement
- Social Care
- Protective Services

- First T levels to be introduced in September 2020, delivered by a small number of providers.
- We will confirm the process to determine which providers will deliver in 2020 during autumn 2017



T level Action Plan

T level panels

- **T level panels** will develop the outline content for each T level, deriving this from the relevant apprenticeship standards.
- T level panels are a key plank of our approach to involve business in co-design and co-delivery of the technical reforms, ensuring that reformed qualifications will have **genuine currency with employers**.
- **Panels have now been launched across all 6 routes** for delivery in 2020 and 2021.



Route Panels

- **Route Panels** will comprise industry experts, whose core responsibility will be the management of standards, qualifications and occupational maps for each technical route. They will oversee and give final approval to the work of the T level Panels.



T level Action Plan

Regulation and Quality Assurance

- The qualifications will be offered under exclusive licensing, in line with the recommendations of the Independent Panel on Technical Education
- We will seek views on the details of our approach to implementation in late 2017 from awarding organisations, including the Federation of Awarding bodies and we expect to launch the procurement process in summer 2018, following the consultation.
- The overall regulatory and assurance system for T level qualifications will be different from that for A levels and GCSEs and other existing vocational qualifications.

T level action plan – support for providers

Teacher support

- Highly-skilled teachers and leaders - key to realising learners' potential - will be critical to the success of T levels
- We intend to begin engaging with providers at the end of this year, and to complete analysis of additional support needs by summer 2018. We will then be able to give more detail about the support that will be available for providers to access.

Funding

- Additional funding, rising to an additional £500 million a year, was secured as part of the Spring Budget 2017 for the delivery of T levels. We will provide details on how this funding will be allocated in due course.
- Work placement capacity building fund – guidance already published on gov.uk



Action Plan: T level Design Principles

- T levels will be level 3 technical study programmes, based on employer-designed standards and content, which will prepare students for highly skilled jobs and enable them to adapt to meet the skills needs of the future.
- T levels will be designed primarily to support entry to skilled employment. Successful completion of a T level will provide students with the knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary to start skilled employment in an occupation related to their field of study.
- Students achieving T levels will also be able to progress to the highest levels of skilled employment or technical education and training at levels 4, 5 and 6. Progression options will include higher and degree level apprenticeships or higher technical education, including technical degrees.
- Apprenticeships and T levels will be based on the same set of standards designed by employers and others but there will be differences in the overall content of each programme, to reflect that apprenticeships are mainly delivered in the workplace, and T levels will mainly be delivered in the classroom



T level Design Principles

- Students achieving a T level will have the numeracy, literacy, digital skills and wider transferable skills, attitudes and behaviours needed to succeed in occupations relevant to their chosen route and the wider workplace of the future.
- T level programmes are substantial and will be high quality. They are likely to be equivalent in size to a 3 'A' level programme and will have more teaching time built in to enable students to acquire more and better knowledge, skills and behaviours than currently.
- All T level programmes must include a substantial work placement with an employer, away from the individuals' learning environment, to help students put into practice the knowledge and skills they have learnt in the classroom.

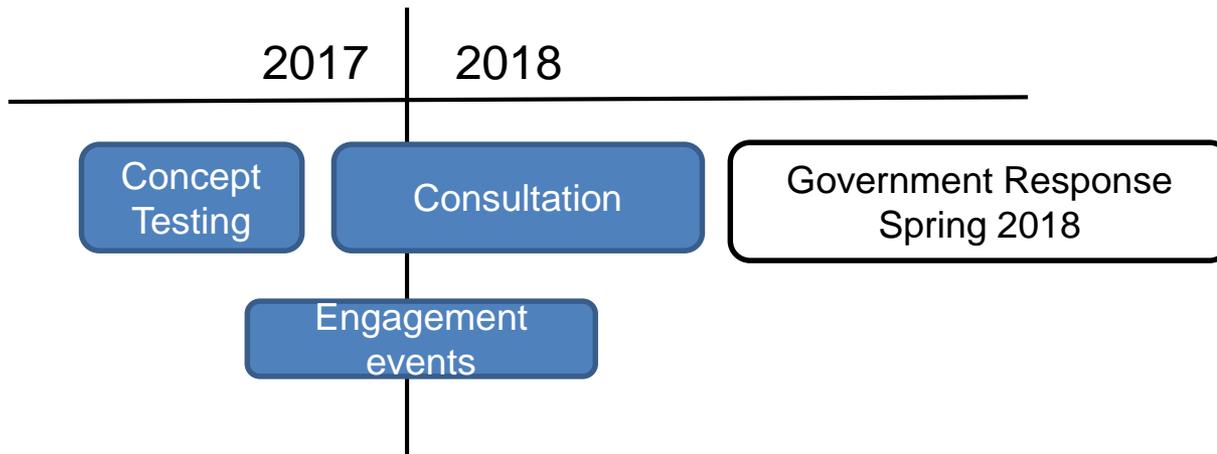


T level Action Plan: Impact on Existing Provision

- We will consult further on our approach to ensure that awarding organisations, providers and others are able to input views on our approach and will ensure that adequate transitional arrangements are put in place.
- However, as a general principle, we expect the number of qualifications that are funded for 16-19 year olds to be significantly lower in the future and to be restricted to specific types of programmes, such as academic and technical study programmes, to help streamline and simplify the system.



Action Plan: Consultation



Consultation Themes:

- The structure of the T level programme including qualification design
- Work placement delivery
- Funding and accountability
- Quality assurance and regulation
- Preparing providers and employers for T levels and transition year



Concept testing

Events

- w/c commencing 25 September and 3 October
- 8 events across London, Birmingham and Manchester
- 84 awarding organisations
- 45 employers and providers

Purpose of concept testing

- To ensure we consult on a full range of issues, and to help inform the design of the consultation. The outputs from the concept testing are intended to form the basis of for the consultation, with further development by the DfE through engagement with wider networks



Concept testing findings: the T level programme

Discussions around the T level Programme focussed around the programme purpose and it was suggested that consideration could be given to the following questions:

- how the T level compares to apprenticeships and A levels and the key differences – such as the work placement and professional certification?
- there is good practice in the FE system already and how would the T level build on that ?
- if T levels are potentially a route into apprenticeships how could we recognise prior attainment at level 3 if a student moves into an apprenticeship at the same level?
- how will flexibility in the length of each T level, to allow sector differences, be accommodated?



Concept testing findings: the programme content

It was accepted that without the outline content that there were limitations on obtaining detailed commentary. It was suggested that consideration could be given to the following questions:

- the concept of a common core whilst understood, but given the need for flexibility across routes, does this suggest that in some sectors there would be limited core content which corresponds to the whole route?
- how could a mechanism for ease of transfer between routes and pathways be made available?
- some routes must set entry requirements around English and maths (eg engineering). For other routes, for learners who have not achieved English and Maths, will the time for these be included within the 900 hours per year?
- where transferable skills, numeracy, literacy and digital skills are needed for threshold competence, how will they be integrated in to technical content?



Concept testing findings: delivery and assessment

The discussions on assessment tended to focus on the balance of internal and external assessment and the balance of threshold and compensatory assessment. It was suggested that consideration could be given to the following questions:

- how the mixture of mastery and compensatory assessment (seen as desirable), would reflect the balance of practical and theoretical content?
- as the balance should be driven by T panels, reflecting sector and learner need, does that mean that balance could look quite different for each route?
- how employers should play a role in standardising content? There was support for employers to have some role in standardisation, perhaps through sampling?
- If the programme overall should not be graded, will the certificate state a single overall grade for the qualification title (the route and pathway) and the specialisms achieved?
- how should other aspects of the programme, such as the work placement, be listed on a T level certificate?



Any Questions?

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