

Level 3 Qualification Reform

HELOA Conference

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Level 3 Qualification Reform

Aims of the session:

- Provide an overview of the new T Level programmes and timeline
- Give an overview of the Level 3 Reform
- Update on the potential impact of the reform on BTEC qualifications



T Levels

What are T Levels?

- T Levels were introduced following the Sainsbury Review into Technical Education.
- *"We recommend the Government develops a coherent technical education option which develops the technical knowledge and skills required to **enter skilled employment**, which leads from levels 2/3 to levels 4/5 and beyond, and which is highly valued because it works in the marketplace."* (Sainsbury Review)
- Developed in **partnership** with government, business and education, with contracts managed by IfATE. The T Level is certificated by ESFA.
- Focus on developing skills within **15 industry routes**. 11 of which will have T Levels; some routes have **pathways** giving a total of **24 Technical Qualifications** (TQs).
- First three pathways commenced **September 2020**, with full roll-out of all 23 expected by September 2023.
- The TQ Outline Content is based on **apprenticeship standards**, created by T Level panels to set out the knowledge and skills required, and managed by IfATE.
- AOs use the **Outline Content** and Ofqual conditions to design the TQ specification and assessments.

T Level timeline

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 2020 | Pathways available in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Construction (Design, Surveying & Planning)• Digital (Digital Production, Design & Development)• Education & Childcare |
| 2021 | Full routes available in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Digital• Construction• Health & Science |
| 2022 | Full routes available in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business & Administration• Engineering & Manufacturing Pathways available in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legal, Finance & Accounting (Finance & Accounting) |
| 2023 | Full routes available in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legal, Finance & Accounting (Legal Services)• Hair, beauty & aesthetics• Hospitality & Catering• Creative Design Pathways available in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agriculture, Environment & Animal Care |
| 2024 | Full route available in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agriculture, Environment & Animal Care All routes/pathways available this year. |

What is a T Level?

- Post-16 **technical study programmes** that sit alongside apprenticeships and A levels, designed to support progression into employment, apprenticeships or further study.
- The difference between a route, pathway and occupational specialism, example:

| Route | Pathway | Occupational specialism |
|--------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Construction | Design, Surveying and Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surveying and Design for Construction and the Built Environment• Civil Engineering• Building Services Design• Hazardous Materials Analysis and Surveying |

- The T Level is made up of **several components**:
 - Technical Qualification (comprising the Core and the Occupational Specialism)
 - 315-hour (minimum) Industry Placement
 - Industry qualifications (where applicable – not none in the ones offered by Pearson)
- 1800 hours over two years (with flexibility)
- Students will need to achieve all components to achieve their T level certificate from ESFA.
- Removal of Level 2 English and Maths **exit** requirement.

T Levels and the Technical Qualification

- The Technical Qualification is developed and delivered by a single AO and is regulated by Ofqual.
- Pearson currently delivers the following Technical Qualifications:
 - Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction (First teach: 2020)
 - Digital Production, Design and Development (First teach: 2020)
 - Accounting (First teach: 2022)
 - Finance (First teach: 2022)
 - Legal Services (First teach: 2023)

Industry Placement

Essential part of T Levels managed by the DfE

- Minimum, 315 hours of placement within an industry environment that's linked to the occupational specialism or T Level route.
- Designed to build 'threshold' competence so learners can start full time employment in their chosen occupational sector.
- 35 hours of 'tasters' into an occupational specialism.
- Students can be placed with up to a maximum of 2 employers.
- SEND learners can have 105 hours in a placement at the providers on site facilities.
- For the most up to date information about industry placement requirements please visit the DfE website.

Entry requirements

Centres set their own requirements for T Levels and are expected to recruit with integrity.

Example: Civil Engineering occupational specialism - 10 FE colleges entry requirements

| | |
|---|---|
| 4 GCSEs (Maths, English and Science) - grade 4 and above | 1 |
| 5 GCSEs (Maths and English) - grade 4 and above (but will accept grade 3 for English and Maths, with a view to resitting) | 2 |
| 5 GCSEs (Maths and English) - grade 4 and above (note some have pre-admissions tests) | 3 |
| 5 GCSEs (Maths, English & ideally Science) - grade 4 and above | 2 |
| 5 GCSEs (Maths, English and Science) - grade 4 and above (note one requests Science and Maths at grade 5 as part of this) | 2 |

Rolling out of T Levels

DfE requirement for only centres rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted can deliver T Levels till 2023.

- Oct 2020 Approx. 1300 enrolments across Wave 1 T Levels.
- Oct 2021 Approx. 5450 enrolments across Wave 1 and 2 T Levels.

From 2023, those with other Ofsted ratings, or no rating can offer Wave 1 and 2 T Levels subjects only.

From 2024, all centres will be available to offer all T Levels.

Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction: assessment approach

Core knowledge and skills 600GLH [50% of the total Technical Qualification]

Core Examination Paper 1

Science and Building Technology

- Externally assessed written examination
- 2-hour 30 minute
- 33.33% of the Core
- 100 marks
- Graded A* - E

The examination consists of Section A and Section B and will include short, medium and extended open-response questions as well as drawing and maths questions.

Core Examination Paper 2

Construction Industry and Sustainability

- Externally assessed written examination
- 2-hour 30-minute exam
- 33.33% of the Core
- 100 marks
- Graded A* - E

The examination consists of Section A and Section B and will include short, medium and extended open-response questions as drawing and identification questions.

Employer Set Project

- Externally assessed project
- 15 hour 30 (assessed in a fixed 4-week window)
- 33.33% of the Core
- 100 marks
- Graded A* - E

Students will undertake a project in response to a realistic contextualised challenge.

Occupational Specialism 600GLH [50% of the total Technical Qualification]

Students will take **one** Occupational Specialism:

- Surveying and Design for Construction and the Built Environment - 30 hours assessed in a fixed window
- Civil Engineering - 25 hours assessed in a fixed window
- Building Services Design - 20 hours 40 minutes assessed in a fixed window
- Hazardous Materials Analysis and Surveying - 15 hours 30 minutes assessed in a fixed week window

Each Occupational Specialist Project will be:

- Externally set and marked by Pearson
- 100% of the Occupational Specialism component
- 180 marks
- Graded P, M and D
- Students will respond to a vocational scenario within the specialism undertaken.

T Level Grading & UCAS Points

(where Core/Occ Spec is 50/50 in weighting)

| | | Occupational Specialism | | | T Level Grade |
|----------------------|----|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| | | Distinction | Merit | Pass | |
| Core Component Grade | A* | Distinction* | Distinction | Distinction | |
| | A | Distinction | Distinction | Merit | |
| | B | Distinction | Merit | Merit | |
| | C | Merit | Merit | Pass | |
| | D | Merit | Pass | Pass | |
| | E | Pass | Pass | Pass | |

| UCAS Tariff Points | T Level Grade | A Level Grades |
|--------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| 168 | Distinction* | A*A*A* |
| 144 | Distinction | AAA |
| 120 | Merit | BBB |
| 96 | Pass (C or above on core) | CCC |
| 72 | Pass (D or E on core) | DDD |

Indicative tariff score (2022 only)

- To help with the understanding and recognition of **partial achievement**, DfE have agreed with UCAS an **indicative** Tariff score for the **Core and the Industry Placement**, which represents 50% of the points for the overall T Level.
- Students who achieve their Core and Industry Placement will attract the following tariff points.

| UCAS tariff points (provided a student completes their Industry Placement) | Grade for Core |
|--|----------------|
| 84 | A* |
| 72 | A |
| 60 | B |
| 48 | C |
| 36 | D |
| 24 | E |

HEI Recognition & Student Progression

- Over 120 HEIs now recognise one/more T Levels - [DFE List](#).
- Some HEIs have additional requirements: for example a minority specifying A Level maths for Civil Engineering, or Computer Science; usually Level 2 Maths (between grade 4 and 7) for Accounting and Finance degrees.
- UCAS confirmed approx. 475 T Level students made applications for 2022.
- 370 UCAS students accepted in 2022, 71% of the cohort that applied to HE.

Results (from DfE website)

Wave 1 cohort that started in 2020, completed in 2022, in pathways in:

- Construction -Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction
- Digital - Digital Production, Design and Development
- Education & Childcare

Summary

- 1029 learners received results.
- 92.2% achieved Pass or above on their T Level.
- 31.9% achieved a Distinction. 2.7% achieved a Distinction *.
- 99.5% achieved E or above on their Core component.
- 97.5% achieved a Pass or above on their Occupational Specialism.
- 94% completed an industry placement.

T Level Transition Programme

| | |
|--|--|
| Diagnostic and guidance period | To assess capability and support needs in order to tailor your students' individual Transition Programme and help them decide which T Level route they wish to prepare for. |
| English and maths | Students who did not achieve English and/or maths GCSE grade 4 at Key Stage 4 are required to continue studying as per the condition of funding. |
| Work experience and preparation | To develop the skills, behaviours, attitude and confidence that will be needed for students to complete the T Level Industry Placement. This should include high quality work experience, and work preparation and employability skills development. |
| Introductory technical skills | The introduction of skills and concepts to prepare students for the T Level route they wish to progress to. |
| Pastoral support and personal development | Relevant and meaningful support to address barriers to education, support emotional and/or mental health difficulties, and support the development of study skills, and reflective and resilience skills. |

Further information

[DfE's T Level Action Plan 2020](#)

[DfE's T Level Action Plan 2021](#)

[T Level Provisional Results](#)

[DfE's resources for HEIs](#)

[Providers approved to run T Levels](#)

[Way to find nearest T Level provider](#)

Discussion points

- What is the level of awareness of T Levels at your institution?
- How can we support HEIs to make admissions decisions on the new T Levels?



Level 3 Reform

Context

- In July 2021 DfE published the outcomes to the Level 3 consultation and the government's response.
- 86% of respondents disagreed with the proposal to defund qualifications that overlapped with the new T Levels.
- In the accompanying policy statement issued by DfE, it stated it would be “rare” to undertake a Level 3 study programme consisting of Applied General type qualifications.
- In **Nov 2021**, Nadhim Zahawi announced a one year delay to the reform programme, delaying the defunding of existing Level 3 qualifications and introduction of new Level 3 qualifications.
- Currently awaiting a list of qualifications to be defunded in the first wave.
- **Feb 2022** DfE confirmed the overarching process for new Level 3 qualifications.
- **March 2022** Ofqual launched consultation on regulatory process for approving new Level 3 qualifications.
- **April 2022** In a letter to the House of Lords, Nadhim Zahawi confirmed the place of BTECs/AGs alongside A Levels and T Levels and that less than half would be defunded through the reform.
- **Sept 2022** DfE publish list of qualifications to be defunded from 2024/25 in the first phase.



Background and context (continued)

Former Secretary of State's letter to House of Lords (April 2022):

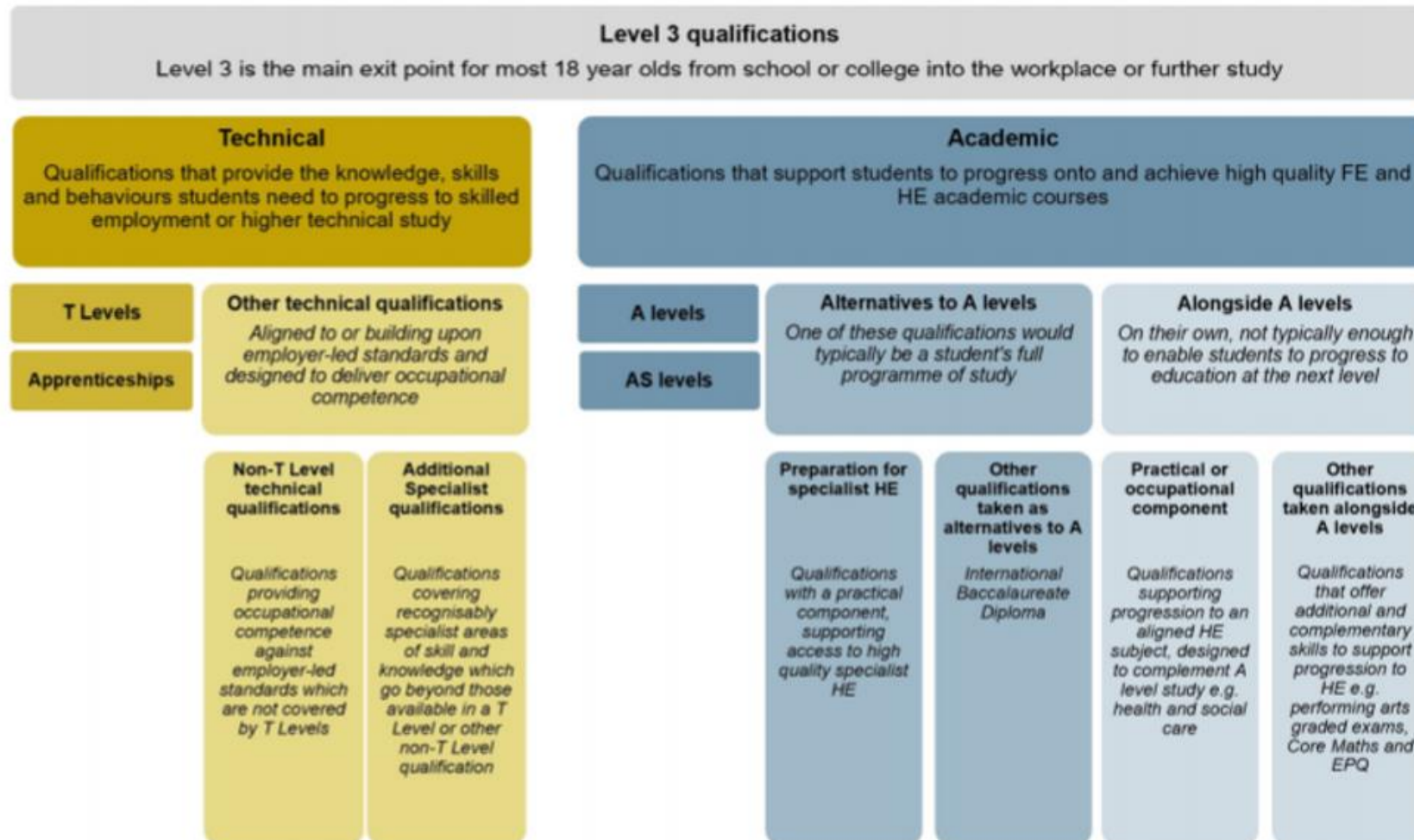
"...many applied general qualifications, BTECs and other similar qualifications, have a **continuing and important role to play** alongside A levels and T Levels. **To be approved for funding in future they will need to meet new quality and necessity criteria.**"

"It may be reassuring to know through this process we expect to remove just a small proportion of the total level 3 BTEC and other applied general style qualification offer – **significantly less than half.**"

"I can now guarantee that employers will have the opportunity to support awarding organisations and say if they believe qualifications support entry into occupations not covered by T Levels as part of the appeals process."

DfE's new Level 3 qualification landscape

Figure 1: Visual representation of the proposed 16 to 19 level 3 landscape



Qualification categories

Alternative academic qualifications

Alongside A Levels (one A Level equivalent size or smaller)

If evidence they add value to A Level study, & aid progression to “high quality” degree courses that deliver “strong graduate outcomes”.

Could overlap with A Levels or T Levels, if overlaps with former, need “evidence of successful outcomes” and links to “priority” subjects.

Examples: Engineering, Health & Social Care

Instead of A Levels (two/three A Level equivalent size)

- Primary purpose progression to specialist HE, in areas not well served by A Levels
- In non T Level areas
- Examples: Performing & Creative Arts

Alternative technical qualifications

Alongside T Levels

- Primary purpose progression to skilled employment
- Small, specialist/niche qualification
- Example: Marine Engineering

Large technical qualifications

- Primary purpose progression to skilled employment
- In non T Level areas
- Example: Hospitality

Possible moratorium on new technical qualifications, if too many deemed to exist, to avoid proliferation.

DfE timeline

- Technical qualifications that overlap with T Levels are defunded for 16-19 year olds (funding may be retained for adults)
- First introduction of new, reformed technical and academic qualifications (including both those for 16-19 year olds and adults)
- All remaining qualifications in this route that have not been reapproved for funding are defunded

| | | Academic years | | | | | |
|---|--|----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| T Level Wave | Occupational routes | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | 2026/27 |
| Wave 1 and 2 | Digital – qualifications delivering against employer-led Standards | | | | | | |
| | Digital – specialist and cross-cutting skills qualifications | | | | | | |
| | Construction | | | | | | |
| | Education and childcare | | | | | | |
| | Health and science | | | | | | |
| Wave 3 and 4 | Engineering and manufacturing | | | | | | |
| | Legal, finance and accounting | | | | | | |
| | Business and administration | | | | | | |
| | Agriculture, environmental and animal care | | | | | | |
| | Catering and hospitality | | | | | | |
| | Hair and beauty | | | | | | |
| | Creative and design | | | | | | |
| Routes not covered by T Levels | E.g. Care services | | | | | | |
| | E.g. Protective services | | | | | | |
| | E.g. Sales, marketing and procurement | | | | | | |
| | E.g. Transport and logistics | | | | | | |
| Academic subjects not linked to occupational routes | E.g. Performing and creative arts | | | | | | |
| | E.g. Sports science | | | | | | |

How does this affect curriculum planning?

2022/2023 and 2023/2024

No changes to vocational offer.

2024/2025

Subject to the outcomes of the appeals process, some qualifications which overlap with T Levels defunded in:

- Digital,
- Construction,
- Education & Childcare,
- Health & Science.

But no change to the majority of the vocational offer.

2025/2026

Some qualifications which overlap with T Levels defunded in:

- Engineering & Manufacturing,
- Legal, Finance & Accounting,
- Business & Administration,
- Agriculture, Environmental & Animal Care,
- Catering & Hospitality,
- Hair & Beauty,
- Creative & Design.

Curriculum reform in:

- Digital,
- Construction,
- Education & Childcare,
- Health & Science,
- Engineering & Manufacturing.

2026/2027

Curriculum reform in:

- Legal, Finance & Accounting,
- Business & Administration,
- Agriculture, Environmental & Animal Care,
- Catering & Hospitality,
- Hair & Beauty,
- Creative & Design.

And in all remaining sectors.



DfE Impact Assessment

June 2021

- DfE estimate that 43% of non A Level enrolments will be impacted by these reforms.
- DfE Impact Assessment highlights a risk that some of these students may no longer be able to achieve Level 3 as a result of these reforms (estimating 3-4%, yet recognising the “uncertainty” of this estimate). Many consultation respondents indicated this estimate was “underestimated” in their view.
- Furthermore that there will be a disproportionate impact on specific student groups, including those from an Asian ethnic background, males, those with SEN and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

May 2022

- Students from the following groups may be slightly more impacted than outlined in the initial consultation: female students; those from a white ethnic background; those with SEN; those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Link to updated [Equalities Impact Assessment](#).

DfE will update equalities impact assessment, to take account of any additional impacts as they further develop the policy.

New Level 3 approval process

1. **DfE necessity review** – awaiting criteria
2. Ofqual/IfATE review of qualification & assessment – criteria subject to consultation
3. **ESFA funding review** – awaiting criteria
4. DfE performance measure review

Ofqual's proposed Level 3 criteria

Subject to outcomes of closed [consultation](#).

Qualification grading scale conventions

Additionally, for alternative academic qualifications:

- Min. 40% assessment by examinations (available up to twice a year)
- Requirement for non-examined assessment to be set by the awarding organisation
- Set requirements for awarding organisations' setting standards



Potential impact of reform on BTEC Level 3

What is happening?

Technical qualifications that overlap with T levels in Waves 1 and 2 are due to be defunded in 2024 / 2025.

On 11 May 2022, the DfE published the [provisional list of qualifications](#) that will no longer be funded from academic year 2024 / 2025 for 16-19 learners in England due to overlap.

Awarding bodies can appeal qualifications they think should not be on the list – with evidence.

106 qualifications listed for defunding, including 26 Pearson qualifications, including:

- BTEC Nationals in Construction (1, 2 and 3 A Level equivalent)
- BTEC Nationals in Children's Play, Learning & Development (1.5, 2 and 3 A Level equivalent).

TBC – BTEC National Diploma in Health & Social Care (2 A level equivalent).

Link to [DfE's final list](#).



Why are qualifications on the list?

Qualifications had to meet three overlap tests AND not be an exception

Overlap tests – if Y to all, in scope

- **Test 1:** Is the qualification technical - primary purpose aims to support entry to employment in a specific occupational area(s)?
- **Test 2:** Are the outcomes of the qualification similar to those set out in an occupational standard covered by a T Level in Waves 1 and 2?
- **Test 3:** Does the qualification aim to support entry to the same occupations as a T Level in Waves 1 and 2?

Exceptions – not in scope

Exception A: The qualification is primarily designed to support those already in a job role, as our criteria for withdrawing funding is aimed at qualifications that overlap with the content and purpose of T Levels, including supporting entry into the same occupation as a T Level.

Exception B: The qualification is aligned with an occupational route within Waves 3 and 4 T Levels, to ensure that we do not remove overlapping provision before Waves 3 and 4 T levels are widely available.



Key BTEC statistics (cohort)

| Characteristics associated with students from a widening participation background | | |
|---|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Ethnic group of those entering HE (2018/19) (HESA 2018 entry data) | A level only | BTEC only |
| White | 73.9% | 60.7% |
| Asian | 13.9% | 17.8% |
| Black | 5.5% | 13.8% |
| Other (incl. mixed race) | 6.7% | 7.7% |
| Socio-economic background (by parental occupation) (2018/19) (HESA 2018 entry data) | | |
| Top 4 | 79% | 59% |
| Bottom 4 | 21% | 41% |
| SEN (CVER, Oct 2019) | | |
| Proportion of students with SEN achieving a degree | Male: 3.8% Female: 2.2% | Male: 14.4% Female: 8.7% |
| Free School Meals marker (CVER, Oct 2019) | | |
| Proportion of students eligible for Free School Meals achieving a degree | Male: 4.5% Female: 5.3% | Male: 11.4% Female: 12.2% |
| Mature students (UCAS 2019 admissions data) | | |
| Students aged 21 and over upon entry to HE | 6.96% | 16.13% |

Key BTEC statistics (outcomes)

Approx. 100,000 progress to HE every year with a BTEC qualification.

Research done separately by Datalabs (2018) and the SFCA (2022) suggests that BTEC students are more likely to complete their Level 3 studies than those following an A Level only curriculum.

According to Nuffield research (Jan 2022), well **over 80%** holding the non-reformed BTECs complete their first year of HE studies, continuing into year 2.

HESA data shows that the non-continuation rate for BTEC students has **declined from 11.8%** (entry in 2018/2019) **to 9.2%** (entry in 2019/2020).

Over 60% holding the non-reformed BTECs gained a 2:1 or above (Nuffield research, Jan 2022).

Impact on earnings (CVER 2019)

Males and females respectively, progressing to HE with BTECs **earn 18% and 22% more** than those who do not progress to HE.

Males and females respectively progressing to HE holding a combination of BTECs and A levels **earn 15% and 23% more.**

Protect Student Choice campaign

Led by Sixth Form College Association (SFCA) in collaboration with 29 other partners.

HE partners include:

- Universities UK
- Mission groups: University Alliance; MillionPlus Group; GuildHE
- Widening participation groups: NEON, London Higher, Linking London
- UVAC
- Council of Deans of Health

Over 108K signatures on petition for this issue to be debated in parliament on **18 July 2022**.
Massive thank you to everyone who signed.

Link to [campaign website](#).

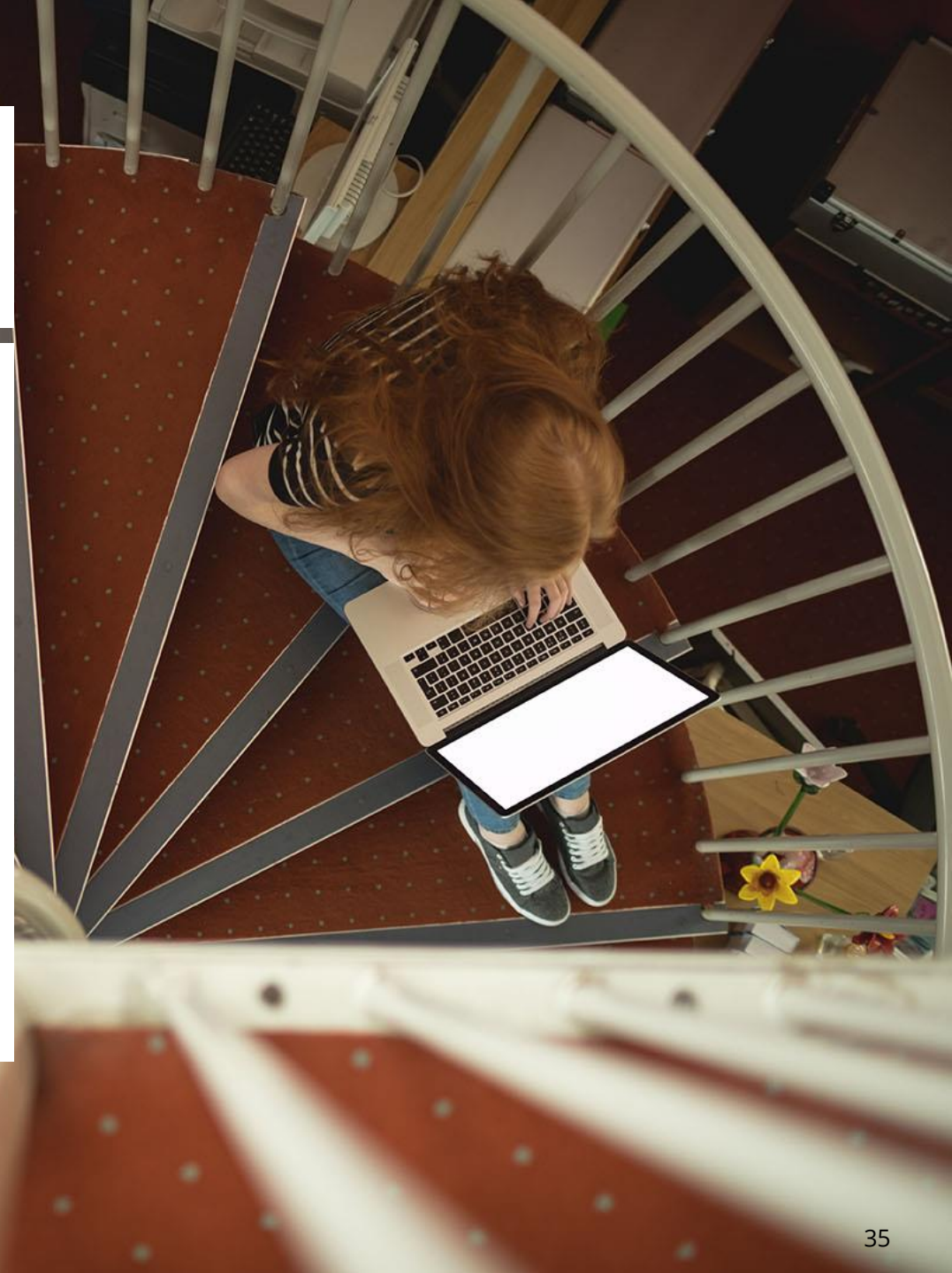
Ways your institution can support

We are looking for HE academics across different subjects to input into the redevelopment of the BTEC Nationals in line with the forthcoming criteria.

If any of your colleagues in the Academic teams are interested in participating please contact Ria Bhatta.

Contact details

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Pearson