

WHAT IS TECHNICAL EDUCATION?

FAQS

Supporting you to answer questions
about apprenticeships, T Levels and
HTQs



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CONTENTS

This document has been designed to support you to answer questions that may come up during the Apprenticeships and Technical Education (ATE) presentation or during conversations with students (or anyone else) about ATE.



amazingapprenticeships.com/cec-ate-resources



Apprenticeships

Accessing apprenticeships	3
Apprenticeship levels and training	4
How to search and apply for apprenticeships	4
Apprenticeship salaries and bursaries	7
Apprenticeship support	8
Completion and progression	8

Page

T-LEVELS

T Levels

Accessing T Levels	9
Finding T Level courses	9
T Level subjects and content	10
Completion and progression	11

Page



Higher Technical Qualifications

Accessing HTQs	12
Finding HTQ courses	12
HTQ subjects and content	12
HTQ finances	13
Completion and progression	13

Page

Other support

Support to deliver the ATE presentations	14
CEC Resource Directory	14
Finding external speakers	14

Page

APPRENTICESHIPS

Accessing apprenticeships

Q. What is an apprenticeship?

A. An apprenticeship is a real job with an employer, where you work and earn a salary, as well as undertake learning via a training provider. An apprenticeship allows you to gain valuable qualifications and experience without incurring any training costs, whilst earning a salary.

Q. What age do I have to be to do an apprenticeship?

A. Anyone aged 16 and over and not in full-time education (or 15 years of age if the apprentice's 16th birthday is between the last Friday of June and 31 August) can become an apprentice. There is no upper age limit and as well as being a popular route for young people as a post-16 or post-18 option, lots of adults also use apprenticeships to upskill or re-skill during their career.

Q. Do apprenticeships have entry requirements?

A. The qualification required will vary depending on the level of apprenticeship and the requirements of the apprenticeship employer, but they should be clear about this in their adverts. Some employers won't have any qualification requirements at all, but some will ask for qualifications and particular grades too, especially for higher level apprenticeships. However, if you don't quite have the right qualifications, but do meet their other criteria, it's worth getting in touch with them because lots of employers value who you are over which qualifications you have.

Q. What if I don't have GCSE English and/or maths at grade 4?

The requirements if you don't have GCSE English and/or maths at grade 4 vary depending on your age, the level of apprenticeship you are doing and any additional needs you may have.

- **Aged 16-18:** If you are aged 16 to 18 when you start your apprenticeship, you are required to achieve English and maths qualifications at level 2 (such as Functional Skills qualifications) to complete your apprenticeship. Your training provider will support you to achieve these qualifications and the cost of taking them is funded for you.
- **Aged 16-18 Foundation Apprentice:** If you are studying at foundation level, you will be required to work towards achieving the qualifications and funded to do so. Due to the shorter programme design, you are not expected to achieve them in this time.
- **Aged 19+:** Apprentices aged 19+ at the start of their training are not required to achieve English and/or maths at level 2 to complete their apprenticeship, but some employers may decide it is still the required level they want you to achieve. The cost of taking them is also funded in this case.
- **Additional needs:** If you have any additional needs, your training provider will discuss the flexibilities with you that mean you may be eligible to work towards a different level of English/maths.

APPRENTICESHIPS

Q. Do I need to be a UK National to be eligible for an apprenticeship?

A. In order to receive funding from the government for an apprenticeship, there are eligibility criteria that apply. For queries on eligibility, you can contact the National Apprenticeship Helpdesk by email nationalhelpdesk@findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk or by phone: 0800 015 0400

Apprenticeship levels and training

Q. What are the different apprenticeship levels?

A. Apprenticeship levels range from level 2 (foundation and intermediate), level 3 (advanced and equivalent), levels 4 & 5 (higher) and levels 6 & 7 (degree). For context, GCSEs are level 2, A-levels and T Levels are level 3, a bachelor's degree is level 6 and a master's degree is level 7.

The level that you start at will depend on a combination of the job role that the employer is offering, and any relevant prior experience or qualifications that you may hold. It's important to remember that if you've done a level 3 qualification like A-levels, it doesn't mean you can't do a level 3 apprenticeship if it's the right one for you.

Q. Who picks the training provider?

A. The employer is responsible for selecting the training provider. They will choose a provider that aligns with the skills they want their apprentices to develop and that best meets the needs of their business.

How to search and apply for apprenticeships

Q. Which employers offer apprenticeships?

A. Apprenticeships are offered by a wide variety of employers across England, including small, medium and large employers, across every sector. Their apprenticeship vacancies and/or programmes will typically be detailed on their website, for example on their Early Careers page.

Q. Where are apprenticeship vacancies advertised?

A. Apprenticeships are advertised on different platforms and websites. A good place to start is the Government's Find an apprenticeship website findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk which has thousands of live vacancies with employers across the country. There is a guide to help you set up a Find an apprenticeship account here:

amazingapprenticeships.com/resources/how-to-register-on-find-an-apprenticeship-guide

You can also look at employer careers pages, job sites, local colleges, training providers and university websites. Also, look at social media platforms and let friends and family know you are looking as they may be able to help. LinkedIn is a great place to hear about apprenticeship vacancies.

APPRENTICESHIPS

Q. How do I find a higher or degree level apprenticeship?

A. Higher and degree apprenticeships are advertised in the same way as other level apprenticeships – on different platforms and websites, including the Government’s Find an apprenticeship website findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk, as well as employer careers pages, job sites, local colleges, training providers and university websites. Higher and degree apprenticeship vacancies can often be found on LinkedIn too.

In addition to the above, a great place to find higher or degree level apprenticeships is the Higher and Degree Vacancy Listing, produced by Amazing Apprenticeships and now released three times a year in October, January and April.

amazingapprenticeships.com/higher-degree-listing

UCAS is also a good source of some higher and degree apprenticeship vacancies.

Q. When is the best time to apply for apprenticeships?

A. Recruitment cycles vary depending on the employer. Some will have apprenticeship vacancies all year round, depending on how the business works and when they need more staff, e.g. if they get a new contract or if a member of staff leaves. Other employers will recruit in line with the academic year so apprentices can finish school or college and start their apprenticeship in September for example. This is often the case for higher and degree apprenticeships. It is best to research the apprenticeships you are interested in and look well in advance at when different employers recruit for their roles.

Q. Can you apply for university and apprenticeship at the same time?

A. Yes, you can apply for university and apprenticeship roles at the same time, allowing you to keep your options open. If you prepare a personal statement for your UCAS application and get support with that at school or college, it will help with apprenticeship applications too, especially the three questions you now structure your UCAS personal statement around. Apprenticeship applications are separate from any UCAS university applications and do not count as one of your five choices.

Q. How many apprenticeships can I apply for?

A. There is no limit to the number of apprenticeships you can apply for, but you need to be mindful of managing the application processes, which can be quite demanding.

Q. What are the skills and qualities apprenticeship employers are looking for?

A. These will vary depending on the needs of the employer. We know that employers look for a genuine interest in the role and industry, and most will value this more than experience. It’s really important to research employers thoroughly and look at their values and what they say they want from their staff.

APPRENTICESHIPS

Q. What is the best way to stand out from other candidates?

A. It is really important to show who you really are, so you need to be yourself. Employers aren't just looking for qualifications, they want curious, motivated individuals who bring energy and enthusiasm to the role. Use real-life examples to demonstrate your strengths – maybe you led a school project, supported a friend/peer or solved a difficult problem. It is also a good idea to mirror the language they use in the job description in your application/interview to show you understand what they're looking for and explain why this apprenticeship in particular interests you. Highlight both your skills (like coding or communication) and your strengths (like creativity or determination). Keep your application clear, professional and mistake-free (paying particular attention to spelling and grammar).

Q. Can I use AI to help write my application?

A. Employers want to hear who you are and what you could bring to their organisation in an authentic way, so whilst using AI can be useful for proofreading, and checking spelling and grammar, it is important that you don't use it to create the content for you. Employers see lots of applications and are likely to be able to spot those applications that are created using AI. If you get to the interview stage, you need to be able to speak in person about yourself, without the use of AI.

Q. How can I best prepare for an assessment centre?

A. It's really important that you have fully researched the employer – not just top-level facts about when the company was founded etc., but detailed research – looking at their company website and social media, their values, recent news, awards, priorities and what their employees say. You also need to have fully researched the apprenticeship itself – what it involves and how they structure it at their organisation.

Q. What are common mistakes candidates make during assessment and interview?

A. Apprentice candidates can make simple but avoidable mistakes during assessments and interviews if they're unsure about what's expected of them. Things like arriving late, appearing under-dressed (check the dress code you're given in advance and if you aren't given one, ask what the dress code is), using overly casual language or failing to ask questions that show genuine interest. Some candidates struggle to explain why they want the role or how they have researched the company and why they see themselves as a good fit for the organisation. But these mistakes can all be avoided with preparation.

APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeship salaries and bursaries

Q. What do you earn as an apprentice?

A. Apprentices will be paid at least the National Minimum Wage for Apprentices which varies depending on their age and how far along they are in their apprenticeship.

Apprentices are entitled to the apprentice rate if they're either:

- aged under 19
- aged 19 or over and in the first year of their apprenticeship

Apprentices are entitled to the minimum wage for their age if they:

- are aged 19 or over
- have completed the first year of their apprenticeship

Apprentices who have completed their first year are paid the National Minimum Wage. These are the legal minimum wages, but many employers will pay more. The wage can depend on the sector, location and level of responsibility.

gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates

Q. I am a Care Leaver/Care Experienced – am I entitled to any additional support on an apprenticeship?

A. You may be entitled to the Apprenticeship Care Leavers' Bursary. Also, local authorities often have additional bursaries and grants that you may be able to access. They may also be able to support you with travel expenses, with clothing before you attend interview or support in paying for any documentation needed e.g. a passport.

Q. What is the Apprenticeship Care Leavers' Bursary?

A. The Apprenticeship Care Leavers' Bursary is a payment of £3,000 that the government gives to young people meeting the criteria. If you are eligible for the £3,000 bursary, you will get this in three instalments. Your training provider will receive your bursary, and pass these payments on to you.

You can find more information about the Apprenticeship Care Leavers' Bursary here:

apprenticeships.gov.uk/apprentices/support-care-experienced-apprentices

APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeship support

Q. What support is there during an apprenticeship?

A. Apprentices will have a line manager and mentor to support them on the job. They will also benefit from support via their training provider.

Q. What support is there for individuals with additional needs?

A. Apprentices with additional needs will have a support plan to ensure that any reasonable adjustments are in place. The Department for Work and Pensions can provide Access to Work funding to contribute to support beyond reasonable adjustments for people with a disability, health condition or mental health condition that affects their ability to work. For apprentices who are care experienced or are a care leaver, they may be entitled to a care leaver bursary of up to £3,000. Find out more here:

apprenticeships.gov.uk/apprentices/support-care-experienced-apprentices

Completion and progression

Q. Is there a guaranteed job when the apprenticeship ends?

A. Many employers will offer permanent roles to apprentices who successfully complete their apprenticeship, however a permanent role is not always guaranteed. If an apprentice is on a fixed-term contract of employment, the employer will usually support the apprentice to secure a position within the company, if available, before their apprenticeship ends. If this is not possible, the apprenticeship training provider will support the apprentice with their next steps.

Q. What do I get for completing an apprenticeship?

A. Apprentices will gain a nationally recognised qualification and a certificate upon completion of their apprenticeship. They will also benefit from work experience and a salary.

T LEVELS

Accessing T Levels

Q. What is a T Level?

A. A T Level is a level 3 technical alternative qualification to A-levels, designed for 16–19 year olds after year 11, combining classroom learning, alongside an industry placement.

Q. What are the entry requirements for a T Level?

A. Many providers require GCSEs including English and maths at grade 4 or above. You will need to check the specific entry requirements for the course you are interested in and also get in touch with the provider if you are worried about your GCSE grades. Some T Level providers offer a T Level Foundation Year course to prepare you for a T Level, or may have another level 2 course to help you work on achieving your English and/or maths before taking a T Level.

Q. Do I have to pay to study a T Level?

A. No, you do not have to pay to study a T Level.

Q. Can I take a T Level alongside A-levels?

A. No, you cannot usually take a T Level alongside A-levels, as a T Level is a full two-year qualification equivalent to three A-levels. However, do discuss this option with your local provider if it is something you're interested in doing.

Finding T Level courses

Q. How do I find a T Level course?

A. Visit the government website tlevels.gov.uk/students/find and enter your postcode to find your local college or school offering T Levels.

Q. Can I study a T Level at school?

A. Yes, some schools offer T Levels alongside other year 12 and 13 qualifications. You can find out which settings offer T Levels near you by visiting tlevels.gov.uk/students/find and entering your postcode.

T LEVELS

T Level subjects and content

Q. Which T Levels are available?

A. There are currently 21 T Level subjects available in 10 different sectors. You can view the full list at tlevels.gov.uk/students/subjects

Q. How is a T Level structured?

A. 80% of the qualification is classroom-based and 20% is spent undertaking an industry placement with an employer in the workplace.

Q. What is the industry placement?

A. The industry placement lasts at least 45 days working with an employer in a real-world setting. It is designed to give you hands-on experience in your chosen industry and help you develop job-ready skills.

Q. Who finds the industry placement?

A. Your training provider will be responsible for finding the employer(s) that will provide your 45-day industry placement.

Q. What support systems are typically in place during the industry placement component of T Levels and what happens if a student faces difficulties during the course?

A. Support for T Level industry placements includes dedicated employer liaisons and tutor check-ins for progress and welfare, a designated line manager and workplace mentor at the employer's site, and pre-placement induction and learning goals. If a T Level student faces difficulties, their course provider should offer support, such as learning support, pastoral care, or alternative assessments to address issues with complex topics, time management, or personal circumstances. Students should discuss challenges with their tutors, who can access appropriate resources to help them succeed and ensure their learning is not negatively impacted.

T LEVELS

Completion and progression

Q. What do I get at the end of a T Level?

At the end of a T Level, you receive a nationally recognised certificate with an overall grade of Pass, Merit, Distinction, or Distinction*, a breakdown of your achievements in core and occupational components, and confirmation of a completed industry placement. The T Level certificate also includes UCAS tariff points, allowing progression into higher education.

Q. Do all universities accept T Levels?

Many, but not all universities accept T Levels at the moment. The number of universities accepting T Levels is growing all the time as universities recognise the value of T Levels. There is a list of providers that accept T Levels for entry onto at least one of their courses on the Government website, but if you are interested in a particular university, it is worth checking with them directly.

[gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-providers-with-t-levels-in-entry-requirements/list-of-higher-education-providers-that-accept-t-levels-for-entry](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-providers-with-t-levels-in-entry-requirements/list-of-higher-education-providers-that-accept-t-levels-for-entry)

Q. How do employers actually view T Levels compared to A-levels or apprenticeships when hiring for entry-level positions, and are there specific industries where T Levels give candidates a competitive advantage?

A. Employers are increasingly recognising T Levels as a strong alternative to A-levels and apprenticeships, especially in sectors where technical skills and hands-on experience are valued, such as construction, digital, science, healthcare, engineering, manufacturing, education and childcare. T Levels are still a relatively new qualification (they were first introduced in 2020), so some employers are still finding out about them and realising the benefits of the blend of classroom learning and the work experience gained from the industry placement.

Q. Do Industry Placements lead to employment?

A. T Level industry placements can be a great way for employers to build their future workforce - around a third of T Level students who progress into employment get jobs with their T Level industry placement employer.

Accessing HTQs

Q. What is an HTQ?

A. HTQs are level 4 and level 5 qualifications that have been developed and approved by employers as teaching the skills they want in their employees.

Q. What age can you do an HTQ?

A. HTQs are for post-18 learners, with no upper age limit.

Q. What is the duration of an HTQ?

A. An HTQ will usually take 1 or 2 years to complete, depending on the level.

Q. What are the entry requirements?

A. Most HTQs will require a level 3 qualification (such as A-levels, a T Level or a BTEC) and GCSE English and maths at level 4 and above, however you will need to check with the HTQ provider to see what specific entry requirements they have for the course you are interested in. It is really worth having a conversation with them if there is a course you are interested in and you are concerned about your qualifications.

Finding HTQ courses

Q. Where can I study an HTQ?

A. You can study HTQs at colleges, universities and Institutes of Technology.

Q. How do I find an HTQ?

A. You can search for HTQs via the Skills England qualification finder, by looking at providers you are interested in and via the UCAS website.

skillsengland.education.gov.uk/qualifications

HTQ subjects and content

Q. Which HTQs are available?

A. HTQs are available across a wide range of sectors. You can view the HTQ subjects available now and in the future via the Government website.

gov.uk/government/publications/higher-technical-qualification-overview/higher-technical-qualification-an-introduction#available-subjects

Q. What is the structure of an HTQ?

A. HTQs are typically delivered in a classroom setting in further education colleges, universities and Institutes of Technology, but there is often a practical element depending on the course.

Q. Can an HTQ course be taken online or part time?

A. HTQs are flexible and can be studied full time or part time, with online options, but this will vary a lot depending on the course and the provider. However, lots of providers are willing to be flexible if they can.

Q. Is there a work placement in an HTQ?

A. Work placements are not a standard requirement of an HTQ and they are delivered primarily in a classroom setting.

HTQ finances

Q. How much does an HTQ cost?

A. A full-time HTQ costs up to £9,535 per year. Costs will vary from one provider to another and it's really important to discuss this with the providers.

Q. Is student finance available for HTQs?

A. You may be eligible for funding from student finance. It's available for both full time and part time courses and is the same support that's available for degrees and other types of higher education. The amount you could get will depend on your circumstances and the type of HTQ you're studying. HTQ courses that are shorter than a year in duration will be eligible for the Advanced Learner Loan, which covers the tuition fee loan but not the maintenance loan.

You can find out more about student finance here: [gov.uk/student-finance](https://www.gov.uk/student-finance)

Q. Who pays for the HTQ if the student is employed?

A. If the student is in employment, the employer will often pay for all, or part of the costs of studying.

Completion and progression

Q. What does an HTQ lead on to?

A. An HTQ can lead to employment, further study (such as topping up to a full degree) or could prepare you well for an apprenticeship.

OTHER SUPPORT

Support to deliver the ATE presentation

Amazing Apprenticeships and The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) are running a series of webinars throughout the academic year to ensure you feel confident and knowledgeable ahead of presenting the resources in your setting. These webinars will:

- explain how you can use the resources
- provide you with some delivery ideas
- ensure you are up-to-date with key ATE information
- answer any questions you may have



Register for the webinars here:

amazingapprenticeships.com/workshops-webinars

Useful CEC links

Resource directory

The CEC's carefully curated Resource Directory makes it quick and easy to find trusted, high-quality resources you need to make a difference to careers education in your setting.

careersandenterprise.co.uk/educators/digital-products-and-resources

Support for educators

Find out more about how the CEC supports educators here:

careersandenterprise.co.uk/educators



The Careers & Enterprise Academy

The Careers & Enterprise Academy is the online home of careers leadership for Careers Leaders and all those who work with them to plan and deliver strategic, progressive careers programmes.

careersandenterprise.co.uk/educators/the-careers-enterprise-academy

Finding external speakers

Contact the Apprenticeship Ambassador Network (AAN) to find out if an apprentice ambassador can visit your school or college and share their experience:

apprenticeships.gov.uk/influencers/yaan-regional-networks

Contact the T Level Ambassador Network (TAN) to find out if an ambassador can visit your school or college and share their experience. Email: hello@tlevelambassadors.co.uk



If there are any questions you would like us to add to this guide, we'd love to hear from you: hello@amazingapprenticeships.com