

Technical Education Programme

'Update on Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs)' webinar (28/11/24) – Q&A

Many thanks to colleagues from the DfE and the Gatsby Foundation for their input to the answers below.

Disclaimer: Please note that the information in this document reflects the policy situation at the time of the webinar recorded in November 2024 and is subject to change over time.

Q: Where can students study an HTQ?

A: HTQs can be studied at Further Education colleges, universities, independent training providers or at specialist [Institutes of Technology](#) Courses and further information can be found on the [UCAS website](#) or by checking with your local providers.

Q: Is there an HTQ Ambassador scheme, similar to the T Level one?

A: HTQs are level 4 or 5 qualifications, such as Foundation Degrees, Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas that have been approved against employer developed standards. As they include a range of qualifications, there is no single 'Ambassador' scheme as such. However, schools and colleges are encouraged to make links with their local HTQ providers, who can provide students to deliver talks.

The National Careers Service has a playlist of videos to support careers conversations with students talking about their [HTQ experience](#)

[Amazing Apprenticeships](#) provide lots of useful resources and videos of HTQ students.

Q: Do work placements form part of the assessment for HTQs, as it does for T Levels?

A: Level 4 and 5 qualifications do not have to include work placements to get approved as an HTQ. One of the reasons is because many learners study their HTQs part-time and are already getting relevant work experience through their job.

However, many qualifications that become HTQs do require a work placement; it is up to the awarding body to decide if a placement is included. It will often be required in courses that are also endorsed by professional and statutory regulatory bodies, like the Nursing Associate HTQ

regulated by the Nursing and Midwifery Council, or a Network Engineering HTQ endorsed by the British Computer Society. Many HTQs which don't require a work placement will instead involve an employer-based project and many offer experience of work simulated environments.

Q: A lot of job descriptions ask for a degree. How useful is it to have a level 4/5 qualification?

A: In fact, evidence suggests that the number of employers requiring a degree is getting less, and those who do often ask for 'degree or equivalent, which opens up opportunities for those with HTQs. The [DfE](#) HTQ team is working with employers to show that level 4/5 HTQ qualifications provide valuable preparation for the world of work. Level 4/5 qualifications provide the necessary theory and practice to meet the needs of employers and offer a high quality progression route for students who do not necessarily want, or need to undertake a degree.

Q: If a student holds a level 3 qualification, e.g. in Business, could they progress to a level 4 on a part-time basis? Would a level 4 apprenticeship be a better route?

A: HTQs can be studied on a part-time basis, depending on the availability of a relevant local provider and offer a high quality alternative to a degree or an apprenticeship route. Students should discuss their individual requirements with local providers to determine which route best meet their needs. It is important to know that part-time learners on HTQs have the same eligibility for tuition fees and maintenance loans as part-time learners on degree courses. This may not be the case for non-approved level 4 and 5 qualifications.

Q: What do employers think of HTQs?

A: As many HTQs are existing qualifications that have been around for a long time, employers already know and value many of them, like Higher Nationals in Construction and Engineering.

HTQs have been developed in partnership with employers and have been well received as they provide relevant training, knowledge and skills to succeed in the workplace. HTQs are quality marked by [IfATE](#) to indicate that they align with employer-led occupational standards.

HTQs provide flexibility as they can be studied full-time or part-time and help businesses support their employees by enabling them to retrain, learn new skills and improve their existing skills.

Q: Is there a list of HTQ providers for employers to engage with?

A: The DfE hold a [list of approved providers](#) up to June 2023 and are currently working to update this list. However, it is important to check both locally and on [UCAS](#) to confirm which courses are running (just because a course is approved, doesn't necessarily mean it is currently on offer).

Q: Can a student 'top up' to a full degree?

A: Yes, students who have successfully completed an HTQ can 'top up' to a level 6 qualification, subject to the requirements of the organisation that awards the degree. Students who are already employed may receive financial support from their employer to do this. Some HTQ graduates are also able to progress to accelerated degree apprenticeships. Of course, HTQs are excellent preparation for the workplace, so it is not always essential to move on to a level 6 qualification.

Q: Are there any resources available for parents?

A: Yes, the DfE HTQ team has produced a [HTQ Guide for Parents and Carers](#) and a [Parent Briefing Presentation](#)

The DfE produced a useful [Information Pack for Careers Leaders](#), which could also be used when speaking to parents and carers.