



Department for Education: Review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 in England: Second Stage

Consultation response – December 2020

The Council of Deans of Health welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this consultation. The Council represents over 90 UK university faculties engaged in education and research for nursing, midwifery and the allied health professions.

Key messages

1. The Council supports widening access and participation into healthcare careers. Universities are committed to working with providers of Level 3 programmes to ensure a smooth transition into healthcare higher education.
2. New technical qualifications at Level 3 in England must ensure the ability to progress into healthcare higher education, including both university-based programmes and higher-level apprenticeships. Programme outcomes should enable student choice and be aligned closely with entrance requirements.
3. The Government must ensure that there is sufficient provision at level 3 to meet the needs of all learners and that no decision about future provision restricts access to higher level education or has a negative impact on widening access and participation.
4. The Government must continue to fund academic qualifications in health and social care.¹ These are typically taken alongside A Levels and can enable progression into healthcare higher education programmes.
5. The Government must continue to fund Access to HE diplomas for adults and young people. These provide opportunities for social mobility and are aligned to the levelling up agenda.
6. The consultation acknowledges the potential difference in needs of 16-19 year olds and adults. We support the continuation of funding for qualifications for adults that overlap with T Levels. The Government should continue to fund for adult learners: additional specialist qualifications that

¹ Department for Education, 2020, [Review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 in England: Second Stage Government consultation](#), p29.

build on qualifications aligned to employer-led standards; qualifications that provide occupational competence against employer-led standards which are covered by T Level occupational specialisms; and qualifications focused on cross-sectoral skills.

7. Adult learners should have full access to T Levels. We support the proposed 50% reduction in time on a T Level technical industry placement for adult learners with prior relevant experience.
8. Any new or continuing Level 3 technical qualifications in health and social care must take account of pressures in practice placement capacity for learners. Placements must be prioritised for pre-registration learners on programmes leading to professional registration.
9. The consultation indicates that the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (the Institute) will be undertaking a review of its 15 occupational maps.² There is a strong need to ensure the continuation of the health and science occupational map and the health pathway.
10. All professional healthcare apprenticeship programmes will require mandatory qualifications due to external healthcare professional regulation. We note in the Institute's recent consultation³ that the funding rate to be allocated where a degree is a mandatory qualification is still to be determined. This must be urgently resolved to progress reform in this area.

For more information contact:

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² Ibid., p24

³ <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/reviews-and-consultations/consultations/consultation-on-changes-to-funding-recommendation/>