

# **Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs)**

**A guide for teachers and  
education professionals**



**Version 1: October 2023**

# Understanding HTQs



Dear Reader

My name is Joanne Fradd and I am a Senior Policy Advisor for Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) with the Department for Education.

HTQs are level 4 and 5 qualifications such as HNCs, HNDs and Foundation Degrees that have been approved against employer developed standards for specific job roles. HTQs are developed against a rigorous set of occupational standards, ensuring that employers, and individual students, can access high quality training and have confidence that they are developing the skills that they need.

This guide has been created to support careers advisers, careers leaders, teachers, tutors and other educational professionals to provide you with essential information on HTQs, so that you may feel more confident in passing this on to your students, colleagues and wider school or college community.

*Joanne Fradd*

## Contents

What are HTQs?	2
Quick facts about HTQs	3
An introduction to HTQs	4
HTQ subjects and qualifications	5
HTQ providers	7
Who are HTQs for?	8
Finances explained	9
Progression opportunities	10
The HTQ application process	11
Useful resources and links	12
Is your school or college ready?	13

# What are HTQs?

**HTQs are high-quality,  
job-focused  
qualifications that  
have been approved  
as delivering the skills  
employers need.**

# Quick facts about HTQs

In September 2022, the first qualifications approved as HTQs began.

HTQs have been approved to deliver the skills employers need.

All qualifications approved as HTQs are an exciting option for individuals aged 18+.

More and more occupations will be available each year.

They're available across the country in further education colleges, universities and Institutes of Technology.

HTQs are flexible and can be studied full-time or part-time.

An HTQ will usually take 1-2 years to complete.

HTQs are typically delivered in classroom settings.

Students are able to access the same student finance as a degree.

HTQs could lead into an accelerated apprenticeship, full degree or employment.

HTQs can lead to fantastic jobs such as Nursing Associate, Software Developer and Sports Coach.

Look out for the HTQ qualification approval logo!



# An introduction to HTQs

## What are HTQs?

Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) are a great way to get the skills employers want - a route to well-paid, secure and sustainable jobs.

We know that employers are crying out for more people qualified in these skills to grow their businesses and the economy. HTQs are at the forefront of our drive to have more people qualified at higher technical levels – great jobs such as Nursing Associate, Sports Coach or Network Engineer.

HTQs give employers a voice at the heart of the skills system – developing the standards that qualifications are assessed against. With employers telling us what skills they need and what ‘quality’ means, students can have confidence that taking an HTQ will be an investment in themselves, and in the future.

Once approved, the HTQ can display the HTQ Quality Mark, meaning that it delivers the skills employers need. Look out for this logo to find an approved HTQ.



## High quality teaching

Funding is also available for providers to improve their facilities and teaching to give students the best teaching experience. The first round of funding saw diverse and innovative applications, from a mock hospital ward for training healthcare students, to commissioning research to widen HTQs participation – and we’re looking forward to supporting more innovative teaching ideas.

## What are the benefits of HTQs?

HTQs give you confidence that you are getting the skills that employers want. They offer a great deal of flexibility for a variety of learners, including the possibility to study full or part time. They are a great way to continue your studies and get a good job, or to retrain or progress in your current career.

# HTQ subjects and qualifications

Are there HTQs available in a wide range of occupations?

Yes, they can already be studied in areas leading to careers in software engineering, construction site supervision and sports coaching. More will be available each year.



## Which HTQs are available?



**September 2022**

Digital

**September 2023**

Construction & the Built Environment  
Health & Science

**September 2024**

Business & Administration  
Education & Early Years  
Engineering & Manufacturing  
Legal, Finance & Accounting

**September 2025**

Agriculture, Environment & Animal Care  
Care Services  
Catering & Hospitality  
Creative & Design  
Protective Services  
Sales, Marketing & Procurement

# HTQ subjects and qualifications

## Which qualifications are HTQs?

There are several different types of qualifications that are approved as HTQs and the way they are structured depends on the length of the course, the provider, whether you undertake them full or part time and which subject you are studying.

Some existing qualifications that have been approved as HTQs because they meet employers' needs include:

- Higher National Certificate\* (HNC)
- Higher National Diploma\* (HND)
- Foundation degrees\*

\*Remember only approved qualifications will display the HTQ logo, indicating a quality choice.



Find out more about these qualifications here:

[What qualification levels mean: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)



Not all diplomas, certificates and foundation degrees are approved HTQs. Look out for the HTQ logo which will always show on approved qualifications.

## Which approved HTQs are being delivered?

Qualifications in **Digital, Construction, Design & Build** and **Health & Science** have already been approved as HTQs.

Examples of qualifications approved as HTQs so far are:

### Digital

- HNC - Artificial Intelligence Solutions and Applications
- HND - Computing
- HNC - Software Development and Programming
- Foundation Degree - Cyber Security

### Construction, Design & Build

- HND - Modern Methods of Construction
- HNC - Quantity Surveying
- HNC - Construction Management
- HNC - Architectural Technology for England

### Health & Science

- Foundation Degree - Nursing Associate
- HNC - Community Coaching for England
- Foundation Degree - Health Play Specialism
- HND - Healthcare Assistant Practitioner

Find current courses available on UCAS [here](#)



# HTQ providers

## Which training providers offer HTQs?

HTQs are delivered by Universities, FE Colleges, Independent Training Providers and Institutes of Technology across England.

You can view a spreadsheet of HTQ providers on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/list-of-higher-technical-qualifications>

## How are HTQs delivered?

HTQs are typically delivered in a classroom setting, with online learning options too. Work placements are not usually needed on a HTQ except in some professions. However, many courses do offer you practical skills and experience through workshops, labs or work experience.

## Part-time or full-time?

You can study HTQs full-time or part-time. Students leaving school or college and studying HTQs as a post-18 option would typically study full-time. It is more likely that where HTQs are being used by individuals already in employment to upskill or retrain, that this would be part-time study, allowing them to also work at the same time.



## Newcastle College University Centre



*"Having the HTQ badge against our courses is a great benefit as it is an extra set of external verification to prospective students and employers that our courses are aligned with industry needs and will equip our students with the correct set of skills and behaviours that are needed in industry, making our graduates stand out and giving them the best opportunity to be successful in their career choices."*





# Who are HTQs for?

## When can you start an HTQ?

You have to be at least 18 to undertake an HTQ and they can be taken after a level 3 qualification, such as A-levels, T Levels, BTECs or some advanced apprenticeships, depending on the mandatory qualification within them. They are suitable for 18+ school leavers and you can apply for HTQs while you are still at school. They are also suitable for anyone looking to upskill or retrain.

HTQs can be taken alone as a standalone qualification or embedded as part of the mandatory qualification within a higher apprenticeship.

## Which students are most suited to an HTQ?

HTQs can be excellent for all students post-18. They may be particularly relevant for:

- ☀ Students looking for a practical, employer-led programme with a job focus, but who prefer classroom-based learning to work-based learning.
- ☀ Anyone not ready to leave a learning environment and seek employment, but who doesn't want to commit to the time and cost of a full degree.
- ☀ Learners who may not feel ready for an apprenticeship or a degree, or those who haven't secured the position, apprenticeship or course they wanted. An HTQ can get them ready and help boost their chances of securing their next step at the end of their HTQ.



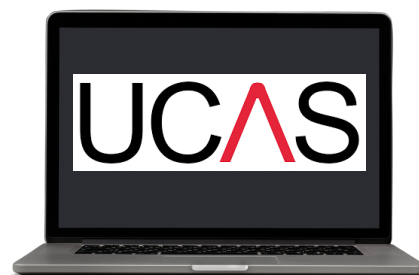
Because many HTQs start in September **or** January, there is flexibility. A learner doesn't have to rush to make a decision following exam results for a September start.

## What are the entry requirements for HTQs?

Each educational provider sets their own entry requirements. IfATE set the occupational standards along with employers, but each provider can choose the entry requirements for their courses.

The grades or qualifications needed will depend on the type of course being applied for. Most providers state their entry requirements in terms of UCAS tariff points, and requirements could range from 0 – 112.

## Where can you find out the UCAS tariff point requirements?



Use the UCAS search function to look at the different requirements across the many providers.

[Search UCAS](#)

# Finances explained

## Do you have to pay tuition fees to do an HTQ?

If an HTQ is undertaken as a standalone qualification, tuition fees will apply, which will vary depending on the course.

They're likely to cost from around £7,000 to £9,250 a year for a one-year or two-year course.

## Are student finance options available?

Students may be eligible for [funding from student finance](#) or a [scholarship, grant or bursary](#). This will depend on their circumstances and the type of HTQ being studied.

Also, from 2025 the [Lifelong Loan Entitlement](#) (LLE) will replace the two existing systems of publicly funded higher education; student finance loans and Advanced Learner Loans.

The LLE will provide all new learners with a tuition fee loan entitlement equivalent to four years of post-18 education and this can be used up to the age of 60. This would be £37,000 in current fees. Learners will have a personal account they can access throughout their life that will display their student finance LLE 'balance' as well as information, guidance, and details of eligible courses the LLE will fund.

## Are there any other finance options?

In the same way as full-time university study, students may wish to make arrangements for their own payment of fees and this is also the same for HTQs.

# Progression opportunities

## Do HTQs lead to employment?

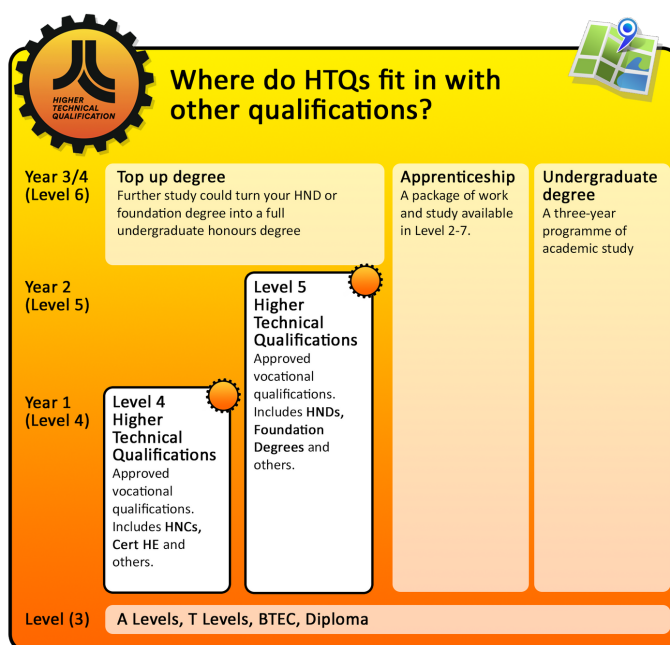
Although there are tuition fee costs to undertake HTQs, they could lead into paid employment more quickly than doing a longer, full degree would, for a fraction of the cost.

## What could you do after an HTQ?

After completing an HTQ, you could go straight into employment or use credits gained through your HTQ to progress onto further study, for example a degree, or an apprenticeship. You can top up your HTQ credits and turn it into a full undergraduate honours degree or use those credits to undertake an accelerated apprenticeship.

## Do HTQs attract UCAS points?

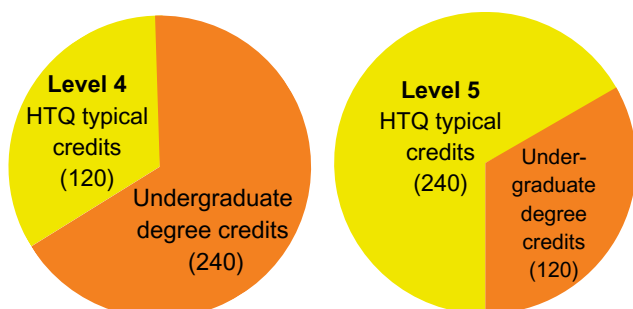
An HTQ at either Level 4 or 5 would earn credits (a level 4 Certificate in Education that is an approved HTQ typically attracts 120 credits, for example). Students could make an application to a university to 'top up' to a degree (in a similar subject area) on the basis of these credits. Universities would consider each application on its merits. Typically, 360 credits are needed in total to complete an undergraduate degree.



## Occupational maps

All Apprenticeships, Higher Technical Qualifications, and T Levels are based on occupations recognised by employers. The Occupational Maps bring these together to show where technical education can lead. There are 15 maps, one for each route. They help employers and individuals to understand routes for progression and how occupations at different levels link together. Explore the occupational maps here

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/occupational-maps/>



# The HTQ application process

## How do you apply for an HTQ?

There are two ways to apply for an HTQ.

- Use the [UCAS website](#) to search and apply for HTQ courses
- Apply directly to the training provider

## When should the application be made?

Applications should be made in the autumn term observing the January deadline to have the best chance of securing your first choice for the following September. Applications can be made after this date as some courses have a January rather than September start, allowing further flexibility.

## How do you use UCAS to search and apply?

### Full time HTQs

The journey for application to full time HTQs listed in the UCAS search tool is identical to the journey for other courses.

Visit <https://digital.ucas.com/search> to start your search or visit [UCAS HTQ courses](#) to see a full list of courses.

### Part time HTQs

UCAS does not support applications to part time courses, so if an applicant wishes to apply to these courses, they would need to directly contact the provider. The UCAS search tool will direct them to the provider website if they click the 'apply' button.

## Timeline for applying to full time HTQs on UCAS:

**Early May** - Course listings released.



**Mid May** - Applicants can start adding choices and completing their application (as long as they have registered on the UCAS hub). Applicants can add up to 5 choices, including HTQs.



**Early September** - Applicants who are ready can submit their application.



**January** - Equal consideration deadline (this guarantees equal consideration of all applications received by this point, but doesn't stop applications being submitted).



**From May** - Receive offers.



Not all organisations are labelling courses as HTQs yet, so some courses may not appear when you search on UCAS. You could look at the HTQ list [here](#) and then search by course name on UCAS.

# Useful resources and links

A variety of useful resources have been made available to help you to explore HTQs. Please use the QR codes below:

What is studying an HTQ like?



Hear from Sam at Salford City College about his HTQ journey



What are the occupational maps?



Visit the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education



Find out more at gov.uk



[Amazing Apprenticeships](#) is running a series of free webinars on HTQs on behalf of the Department for Education.

Visit <https://amazingapprenticeships.com/workshops-webinars/> to book on to future webinars.

Visit <https://amazingapprenticeships.com/resources/?webinar=1> to catch up on previous webinars.



# Is your school or college ready?

Use the following statements to see where your school or college is at on their HTQ journey and consider using some of the development ideas to enhance your progress.

<b>We're getting ready</b>	<b>We've started</b>	<b>We're making good progress</b>
<p>We will be looking to include information about HTQs in our careers activity this year.</p>	<p>We have started to introduce information about HTQs to our students and colleagues, and we are in contact with our local HTQ providers.</p>	<p>Information about HTQs is embedded within our careers strategy and staff feel confident in discussing the options available with students and their families.</p>
<b>Development ideas</b>	<b>Development ideas</b>	<b>Development ideas</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research local providers offering HTQs and invite them to come in and speak with students and staff. This could also help towards your PAL requirements.</li> <li>• Share this guide with colleagues.</li> <li>• Sign up to join (or watch on catch up) the webinars available through <a href="#">Amazing Apprenticeships</a>.</li> <li>• Speak with your local Careers Hub to see if there are other activities around HTQs that will help to build your knowledge and local connections.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider asking your local HTQ providers if they would host an open day for your students to visit them and learn more about this offer and how it fits with other choices.</li> <li>• Speak with your local HTQ providers to see if they have any current HTQ students that would share their journey with your students.</li> <li>• Include HTQ information within your HE Options / post-18 choices evening (if you have one) alongside full-time university study and apprenticeships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak with your local Careers Hub to find an opportunity to share your approach to inspire other schools.</li> <li>• Share your tracking systems to ensure that you are capturing immediate progression post-18 e.g. onto a HTQ L4, but also reviewing the next steps after this e.g. onto full-time HE / accelerated apprenticeships / employment.</li> </ul>