

Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs)

**A guide for teachers and
education professionals**



Version 2: November 2024

Understanding HTQs

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.

The Department for Education HTQ Team



Department
for Education



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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.

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

More and more occupations will be available each year.

They're taught 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 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 and are a route to well-paid, secure and sustainable jobs.

We know that employers are crying out for more people qualified in specialist 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.

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.

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.



HTQ subjects & 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.

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.



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*

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/guidance/what-qualification-levels-mean-england-wales-and-northern-ireland)

“

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.

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University Centre**



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

HTQ subjects & qualifications

HTQs in these subject areas are available now:



**BUSINESS &
ADMINISTRATION**



**CONSTRUCTION &
THE BUILT
ENVIRONMENT**



DIGITAL



**EDUCATION &
EARLY YEARS**



**ENGINEERING &
MANUFACTURING**



**HEALTH &
SCIENCE**



**LEGAL, FINANCE
& ACCOUNTING**

HTQs in these subject areas will be available from September 2025:



**AGRICULTURE,
ENVIRONMENT &
ANIMAL CARE**



CARE SERVICES



**CATERING &
HOSPITALITY**



**CREATIVE &
DESIGN**



**PROTECTIVE
SERVICES**



**SALES,
MARKETING &
PROCUREMENT**

HTQ subjects & qualifications

Examples of qualifications approved as HTQs are:

Business & Administration

- HNC - Business (General)
- FD - Business and Management
- FdSc - Operational Management
- HND - Leadership and Management

Construction & the Built Environment

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

Digital

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

Education & Early Years

- CertHE - Sports Coaching
- FdA - Children and Young People
- FdA - Childhood Studies Care and Education
- FdSc - Basketball Coaching and Performance

Engineering & Manufacturing

- HND - Aeronautical Engineering for England
- HNC - Civil Engineering
- HNC - Electrical and Electronic Engineering
- HND - Mechanical Engineering

Health & Science

- FD - Nursing Associate
- FD - Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences
- HNC - Counselling and Applied Psychology
- HND - Healthcare Assistant Practitioner

Legal, Finance & Accounting

- HND - Accounting Principles and Project Management
- FdSc - Criminology, Policing and Criminal Law



CertHE - Certificate of Higher Education
HNC - Higher National Certificate
HND - Higher National Diploma
FD - Foundation Degree
FdA - Foundation Degree in Arts
FdSc - Foundation Degree in Science

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 an 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.



HTQ students




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.

Who is most suited to an HTQ?

HTQs can be excellent for anyone 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.



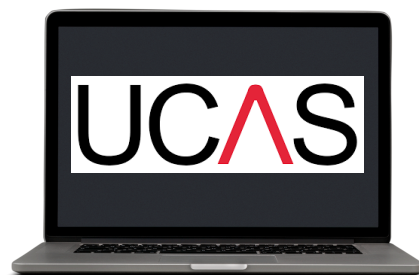
Because many HTQs start in September or January, there is flexibility. A learner doesn't have to rush to make a decision following exam results for a September start.

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 £6,000 to £9,250 a year for a one-year or two-year course, with some courses costing £4,500.

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.

From September 2026, learners will be able to apply for [Lifelong Learning Entitlement \(LLE\)](#) for the first time for courses and modules starting from January 2027 onwards.

LLE funding 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.



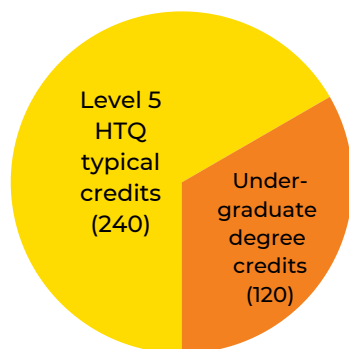
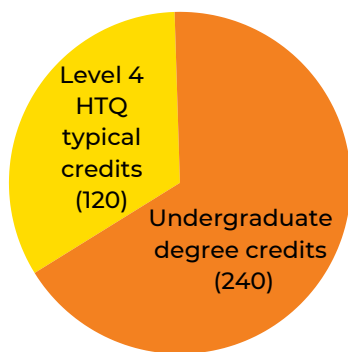
Progression opportunities

Employment after HTQs

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.

Further study after HTQs

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.



HTQs and UCAS tariff 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://digitalucas.com/search> to start your search or visit [UCAS HTQ courses](#) to see a full list of courses.

Part-time HTQs

You can search for part-time HTQs on UCAS, but it does not support applications to part-time courses. To apply, you would need to contact the provider directly. 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.



August - Courses made available via clearing.

Hear from HTQ students



Khawar,
HTQ Cyber Security
student,
Solihull College



I decided to enrol myself on an HTQ because I was looking for an opportunity to get back into the IT industry. The way they have structured and are delivering the course I think is brilliant. Two days a week works perfectly with my routine. Someone like me, who has kids, it gives plenty of time to balance my life with my studies and my family life. I feel it has been the best decision for me. I wanted to do something different and IT has always been my passion. I feel motivated that once I finish my programme, I am going to be in a position where there will be a lot more opportunities available to me.



I decided to do a HTQ following my T Level because I enjoyed the more practical subjects at school such as design technology, so I was looking for a career where I could develop and use these skills. I'm doing the HTQ alongside work, it's the best option for me and studying whilst working gives me a great life balance. I would certainly recommend it. I've really enjoyed the interactivity of the small classes, it allows much more one to one learning. The guest speakers and site visits have also been great and really beneficial.



James,
HTQ Construction
and the Built
Environment
student,
Blackpool and
Fylde College

Hear from HTQ students



**Tarza,
HTQ Healthcare
Practice Graduate,
Newcastle College
University Centre**



It was amazing taking my Higher Technical Qualification. I've always been fascinated by the healthcare sector, and it was my childhood dream to work as a nurse. I thought the HTQ was a better option for me as I was out of education for so long. This course gave me the clinical skills I need to become a healthcare practitioner and I also developed skills in critical writing, thinking and researching. This course has given me good knowledge and I am now studying my BSc in Adult Nursing Practitioner at the University of Sunderland.



I was drawn to cyber security as it's an important, ever-changing field and I know I can help people with my technical skills. I loved my course! The small sizes suited me, and my tutors and lecturers are all experts in the area so you learn a lot. I also got the opportunity to link up with a local cyber security business which was a really valuable experience. The projects were really practical and real world based. I graduated with a distinction and I'm now topping up my HTQ to a BSc in computing and I'm excited to learn more about digital forensics and the impact of AI in cyber security.



**Lucy,
HTQ Cyber Security
Graduate,
Newcastle College
University Centre**

Useful resources and links

About HTQs

Skills for Careers HTQ information:

skillsforcareers.education.gov.uk/pages/training-choice/htq-higher-technical-qualification



National Careers Service Find a course - HTQs:

tinyurl.com/43ff35y6



Find Amazing Apprenticeships' HTQ resources here:

amazingapprenticeships.com/htqs/



UCAS HTQs information:

ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/choosing-course/higher-technical-qualifications

UCAS HTQ search:

tinyurl.com/2s44vaby



Application support

UCAS

ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/filling-your-ucas-undergraduate-application



General support

National Careers Service

nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/



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.

We're getting ready	We've started	We're making good progress
<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>
Development ideas	Development ideas	Development ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Share this guide with colleagues. • Sign up to join (or watch on catch up) the webinars available through Amazing Apprenticeships. • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Speak with your local HTQ providers to see if they have any current HTQ students that would share their journey with your students. • Include HTQ information within your HE Options / post-18 choices evening (if you have one) alongside full-time university study and apprenticeships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak with your local Careers Hub to find an opportunity to share your approach to inspire other schools. • 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.