



openawards

Post-16 Qualifications at Level 2 and Below

Consultation Overview
March 2022

**Changing
Lives
Through
Learning**

Overview of Key Proposals

- Level 2
- Level 1
- Entry Level
- Personal, Social and Employability
- English and mathematics

Timeline and Next Steps

- Consultation dates
- Further information

Introduction

The Department for Education has published the Post-16 Qualifications at Level 2 and Below Consultation.

This Consultation is open until Wednesday 27th April.

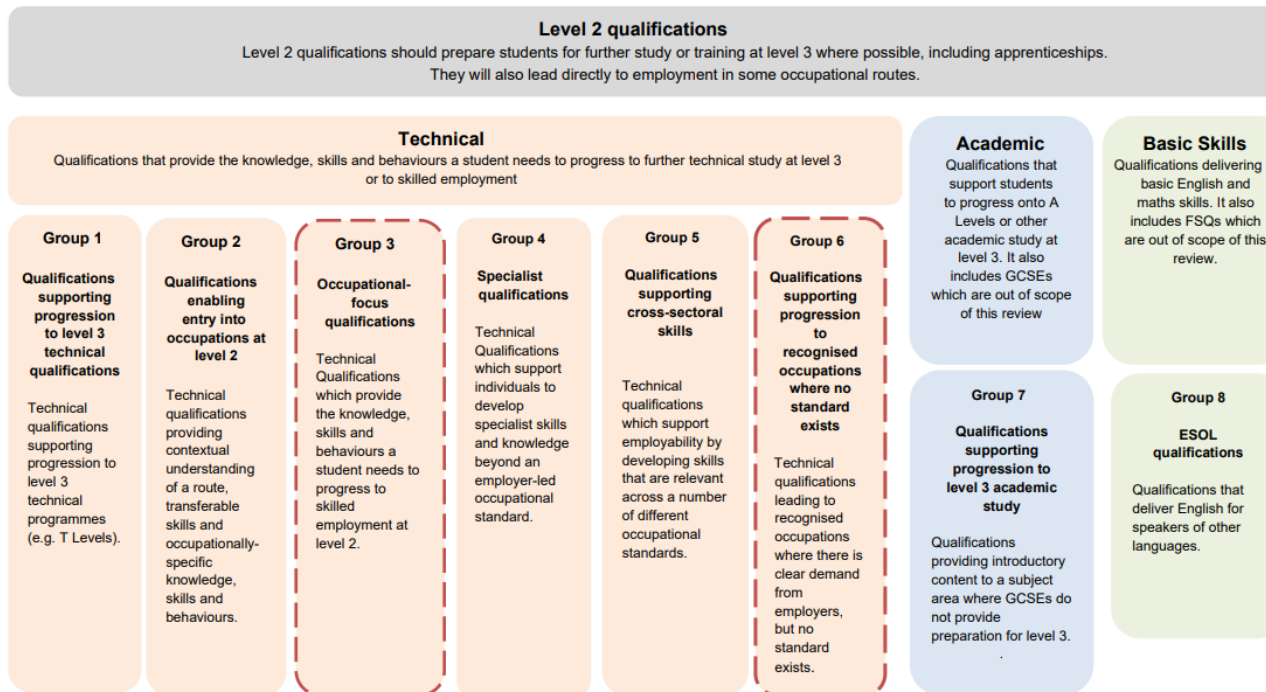
We would encourage all providers to respond to this or contact Open Awards with any comments and we will feed into our response.

Open Awards will share further information on the implications of the proposals once we have the outcome of the consultation.

Level 2 Qualifications

DfE are proposing a total of eight distinct groups of qualifications that will be considered for public funding at level 2 in the future. Qualifications will be grouped according to whether they support progression to level 3 study, employment or deliver English skills for speakers of other languages.

Figure 7: Proposed Level 2 qualification landscape



Groups 3 and 6 are proposed for adults only, but DfE are consulting whether qualifications Group 3 should also be available for 16-19 year olds who are unsure about the occupational route they want to pursue; they could study two smaller qualifications in two different occupational routes.

Level 2 Qualifications

Other key proposals are:

Group 1 – purpose to enable students to progress to level 3 Technical Qualifications (e.g. T-Levels). Broad content relevant to a particular technical education route. Anticipated size of 120-240 GLH.

Group 2 – purpose to enable progression into an occupation at level 2. Focus on full occupational competence as is possible in a classroom-based setting. Must align to an employer-led occupational standard at level 2. Designed to be delivered over two academic year (c. 540 GLH).

DfE Consulting on two different options:

- Option A – Group 2 qualifications only
- Option B – Group 2 qualifications, plus the alternative of taking two medium sized occupational-focus qualifications (from group 3) in different routes over two years, with a guideline size of around 350 GLH per qualification

Level 2 Qualifications

Other key proposals are:

Group 4 – small range of qualifications to support individuals to develop specialist skills and knowledge based on an aspect of employer-led occupational standards. Focus on skills/knowledge that are not included in the level 2 occupational standard but are recognised by employers as adding value to career prospects. Maximum GLH of 200 hours.

Group 5 – small range of qualifications designed to support students to develop skills that add value across multiple occupations or sectors e.g. health and safety or first aid.

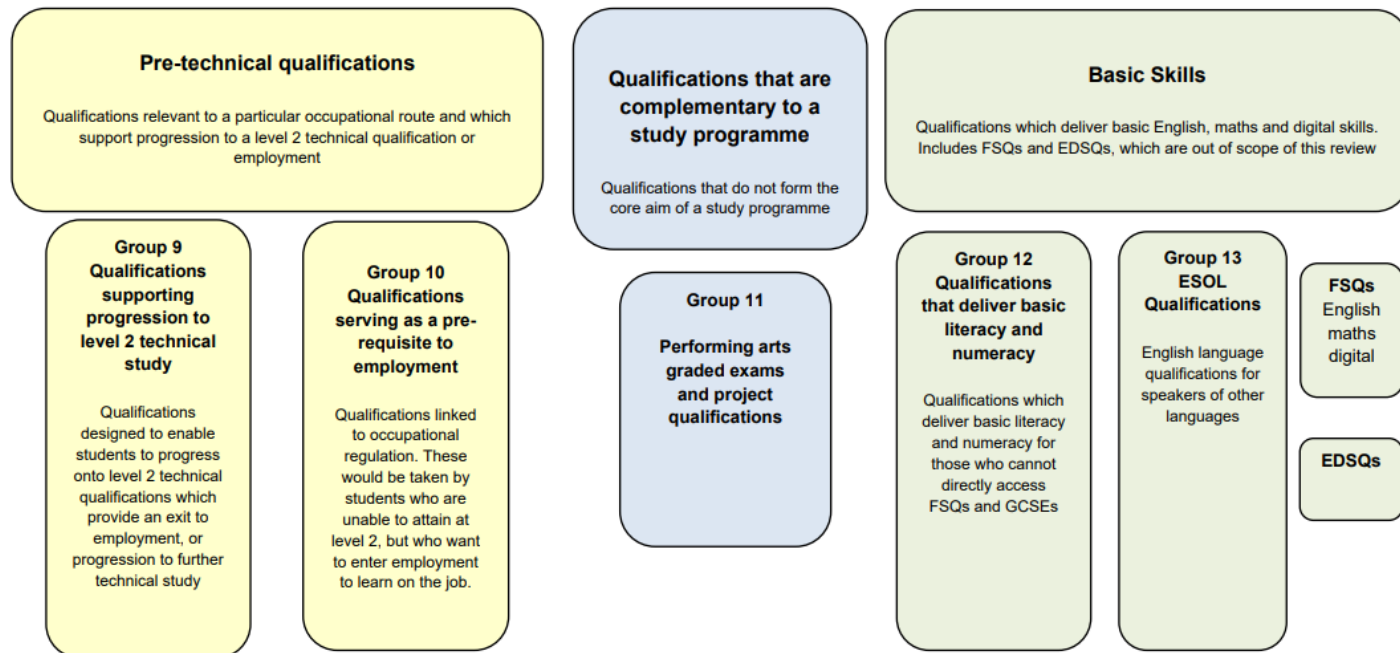
- Perform a function/functions that are part of multiple occupational standards but do not result in occupational competence.
- Be small in size, with a guideline maximum of 150 GLH.

Group 7 – purpose to support progression to specialist academic qualifications at level 3, which are offered as an alternative to A Levels. Content must be substantially different to GCSEs. Anticipated GLH of 120-240 hours to enable study as part of a broader study programme.

Level 1 Qualifications

DfE are proposing a total of five distinct groups of qualifications that will be considered for public funding at level 1 in the future. All will be available for 16-19 year olds and adults. The focus will be on progression onto a level 2 qualification or higher that provides entry into a skills occupation, or progress to a work-based pathway (including supported internships, traineeships, and apprenticeships).

Figure 10: Proposed level 1 qualifications landscape



Level 1 Qualifications

Group 9 – level 1 qualifications with a purpose to support progression onto a level 2 technical qualification that provides direct entry into a level 2 occupation, or to support progression, potentially via a level 2 qualification, to a level 3 qualification which provides entry to a level 3 occupation. Expected to be 120-280 GLH.

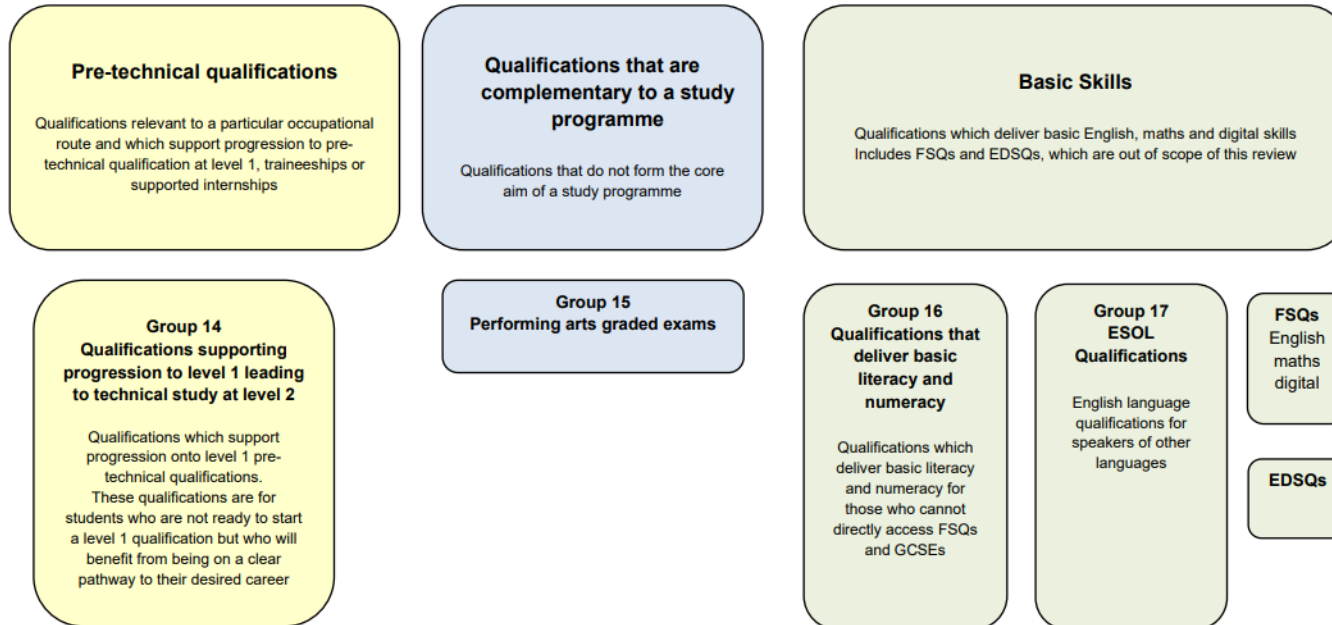
Group 10 - qualifications which may serve as a prerequisite for employment, including those which are linked to occupational regulation in certain routes. Expected to be no more than 100 GLH.

Group 11 - qualifications that are designed to be taken alongside a student's main programme of study but do not form the core aim of a study programme.

Entry Level Qualifications

DfE are proposing a total of four distinct groups of qualifications at Entry Level; all will be available for 16-19 year olds and adults. The focus will be on progression onto a level 2 qualification or higher that provides entry into a skills occupation, or progress to a work-based pathway (including supported internships, traineeships, and apprenticeships).




Figure 11: Proposed entry level landscape



Group 14 – qualifications which lead directly to a level 1 pre-technical qualification. Expected to be 120-180 GLH.

Group 15 – qualifications at entry level which allow students to develop additional skills and are complementary to a study programme.

Personal, Social and Employability Qualifications

	Personal and Social Development We anticipate this standard would include content designed to improve a student's communication and interpersonal skills, develop confidence and resilience, prepare them for further study and progression, and prepare them to engage with the local community and wider society.
	Employability Skills We anticipate this standard would include content designed to prepare a student to find and secure employment, such as job searches, CV writing and interview skills, and to teach the essential skills for the work environment, such as workplace communications, teamwork and problem solving, health and safety at work, and employee rights and responsibilities.
	Independent Living and Life Skills We anticipate this standard would include content designed to prepare a student for adulthood and independent living, such as managing physical and mental health, relationships, maintaining a home, tenant rights and responsibilities, independent travel skills, and financial management skills.

The proposal is to streamline the system by developing a set of national standards for PSE, which include core content, key skills and behaviours, and set out a clear continuum of skills development and progression across the levels.

The standards, supported by comprehensive frameworks, would underpin qualification design, and in future, only qualifications designed to meet the requirements of the standards would be in scope for funding approval.

DfE will consider responses to this consultation and then consult separately on the detailed implementation of proposals for PSE qualifications.

Maths and English Qualifications

Groups 12 and 16 – qualifications at level 1 and Entry Level will continue to be funded where they deliver basic literacy and numeracy for those who cannot directly access FSQ/GCSE.

Funding at level 2 for non-FSQ/GCSE will be removed.

Mathematics and English qualifications will need to be:

- Developed against National Standards for Adult Literacy and Numeracy
- Designed to support those who cannot access FSQ/GCSEs

Groups 8, 13 and 17 – ESOL qualifications will continue to be funded at level 2, level 1 and entry levels. Qualifications named ESOL Skills for Life are in scope of this review. ESOL International qualifications are out of scope.

Timelines and Next Steps

1. Qualification Approval

The Department for Education are proposing that awarding organisations put forward qualifications for future funding approval.

The detail of the approvals process at level 2 and below will be set out following the consultation, subject to further discussions with Ofqual and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE).

Existing qualifications that are not considered as part of this approvals process, or do not meet the new criteria, will not be approved for funding.

2. Timeline

DfE expect the reforms to be phased in from September 2024:

- Level 2 Construction qualifications in Groups 2 and 3 – 2024/25
- All other Level 2 qualifications in groups 1-7 – 2025/26 or 2026/27
- Qualifications at level 1 and entry level in groups 9-17 – 2027/28

Actions

Feed into the consultation – deadline 27th April

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/post-16-qualifications-review-team/review-of-post-16-qualifications-at-level-2-and-be/>

Once the outcome of the consultation is published, Open Awards will review the detail and share any implications with our providers, including sharing any qualifications that are likely to have funding withdrawn from 2024 onwards, and our plans for qualification development in line with the reforms.

In the meantime, please contact a member of the team on 0151 494 2072 or enquiries@openawards.org.uk to discuss your curriculum.

Further Assistance

Call Open Awards:

0151 494 2072

www.openawards.org.uk