

Joint position statement on the future of applied general qualifications

June 2021

Introduction

- The Department for Education is currently [conducting a review](#) of post-16 qualifications at Level 3 in England. The second stage of the DfE's consultation closed in January 2021 and a formal response is expected at some point in the next few months. The main proposal is to introduce a binary system of T levels and A levels at Level 3, where the vast majority of young people pursue one of these qualifications at the age of 16.
- As a result, funding will be removed for the majority of applied general qualifications such as BTECs. We are deeply concerned about this proposal and believe that AGQs have a vital role to play in the future qualifications landscape. Our organisations all support the joint position statement on the future of applied general qualifications set out below.

Joint position statement

- We share the government's ambition to create a world class post-16 education system, comprising both technical and academic routes, that helps all students to fulfil their potential and meets the needs of employers.
- We welcome the introduction of T levels and many colleges and schools have already started to deliver these stretching new qualifications.
- However, we are concerned that moving to a binary system of T levels and A levels will lead to many of the newly-reformed, high quality, applied general qualifications (AGQs) being defunded.
- For many young people, AGQs (taken alongside A levels or as part of a standalone study programme) will be a more appropriate route to support progression to higher levels of study or a meaningful job, than an A level or T level-only study programme.
- Although AGQs are often available in similar subjects, they are a different type of qualification that provide a different type of educational experience – one that combines the development of skills with academic learning.
- Defunding AGQs will leave many students without a viable pathway at the age of 16 and will hamper progress to higher education or skilled employment. The Department for Education's own impact assessment concludes that students from disadvantaged backgrounds have the most to lose if AGQs are defunded.
- The present implementation timeline is not feasible, particularly given the unfolding impact of the Covid pandemic. Funding should not be removed for any applied general qualification unless an impartial, evidence-based assessment has concluded that it is not valued by students or employers.
- Our shared priority is to **#ProtectStudentChoice** by ensuring that AGQs continue to play a major role in the future qualifications landscape. For more information visit the campaign webpage [here](#).