

# Plans to remove funding for courses with low student numbers

More than 5,000 qualifications which are not being taken by anyone or are being studied by less than 100 students each year may lose government funding, under plans announced by Education Secretary Gavin Williamson.

The proposals set out [today](#) (Thursday 13 February), will make it easier for students to choose the qualifications that are in demand and help them to land great jobs.

The current system is confusing with around 12,000 qualifications on offer to young people at Level 3 and below – including A Level and GCSEs – often with multiple qualifications in the same subject area.

This action is a key part of the government's ambitious plans to transform further education and training, including introducing new T Level qualifications. Alongside world-class A Levels, new T Levels will be the gold standard technical course of choice for young people from 2020.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said

Trying to decide what course will put you on the path to a great career is hard enough, but with over 12,000 qualifications available and many in the same subject – it can feel like a needle in a haystack.

Removing funding for qualifications that have no or low numbers of enrolments will help make sure students have a clearer choice of the qualifications on offer, and ensure they get the skills they need to progress.

David Hughes, Chief Executive of The Association of Colleges said:

Making the qualification landscape easier to navigate for students and employers is crucial for the success of technical education. This will help that, but at the same time I am pleased at the approach being taken which should protect highly-valued but low enrolment qualifications which provide crucial skills, often in smaller sectors of the economy. We also welcome the opportunity for colleges to feed into the process alongside the awarding bodies they work with.

Qualifications including ProQual Level 1 Certificate in Business Administration, OCNLR Level 2 Award in Interior Design and Focus Awards Level 3 Certificate In Personal Training are being considered. These qualifications

have no one taking them and other options exist that are more in demand.

This move is the latest step in the [Government's wider review of Post-16 qualifications at Level 3 and below](#), which aims to ensure all qualifications on offer are high-quality, necessary, and support students to progress into employment or further study.

The review builds on work already underway to help level up skills and opportunities across the country, including the introduction of new T Levels, working with employers to create more high-quality apprenticeship opportunities and establishing a network of Institutes of Technology.

The government is seeking views from the education sector on whether any of the 5,000 qualifications on the list should continue to attract public funding from August 2021.