

Providers committed to making T levels a success, but challenges remain

Ofsted has today published an interim report evaluating the quality of the new T-level courses. It finds that providers are working hard to ensure that T-level courses equip learners with the knowledge, skills and experiences needed for future study or employment. However, the first providers to offer these new qualifications have faced some challenges.

The review also finds that the T Level Transition Programme (TLTP) is not always resulting in learners progressing to a T level as intended.

The interim report was commissioned by the Department for Education and is the first stage in a two-year evaluation of T-level courses. It draws on evidence from visits to 24 providers, 10 of which also offered the transition programme, between December 2021 and April 2022.

Overall, Ofsted found that learners were appreciative of the quality of teaching on their T-level course. However, not all learners felt prepared for how much work they had to do. Effective industry placements gave learners broad, high-quality and appropriate experiences that helped them to make informed decisions about their future career path. However, many learners experienced delays in going on placements.

Work experience is a fundamental component of the transition programme that gives learners the opportunity to gain the skills needed to progress to a T-level course.

In some cases, providers failed to help learners secure meaningful work experience relevant to their course, which resulted in learners sourcing their placements independently.

The review also found that many teachers did not receive comprehensive training and some found teaching the new curriculum challenging. Providers did not always have access to the resources they needed from awarding bodies in good time.

The recruitment and retention of staff with sufficient knowledge and experience were also a challenge, due to sector shortages and the effects of the pandemic. The more effective T-level curriculums involved frequent collaboration between education providers and employers.

Inspectors found that, although teaching on the transition programme was generally of a high standard, most learners appeared unlikely to progress on to a T-level course on completion.

Ofsted's interim report recommends that all T-level and T Level Transition Programme providers:

- provide initial advice to learners before they start a T-level course to

- help them decide which pathway to follow
- collaborate with employers to make sure the design and delivery of the curriculum is of a high quality
 - make sure that the curriculum sequences the different components of a T level in a coherent way that develops learners' knowledge and skills
 - reduce delays to learners work placements
 - ensure that learners in the transition programme get relevant work experience
 - monitor learners' achievements and progress and the impact of work placements on their knowledge and skills

Ofsted also recommends that employers provide placements that give learners experiences relevant to their T level.

The Department for Education should evaluate the effectiveness of the transition programme in helping learners progress to T-level courses, and work with universities to make sure they accept T levels for entry to relevant courses.

In addition to this, awarding bodies should make sure that teachers and learners have the resources they need, in good time.

His Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, said:

It's clear that T-level courses are giving learners career-building pathways. The right balance of theory and practical elements helps learners gain the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to enter the workforce. However, we have also identified a number of concerns that need to be addressed.

I am looking forward to seeing the progress providers have made at our next visits in 2023, and to see the additional courses added into the scheme in the next few years.

A full report will be published in 2023. Providers visited for this interim report will be visited again next year, along with others, to see how T-level courses and the T Level Transition Programme have developed.

Tick Tock! 100 days left on the Self Assessment clock

With 100 days to go until the deadline for online returns, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is reminding Self Assessment customers that the countdown to complete their tax return has begun.

Self Assessment customers have until 31 January 2023 to submit their online return for the 2021 to 2022 tax year.

More than 66,000 taxpayers beat the clock and filed their tax return on 6 April – the first day of the new tax year. HMRC is encouraging others to complete their return as soon as they can, so they know what they owe and can budget to make the payment by 31 January 2023. This also means that if a repayment is due it can be claimed back sooner.

Completing a tax return using HMRC's online filing service is simple and convenient. Last year, more than 95% of customers filed online with many choosing to start it, save their progress and go back to it as many times as they need before it's ready to submit. Those who submit their returns early still have until 31 January 2023 to pay.

Myrtle Lloyd, HMRC's Director General for Customer Services, said:

With 100 days to go until the online deadline, there's still time to complete your tax return, to budget and look into the range of payment options if you need to.

Help and support is available online to help customers with their tax returns. Just search 'Self Assessment' on GOV.UK to find out more and get started today.

Filing early also means they will have plenty of time to access the number of payment options available including:

- paying via the free and secure HMRC App
- setting up an online monthly payment plan (self-serve Time to Pay)
- paying through PAYE tax code (subject to eligibility)
- payment on account

Those who are unable to pay their tax bill in full can access the support and advice that's available on GOV.UK. HMRC may be able to help by arranging an [affordable payment plan](#).

HMRC has updated its [Self Assessment guide](#) to help customers complete their tax return. The guide contains helpful information including:

- what help and support is available when completing their Self Assessment
- what documents they need before they start
- what earnings they need to declare including funds received through COVID support schemes
- help with paying their tax bill and what to do if they have overpaid and are due a refund

All Self Assessment customers need to be aware of the risk of scams and HMRC is reminding them never to share their login details. Someone using them could steal from the customer or make a fraudulent claim in their name. Check HMRC's advice about scams on GOV.UK.

Anyone can [check if they need to complete a tax return](#) by using the free online tool on GOV.UK. Those new to Self Assessment for the 2021 to 2022 tax year may include:

- those who are newly self-employed and earned more than £1,000
- a new partner in a business partnership
- those who have received any untaxed income
- those claiming Child Benefit but they or their partner have an income above £50,000

Self-employed workers must also register for Class 2 National Insurance contributions.

The deadline for paper tax returns is 31 October 2022. If customers miss the deadline for paper returns, they still have until 31 January 2023 to file online.

Find out more about [how to declare taxable COVID-19 support in your tax return](#) if you are self-employed, in a partnership or run a business.

The National Cyber Security Centre has a helpful guide on how to stay secure online and protect yourself or your business against cyber-crime. To find this, go to www.cyberaware.gov.uk.

Payment can be made through HMRC App. To [download the free HMRC App](#), customers can visit the App Store from their iPhone or Google Play for Android and follow the download and set up instructions from there.

[Help and support](#) is available on GOV.UK for customers completing their Self Assessment tax returns. There is also a series of videos to help customers with their tax returns on [YouTube](#).

If you think you are no longer required to complete a Self Assessment return, you can [Check if you need to send a Self Assessment tax return](#).

[Handling large datasets](#)

News story

We deal with a huge volume of complex data every day. The backgrounds, skills and interests within the Government Actuary's Department are an advantage in doing this.



In our blog [Handling large datasets](#) we explore the challenges with data processing and analysis. GAD's diverse team of analysts, trainee actuaries, qualified actuaries and pensions professionals means we can overcome the challenges and produce high quality analysis for government.

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[Results of the annual ICIBI stakeholder survey 2022](#)

In response to the results of the annual stakeholder survey, David Neal, the Independent Chief Inspector, said:

I welcome the responses to this survey and thank all those who took the time to contribute.

I am encouraged to find that stakeholders mostly find participation with the ICIBI worthwhile and are satisfied with their communication with my organisation.

Feedback indicates that there are concerns relating to the Home Office's response to ICIBI recommendations. This is a concern of which I am aware and that I intend to explore further over the coming months.

Many suggestions were made for topics for future inspections, all of which have been noted and will form part of consideration for my 2023-24 inspection programme.

I would like to remind stakeholders that they are free to contact me at any time, either directly or through my inspectors.

Stakeholders who have previously engaged with the ICIBI through our forums, in interviews or by submitting evidence for an inspection were invited by email and through the ICIBI's website and Twitter to participate in the survey.

The survey asked questions relating to stakeholders' experiences of engaging with the ICIBI. It also asked for their views on inspection reports, effectiveness of recommendations, and new ways of working.

Thirty-seven stakeholders completed the survey, an increase from 22 in 2021. Respondents represented a range of organisations, including charities, trade associations, the aviation and maritime sectors, and local authority partnerships:

Participant	Number of respondents
Charity	18
Other*	6
Trade association	5
Local authority partnership (e.g. regional strategic migration partnership), or devolved nation	4
Academic or researcher	1
Direct personal experience of Home Office's border or immigration functions, e.g. EU citizen, asylum seeker, refugee	1
Trade union	1
Legal representative, firm or chamber	1
Legal representative, firm or chamber	1

*Of those who selected other, respondents were:

- 3 from aviation sector
- 1 from the maritime sector
- 1 non-Home Office civil servant

Headline findings are as follows:

Engagement with ICIBI

Generally, scores indicated that stakeholders find engaging with the ICIBI worthwhile, with 60% of respondents using ICIBI inspection reports for advocacy or engagement with the Home Office, and 16% for information only.

Of 37 respondents, 29 (78.4%) were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with their communication with ICIBI over the past year, while 3 (8.1%) had not had any recent communication.

Inspection reports

Of 37 respondents, 33 (89.2%) said the following statement, "ICIBI inspection reports provide constructive challenge to the Home Office", either 'fully' or

'somewhat' reflected their opinion.

On whether "ICIBI inspection reports highlight good practice when it is encountered at the Home Office", 34 out of 37 (94.4%) said this statement 'fully' or 'somewhat' reflected their opinion.

On whether "ICIBI inspection reports address equality and diversity issues", 26 out of 37 respondents (70.3%) said it 'fully' or 'somewhat' reflected their opinion. This compares to 38.5% of respondents who were asked the same question last year, who either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with this statement.

Recommendations

Satisfaction in the Home Office's responses to ICIBI reports had decreased since 2021.

Although 86.5% of respondents agreed 'fully' or 'somewhat' that recommendations are well focused, when asked whether "ICIBI recommendations are effective in driving change within the Home Office", only 20 out of 37 respondents (54%) said the statement either 'fully' or 'somewhat' reflected their opinion.

Just 8 out of 37 (21.6%) respondents believed the Home Office's responses to ICIBI's recommendations to be adequate.

New ways of working

ICIBI introduced new ways of working in August 2021, which included the commencement of shorter length inspections to complement the existing standard inspections, which last around 100 working days. The introduction of these shorter length inspections was to enable the inspectorate to be more agile and responsive to emerging issues, such as the increase in migrants arriving by small boat, and the use of hotels for housing unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

A further aim of the new approach was to increase the inspectorate's output, to enable it to examine more of the Home Office's operations and activity, in shorter timeframes.

Short inspections in particular focus on inspectors' observations, while medium inspections focus on a combination of observation and evidence analysis. In both cases, the scope must remain focused.

The survey asked stakeholders whether the following statement, "I support the new approach to inspecting", reflected their opinion. Of 37 respondents, 33 (89.2%) said this statement 'fully' or 'somewhat' reflected their opinion.

Looking forward

The responses to this survey will inform future stakeholder engagement and feed into our inspection planning. Work is already underway to follow up on

feedback received.

Public asked to help shape UK's Covid-19 commemoration plans

Press release

People across the UK are being invited to have their say on how the nation should remember those who lost their lives during the Covid-19 pandemic.



UK Commission on Covid Commemoration

Today, the UK Commission on Covid Commemoration has launched a consultation giving people across the UK the opportunity to say how they think the pandemic should be remembered and with possible suggestions including the adoption of a Remembrance Sunday-style symbol, dedicated memorials and reflective spaces.

The Commission is also seeking suggestions on suitable dates to hold a national day of remembrance and views on how future generations should be educated about the sacrifices made throughout the pandemic, as well as marking key achievements such as the development of the vaccines and the valuable contribution made by volunteers.

The Chair of the UK Commission on Covid Commemoration, Nicky Morgan, said:

The pandemic had a profound impact on all our lives and will be remembered in our history forever.

Through this consultation, we want to hear from as many people as possible about how we should remember those who lost their lives and those who cared for those in need as well as those who kept our essential services running or stepped up in other ways such as taking on volunteering responsibilities.

We know there are some incredible initiatives already happening

across the UK and we want to build on this great work and consider further ways to commemorate and mark this period in our history.

The public consultation will close on Monday, 5 December 2022.

As part of its engagement programme, the Commission has already met a number of interested parties to seek their views with further regional events planned across the UK. These events provide an opportunity for bereaved families and local stakeholders to offer suggestions for how to commemorate those who died, as well as discuss how the pandemic should be marked more generally.

The Commission will report its recommendations to the Prime Minister by the end of March 2023.

To take part in the consultation visit [Covid Commemoration Consultation](#)

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