

Proposals launched to boost the quality and uptake of Higher Technical Qualifications

Opaque and misunderstood Level 4 and 5 qualifications are being renamed and revamped [under plans unveiled today](#) (Monday 8 July) by Education Secretary Damian Hinds.

Level 4 and 5 qualifications – lesser known qualifications that sit between A Level (Level 3) and degrees (Level 6), such as CertHE, DipHE and foundation degrees – will be rebadged as Higher Technical Qualifications and quality approved, in a drive to attract more students to study them.

[Despite research showing Higher Technical Qualifications can lead to better wages and provide the skills in demand in the future job market](#), only around [1 in 10 adults](#) in England hold them – one of the lowest rates in the OECD. Of the 4,000 qualifications offered, [research shows](#) that over 40% of these only have 5 students or even fewer on them.

[Recent research](#) has also revealed that students who gain these qualifications in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects can earn up to £5,000 more a year than people with degrees from many universities.

[The CBI](#) have predicted that in 5 years' time almost half (47%) of all employment will be in management, professional and technical roles – boosting demand for the specialist skills that Higher Technical Qualifications provide.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

Employers across the country are crying out for more computer programmers, engineers, electricians and technicians in fields from advanced manufacturing to healthcare. But the evidence shows that despite these qualifications putting people in prime position to take advantage of that demand and the opportunities for better wages and better prospects – not enough people know about them.

That needs to change. To help that change we need to make sure these courses are high-quality, lead to good jobs and that people know about them. We can't legislate for parity of esteem between academic and technical routes, but we can make sure the options out there are clear and high-quality so students and employers know and trust that they will give them the skills they need.

This overhaul is part of Mr Hinds' radical shake-up of technical and vocational education, so students and employers understand Higher Technical Qualifications and see them as high-quality and valued alternatives to a

traditional academic route.

To boost uptake of these qualifications and ensure they are of a high standard the Government has outlined proposals including:

- Reviewing Level 4 and 5 Qualifications – ensuring they are of a high-quality and lead to well-paid jobs – and awarding a new quality mark for all approved Higher Technical Qualifications so students and employers can be confident courses provide the skills they need
- Ensuring that approved Higher Technical Qualifications are only available with access to student finance at high-quality further and higher education providers – so that students know the qualifications they get from these institutions are prestigious and highly valued by employers
- A new public campaign working alongside employers and careers advisers to showcase the benefits and the wide range of career opportunities that studying a Higher Technical Qualification can open up

To be internationally competitive and develop the skills our economy needs to drive growth, more people need to gain these Higher Technical Qualifications. In Germany, where productivity levels [are 25% higher than in the UK](#), leading to better wages and prosperity, one in five adults holds a qualification to this level.

Today's plans build on the action already underway to transform technical and vocational education in this country. This includes the introduction of new T Levels from 2020 – technical alternatives to A Levels – and the creation of more high-quality apprenticeship opportunities.

Higher Technical Qualifications will provide a natural progression route for young people taking new T Levels from 2020 or A Levels (Level 3) enabling them to take the next step up and gain higher technical skills in key subjects like STEM.

Matthew Fell, CBI Chief UK Policy Director, said:

There is increasing demand from business for skills at all levels, so it's vital the education system keeps pace with the changing world of work.

It's terrific to see a focus on level 4 and 5 qualifications. This 'missing middle' has been overlooked for too long, and yet for many employers it can provide the skills by bridging a gap between A levels and degrees.

The CBI encourages more flexible routes to higher skills. Ensuring

firms have confidence in these qualifications is critical, so an increased role for the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education and Office for Students to oversee and kitemark quality on behalf of employers will be welcomed.

Federation of Small Businesses National Chairman Mike Cherry said:

We welcome the findings of this review into higher technical qualifications. It's vital for future generations and for the economy, that education and training at all levels are readily accessible. Small firms tell us that technical skills are the most important skillset to achieving future growth. However, many small businesses are still unaware of the potential training possibilities that are available to meet the technical skills gaps they face. We want to work with the Government to change this.

Lord Sainsbury of Turville, chair of the Independent Panel on Technical Education, said:

In the world's best technical education systems, higher technical qualifications play an essential role in equipping people with the skills that modern industry and business need. In England, however, this 'missing middle' of technical education has been neglected for decades. As a result, we now see a significant mismatch between the skills that our economy needs and the qualifications on offer.

I warmly welcome these plans for reform. Qualifications bearing the new, government-backed quality-mark will have met employer standards, be taught in excellent institutions and align with apprenticeships. In this way, employers and students alike can be confident that they have real value in the labour market.

Higher technical courses are offered at universities, FE colleges and National Colleges – such as the London South Bank University and the National College for Nuclear. [The Government's network of Institutes of Technology](#) – unique collaborations between universities, FE colleges, and leading employers – will also specialise in delivering quality Higher Technical Qualifications and training in STEM subjects, such as digital, advanced manufacturing and engineering that will provide employers with the skilled workforce they need.

The Level 4 and 5 review will complement the Government's Post-18 review, to ensure the system is joined up, accessible to all and encourages the development of the skills the country needs. This is central to the Government's modern Industrial Strategy, which aims to make sure everyone is equipped for the jobs of the future.

The Government is also [reviewing post-16 qualifications at Level 3](#) and below

to make sure that all qualifications taken by students are high quality and lead to employment or further study.

Royal Navy destroyer HMS Duncan in Ukraine for major multinational maritime exercise

Alongside forces from 18 other Allies and partners, the ship is contributing to the major multinational maritime training exercise featuring a combined 3,000 troops, 32 ships and 24 aircraft.

HMS Duncan is participating in the exercise as part of the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 and has received support on Sea Breeze 19 from their colleagues deployed on Operation Orbital – the UK’s training mission to Ukraine.

On Sunday HMS Duncan also hosted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during his visit to the Port of Odesa as part of Ukraine Navy Day.

Commodore Michael Utley, Commander of the United Kingdom Carrier Strike Group (COMUKCSG), met with Navy personnel aboard HMS Duncan as part of a visit to the exercise.

COMUKCSG Commodore Michael Utley said:

With a multitude of nations combining a wealth of maritime assets, Exercise Sea Breeze 2019 demonstrates the strength of solidarity between Ukraine and its international partners.

From crucial training exercises to long-term political reform – the UK is committed to standing by Ukraine, whilst Russia maintains its illegal annexation of Crimea.

Since 2015 the UK has helped build the resilience and capacity of the Ukrainian Armed Forces through Operation Orbital, providing training to over 16,000 personnel so far.

Earlier this year the operation expanded to include maritime training, including seamanship, sea survival and maritime tactical training courses.

The UK also supports Ukraine in its institutional reforms of the defence and security sector, helping to drive more effective governance and will soon

introduce a permanent Naval Attaché to the UK Defence Section in Kyiv to help build Ukrainian naval capability.

UK statement on Iran's commitment to the nuclear deal



Iran has broken the terms of the JCPoA, following its announcement that it will start uranium enrichment above the 3.67% limit agreed in the nuclear deal.

While the UK remains fully committed to the deal, Iran must immediately stop and reverse all activities inconsistent with its obligations.

We are coordinating with other JCPoA participants regarding the next steps under the terms of the deal, including a Joint Commission.

Minister for Europe & Americas statement on the death of the Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the United Kingdom

"I was saddened to learn of the death on Saturday 6 July of H.E. Dr Arman Kirakossian, the serving Ambassador of Armenia and a great friend to the UK.

I have spoken to the Foreign Minister of Armenia H.E Zohrab Mnatsakanyan to

pass on condolences on behalf of Her Majesty's Government and have offered our assistance at this difficult time. Our thoughts are with the late Ambassador's family and friends."

[Jodrell Bank added to UNESCO World Heritage List](#)

Jodrell Bank Observatory in Cheshire has been named as the UK's newest UNESCO World Heritage Site, becoming the UK's 32nd site to be added to the prestigious list

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Jodrell Bank Observatory in Cheshire has been added to the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The observatory becomes the 32nd UNESCO World Heritage Site in the UK and joins the prestigious list alongside international sites such as Machu Picchu, the Great Wall of China and the Taj Mahal.

Jodrell Bank, owned by the University of Manchester, is famous as the home of the Lovell Telescope, the world's third largest steerable radio telescope. Completed in 1957, the dish was the largest of its kind anywhere in the world until 1973 and was the catalyst for the construction of many other large scale satellite dishes.

The Lovell Telescope's first act was to track the Soviet Union's Sputnik, the world's first artificial satellite. Today, Jodrell operates the UK's national e-MERLIN radio telescope and hosts the global headquarters of the Square

Kilometre Array, a radio telescope project that will build the world's largest telescope, comprised of a network of instruments sited in South Africa and Australia.

The addition of Jodrell Bank to the UNESCO World Heritage List is in recognition of its outstanding scientific heritage including its pioneering role in the development of radio astronomy and its work in tracking spacecraft in the early space race, and its research into quasars, pulsars and gravitational lenses. The site has evidence of every stage of the history of radio astronomy, from its emergence as a new science in the 1940s through to the present day.

Heritage Minister Rebecca Pow said:

I am delighted that Jodrell Bank has become the UK's 32nd UNESCO World Heritage Site. The research completed here has transformed our understanding of the Universe and it is right that this is recognised.

Today's announcement will make sure that this remarkable site will continue to inspire young scientists and astronomers all over the world.

Teresa Anderson, Director of the Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre said:

This is wonderful news and a great day in the history of Jodrell Bank. It honours the pioneering work of Sir Bernard Lovell and the early scientists here, together with the world leading research that continues to this day.

Receiving this recognition will help us tell their story and the story of the communities connected to the site both across the UK and worldwide.

Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell, President and Vice-Chancellor of The University of Manchester said:

I'm absolutely delighted to hear that the Jodrell Bank Observatory site has been assigned World Heritage status by UNESCO. This is fitting recognition of the history of science and discovery at Jodrell Bank, and the work that continues today.

Indeed, the site is fantastic for the University because of its heritage, its teaching and its research, and also because it is a place where many members of the public come to learn and be inspired about science.

In 2017 the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) increased

the Observatory's recognition in the National Heritage List for England. The Mark II Telescope joined the Lovell Telescope in being listed at Grade I, the highest form of protection, with a further five buildings listed at Grade II. Together, these listings recognised the pivotal role played by the Observatory in the development of the science of radio astronomy, revolutionising our understanding of the universe.

The decision to add Jodrell Bank Observatory to the UNESCO World Heritage List was taken at the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Minister and Ambassador of United Kingdom of Great-Britain and Northern Ireland to UNESCO, Matthew Lodge, said:

Congratulations to the Jodrell Bank Observatory for becoming a UNESCO World Heritage Site. UNESCO World Heritage Sites celebrate and safeguard our shared past. They are places of distinct cultural and natural significance for the development of human history. I am delighted that Jodrell Bank Observatory is becoming one of them.

Jodrell Bank is more than just a relic from the post-war flourishing of research technology. It is also a beacon and centre of excellence for world-leading research and education, reminding us that there is far more to the Universe than meets the eye. It is part of one of the UK's leading universities, the University of Manchester, and hub of the UK's national array of seven radio telescopes. Jodrell Bank's rich scientific heritage bears testimony to the UK's leading role in science research worldwide. Becoming the UK's 32 UNESCO World Heritage Site is a great accolade for the Observatory, Cheshire and all of the UK.

Notes to editors:

- The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is responsible for meeting the requirements of the World Heritage Convention within the UK. This includes maintaining and reviewing the Tentative List of sites, formally nominating new sites, and ensuring existing sites are conserved, protected and given a life in the community.
- The University of Manchester was awarded £12.1million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and a further £4m from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in 2018 for a new Discovery Centre at Jodrell Bank, Cheshire. Named 'First Light at Jodrell Bank' the project is creating a spectacular new gallery building to promote and celebrate the observatory's world-leading place in the history of astronomy.