

# *DfE's Post 16 review of Vocational Qualifications*

## *The impact to Applied General Qualifications*

*Full time vocational courses for 16+ years olds*

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## The impact on Applied General Qualifications

The recent consultation stated:

- *'We want T Levels and A Levels to become the qualifications of choice for 16 to 19 year olds taking level 3 classroom based qualifications.'*
- *'In applying our principles, we propose that qualifications that overlap with T Levels or A Levels should not be approved for public funding for 16 to 19 year olds. We will consider how the principles should apply to adults, reflecting their differing circumstances.'*

This implies the potential removal of vocational qualifications, many of which have been approved as meeting DfE criteria for **Applied Generals** and **Tech Levels** and includes:

- Pearson BTEC Nationals
- OCR Cambridge Technicals
- NCFE CACHE Technicals

# Potential impact of the loss of level 3 career-focused qualifications

1. **The loss of a distinct alternative** – Not all students will want to take either academic A Levels or a specialised technical T Level. The career-focused qualifications are distinct in that they develop knowledge and skills through a broader sector-based curriculum, allowing progression to a wide range of HE and employment opportunities.
2. **Practical issues with T levels:**
  - a) Access to T Levels could be limited in some areas of the country as the qualifications depend on access to employers to deliver the industry placement
  - b) Currently T Levels do not cover all sectors and a classroom-based option for sectors not covered by T Levels will be needed
  - c) It will take time for T Levels to be fully established and for an evaluation of which progression pathways (including HE) are successful
3. **Loss of the blended pathway** – many students complete mixed programmes of career-focused qualifications with A levels and then progress successfully to higher education programmes



## Numbers of Cambridge Technical students progressing to university



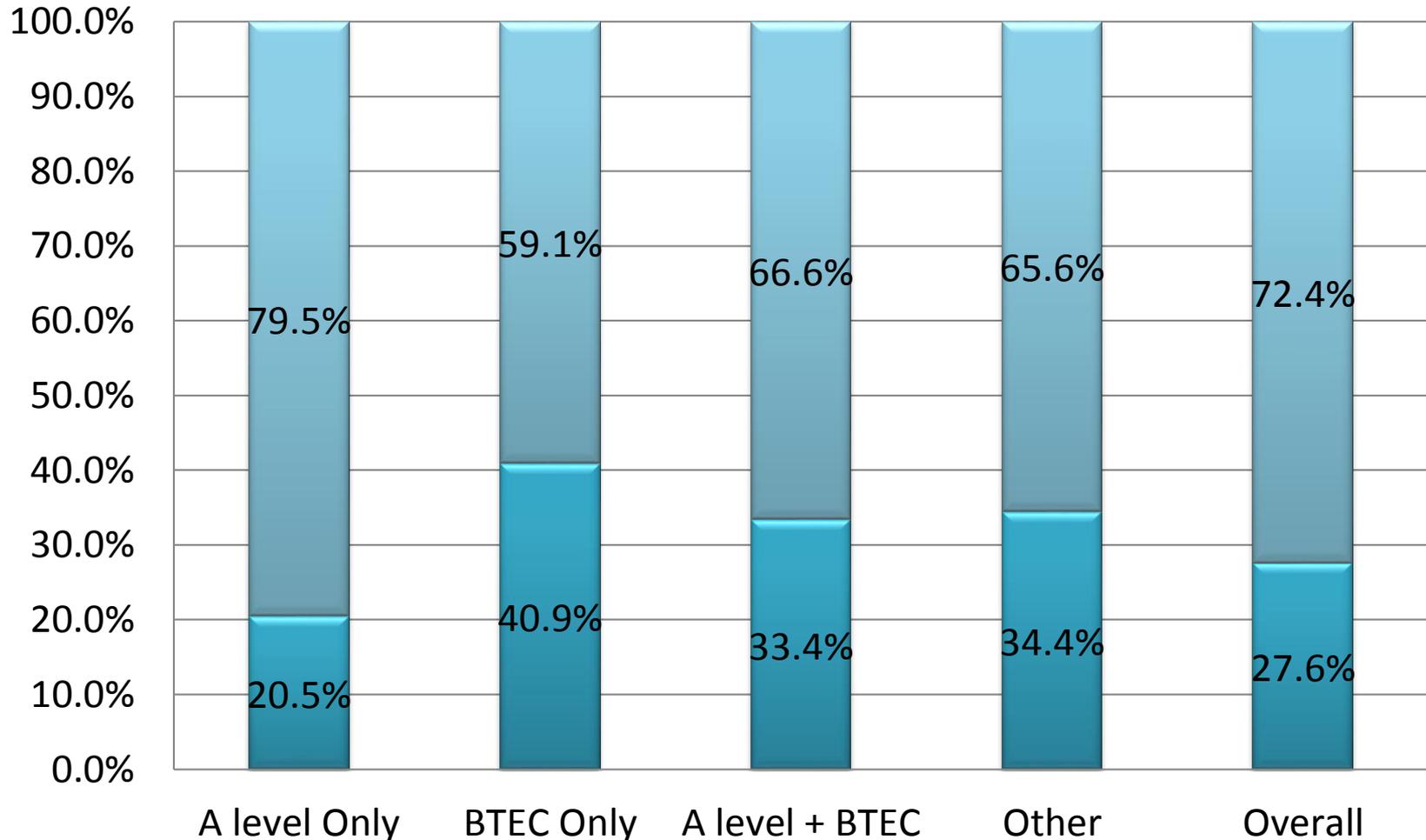
**85%** of universities made an offer to candidates that had a Cambridge Technical as part of their application

**95%** of Cambridge Technical students applying to university received at least one offer

**80%** of students with a Cambridge Technical qualification in IT and in Business were successful in their applications to Computer Science and Business courses at university

*“[Cambridge Technical] provide effective routes between higher and technical education, giving students greater choice and opportunities for a successful career”*  
*Greg Wade, Policy Manager, Universities UK*

# Socio-economic background of 2017 entrants by qualification type



■ Bottom 4 socio-economic groups    
 ■ Top 4 socio-economic groups

# Most popular subject (rank order) areas – 2017 first degree entrants

A level only	Applied General only	AG / A level mix
Psychology	Sport and exercise science	Business studies
Economics	Nursing	Sport and exercise science
English studies	Computer science	Design studies
Politics	Business studies	Nursing
History by period	Design studies	Psychology
Business studies	Management studies	Computer science
Mathematics	Psychology	Sociology
Sociology	Sociology	Management studies
Design studies	Academic studies in education	Media studies
Computer science	Social work	Accounting

# DfE review of Post-16 qualifications Level 3 timeline

## Review of post-16 qualifications at Level 3 and below:

2019	March	Stage 1 consultation opens
2019	June	Stage 1 consultation closes
2019	July	Publication of decisions on removal of funding approval from earlier versions of Applied General Qualifications
2019	December	Government response to stage 1 consultation Stage 2 consultation opens
2020	Spring	Government response to stage 2 consultation Final plans for change published
2020	August	(Proposed) funding approval withdrawn from pre-existing qualifications
2021	August	(Proposed) funding approval withdrawn from qualifications with low or no enrolments
2023	September	Removal of funding from qualifications as determined by the review and in line with the rollout of T Levels

**This has been pushed back to Spring 2020**

**We are waiting for the updated time line.**

# DfE post-16 review - What keeps us awake at night

What options will learners chose if the Applied Generals are removed? Will remaining options suit every learner? Will this impact on university entry numbers?

Some universities are showing retention evidence that suggests blended (A Level/[Reformed] AGs) applicants are coping with the demands of their degree. We haven't given the new reformed Applied Generals sufficient time to show their true value.

Will all learners be able to progress from level 2 effectively? Applied Generals offer an alternative to A levels (This is especially true in WP learners).

Applied Generals develop different skill sets to A Levels which add value to both HE and workplace study. Will these strengths be lost in a binary (A Level / T Level) approach?

What about learners who change their mind? Will these students end up living with a poorly made choice?

# Proposed actions that will help to retain career-focused qualifications as options post-16

DfE response to the consultation should be published spring 2020, together with details of phase 2 consultation.

Please help us to present a case for Applied Generals.

- do you have evidence that you can share showing the value of Applied Generals?
  - retention data supporting entry with Applied Generals
  - case studies (supporting WP or social mobility)
- Email Martin Webber [martin.webber@ocr.org.uk](mailto:martin.webber@ocr.org.uk)