

T levels: Rationale and Implementation

NFEC National Conference

1 December 2017



Department
for Education

The current system isn't meeting our country's skills needs...

The UK faces a long-standing productivity challenge

- The UK's **productivity performance is poor** compared to international competitors, and our relative position has worsened since 2007.



Part of this is directly attributable to weaknesses in our skills base

- The UK is in the **bottom four OECD countries for literacy and numeracy skills** among 16–24 year olds.¹
- The UK also performs poorly on **intermediate professional and technical skills**, and is forecast to fall to 28th out of 33 OECD countries for intermediate skills by 2020.²

Addressing this is a matter of economic and social imperative

- We live in **an age of increasing global competition** and ever-faster technological change.
- **Skilled employment leads to prosperity and security** for individuals while unskilled employment often means the opposite.



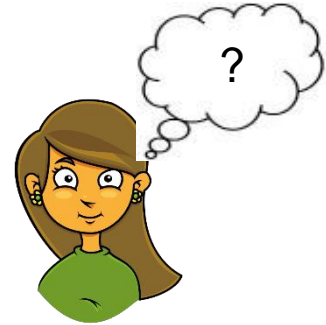
....it isn't meeting learner needs...

Post-16 academic education follows a clear, well-established and respected path

- A levels enable access to undergraduate degree courses. In contrast.....

The post-16 skills system is complex and of variable quality

- There is a **lack of clear progression routes** to employment.
- Students face a **bewildering choice** of qualifications:
 - Nearly 13,000 qualifications are currently available for 16–18 year-olds, including 28 in plumbing alone.³
 - Many of the existing qualifications are **low-quality**:
 - Only 173 meet the DfE tech level requirements.⁴
 - Competition between awarding organisations can lead to a 'race to the bottom' on standards.
 - They do not prepare students for work
- Careers education and guidance provides **insufficient information and support** for those wishing to access technical training for skilled employment.



...or the needs of employers

Employer engagement in the current system is limited

- The current system has **limited employer engagement** in defining qualifications and curricula. Intermediary bodies have not provided an effective voice for business and many employers have disengaged from the skills system.



Many employers do not understand the system

- Many employers do not know what to expect from a person with a particular qualification – what do they know and what level of skills do they have? Current qualifications therefore have **limited labour market currency**.

Provision is not aligned with local and national economic needs

- There are **not enough apprenticeship opportunities to meet potential demand** in the economy and the wider availability of training opportunities frequently doesn't reflect employment market demand.



The Government sought advice from an Independent Panel

The Sainsbury Panel

Chair:

Lord Sainsbury of Turville, former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State For Science and Innovation (1998-2005)



Panel members:

- **Simon Blagden**, Non-Executive Chairman, Fujitsu UK
- **Bev Robinson**, Principal & Chief Executive, Blackpool and The Fylde College
- **Steven West**, Vice-Chancellor & President, University of the West of England
- **Professor Alison Wolf**, Sir Roy Griffiths Professor of Public Sector Management, King's College London



... and considered international evidence

- They considered a number of international exemplars of routes-based technical education systems, including **Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Singapore**.
- In the best international technical education systems, **routes begin with a broad curriculum, then increasingly specialise** as an individual progresses to higher levels of knowledge and skills.
- While **jurisdictions vary in their economic and social contexts**, and thus comparisons must be made with care, this should not be viewed as a barrier to **learning from principles that underpin strong technical education elsewhere**.



Danish system...students start on one of 12 broad, basic foundation programmes:

1. Motor vehicle, aircraft and other means of transportation
2. Building and construction
3. Construction and user service
4. Animals, plants and nature
5. Body and style
6. Human food
7. Media production
8. Business
9. Production and development
10. Electricity, management and IT
11. Health, care and pedagogy
12. Transport and logistics



... including those of the OECD



“The current system of awarding bodies which operate in many parts of the UK (but works differently in Scotland) has very serious drawbacks. The proliferation of competing qualifications in England and Northern Ireland undermines the labour market value of vocational qualifications, and prevents employers from engaging effectively in the construction of qualifications.”

Source: <https://www.oecd.org/unitedkingdom/skills-beyond-school-United-Kingdom.pdf>



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The Government accepted all of the Sainsbury Panel's recommendations

The Sainsbury Panel started work in November 2015 and submitted their **final report** in April 2016.

The Government response, set out in the **Post-16 Skills Plan** in July 2016, accepts all 34 of the Panel's recommendations, and was widely welcomed by stakeholders including the CBI and AoC.



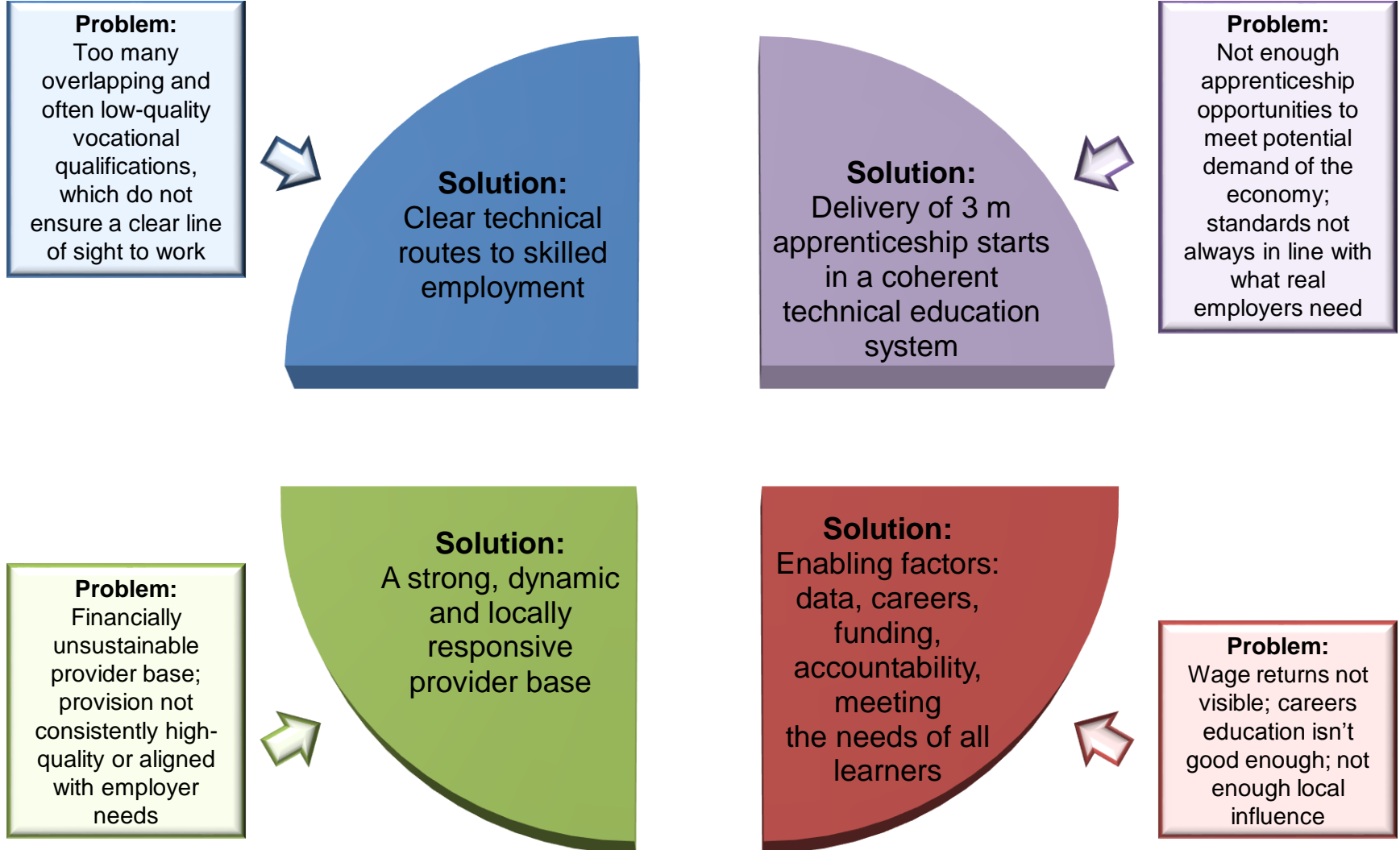
In the **Spring Budget 2017**, the Chancellor announced additional funding to deliver the Sainsbury Panel's recommendations – over £500m a year to increase training hours from the current 600 to 900 per year, including a substantial work placement for each student.

The **Technical and Further Education Act 2017** provides the legislative basis for delivering the reforms, extending the remit of the Institute for Apprenticeships to cover technical education.

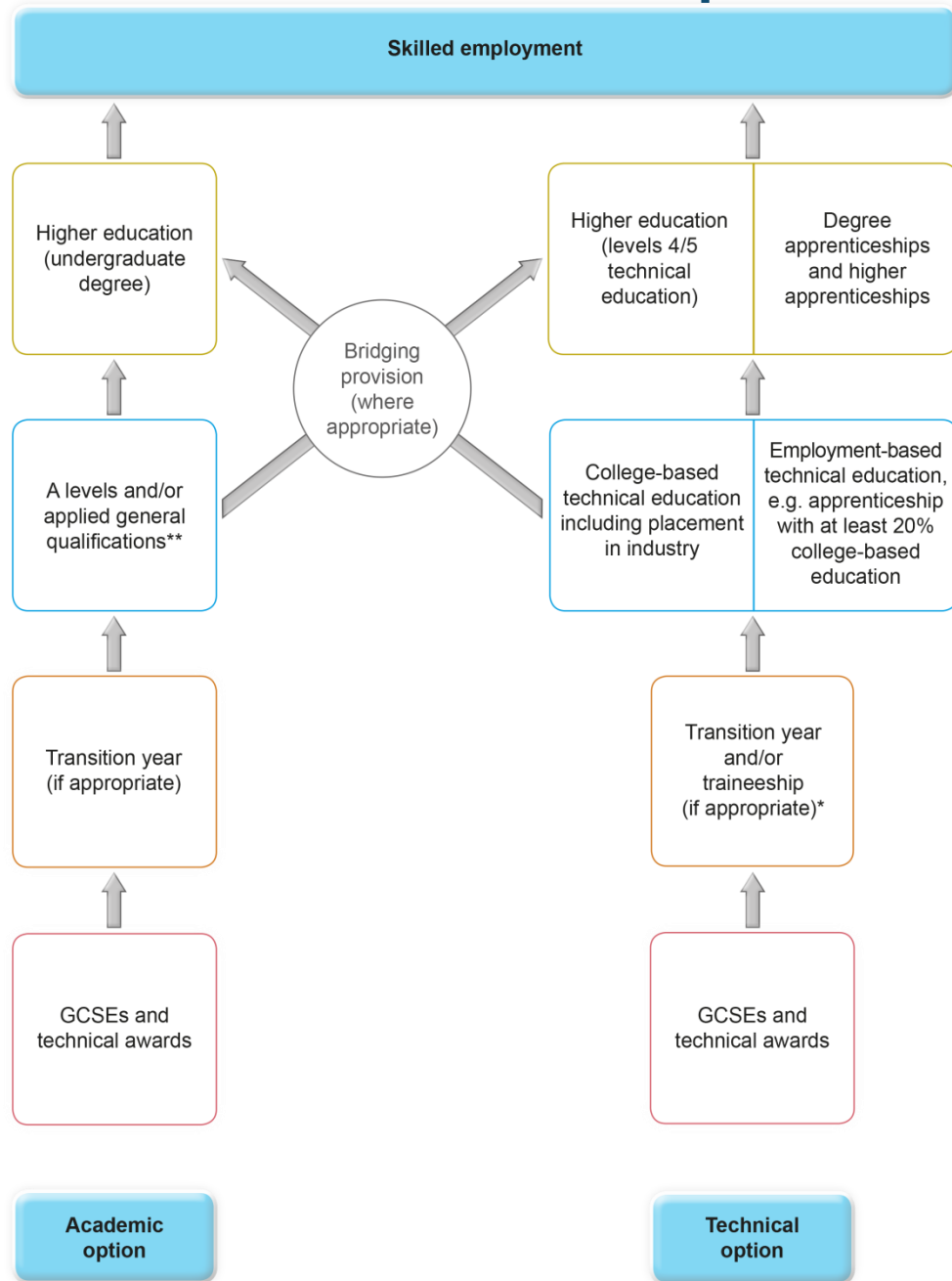
The Secretary of State spoke at **British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) Education Summit** on Thursday 6 July, setting out her ambition for the new technical routes and T levels, and focusing on the need for a genuine partnership between business and government, to deliver these.



The Post-16 Skills Plan explains how we will create a coherent technical education system fit for the twenty-first century



How the academic and technical options would work




* Where a student does both, the traineeship will follow the transition year. Students doing both the transition year and a traineeship may progress directly to employment.

** Some students will move directly from A levels and/or applied general qualifications to degree and higher apprenticeships.



The proposed routes

1. **Agriculture, Environmental and Animal Care**
2. **Business and Administrative**
3. **Catering and Hospitality**
4. **Childcare and Education**
5. **Construction**
6. **Creative and Design**
7. **Digital**
8. **Engineering and Manufacturing**
9. **Hair and Beauty**
10. **Health and Science**
11. **Legal, Finance and Accounting**
12. **Protective Services**
13. **Sales, Marketing and Procurement**
14. **Social Care**
15. **Transport and Logistics**



To be delivered
primarily through
apprenticeships



T levels: new technical programmes are central to the reforms...

“As part of these routes we will introduce a new certificate – the “T Level” – which will be a gold standard for technical and professional excellence. Offered alongside apprenticeships, they will form the basis of our new technical education system.” Secretary of State, 6 July 2017



...with employers involved in shaping their design

“Delivering these reforms will be a challenge. I am clear there is only one way to get this right – through a genuine partnership between business, government and education professionals. This means we need a collective plan. One plan. One team for skills.”

Secretary of State, 6 July 2017

To ensure the skills system responds to the changing labour market, employers, providers and other partners need to be involved in both design and delivery.

Co-creation: shaping occupational standards and designing wider T level content.

Co-delivery: employers offering work placements to T level students so they can apply the knowledge and skills they have learnt in college.



“Businesses and colleges will be in the room at every single point – so we drive the skills revolution together.”

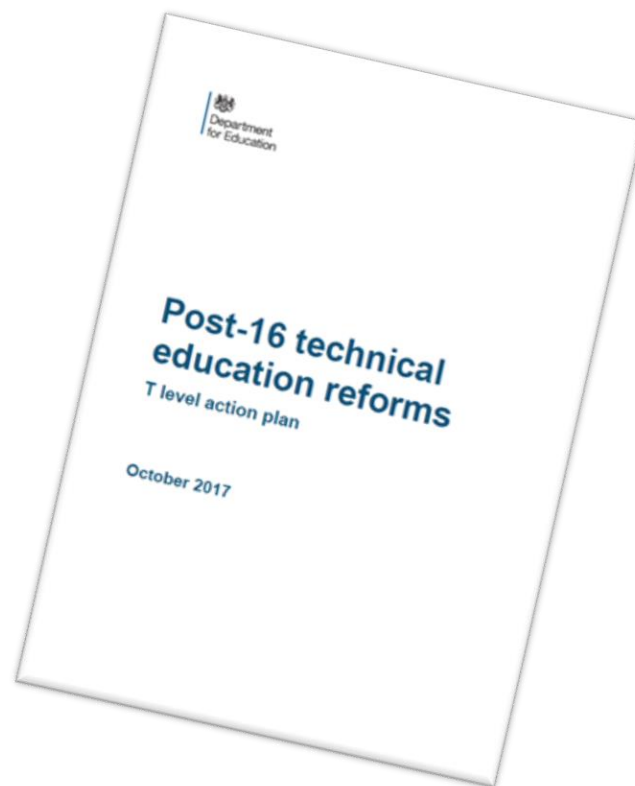
Secretary of State, 6 July 2017



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T level action plan

- Design principles for the T level programme
- Timeline for the reforms
- The role of the Institute for Apprenticeships and employers
- Occupational maps
- Developing qualifications
- The T level programme
- Work placements
- Impact on other provision
- Support for delivery



Design principles

- T levels will be level 3 technical study programmes, based on employer-designed standards, which will prepare students for highly skilled jobs
- Apprenticeships and T levels will be based on the same set of standards designed by employers
- Successful completion of a T level will provide students with the knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary to start skilled employment in an occupation related to their field of study or to progress to higher levels of study
- All T levels must include a substantial placement with an employer, away from the individual's learning environment, to help put into practice the knowledge and skills they have learnt



Planned Implementation Timetable

2017

- Concept development
- Consultation
- Piloting work placements

2018

- Procurement
- Funding colleges for work placements

2019

- Preparedness for 2020 delivery
- Procurement

2020

- Delivery of T levels (likely across 3 different routes)

Early starters with small number of providers

2021 ROUTES

- Legal, Finance and Accounting
- Childcare and Education
- Digital
- Construction
- Engineering and Manufacturing
- Health and Science

Wave 1

2022 ROUTES

- Hair and Beauty
- Agriculture, Environment and Animal Care
- Business and Administrative
- Catering and Hospitality
- Creative and Design

Wave 2

APP. ONLY

- Transport and Logistics
- Sales, Marketing and Procurement
- Social Care
- Protective Services

Four routes to be delivered through apprenticeships



A national framework

- **A single, common framework of standards** covering both apprenticeships and provider-based provision
- Remit of the Institute for Apprenticeships expanded to encompass technical education, and will become the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education
- **Employer-designed standards and content at the heart of reforms;** panels will advise on knowledge, skills and behaviours for occupations, and set the outline content



T level and Route Panels

T level panels

T level panels will include practitioners, employers and industry-representative bodies. They will:

- develop the outline content for each T level, deriving this from the relevant apprenticeship standards
- ensure that reformed qualifications will have genuine currency with employers



Panels have been launched across all 6 routes for delivery in 2020 and 2021

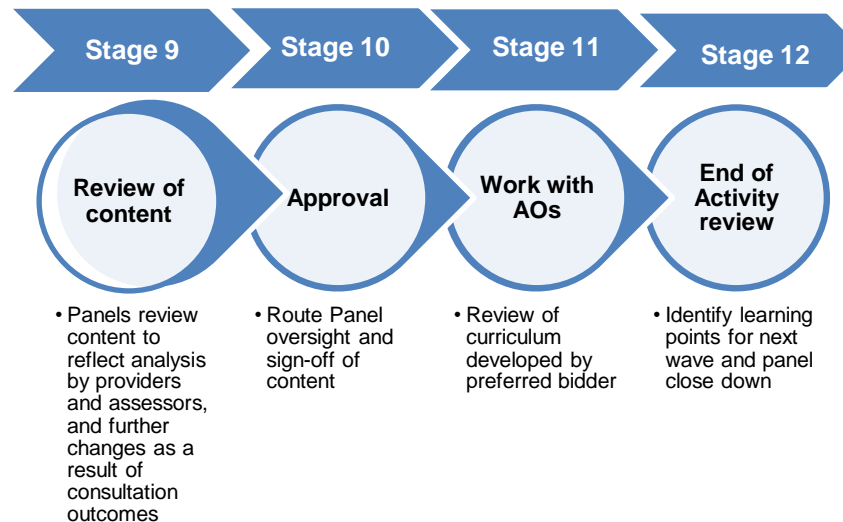
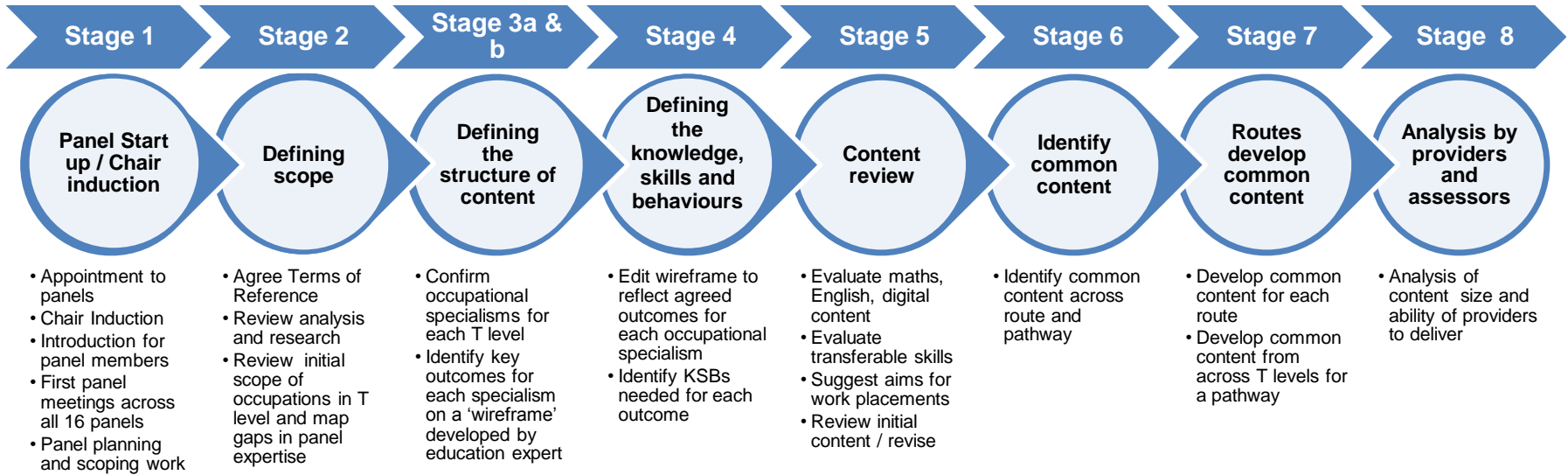
Route panels

Route Panels will comprise industry experts, whose core responsibility will be the management of standards, qualifications and occupational maps for each technical route

They will oversee and give final approval to the work of the T level panels



Example T level panel outline process



Routes

Defining the routes

The end point of the route is employment in relevant occupation, therefore routes were defined using occupations

This was done using UK Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes, which were used to draw together 'clusters' of occupations that have similar requirements in terms of knowledge, skills and behaviours

Occupations included

All technical occupations were included, except those that:

- require significant experience or an undergraduate or higher degree, or
- were not suited to a 2 year technical education programme (eg elementary occupations that could be learnt 'on the job')



Occupational Maps

Technical
Occupations

Pathway A

Occupational Cluster

Occupation A

Occupation B

Occupation C

Occupation D

Pathway B

Occupational Cluster

Occupation E

Occupation F

Pathway C

Occupational Cluster

Occupation G

Occupation H

Occupation I

Route ABC



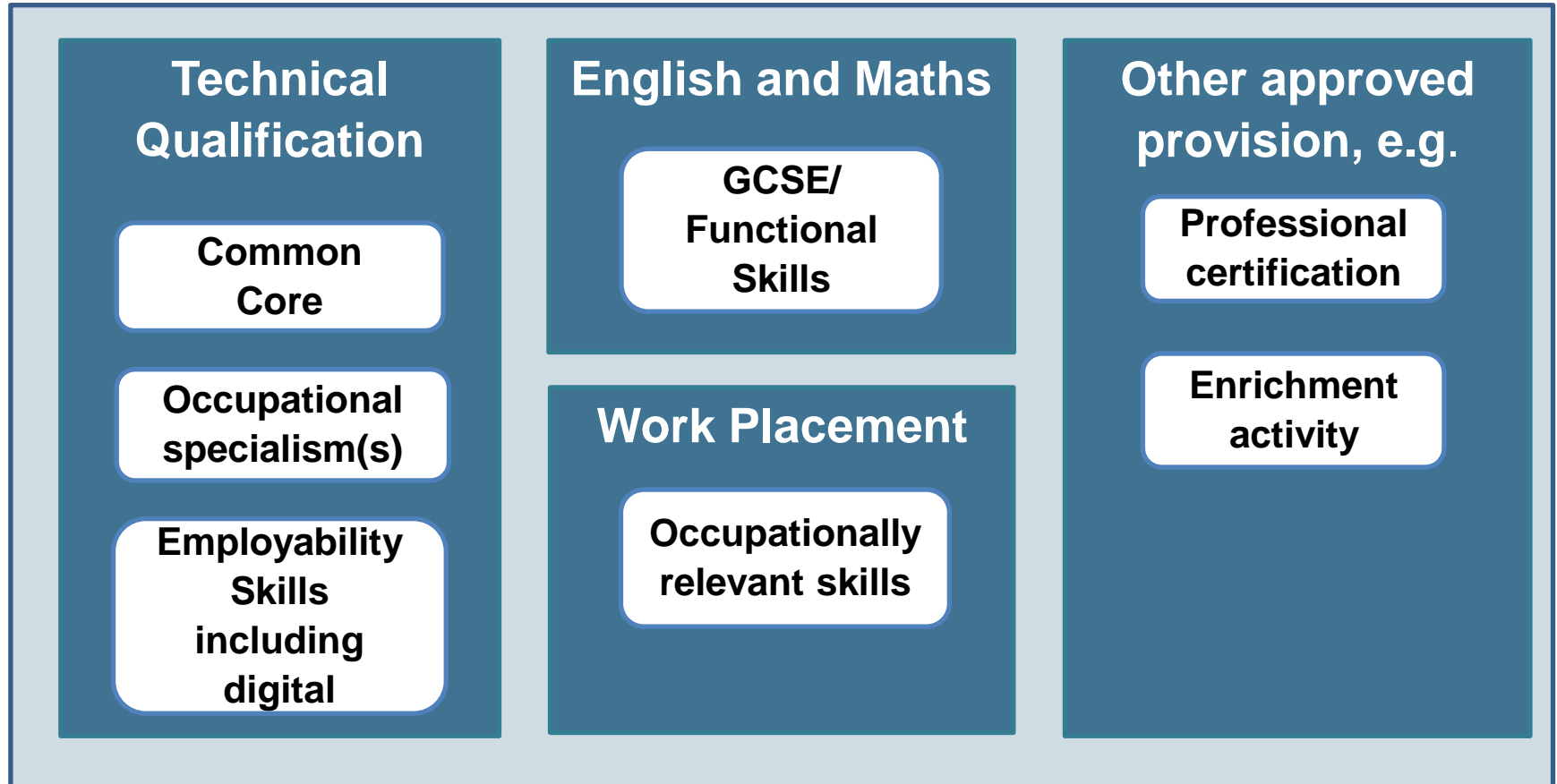
Developing qualifications

- In line with the recommendation from the Sainsbury Panel, the qualifications will be offered under exclusive licensing
- There will be **consultation** in late 2017 with assessment organisations, including members of the Joint Council of Qualifications and the Federation of Awarding Bodies, to better understand how this can be implemented
- The **procurement process will follow standard EU government procedures** and we expect it will **launch in spring 2018**



T level structure

- T levels are more than just a qualification and will build on study programme principles



... and will include substantial work placements

Employers are often not satisfied with the skills of school/college leavers – so students can't secure employment in the area they have trained for

The 2016 Skills Plan said that:

“...every 16 – 19 year old learner undertaking a college-based technical education route will be entitled to a high quality, substantial work placement”

Successful completion of this work placement will be a requirement for full certification of a T level

....no work placement, no certificate!



What are T level work placements?

Very different from work experience.... both are vital but have different purposes

Work experience

- 1 – 2 weeks
- Aim to help students gain **general 'employability skills'**
- More of a 'work taster' – the first exposure to a working environment

Work placements

- Minimum of 45 days
- **Occupationally specific** – focussed on developing practical and technical skills
- **External** – placement should be with an external employer in a real life working environment



Work placements – capacity building

Building our evidence base

- We have undertaken international and domestic learning visits, published a call for evidence, and sought views from a range of post-16 providers and employers.
- The work placement pilot scheme has been launched to test different models and approaches to delivering T level placements. 21 providers are piloting these with approximately 2500 students in academic year 2017/18.

Capacity building support for providers

- £74million is to be allocated from April 2018 for providers to start building their capacity and infrastructure to deliver work placements
- Guidance on how to access this funding is available on Gov.uk



Impact on existing provision

- We will **consult** further on our approach to ensure that awarding organisations, providers and others are able to input views on our approach and will ensure that adequate transitional arrangements are put in place
- However, as a general principle, **we expect the number of qualifications that are funded for 16-19 year olds to be significantly lower in the future** and to be restricted to specific types of programmes, such as academic and technical study programmes, to help streamline and simplify the system
- We will consider how the introduction of T levels will impact on **current level 2 provision**, and proposals to develop a **transition year**, and cover this in the consultation later this year



Skills Summit 2017

- The Secretary of State hosted a Skills Summit in DfE on 30 November to seek support from employers and ask them to sign up to a statement of action to support the skills revolution. Aligned with this, we:
 - Launched the consultation on the principles underpinning T levels: open for 10 weeks until February 2018;
 - Published the list of T level panel members who will co-design outline content for new T levels;
 - Rolled out the first seven Skills Advisory Panels in regions across England to help identify the skills needs and employer demands at a local level.
- Consultation on the occupational maps will be held by the Institute for Apprenticeships shortly.



Any questions or thoughts?

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