



2022-0040672RHPO

The Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP

Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education

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Graham Hastings-Evans
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18 November 2022

Dear Mr Hastings-Evans, Mr Selby, and Mr Price,

Thank you for your letters of 11 October, addressed to the former Prime Minister and former Secretary of State, about the delivery and funding of qualifications in the UK, and for providing a copy of your white paper: Building the construction operational workforce of 2030. I am replying as the minister responsible for this policy area.

I read your report with interest and have shared it with relevant policy officials. I would like to assure you that we have not yet made any decisions on the removal of funding approval for specific qualifications at the levels it mentions, apart from through our low and no enrolments process, and on ICT and alternative English and maths qualifications at level 2.

We have consulted on our proposals for the groups of qualifications that should be funded in future. There was strong support for the groups we proposed, and for simplifying the qualification landscape and improving the quality of provision. Our final position is set out in our consultation response, which was published on 23 October and is available on the GOV.UK website at: [tinyurl.com/BDE5J6TX](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/building-the-construction-operational-workforce-of-2030).

We will now work with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) and Ofqual to set out the criteria for the future public funding of these qualifications. We will publish further details in 2023. The criteria will ensure that every qualification approved for public funding is of high quality, necessary, has a distinct purpose, and supports progression to good outcomes.

We also fully recognise the importance of level 2 qualifications for the construction sector. Within our confirmed qualification groups, we expect to fund construction qualifications at level 2 and below which meet the approvals criteria. At level 2, this will include qualifications that align to employer-led occupational standards, the same standards that already underpin apprenticeships and T Levels.

We are supporting employers and learners in the construction sector to benefit from our high-quality apprenticeship training to obtain the skills they need now and in the future. We recognise the importance of apprenticeships in helping workers to upskill or retrain, and our 'Skills for Life' campaign is raising awareness of the value apprenticeships can offer to individuals at any age and at any stage of their career.

We are also encouraging more flexible training models, such as front-loaded apprenticeships, so that employers in the construction sector can train apprentices in the ways that work best for them and to support apprentices to hit the ground running. As you set out, it is vital that apprenticeship standards keep pace with the latest industry developments. IfATE continues to work closely with employers to update standards to ensure they meet the future needs of the sector and keep pace with technology, practices, and digital and green requirements.

Thank you for writing on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Halfon', written in a cursive style.

**The Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP
Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education**