Teaching students about HTQs

Education provider pack

Contents

Introduction to HTQs

HTQs sit between A-Levels or T Levels and Degrees. They are Level 4/5 qualifications, such as HNDs and Foundation Degrees, that have been approved against standards as delivering the skills employers want. Currently, they cover jobs in Digital, Construction & the Built Environment and Health & Science. In 2024, teaching also begins in Engineering & Manufacturing, Education & Early Years, Business & Administration and Legal, Finance & Accounting. They aim to help students get the right training and skills needed to succeed in the workplace. HTQs offer a practical, employer-focused study programme and are offered as a viable alternative to degrees or apprenticeships.

Level 4/5 uptake in England is low but the returns are excellent and, for some, early career earnings are better than for degrees. The Department for Education (DfE) wants more learners to have the choice to take up these high-quality, job-relevant qualifications.

We want schools and further education (FE) providers that offer A-Levels, T-Levels or BTECs to help us to give information to students so that they can access Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) more easily. Our aim is to help students to make the best choices for their future, to be well-informed and confident in their path.

Therefore, we have designed a pack to help you deliver high-quality information about HTQs to Year 12 and Year 13 students. The pack contains everything that you need to know in order to help your students consider HTQs, which ensures they make informed post-18 choices. The pack contains

1. A video about HTQs that can be used by subject teachers and other staff in talks with parents and students.
2. Classroom-based lessons that teachers can deliver to students: a 20-minute lesson plan (pages 3–7) and a 50-minute lesson plan (pages 8–10), which includes showing the video
3. PowerPoint presentations to accompany each of the lessons.
4. A webinar to brief you on HTQs and the delivery of the lessons
5. Ideas for embedding HTQs into your everyday subject lessons (page 11)
6. A guide to HTQs with high-quality information that you can use if you are consulted by students or parents about HTQs. Please see the ‘HTQ guidance’ document.

Lesson plans

In this section we will provide you with two detailed lesson plans for a 50-minute and 20-minute lesson. We will then also provide you with a few ideas about how to embed discussion of HTQs and other educational pathways into lessons.

Of course you will know your students and your context best, so just view these resources as a useful starting point which you can adapt. For example, if your students are studying a particular subject or field, consider tailoring the information about HTQ courses based on their subject area.

50-minute lesson plan

This is a lesson plan for a 50-minute lesson looking at *Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs)*. It is designed to introduce HTQs to students who may not have heard of them before and to encourage them to consider them as one possible pathway for their post 18 choices.

It is important to devote some time to HTQs as they are a new pathway, that many students may be unaware of, but which offer major opportunities for the right student.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this session, students will be able to:

- describe all of the major post-18 pathways that they could take;
- explain what a Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) is and how it differs from other post-18 pathways;
- articulate the pros and cons of taking an HTQ; and
- explain what they should do if they want to investigate HTQs further and make an application.

Resources needed

The main resource needed to deliver this lesson is access to the video. You will need a screen and the capability to listen to sound to make use of this resource.

There is also a PowerPoint presentation that accompanies this lesson.

The lesson is designed to be delivered by a teacher with no specialist knowledge about careers or HTQs. By briefing you and asking you to deliver it we hope to understand more about the impact of the lesson on students, but we are also testing the lesson plan with a teacher who has not received this briefing.

If you can arrange for the school or college's careers leader or careers advisor to attend the lesson this will be useful. If not, then make sure you provide their contact details to students so that they can follow up the lesson with a specialist.

If feasible, delivering this lesson in a computer room may help encourage more self-directed learning from students, as they can engage in activities to search information about HTQs online and source local HTQ offers aligned with their interests.

Lesson plan

Time	Slide	Notes	Resources
0:00	1	Welcome students to the session. Explain that we are going to be looking at post-18 choices and focusing on a new option called Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs).	
0:01	2	Ask if people know what the letters H, T and Q stand for in this context. See if anyone has already heard about HTQs.	
0:02	3	Briefly go through the learning outcomes for the session so that students know what is going to be covered.	
0:03	4	Whole group discussion. Start by asking the group who has a plan for what they are going to do when they leave school or college. This is best done as a show of hands (put your hand up if you agree). Note how many people have a plan. Say that if they have a plan the current session will help them to check and refine it. If they don't have a plan say that the session will help them to develop one. Then ask them to give examples of the kinds of things that you can do after you leave school or college. Write these up on the board and group them in the following headings. - University options - Other educational options - Apprenticeship - Work - Starting their own business - Other e.g. 'being unemployed' or 'doing nothing' - *Note for teachers: Please include any additional options to this list that you can think of, to ensure it's as representative as possible.* Then ask students to volunteer what options they are considering. Add these to the board if they generate anything new.	

		Once options are collated on the board, encourage deeper thinking by asking the students to think about and write down what they want from a post-18 pathway. Consider what factors are most important to them (Probe for course type, work vs study approaches, location, flexibility length of time, cost, salary prospects). Ask them to reflect on the pathways discussed and if any feel right for them, or meet the criteria they mentioned. If they were to rearrange them in order of personal preference, what would that look like for them? No need for students to feedback orally. Reassure students it's OK if they do not yet know or are undecided.	
0:10	5	Slide setting out the 4 main post-18 pathways. Introduce these and encourage students to consider: • What they know about each of these options? • What they think that they would be doing on a day-to-day basis? • What they would gain by taking them? • What they could do afterwards? • Which pathways are they considering? Correct any misconceptions but do not expand on HTQs at this stage.	
0:12	6	Summarise university-based pathways. Highlight length, teaching approach, costs and where to get further information.	Direct them to UCAS for more information https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate Direct them to finding open days and events across the year https://www.ucas.com/explore/search/events?query=
0:14	7	Summarise apprenticeship pathways. Highlight length, teaching approach, costs and where to get further information.	Direct them to the government's apprenticeship site for more information https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/apprentices Note that it is National Careers and Apprenticeships Week in February.

0:15	8	Summarise employment pathways.	Direct them to the National Careers Service for more information https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice
0.16	9	Summarise other technical education options.	Direct them to Occupational Maps: Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education
0.17	10	Show the table comparing the different post-18 pathways and ask them if there is anything they are surprised about / any information they want to find out about 1) the different routes, 2) HTQs specifically before moving onto explaining HTQs.	
0:22	11-12	State that Higher Technical Qualifications are relatively new and that is why we are focusing on them today. Introduce the HTQ video and show the video	
0:29	13	Use the FAQs at the end of this document to answer any questions If there are questions that you can't answer, encourage them to see a careers adviser to discuss these issues in more depth.	
0:32	14	Break the group into pairs or small groups and get them to search online to identify the pros and cons of HTQs in relation to other pathways, and identify any questions they have about HTQs. To guide this exercise, you might ask them to look up some HTQs in their sector, or in their local area. Reconvene as a class and talk through length, teaching approach, costs and career prospects associated with HTQs	Direct them to https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/choosing-course/higher-technical-qualifications Direct them to the UCAS page with all available HTQs
0:39	15	Briefly revisit the qualifications and pathways covered by HTQs and ask them to think about which careers are appealing to them. Ask students to consider which job roles these pathways might lead them to. Remind them that HTQs include a range of different qualifications and that they should look for the HTQ cog logo. This means the course will give them the skills that employers need. (HTQs are level 4 and 5 qualifications, designed with employers or existing ones that have been through a rigorous process to show that they meet the	Further information on the occupations associated with different HTQs is available on an online spreadsheet provided by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.

		occupational standards. These qualifications can include HNDs, HNCs, Certificates in Higher Education or Fdn degrees, but **only the ones with the HTQ quality mark** have been approved as HTQs.)	
0:42	16	Summary slide on HTQs. • The courses vary in their length depending on the provider, typically an HNC is 1-year full time study for example, and an HND 2 years, although this can vary depending on the provider – this can make the total course costs lower than a degree and get them into employment, earning money faster. • They are primarily education-setting based - unlike T Levels they do not always require an industry placement unless deemed necessary by the industry. • They are a flexible choice – part- and full-time study options available and student finance is available to support this. • They are taught in colleges, universities, Institutes of Technology and independent training providers. Once finished, students can go straight into employment or use their HTQ to progress onto further study – they could use the credits they have earned and then top it up with study towards an undergraduate degree, for example, or a degree apprenticeship.	Direct them to the National Careers Service for more information https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/explore-your-education-and-training-choices/higher-technical
0.44	17	Review learnings from previous section. Ask students if they remember what the pros and cons of HTQs are.	
0:45	18	Introduce them to local providers and key local contact points where they can get additional help and support e.g. the school or college's careers adviser. Remind them that they can access a careers advice, talk to their network and reach out to the learning provider	You can use your existing knowledge of providers and/or search on https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/list-of-higher-technical-qualifications to find relevant local providers.

0:47	19	Review the learning outcomes to remind students of what they have learnt Note: If time allows, consider incorporating a short quiz into this section to review students' learning.	
0.47	20	Reflect on the lesson introduction where students brainstormed the different options available to them after completing school/college and their initial preferences – how do they feel about the range of options now? Encourage them to explore the option that they are interested in further and follow the links in the presentation to find out more	
0:49	21	Finish the lesson by asking students to write one action that they will take after this lesson to help them think about their next steps.	
0:50	21	Close	Consider providing students with a summary leaflet about HTQs to take home so they can look into HTQs in their own time. Amazing Apprenticeships have created a comprehensive HTQ guide, here: Updated Higher Technical Qualifications guide (amazingapprenticeships.com) They have also created a one-page handout that might be suitable for students, here: HTQ 1 page (amazingapprenticeships.com)

20-minute lesson plan

This is a lesson plan for a 20-minute lesson looking at *Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs)*. It is designed to introduce HTQs to students who may not have heard of them before and to encourage them to consider them as one possible pathway for their post 18 choices.

It is important to devote some time to HTQs as they are a new pathway, that many students may be unaware of, but which offer major opportunities for the right student.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this session, students will be able to:

- explain what a higher technical qualification (HTQ) is and how it differs from other post-18 pathways;
- explain what they should do if they want to investigate HTQs further and make an application.

Resources needed

The main resource needed to deliver this lesson is access to the video. You will need a screen and the capability to listen to sound to make use of this resource.

There is also a PowerPoint presentation that accompanies this lesson.

The lesson is designed to be delivered by a teacher with no specialist knowledge about careers or HTQs. By briefing you and asking you to deliver it we hope to understand more about the impact of the lesson on students, but we are also testing the lesson plan with a teacher who has not received this briefing.

If you can arrange for the school or college's careers leader or careers advisor to attend the lesson this will be useful. If not, then make sure you provide their contact details to students so that they can follow up the lesson with a specialist.

Lesson plan

Time	Slide	Notes	Resources
0:00	1	Welcome students to the session. Explain that we are going to be looking at post-18 choices and focusing on a new option called Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs).	
0:01	2	Ask if people know what the letters H, T and Q stand for in this context. See if anyone has already heard about HTQs.	
0:02	3	Briefly go through the learning outcomes for the session so that students know what is going to be covered.	
0:03	4	Whole group discussion. Start by asking the group who has a plan for what they are going to do when they leave school or college. This is best done as a show of hands (put your hand up if you agree). Note how many people have a plan. Say that if they have a plan the current session will help them to check and refine it. If they don't have a plan say that the session will help them to develop one. Then ask students to volunteer what options they are considering. Add these to the board if they generate anything new. Ask students to think about what they want from a post-18 pathway. Consider what factors are most important to them (Probe for course type, work vs study approaches, location, flexibility length of time, cost, salary prospects). Ask them to reflect on the pathways discussed and if any feel right for them, or meet the criteria they mentioned. Reassure students it's OK if they do not yet know or are undecided.	
0:07	5-6	Slide setting out the 4 main post-18 pathways. Introduce these and encourage students to consider: • What they know about each of these options? • What they think that they would be doing on a day-to-day basis? • What they would gain by taking them?	

		• What they could do afterwards? Show the table comparing pathways on slide 6. Ask students which bits of information are most surprising or interesting to them Correct any misconceptions but do not expand on HTQs at this stage.	
0:08	7-8	State that Higher Technical Qualifications are relatively new and that is why we are focusing on them today. Introduce the HTQ video and show the video	
0:15	9	Use the FAQs to answer any questions	
0:16	10	Remind them that HTQs include a range of different qualifications and that they should look for the HTQ cog logo. This means the course will give them the skills that employers need. (HTQs are level 4 and 5 qualifications, designed with employers or existing ones that have been through a rigorous process to show that they meet the occupational standards. These qualifications can include HNDs, HNCs, Certificates in Higher Education or Fdn degrees, but **only the ones with the HTQ quality mark** have been approved as HTQs.)	• Further information on the occupations associated with different HTQs is available on an online spreadsheet provided by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.
0:17	11	Summary slide on HTQs. • The courses vary in their length depending on the provider, typically an HNC is 1-year full time study for example, and an HND 2 years, although this can vary depending on the provider – this can make the total course costs lower than a degree and get them into employment, earning money faster. • They are primarily education-setting based - unlike T Levels they do not always require an industry placement unless deemed necessary by the industry. • They are a flexible choice – part- and full-time study options available and student finance is available to support this. • They are taught in colleges, universities, Institutes of Technology and independent training providers. • Once finished, students can go straight into employment or use their HTQ to progress onto further study – they could use the credits they have earned and	• Direct them to the Skills for Careers website for more information Higher technical qualifications (HTQs) | Skills for Careers (education.gov.uk)

		then top it up with study towards an undergraduate degree, for example, or a degree apprenticeship.	
0:18	12	Check that students have understood the difference between HTQs and the other pathways discussed.	
0:19	13-14	Encourage them to explore the option that they are interested in further. Remind them that they can access a careers advice, talk to their network and reach out to the learning provider. And provide them with various local and national starting points on these slides.	You can use your existing knowledge of providers and/or search on https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/list-of-higher-technical-qualifications to find relevant local providers.
0:20	15-16	Review the learning outcomes and encourage them to commit to one action at the end of the session.	Consider providing students with a summary leaflet about HTQs to take home so they can look into HTQs in their own time. Amazing Apprenticeships have created a comprehensive HTQ guide, here: Updated Higher Technical Qualifications guide (amazingapprenticeships.com) They have also created a one-page handout that might be suitable for students, here: HTQ 1 page (amazingapprenticeships.com)

Ideas for embedding HTQs into lessons

The two lesson plans above are based on allocating a dedicated amount of time (50 minutes and 20 minutes respectively) to introducing HTQs. Teachers who are not able to do this can still support students to consider their future career options and learn about HTQs by embedding some discussion of technical careers into their subjects.

If done well, embedding career learning into your subject teaching can increase the relevance of, and interest in, your subject and help you answer those awkward but persistent questions from students: Why are we learning this? What use will it be?

This approach should enhance and improve the quality of your engagement with the subject area without displacing dedicated subject content.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- **What does the career programme and curriculum cover?** There are likely to be many overlaps between your subject curriculum and the school's careers programme. You can explore these for more learning opportunities. Talk to your school's career leader or adviser first.
- **How are the skills and knowledge that you are teaching used outside of school?** Understanding the real-world usefulness of what you are teaching is a powerful way to increase the relevance of your teaching. It also provides resources that you can use to illustrate concepts and encourage further research.
- **What jobs require (or prefer) people to have qualifications in your subject?** It is useful to know the jobs where your subject is central – some of them might surprise students. For example, many trade roles require good mathematics skills.
- **What jobs do people who study your subject go on to work in?** Often subjects may lead people in surprising directions. It is always worth highlighting examples that show that careers often don't follow a straight line.
- **What courses connect to your subject?** The higher education and vocational education and training courses that require or recognise your subject is critical information for you to share with students. This is where an awareness of the HTQs and the areas covered by them are particularly useful.
- **Can I involve an employer in my class?** One of the most powerful things that you can do is bring in an employer or working person to your classroom. Employers can talk about how they use your subject in their job, and the skills, experience and training they look for in future employees. Making this direct connection will really engage your students.

Thinking about careers in relation to your subject will enable you to encourage students to think about pathways as you teach them.

Other resources

Gatsby Benchmarks https://www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk/

Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ): an introduction. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-technical-qualification-overview/higher-technical-qualification-an-introduction

National Careers Service (on HTQs) https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/explore-your-education-and-training-choices/higher-technical

Higher technical qualifications (HTQs) | Skills for Careers (education.gov.uk)

Apprenticeship resources for schools, teachers, parents (amazingapprenticeships.com)

Amazing Apprenticeships HTQs guide for teachers and educational professionals

Scholarships, grants and bursaries https://www.ucas.com/finance/scholarships-grants-and-bursaries

Student finance https://www.gov.uk/student-finance

The Careers & Enterprise Company https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/

UCAS (Higher Technical Qualifications) https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/choosing-course/higher-technical-qualifications