Westminster Higher Education Forum policy conference:
Next steps for Higher Technical Qualifications in England
Timing: Morning, Wednesday, 22nd April 2026
*****Taking Place Online*****

Draft agenda subject to change

WESTMINSTER HIGHER EDUCATION FORUM

8.30 Registration

9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian

9.05 **Higher Technical Qualifications within post-16 reform - policy alignment, awarding powers, and system coherence**
Dr Ismini Vasileiou, Associate Professor, De Montfort University; and Director, East Midlands Cyber Security Cluster

9.15 **Priorities for developing HTQs - regulation, licensing, and quality assurance**
delegation of awarding powers to the Office for Students | role of Skills England in coordinating technical route approvals | licensing and approvals for Level 4 and 5 qualifications | safeguarding assessment integrity | maintaining occupational standards | ensuring coherent progression | addressing duplication with T Levels, V Levels, apprenticeships, and degree routes | supporting learner and employer confidence | aligning provision with industry need and national skills priorities | frameworks for provider clarity and consistent delivery
David Rowley, Product Manager, NCFE
Professor Elizabeth Cleaver, Principal Consultant and Director, Elizabeth Cleaver Consulting
Andrew Willis, Head, Quality Assurance, Activate Learning
Alex Proudfoot, Chief Executive, Independent Higher Education
Senior representative, employer

9.40 Questions and comments from the floor

10.10 **Designing HTQs - relevance, progression, and occupational alignment**
Rebecca Mameli, Strategic Lead, Higher Nationals, Pearson
Questions and comments from the floor

10.35 **Chair's closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian

10.40 Break

10.50 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian

10.55 **Priorities for employer engagement, provider readiness, and workforce capacity**
frameworks for employer participation in curriculum design and assessment | building confidence among learners, employers, and careers advisers | recruitment and development of teaching staff | staff training and deployment across sites | scalable delivery models | facilities, resources, and operational pressures | integrating labour market intelligence | supporting effective delivery across multiple pathways and occupational routes | raising learner awareness of HTQs | building provider readiness for HTQ expansion
Claire Foreman, Director, Greater Manchester Institute of Technology, University of Salford
Georgina Barnard, Vice Principal, Institute of Technology and Higher Education and Director, Projects, Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group
Senior representative, employer
Senior representative, awarding body
Questions and comments from the floor

11.40 **Regional coordination and alignment with skills needs**
role of combined authorities and local partnerships in commissioning HTQs | integrating labour market intelligence into planning | supporting national skills priorities while addressing regional inequalities | using tools such as the Local Skills Dashboard | coordinating provision alongside T Levels, V Levels, apprenticeships, and degree routes | sharing lessons learnt across regions
Dr Richard Clewley, Senior Delivery Manager, Higher Level Skills, West Midlands Combined Authority
Senior representative FE
Senior representative, HE
Senior representative, employer
Questions and comments from the floor

12.30 **The future for HTQs - funding, delivery, and sustainability**
Matt White, Assistant Director, Higher Technical Education, Department for Education
Questions and comments from the floor

12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Higher Education Forum closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
Sean Cudmore, Westminster Higher Education Forum