

**Westminster Higher Education Forum policy conference:
Next steps for Higher Technical Qualifications in England**

Timing: Morning, Wednesday, 22nd April 2026

*****Taking Place Online*****



**WESTMINSTER
HIGHER EDUCATION
FORUM**

Draft agenda subject to change

- 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
Keith Cox, Director, Bloc Digital
- 9.40 Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.10 **'The missing middle - unlocking the growth potential of Level 4 and 5 Higher Technical Qualifications'**
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
Tracey Patmore, Group Head, Products, NOCN
Matt Siggins, Director, Airworthy Consulting
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
Dr Brendan Coulson, Head, Technical Education, Nottingham Trent University
Dr Ajaz Ali, Director, Higher Education, BMet College
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