



**Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP**  
Secretary of State

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT  
tel: 0370 000 2288 [www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus)

Jonathan Slater  
Permanent Secretary  
Department for Education

24 May 2018

Dear Jonathan,

### **T Level timetable: direction**

Thank you for your letter on T Level delivery. As you say, the introduction of T Levels is our opportunity to reform technical qualifications for good. I am very grateful to the teams at the Department for Education and all of our partners in business and across the education sector for the design and development work to date.

Our plan is for a measured implementation of T Levels. Teaching is to begin in September 2020 in the first three subjects (out of up to 25 eventually) in 30-50 colleges and other providers (out of a potential group of up to 1,000 providers, eventually including colleges, independent providers and other post-16 providers). T Levels last for two years, so first completions would be in Summer 2022. The subjects are:

- One Construction pathway
- One Digital pathway
- Education & Childcare

I appreciate the advice I have received about the delivery timetable and have considered this in detail. I recognise your reasons for requesting a ministerial direction and how they align with your responsibilities as the Accounting Officer for DfE.

As you say I am able to draw on a wider range of considerations than the guidance to Accounting Officers, and I am convinced of the case to press ahead.

Alongside our apprenticeship reforms, T Levels are central to reforming technical and vocational education and training, to improve workforce skills and drive productivity growth. At the moment we have a confusing landscape of more than 13,000 qualifications at Level 3 and below, and productivity gaps of 36% against Germany and 29% against the US. We must keep up momentum behind the Sainsbury reforms, of which T Levels were a key part; the Sainsbury report and Government response were published in July 2016, almost two years ago.

The need for progress is especially pressing in sectors such as Construction, given our key objectives on housing and infrastructure; and Digital, given the rate of change in global technology and applications.

None of the advice has indicated that teaching from 2020 cannot be achieved. Indeed we have discussed at length the robust plans we are putting in place, and the collaboration already underway with employers (on both subject matter and work placements), Colleges and other FE providers.

The delivery of T Levels in 2020 is focused in a measured way on a small number of T Levels in a small number of providers. I want us now to put all of our collective weight behind delivering these T Levels to begin in 2020.

I know that you will now, in the best traditions of the Civil Service, work at all speed to deliver this top Government priority. I note that you will copy our exchange of letters to the Comptroller and Auditor General, and to the Treasury Officer of Accounts.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Damian Hinds". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly informal style.

**Damian Hinds**  
**Secretary of State for Education**