Dear Dominic,

Thank you for your question on Tuesday 1 October, concerning what the Government is doing to incorporate those with special education needs into the delivery of T Levels. I am sorry that I was unable to respond to you at the time and I promised to write to clarify what is being done in this area.

The Government is committed to making T Levels accessible to all students. It is important for us to ensure the successful delivery of T Levels for students with special educational needs and disabilities. Therefore, we are working closely with the first T Level providers and an advisory group of specialists. The advisory group includes a representative from the British Dyslexia Association, and I would like to express my gratitude for the Association’s engagement with T Levels.

We have introduced flexibilities and support across all aspects of the T Level programme, including:

- the Maths and English exit requirement;
- the technical qualification;
- the industry placement.

Maths and English Exit Requirement

As you rightly pointed out, the Government has confirmed that T Level students with special educational needs and disabilities will have the same flexibility for Maths and English as apprentices. As such, our policy is that the Maths and English exit requirement for T Level students with special educational needs and disabilities will be Entry Level 3 in Functional Skills.

This flexibility requires the same conditions to be satisfied as for apprenticeships, including that:

- the student should have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan;
- the provider should hold an evidenced assessment that the student is not able to study Maths and English at level 2.
The Technical Qualification

The technical qualification for each T Level is developed by a single awarding organisation. The content and assessment of the technical qualification must support fair access. The awarding organisations are required to work with special educational needs and disability organisations to make sure of this.

The awarding organisations have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities and remove or reduce the disadvantage they would otherwise experience. The requirement for awarding organisations to make reasonable adjustments will therefore apply in relation to the technical qualification.

Industry Placements

We want students with special educational needs and disabilities to be able to access high quality industry placements. We want to ensure that they benefit from experience in a real workplace setting just as much as their peers.

T Level providers are expected to consider what preparation and support these students need to access industry placements and complete them successfully.

Providers can use the available capacity and delivery funding to provide further support in the workplace and assist with reasonable adjustments. This could include an independent workplace mentor or a job coach.

Providers may also use other available funding where appropriate. For example, high needs or disadvantage funding.

T Level Transition Programme

The T Level Transition Programme is a new type of 16-19 study programme. It is specifically designed to help students develop the skills, experience, knowledge and behaviours they need to progress onto and successfully complete a T Level. The Transition Programme is targeted at students who are not ready to start a T Level at 16 but have the potential to progress to one following a tailored preparation programme.

We are developing the Transition Programme to enable more young people to benefit from T levels.

Post-16 Qualifications Review

Alongside T Levels, the Government is reviewing post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below (excluding A Levels and GCSEs). It is our firm intention that this review will have a positive effect on disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs and disabilities, by making sure all qualifications are high quality and support progression into higher level study or employment.

Next steps

You mentioned that information about the flexibilities and support for T Level students with special educational needs is confusing. The Department for Education will explore how they can best communicate the provisions made for T Level students with special educational needs and disabilities. This will include drawing together the information in one location, such as the new T Levels website.
I hope you find this letter helpful. I have copied this letter to all Noble Lords who spoke during the question and I will also place a copy in the House library.

[Signature]

BARONESS BERRIDGE

Lord Addington
House of Lords