



**The Rt Hon Baroness Jacqui Smith
Minister for Skills**

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Lord Willetts

By email: contactholmemb@parliament.uk

07 January 2025

Dear David,

I am writing to you as per my commitment during the debate on the findings and recommendations in the Universities UK report, "Opportunity, growth and partnership: a blueprint for change" on 14 November.

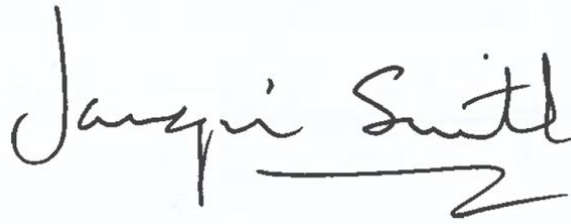
Vocational Educational, also described as Technical Education, primarily takes place in Further Education settings. The Department for Education collects data on student participation in qualifications at both 16-18 and 19+ level. However, the data we collect cannot easily be broken down by subject area to identify learning aim (academic or vocational).

Latest figures show that student participation in qualifications for those aged 19 and over in 2023 was 1,818,480, however, this is only broken down by qualification level, will be a mix of provision and learning aim types. Similarly, there is no breakdown by learning aim for 16-18 year olds where there were around 959,400 16-18 year olds studying for qualifications at Level 3 in 2023 and of these around 331,200 were studying for level 3 qualifications other than A/AS levels. Of these just over 23,000 were studying towards a T-level with the rest studying for either Applied General, Tech Level or another level 3 qualification, most of which will include some vocational element of study. A further 53,700 16-18 year olds were studying for a level 2 qualification (non-GCSE) and a further 80,600 for a qualification at level 1 at below, many of which will contain a vocational element. A further 94,500 16-18 year olds were participating on an apprenticeship in 2023.

In relation to vocational study at Higher Education Providers specifically, the department does not hold data on which courses are vocational or credentialised. However, the department does publish statistics on Higher Level Learners. This covers participation in learning above NQF Level 4 in English Higher Education and Further Education providers for all age groups. In this data the only type of vocational education that can be identified is Apprenticeships. In the 2022/23 academic year, there were 270,615 Level 4+ apprenticeship enrolments across all ages, 98,225 of which were at Higher Education Providers. Some of these apprenticeships will fall into the figures provided in the 1,818,480 figure for 19+ provided above.

Thank you again for taking the time to engage on these matters. I hope these further details have been useful and I will place a copy in the House libraries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background. The signature reads "Jacqui Smith" in a cursive style, with a horizontal line underlining the name.

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