

# The Higher Technical Qualification quality mark

Guidelines v2.0 – August 2022





**HIGHER  
TECHNICAL  
QUALIFICATION**

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# 1 Introduction

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## Welcome!

If you are involved in delivering an approved Higher Technical Qualification – congratulations!

If you are a third party looking to promote the programme to potential students – thank you!

We can all work together to raise the awareness and prestige of our technical offer at Levels 4 and 5, and increase the opportunities and life chances for young people, and those already in a career, across the country. The correct usage of the quality mark will be monitored by the Institute.

## **1.1 Policy context: higher technical education reforms**

- 1.1.1 The government is committed to building a world class technical education system. In the government response to the higher technical education consultation (July 2020), the Department for Education set out plans to make higher technical education a more popular and prestigious choice that provides the skills employers need.
- 1.1.2 The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) has put in place an employer-led approvals process for Higher Technical Qualifications. This builds on its experience and expertise of approving apprenticeships and T Levels. IfATE compares the Level 4 and 5 qualifications submitted against occupational standards, which set out the knowledge, skills and behaviours an individual should achieve to be deemed competent in an occupation.
- 1.1.3 Please note that the Higher Technical Qualification quality mark is a registered trademark of IfATE; any misuse could lead to an action for trademark infringement.

## 1.2 Purpose of the guidelines

- 1.2.1 These guidelines set out when and where to apply the Higher Technical Qualification quality mark, as well as including the design guidelines that are set out in section 3. The correct usage of the quality mark will be monitored by IfATE as part of the periodic reviews outlined in our [terms and conditions](#).
- 1.2.2 The correct use of the quality mark seeks to:
- signal which qualifications IfATE have approved against HTQ approvals criteria
  - support the promotion and marketing of approved Higher Technical Qualifications
  - raise awareness of the Higher Technical Qualification programme amongst potential students, employers and the general public
  - signal clearly the employer value these courses offer.
- 1.2.3 The quality mark must be only used by organisations:
- in relation to an approved Higher Technical Qualification
  - to demonstrate that the qualification has been approved by the Institute, and to advertise a specific course leading to a Higher Technical Qualification, and
  - for careers advisory purposes, to explain and promote the Higher Technical Qualifications programme as a whole.

## **1.3 Who these guidelines are for**

- 1.3.1 The Department for Education and IfATE are keen for organisations to promote approved qualifications to potential students and to employers, as well as contribute to the effort to raise awareness, understanding and positivity towards Higher Technical Qualifications generally. We are also keen for third parties, such as careers advisory bodies and trade bodies, to help promote the programme as a whole and inform potential students and employers about them. All users of the Higher Technical Qualification quality mark must adhere to these guidelines.
- 1.3.2 These guidelines set out when and how to apply the Higher Technical Qualification quality mark consistently and effectively.
- 1.3.3 Please get in touch (contact details below) if you have any questions about how to use the Higher Technical Qualification quality mark that are not answered in this document.
- 1.3.4 IfATE may amend these guidelines from time to time. IfATE will inform awarding bodies of material changes which affect users of the quality-mark.
- 1.3.5 Higher Technical Qualification quality mark is a registered trademark of IfATE; any misuse could lead to an action for trademark infringement.



## **2 When to use the Higher Technical Qualifications quality-mark**

- 2.1** Who should use the Higher Technical Qualification quality mark
- 2.2** Promoting an approved Higher Technical Qualification
- 2.3** Promoting the Higher Technical Qualification programme as a whole (Careers Advisory Bodies and other organisations)

## **2.1 Who should use the Higher Technical Qualification quality mark**

2.1.1 Organisations should use the quality mark to indicate the status of specific approved qualifications, as well as to promote wider awareness and understanding of the Higher Technical Qualifications programme.

2.1.2 It should be used as an endorsement mark, alongside existing branded designs for providers and qualifications. As a result, the 'brand' is focused on the quality mark itself, without some of the wider elements a full product brand might include such as photography, full colour palette, layouts etc.

2.1.3 We are also keen for the Higher Technical Qualification quality mark to be used by third parties to promote the programme. This could be in material developed by careers advisory bodies or industry training bodies, explaining and promoting the employer-led approach and quality of the approved qualifications. This is so that potential students know what to look for when considering their course choices and can easily find the approved Higher Technical Qualifications on offer.

2.1.4 Everyone using the quality mark must ensure that any advertising, marketing and promotion of products or services do not undermine or diminish the reputation, image and prestige of Higher Technical Qualifications when used in any such aforementioned activity e.g. media advertising.

## 2.2 Promoting an approved Higher Technical Qualification

2.2.1 Using the Higher Technical Qualification quality mark prominently and clearly is a vital part of our strategy to promote this new option to potential students. It should only be used to promote approved Higher Technical Qualifications and must not be used in a way that could reasonably be misinterpreted as a wider endorsement of:

- any qualifications not on the approved list of Higher Technical Qualifications
- non- Higher Technical Qualification pathways/options/routes, or
- your organisation overall.

2.2.2 Awarding bodies are responsible for sub-licensing the Higher Technical Qualification quality mark to providers that deliver an approved Higher Technical Qualification. Those awarding bodies are responsible for ensuring that sub-licensees also receive, understand, and follow these guidelines.

### 2.2.3 Mandatory use

Providers and awarding bodies MUST do the following:

- **DO USE** the Higher Technical Qualification quality mark where details of a relevant approved Higher Technical Qualification is promoted, for example:
  - qualification is being promoted on an internet page or page in a print prospectus promoting a single course.
  - immediately next to a relevant course listing on a page where multiple qualifications are covered.
- **DO INCLUDE** relevant details when promoting an approved qualification, such as the name and level of the occupational standard(s) that the approved Higher Technical Qualification is aligned to.
- **DO INCLUDE** a link to IfATE's website for more information about Higher Technical Qualifications.

### 2.2.4 Optional use

Providers and awarding bodies COULD also do the following:

- **DO USE** the quality mark on a page explaining the wider programme in more detail.
- **DO USE** the quality mark on certificates – only for awards of qualifications that have approval, and only where the Higher Technical Qualification name is distinct from non-Higher Technical Qualification names.
- **DO USE** the quality mark in the main copy of a web page to direct readers to a section explaining what Higher Technical Qualifications are.

### 2.2.5 Prohibited use includes the following:

- **DO NOT USE** the quality mark on a website homepage, landing page or elsewhere as a general endorsement of your full programme of qualifications.
- **DO NOT USE** the quality mark to imply that a qualification with multiple optional occupational pathways will prepare students for careers in each of the aligned occupations, rather than in one of the occupations (depending on occupational pathway choice).
- **DO NOT USE** the quality mark to imply that earlier versions of the qualification are also approved Higher Technical Qualifications, for example by adding the Higher Technical Qualification quality mark to student certificates before the approved Higher Technical Qualification 'first teach' date.
- **DO NOT USE** the quality mark on permanent building signage.
- **DO NOT USE** the quality mark if Higher Technical Qualification approval is withdrawn.
- **DO NOT USE** the quality mark on materials intended to promote a course that is delivered outside England. We would not require the production of two sets of materials where a qualification is delivered in England and elsewhere –although we would recommend clarifying in qualification materials that the Higher Technical Qualification approved status is only awarded in respect of usage in England.

### 2.2.6 Responsibilities

We require organisations that own an approved Higher Technical Qualification to:

- **MONITOR** Higher Technical Qualification quality mark usage within their own organisation and by sublicensed providers and inform IfATE promptly of any and all non-compliance with these guidelines.
- **SHARE ON REQUEST** any materials carrying the Higher Technical Qualification quality mark, for the purpose of ascertaining compliance with these guidelines.
- **COOPERATE** with the Institute to resolve issues where the Institute reasonably determines that it appears that there is non-compliance with these guidelines.

### 2.2.3 First Teach

Approved qualifications can only be taught as an HTQ from the first teach date specified ahead of each cycle. Under no circumstances can an approved HTQ be delivered ahead of its stipulated first teach date.

Cycle	First Teach (from September)
1	2022
2	2023
3	2024
4	2025
5	2026

## **2.3 Promoting the Higher Technical Qualification programme as a whole (Careers Advisory Bodies and other organisations)**

2.3.1 We encourage careers advisory bodies, and other organisations (such as sector training bodies, local councils, chambers of commerce and others promoting skills development), to use the Higher Technical Qualification quality mark as part of their communications about the programme as a whole, with the aim of increasing recognition of the Higher Technical Qualification quality mark by their audiences.

2.3.2 These organisations should follow these guidelines to ensure that the Higher Technical Qualification quality mark is used consistently and in a way that avoids confusion, always being sure that it is not used in a way that could be reasonably misinterpreted as a wider endorsement of:

- any qualifications not on the approved list of Higher Technical Qualifications
- non- Higher Technical Qualification pathways/options/routes, or
- the organisation overall.

## 3 Design Guidelines

### Higher Technical Qualification quality mark

- 3.1 Colour logo
- 3.2 Exclusion zone
- 3.3 Minimum size
- 3.4 Mono logo variant for single-colour designs only
- 3.5 Logo don'ts
- 3.6 Further examples



### 3.1 Colour logo

The Higher Technical Qualification quality mark is available in colour as a print or digital file. The logo should be used as supplied, and not altered in anyway.

The following pages will help the user in achieving this.

The colour version of the quality mark is the primary version and should be used for all applications. If your application is a mono print design (ie no colour), then a black or white mono version may be used in this case.

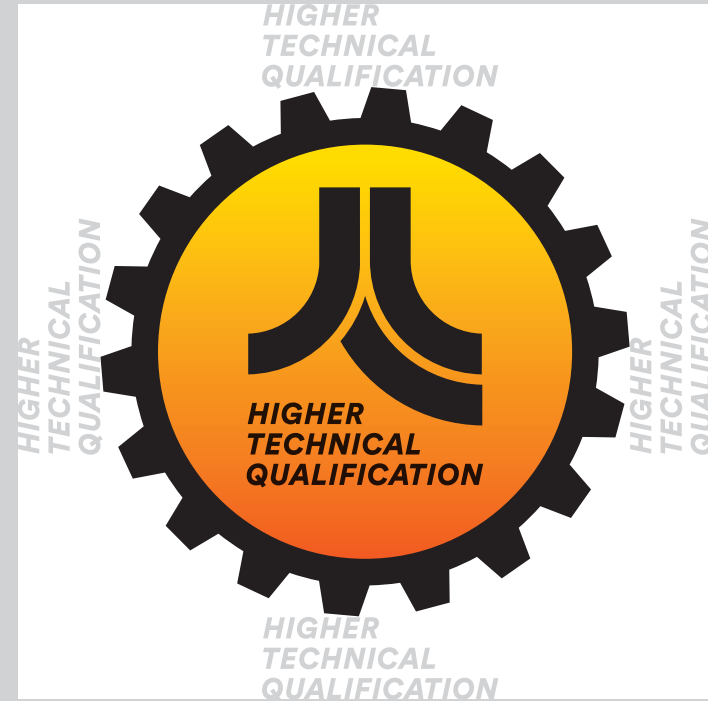


### 3.2 Exclusion zone

Always maintain clear space between the logo, page edges and other elements.

The clear space around the logo is demonstrated here by the height of the text.

This applies to all variants of the logo.



### 3.3 Minimum size

Please consider legibility when placing the logo for print or digital. These are the absolute minimum sizes, and should only be applied where necessary.



Print =  
25mm

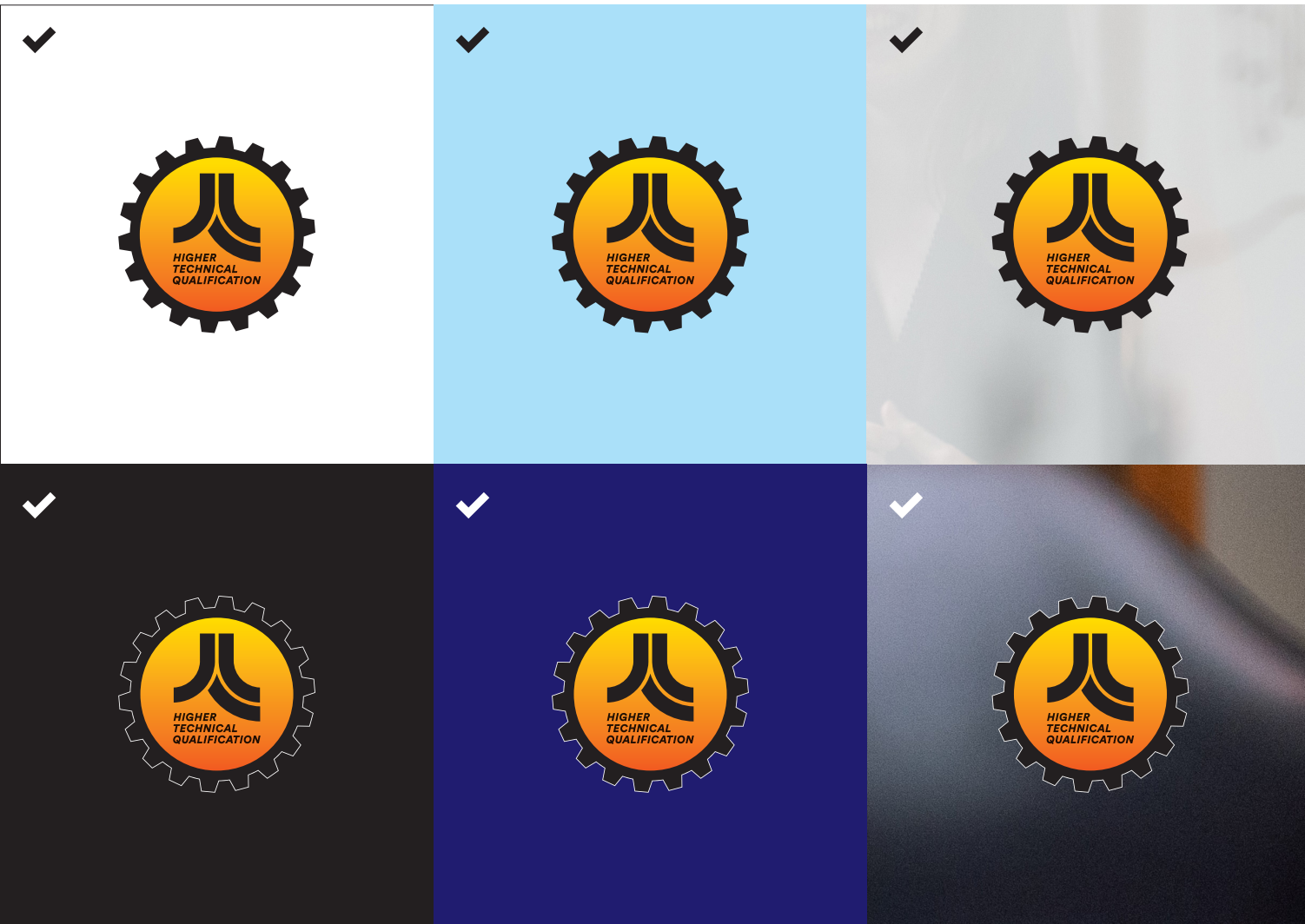


Digital =  
100 pixels

### 3.3 Colour logo placement

Always consider the background when placing the logo, as the user is responsible for accessibility compliance. Dark colours should be avoided. And when placing over photography, always use a clean/light area of the image.

If the logo must be applied to a dark background, use the version with the white keyline to ensure that the surrounding cog motif is still visible.



### 3.4 Mono logo variant for single-colour designs only

The colour version is the preferred version of the logo to use in all circumstances. The mono (black or white) version must only be used if the entire design is single-colour. Do not use a greyscale version.



### 3.5 Logo don'ts

The logo should always remain as supplied.

Don't:

- distort the shape
- change the colour
- remove elements

Do not redraw or create the logo from scratch



## 3.6 Further examples

The logo used on a course information website page

The screenshot shows a laptop displaying a course information page for a 'Diploma of Higher Education in Engineering'. The page features a navigation bar with buttons for 'Shortlist Course', 'Register now', and 'Request Prospectus'. The main content area includes a course description, key features, and a course summary sidebar. The sidebar lists the course code 'W11', 240 credits, and study methods including distance learning. A bottom navigation bar allows users to explore 'Course details', 'Entry requirements', 'Fees and funding', 'How OU study works', and 'Careers'. The 'Course details' section is currently active, showing that the diploma has two stages, each with 120 credits.

**Shortlist Course** **Register now** **Request Prospectus**

### Diploma of Higher Education in Engineering

If you're working in engineering-related employment at a technical level and would like to boost your career, this qualification can combine academic skills with the needs of your workplace. This course will build on your existing skills and experience to support your professional development plans. It applies the study of engineering fundamentals like design, energy, electronics, manufacturing, materials, mechanics and structural analysis, to the solution of real-life problems. It will also develop your mathematical skills, which are key to successfully studying engineering.

*This diploma will be of particular interest to those living and working in Scotland. The same programme of study is also available as the [Foundation Degree in Engineering \(X11\)](#).*

#### Key features of the course

- Builds on your existing skills and experience to support your professional development plans
- Applies the study of engineering fundamentals to the solution of real-life problems
- Develops your skills in mathematics, which is key to the successful study of engineering
- Provides a solid foundation for further study, with the option to top-up to an honours degree

A nationally recognised qualification in its own right, this diploma of higher education is also equivalent to the first two-thirds of an honours degree – see the [Dipole Bachelor of Engineering \(Honours\) \(Q28\)](#) for more information.

This Higher Technical Qualification (Level 4) is approved against occupational standards, decided by employers, for 'Network Engineer and DevOps Engineer'.

#### Course Summary

**Diploma** ?

**Course code**  
W11

**Credits** ?  
240

**How long it takes**  
Part time – 4–6 years  
Full time – 3 years (Stage 1 can be studied only part time; Stage 2 can be studied full time)  
Time limit – 8 years

**Study method**  
[Distance learning](#)

**Ask a question**

**Course details** | Entry requirements | Fees and funding | How OU study works | Careers

#### Course details

This diploma of higher education has two stages, each comprising 120 credits.

- In **Stage 1** you'll study four 30-credit core engineering modules – the last of which focuses on your work in engineering.

### 3.6 Further examples

A certificate





## 3.6 Further examples

A design listing multiple courses

Level	Campus	Duration	Entry requirements	What you'll study	
<b>Animal Care</b> <span style="float: right;">Pearson BTEC</span>					
1	Wakefield City Campus	One year	3 GCSEs 9-1	Topics studied can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical experience of handling, feeding, accommodating, and caring for a range of animals</li> <li>• Learning skills to work in the animal care industry including teamwork, completion of tasks using the correct equipment, and intuition when working with animals</li> </ul>	▲ T
<b>Animal Care</b> <span style="float: right;">Pearson BTEC</span>					
2	Wakefield City Campus	One year	5 GCSEs 9-3 including English or maths or equivalent OR Level 1 Diploma in Land-based Studies - Animal Care, plus Level 1 English and maths	Topics studied can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical animal health</li> <li>• Introduction to animal biology and health</li> <li>• Animal care work placement</li> <li>• Animal welfare</li> <li>• Animal behaviour assessment and safe handling</li> <li>• Feeding, accommodating and moving animals</li> </ul>	▲ T P
<b>Animal Management</b> <span style="float: right;">Pearson BTEC</span>					
3	Wakefield City Campus	Two years	5 GCSEs 9-4 including English or maths and a 3 in the other OR 5 GCSEs 9-4 and Level 2 in either English or maths, and a 3 or Level 1 in the other OR Level 2 Technical Certificate in Animal Care at Merit grade and Level 2 in English and maths	Topics studied can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animal biology</li> <li>• Animal welfare and ethics</li> <li>• Practical animal husbandry</li> <li>• Animal behaviour</li> <li>• Animal health and diseases</li> <li>• Work experience in the animal sector</li> <li>• Zoological animal health and husbandry</li> <li>• Animal breeding and genetics</li> <li>• Investigative research project</li> <li>• Advanced animal nutrition</li> <li>• Human and animal interaction</li> <li>• Principles of animal nursing</li> <li>• Wildlife ecology and conservation management</li> </ul> <b>Either</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical skills in animal science</li> <li>• Animal metabolism</li> </ul> <b>Or</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farm livestock husbandry</li> <li>• Exotic animal husbandry</li> </ul>	▲ T P 
<p>▲ Progression within Wakefield College   R Residential   T Day trips   P Opportunity for placement   P Mandatory placement</p> <p>wakefield.ac.uk / Course Information 01924 789111 <span style="float: right;">27</span></p>					

## 4 Annex

### 4.1 Annex: quick reference to when to use the quality mark

## 4.1 Annex: quick reference to when to use the quality mark

The quality mark should be used in a clear way that promotes specific approved HTQ qualifications that are being delivered, or as part of explanation and promotion of the HTQ programme in general.

The quality mark should not be used in a general, non-specific way that invites the viewer to assume it is a mark of independent endorsement for the whole range of a provider's qualification offer, or their teaching quality etc.

Situation	Who	How
To promote a specific approved qualification	awarding body awarding organisation provider	Applied in proximity to information about that qualification eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- on a course info page</li> <li>- directly next to that qual in a catalogue of qualifications</li> <li>- in materials from an AO promoting the course to potential providers</li> </ul>
To signpost readers to information elsewhere about approved HTQs that are available	awarding body awarding organisation provider	Applied prominently where readers may arrive to look for information eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- website homepage</li> <li>- prospectus cover</li> </ul> <p>Should direct the reader to the information eg with a link or a page number.</p>
To raise awareness and understanding about what HTQs are	awarding body awarding organisation provider third parties such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- careers advice bodies</li> <li>- sector training bodies</li> <li>- employer representative groups</li> </ul>	Used as part of the call to action where the wider programme is promoted and explained. The aim here is to explain the breadth of topics covered, and the significance of the employer input into their development (meaning relevance and credibility for the qualification, and those that get it), and then direct readers to how they can access HTQs. <p>For those delivering a specific course, there should be a link to the course info.</p> <p>For those engaging in general promotion, they could sign off with something along the lines of "Look for this quality mark wherever an approved Higher Technical Qualification is being delivered at your local college or university"</p>

## Contact

We wish you every success with delivering and promoting the new Higher Technical Qualifications. Should you need further advice in relation to these guidelines, please contact:

**HTQ.APPROVALS@education.gov.uk**

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/about/contact-us/>