

Russell Group university approaches to T Levels in admissions

Russell Group universities admit students from a wide range of backgrounds who have the potential and motivation to succeed on challenging university programmes. They are committed to fair admissions and give equal consideration to all applicants who possess the required knowledge and skills.

It is important that students are adequately prepared to deal with the demands of higher-level study. Whilst some T Level subjects will provide a good foundation for admission to related degree courses, others may not, particularly where subject specific content is not covered within the T Level course.

There are currently 16 T Level courses available to post-16 students, three of these have been available long enough for a cohort to complete the two-year course. Our universities have reviewed their admissions policies with consideration to the new T Level qualifications and will continue to review their policies as each new T Level course becomes available for study.

Overview of T level admissions policies

The Higher Education and Research Act (2017) protects the autonomy of institutions to determine the criteria for the admission of students and how to apply those criteria. Each Russell Group university takes admissions decisions according to their local context and the academic requirements of individual programmes. Different Russell Group universities will therefore have different approaches to accepting students with T Levels and this will vary across different programmes of study within an institution. We have surveyed Russell Group universities to understand their current approaches to accepting T Level students and found that:

- **17 of 24 Russell Group universities are accepting T Levels for admission to a limited number of courses.**
- **In the first year of T Level students applying to university, five Russell Group universities accepted at least one student with a T Level qualification.**

Examples of courses that our universities are accepting T Level qualifications for admission include:

The University of Bristol accepts the Construction: Design, Survey and Planning T Level for admission to their BEng and Meng Civil Engineering degreesⁱ and the Education and Childcare T Level for admission to their BSc Education and BSc Childhood Studies degrees.

The University of Manchester is accepting applicants with T Levels onto 37 degree courses, for example: The Construction: Design, Survey and Planning T Level is accepted for admission to 16 courses including BSc Geography and BEng Civil Engineering. The University is also accepting applicants with T Levels in Healthcare Science, Science and Engineering, Maintenance and Manufacturing.ⁱⁱ

The University of York accepts T Levels for admission to a range of degree courses including Archaeology, Education, History of Art, Language and Linguistic Science, Law, Electronic Engineering and Physics (with a foundation year) and Nursing degrees.ⁱⁱⁱ

University of Birmingham • University of Bristol • University of Cambridge • Cardiff University • Durham University
University of Edinburgh • University of Exeter • University of Glasgow • Imperial College London • King's College London
University of Leeds • University of Liverpool • London School of Economics and Political Science
University of Manchester • Newcastle University • University of Nottingham • University of Oxford
Queen Mary University of London • Queen's University Belfast • University of Sheffield • University of Southampton
University College London • University of Warwick • University of York

Admissions policies related to T Levels are being reviewed as each new T Level subject is introduced. It is worth noting that only 1,029 students have completed a T Level. 510 of these students applied to higher education courses in the 2021/22 cycle and 410 (80%) achieved a place at a higher education provider.

Information, Advice and Guidance

Good quality information, advice, and guidance (IAG) is critical in ensuring that students are making the right decisions for their career and future. This is especially true for those embarking on new qualifications such as T Levels where there is less information available from previous cohorts to help students navigate their options.

Russell Group universities who are accepting T Levels have information on their website about how they are being accepted and what kinds of degree courses their T Level could lead to. We have also updated the Russell Group [Informed Choices website](#) to reflect the latest admissions information from our universities.

Through Advancing Access, and partnerships with local schools and colleges including through the Uni Connect programme, our universities are supporting the delivery of IAG to ensure that all students receive the right information about their future choices.

It is important that good quality, transparent IAG continues to be provided by institutions, Government, UCAS and the Office for Students. We welcome the inclusion of [specific guidance](#) from Government on which universities are accepting T Levels, noting the diversity in approaches, and signposting students to university websites and admissions departments.

The long-term view

Russell Group universities are committed to providing pathways for underrepresented students with the potential to succeed. Whilst bridging support through the use of foundation years, and transition programmes are available to help students who do not yet meet the standard entry requirements for their chosen course, our universities must admit students that are going to be able to meet the demands of challenging academic study.

Through established and robust processes, university members will continue to review the acceptance of T Levels as more subjects are made available to students, updating information to applicants and ensuring transparency.

We support the Government's endeavour to create opportunities for level 3 technical study that provide people with the skills and knowledge to succeed in their chosen career. It is vital however, that the intended purpose of these qualifications is not lost in the pursuit of making them more suitable for higher level study.

For the most academically challenging courses, particularly those in STEM, T Levels may not be accepted unless changes are made to the specifications, for example increasing the Maths content of these qualifications. However, we recognise the degree of modification that would be needed is unlikely to be appropriate given the intended purpose and focus of these qualifications to give students technical skills to excel in a given sector.

One of the benefits of A Level and BTEC qualifications is that students can take a mixture of subjects that allow them to explore a range of disciplines and afford them the flexibility to meet university entry requirements.^{iv} Since T Levels are two-year stand-alone qualifications, there is just a single point of success for students and less flexibility to evidence different areas of excellence. Government may therefore wish to consider whether T-Levels could be delivered in a more flexible or modular way.

ⁱ [Link to University of Bristol website](#). Note that for this course, A level Maths or completion of Bristol's in-house maths test is required alongside the T Level

ⁱⁱ [Link to University of Manchester website](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ [Link to University of York website](#).

^{iv} For example, a student achieving an A* in maths and chemistry and a C in English at A Level is likely to be suitable for entry onto a STEM degree, despite not achieving a standard entry requirement of AAA since they have been able to demonstrate their ability in two courses with high level maths content.