



Introducing the Advanced British Standard

Improving the breadth of young people's qualifications

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In October 2023, the Prime Minister announced his pledge to replace A-levels and T-levels with a single Baccalaureate-style qualification, called the Advanced British Standard



(ABS). The reasoning behind this is that the current suite of qualifications is "limiting the breadth of young people's education and prevents full parity across technical and academic routes". This is a significant change which, if implemented, will require a long implementation period, which the Department for Education (DfE) believes will happen over the next decade.

So, what are the aims of the new ABS? It promises to:

- Increase teaching time by around 15%. This will necessarily require an increase in resourcing, including the supply of qualified teaching staff. The government has announced initial funding to help meet this demand.
- Require the study of core English and Maths until the age of 18. Currently, only those opting to follow these at A-Level, or those who have not gained grade 4 at GCSE, continue with these subjects.
- Ensure a greater breadth of study for young people. Typically, students would follow a minimum of five subjects, though each would be either a 'major' or 'minor'. For example, a student may follow majors in three and minors in the other two.
- Combine technical and academic routes into a single framework.

Such a significant change requires careful planning in consultation with stakeholders. In December 2023, the DfE announced a consultation on the introduction and delivery of the ABS to help to inform their approach. You can participate in this consultation by sharing your views in an [online survey](#), which closes on **20 March 2024**. This will be followed by a government White Paper, which will set out their plan for delivery. However, with a general election likely before the end of the year, the future of this new qualification in the long term is uncertain.