

Advanced Technical Awards

AdvancedTech



NORTHERN
Regional College



This guide is presented in five parts;

1. The AdvancedTech Award
2. Who are AdvancedTechs aimed at?
3. The Range of AdvancedTechs Available
4. A New form of learning
5. How to Access an AdvancedTech



Introduction

Employers face a skills shortage that could negatively impact upon the future success of businesses across Northern Ireland. In response, the Regional Colleges of Further Education, in conjunction with the Department for the Economy, have designed the new Advanced Technical Award (AdvancedTech). The AdvancedTechs introduced across all Regional Colleges in September 2021 aims to

deliver the skills organisations need.

This new award provides a high-quality vocational education and training programme through which employers can access a pipeline of talented learners with cutting edge skills and knowledge.

This Guide provides information for employers on the new AdvancedTechs award. It provides information on the AdvancedTechs components; the range of AdvancedTechs; and on how employers can help support the delivery of this new and innovative vocational programme.

1.

What is in an AdvancedTech?

AdvancedTechs are new Level 3 (A Level equivalent) vocational courses aimed at young people who have completed GCSEs. Launched in September 2021, AdvancedTechs have been developed in collaboration with employers and businesses so that the content meets the needs of industry and prepares students for work, further training or study.

We recognise that qualifications by themselves are not enough in preparing young people for entering the world of work or for progressing to higher level study. The AdvancedTech award brings together a number of key components that make up this new and exciting programme of learning.

AdvancedTechs include the following elements:

- A work based qualification equating to 3 A Levels , which includes:
- knowledge content, concepts and skills for an industry area
- specialist skills and knowledge for an occupation or career
- Project Based Learning;
- Development of T skills (transversal or soft skills)
- A structured industry placement with an employer.

Students will also be required to undertake literacy and numeracy classes should they have not already achieved GCSE grade A*-C in Maths and English.

2.

Who are AdvancedTechs aimed at?

- AdvancedTechs will be more suited to students who know what occupation or industry they want to move in to.
- AdvancedTechs are a brand-new, 2-year qualification that young people or adults can do as an alternative to A levels, other post-16 courses or an apprenticeship. They bring classroom learning and industry practice together on a

course designed with industry for industry.

- AdvancedTechs are ideal for those who complete GCSEs and want the knowledge and experience to get straight into employment, an Apprenticeship or Higher Education.
- Students will typically spend 80% of their time in college and 20% on a placement with an employer to further develop skills and knowledge.
- An AdvancedTech takes 2 years of full-time study and is equivalent to 3 A levels and attracts UCAS points
- The first 6 AdvancedTechs are now available at Further education Colleges in Northern Ireland, with more coming in the following years.
- AdvancedTechs are delivered only through the regional Colleges of Further Education.



3.

The Range of AdvancedTechs Available

The AdvancedTech award was first introduced from September 2021 in the following areas;

- Information Technology
- Health & Social Care
- Applied Science
- Construction & the Built Environment
- Engineering
- Business & Finance

Further AdvancedTechs will be designed with industry and introduced from 2022 onwards.

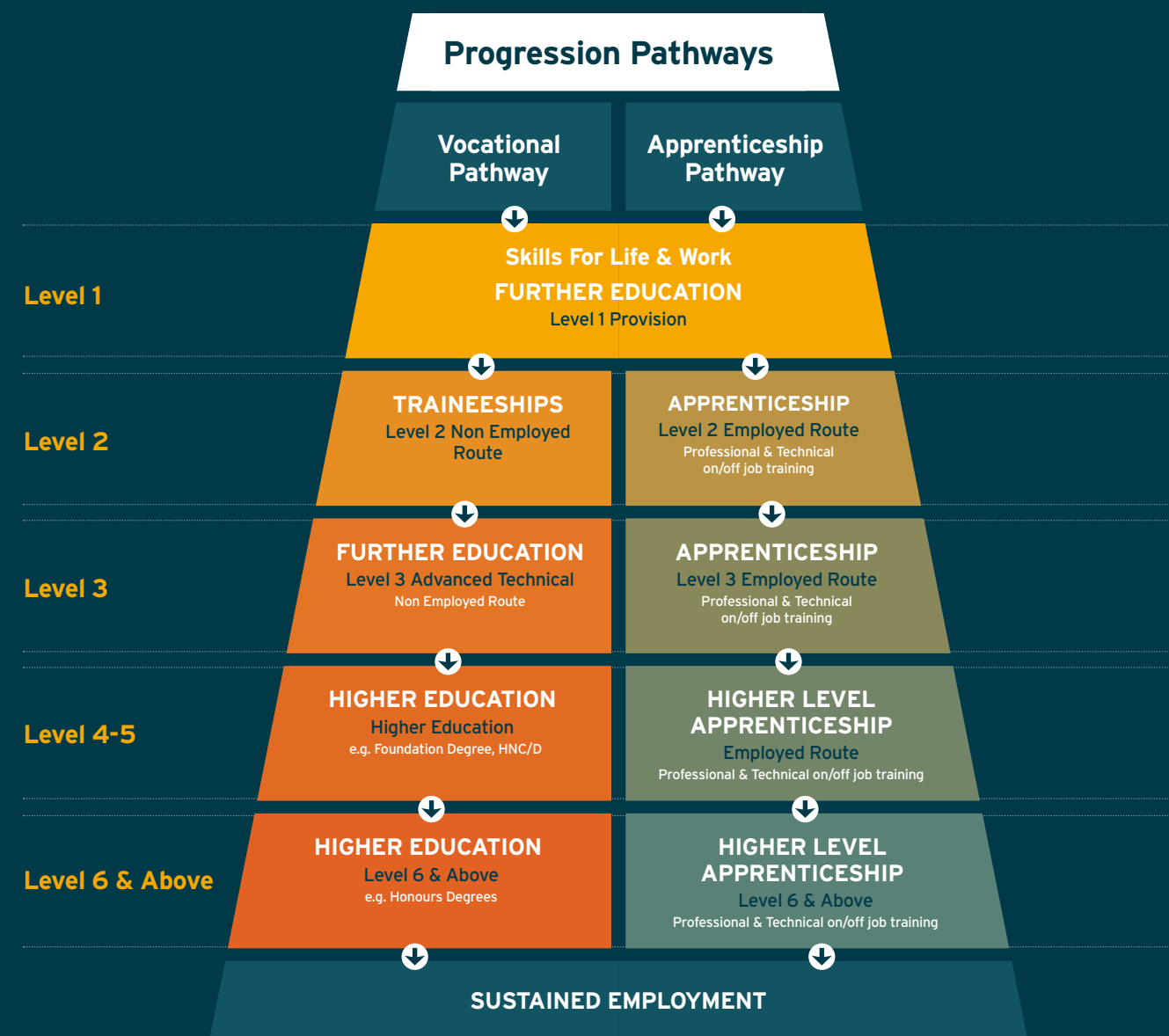
This Guide provides information for employers on the new AdvancedTech award. It provides information on the AdvancedTech components; the range of AdvancedTechs; and on how employers can help support the delivery of this new and innovative vocational programme.

Helping to Simplify Vocational Education

Employers tell us that the current range of vocational education courses is confusing and doesn't always meet their needs.

AdvancedTechs are part of a new and emerging system of vocational education and training (VET) in Northern Ireland that aims to simplify vocational education and create a system that employers, parents and young people can trust and understand. They provide a clear and high-quality, technical alternative to the current range of post-16 education and training options.

The introduction of the AdvancedTech follows the launch of the new system of Traineeships at Level 2 (GCSE equivalent) and will be the Gold Standard offering at Level 3 across all Regional Colleges in Northern Ireland.



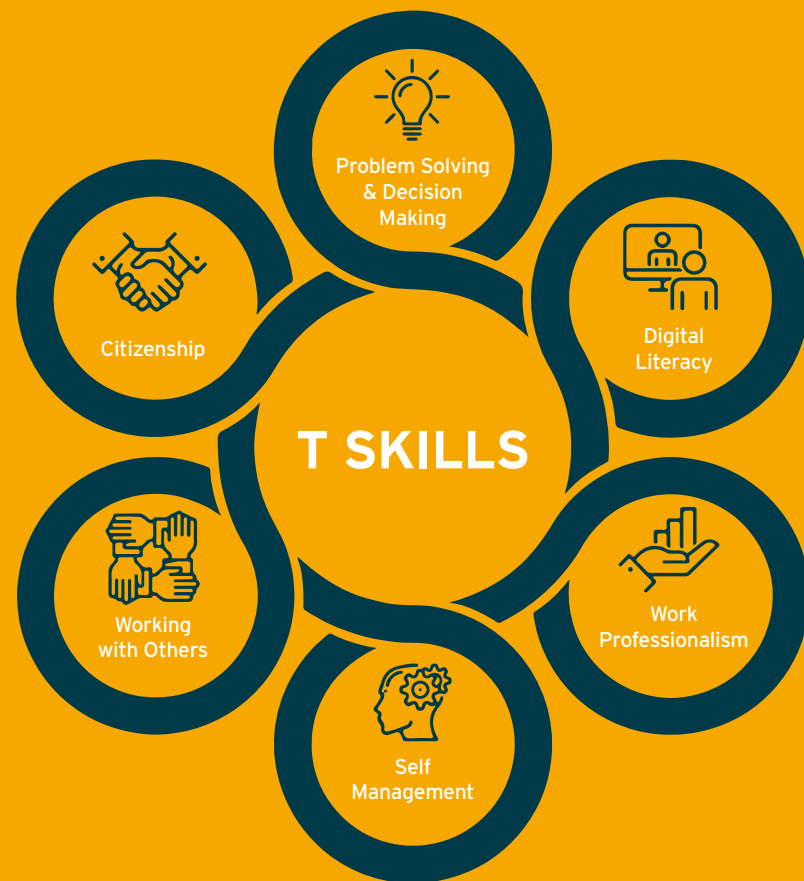
4.

A New Form of Learning

In addition to the main knowledge based qualification equating to 3 A Levels, the *AdvancedTech* is based on a new form of learning where delivery is centred on employer skills needs and practices.

Most skills development courses focus on 'hard', functional or specialist skills, gained through vocational training . Yet it is 'transversal' skills (T Skills) that employers demand the most. These are the skills that help employees to adapt to change throughout their careers.

Often called 'soft' or 'transferrable', they are not specific to a particular sector or job role but 'cut across' different tasks and roles. Embedding these transversal skills within the *AdvancedTech* will therefore better prepare young people for entering employment and ensuring that they can contribute to business success.



**T Skills -
Supporting the
development
of the future
workforce.**

**Learning
through active
& engaging real
world industry
focused projects**

Project Based Learning.

Project Based Learning (PBL) is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge.

Working in partnership with local employers, Colleges will design authentic business focused projects that are engaging and complex questions, problems or challenges. These projects will underpin all AdvancedTechs and will transform how we deliver vocational programmes of learning.



Industry placement

Every **AdvancedTech** includes an industry placement with an employer. The placement will be used to further embed the practical and technical skills required for the occupation. These will last for a minimum of 200 hours (approximately 30 days) but can last longer.

Employers can offer industry placements as a block, day release or a mix of these, and can discuss sharing part of the placement with another employer if necessary.

Colleges will support employers offering industry placements. This will include assistance with designing the industry placement, the necessary paperwork, personal training plans and monitoring of placement with the employer.

Industry placements give employers a unique opportunity to help develop new talent and get young people work ready. They also bring many business benefits including;

A Solution For Entry-Level Jobs

Industry placements are an ideal solution for helping you build a pipeline of talent for junior positions or apprenticeships.

Cost-Effective Channel For Recruitment

Employers can avoid many of the costs associated with recruitment by working with local colleges to connect with young people who are deciding on their careers.

Develop Young People Into Your Industry

Placements give employers a chance to work alongside the next generation of workers entering the industry, making sure they develop the knowledge, attitude and practical skills to succeed.

Assess Potential Applicants For Higher Level Apprenticeships

With more and more employers now using the higher level apprenticeship route to address future workforce needs, the **AdvancedTech** placement provides employers with an ideal opportunity to assess the suitability of future applicants to HLAs.



5.

How to Access an AdvancedTech

Access to Advanced Technical Students for Employers

Employers interested in supporting an **AdvancedTech** programme either through project based learning and/or facilitating the work placement element of the award are invited to contact their local Further Education College's training unit.

Participating employers agree to provide a minimum of 200 hrs of the programme as work-based learning. The College will work with employers to place students and to monitor and track progress on all aspects of work based learning.

Belfast Met

Kathryn Stewart

✉ kstewart@belfastmet.ac.uk ☎ 028 9026 5000

Northern Regional College

Sean McAleese

✉ sean.mcaleese@nrc.ac.uk ☎ 028 2566 4266 or 075 5411 8467

North West Regional College

Annette O'Doherty

✉ Annette.odoherty@nwrc.ac.uk ☎ 028 7127 6498

South Eastern Regional College

Victoria Boyd - Training Programmes Manager

✉ vboyd@serc.ac.uk ☎ 078 2652 1798

Southern Regional College

Denise Cornett - Training & Apprenticeship Manager

✉ cornettd@src.ac.uk ☎ 0300 123 1223

South West College

Sharon Murphy

✉ Sharon.Murphy@swc.ac.uk ☎ 079 2014 6186

Access to Advanced Technical Students for Students

AdvancedTechs are open to participants of all ages and backgrounds, and are free of charge. Students may include school leavers (statutory school leaving age of 16 years), students progressing from a Traineeship or Further Education or older learners.

Anyone interested in undertaking an **AdvancedTech** can make a direct enquiry or application to their local Further Education College.



AdvancedTech

