



DLC TRAINING: PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION LEVELS EXPLAINED

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WHAT ARE THE LEVELS OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS?



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“The more that you read,
the more things you will
know. The more that you
learn, the more places
you’ll go.”

Dr Seuss

Qualification levels represent different degrees of knowledge, skills, and expertise within a particular field. In the UK, there are nine qualification levels, from entry level through to level 8.

The complexity of a qualification increases with the qualification level, which indicates that the higher the level of qualification you have, the better your understanding of a subject.

It is important to gain qualifications related to your career, not only to be able to develop professionally but also to demonstrate the level of understanding you currently have within your sector.

Recognised by industry, Professional Qualifications can enhance employability and career advancement opportunities within a specific profession or industry.

They demonstrate competence and expertise and are an essential way to develop and achieve individual career goals.

TYPES OF QUALIFICATION EXPLAINED

Here in the UK, there are three key types of qualifications that you can consider. This includes:

- Professional Qualifications
- Academic Degrees
- Vocational Qualifications

Professional Qualifications

Tailored to specific professions, these qualifications are awarded by professional bodies or institutes such as the Chartered Management Institute (CMI), the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) and the Institute of Supply Chain Management (IoSCM). They enhance practical skills, knowledge and expertise relating to a specific industry.

Academic Degrees

Academic degrees are offered by universities and include Bachelor's degrees, which are typically completed after three years of full-time studying. Post-Bachelor's, students can complete Master's degrees, which usually take one to two years, and Doctorates (PhDs), which can take anywhere from four to six years, depending on the area of study.

Vocational Qualifications

Vocational qualifications are offered by a range of institutions and include courses such as apprenticeships that provide a pathway into specific job roles. Popular apprenticeship programmes include employment areas such as IT, business, construction, and health and social care.



THE PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK

Professional Qualifications are categorised into levels to provide a common framework of understanding. This applies to everything from a degree to an apprenticeship – allowing a clear definition for each step.

The differences between each level are often dependent on factors such as **level of understanding, complexity,** and **duration.**



The **level of understanding** directly corresponds to the level and often dictates an entry point. For example, an introduction to a new subject would be entry level, whereas later levels (like 7 and 8) revolve around advanced knowledge of the topic.

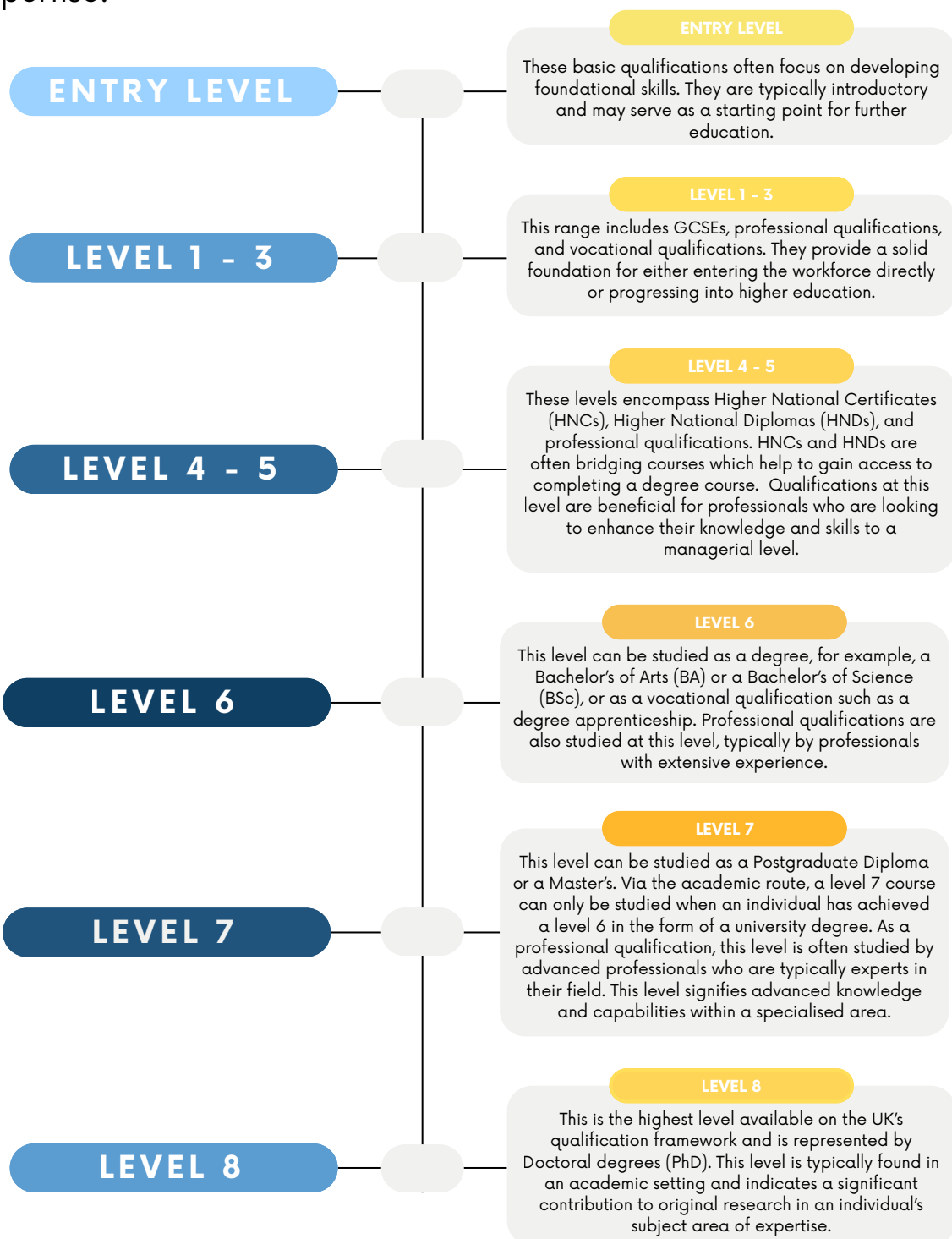
In terms of **complexity**, each level is designed to provide the learner with the skills, knowledge and competencies necessary to excel in their chosen profession, advancing with each new level.

The **duration** of each can also vary. Learners are provided with two key pieces of information on the duration of a course. Total Qualification Time (TQT) is the amount of time a learner will require to complete their qualification. Guided Learning Hours (GLH) is the amount of time required via tutor support.

Professional Qualifications are designed to provide the learner with specific skills and knowledge required for their particular profession and focus on the practical application of these in employment.

TYPES OF QUALIFICATION EXPLAINED

In the UK, these levels usually align with the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), a system used to regulate qualifications based on content difficulty and how much time is required. With some qualifications, there is a highest entry-level requirement; with others, you can enter at a level appropriate to your existing understanding and expertise.





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