



# **DLC TRAINING FOCUS: PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION LEVELS EXPLAINED**

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# PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION LEVELS EXPLAINED

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## What Are Qualification Levels?

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.

## Qualification Types

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.

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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.

## **Professional Qualification Framework**

Professional Qualifications are categorised into levels in order to provide a common framework and clear definition between each step. The differences between each level is often dependent on factors such as;

Level of understanding, for example an introduction to a new subject would be beneficial or you may be looking to develop your existing knowledge.

Complexity, each level is designed to provide the learner with the skills, knowledge and competencies necessary to excel in their chosen profession.

Duration, 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.

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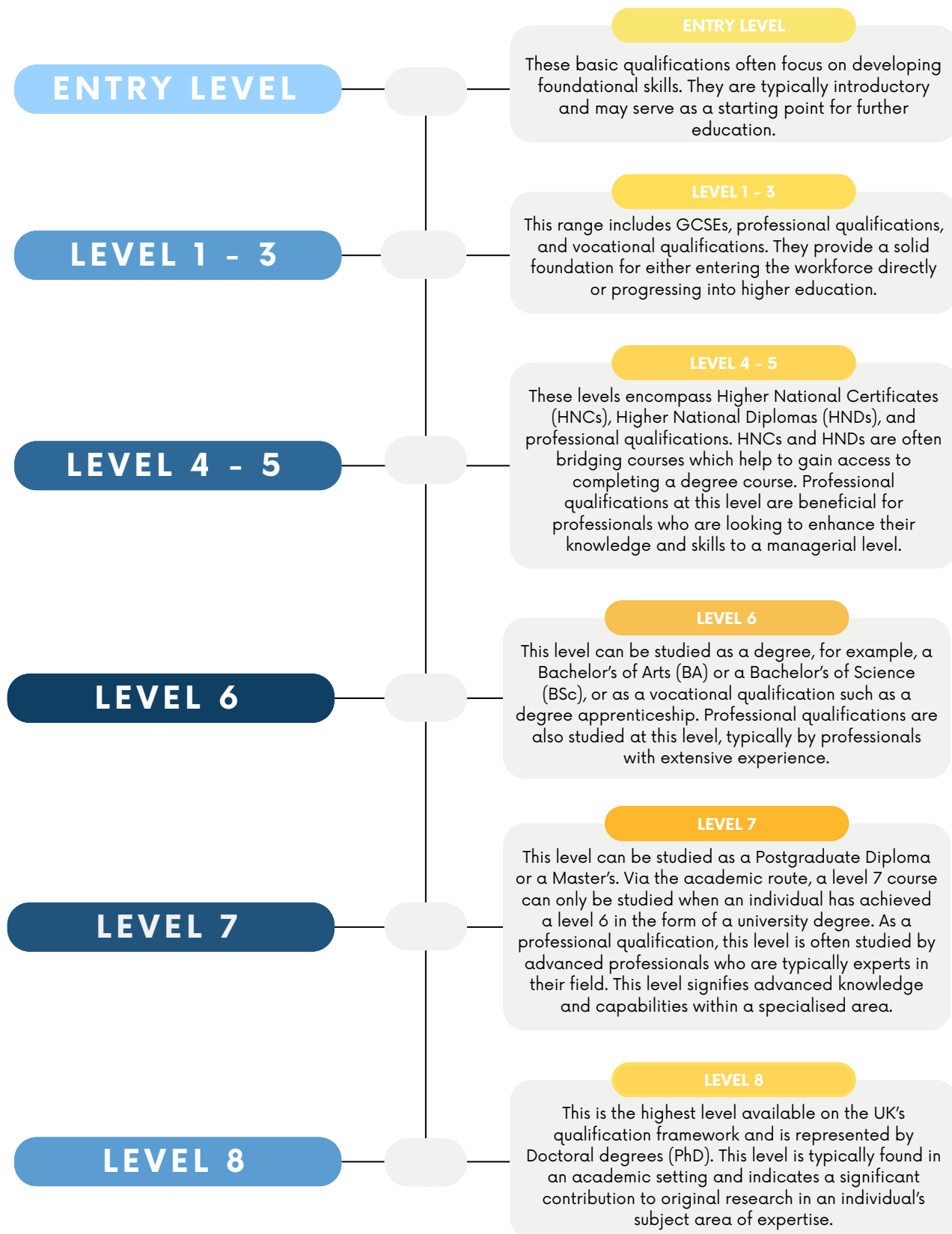
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Professional Qualifications are designed to provide the learner with specific skills and knowledge required for their particular profession and focus on the practical application of these in employment.

Recognised by industry, Professional Qualifications can enhance employability and career advancement opportunities within a specific profession or industry. They demonstrate competence an expertise and are an essential way to develop and achieve individual career goals.

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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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**DLC Training Focus - Professional Qualification  
Levels Explained**