



Permanent Secretary

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT

The Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP
Secretary of State for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

17 May 2018

Dear Damian,

T-Level timetable: direction

The T-Levels programme presents an opportunity to improve significantly the quality of technical education for 16-18 year olds in England. A very large amount of design and development work has taken place already in support of the successful delivery of the programme, both within Government and in partnership with employers and the Further Education sector.

The delivery of the programme to the timetable we have set out is ambitious, and so we have been keeping it under regular review. As things stand today, it will clearly be very challenging to ensure that the first three T-levels are ready to be taught from 2020 and beyond to a consistently high standard.

'Managing Public Money' requires Accounting Officers like me to consider the 'regularity, propriety, value for money and feasibility' of public spending. If these were the only considerations, you are aware that I would advise deferring the start date to 2021 in order to mitigate the feasibility and consequential value for money risks. But it is perfectly legitimate for you to bring other considerations to bear, namely the high priority that the Government attaches to the programme in light of the urgency of the task of improving technical skills. And on this basis you can quite legitimately decide that we should stick to 2020.

In this case, I need a formal written direction from you, which I will of course follow to the very best of my abilities, ensuring that the department continues to work strenuously under your leadership and with all involved to progress this key Government priority with all due speed.

Upon its receipt, I will copy the relevant papers to the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Treasury Officer of Accounts promptly. The C&AG will draw the matter to the attention of the Public Accounts Committee.

Yours sincerely,

JONATHAN SLATER
PERMANENT SECRETARY