

Dear Stakeholder

The transport planning technician Level 3 Apprenticeship

I am writing to update you about the work that TPS has been doing on the development of a new qualification and title which could be used by transport planning technicians following successful completion of their apprenticeship. Before doing so, I want to recap on the current arrangements, and why we want to expand on them.

When the apprenticeship was set up, there was no external professional title or qualification for the technician level (Level 3) for transport planning. The Government required, in addition to signing off the learning element of the apprenticeship, a separate “End Point Assessment” (EPA). This in turn required a process to be set out in the apprenticeship documentation and an organisation to carry it through. This organisation had to be registered with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

For engineering apprentices, EngTech was already available and it was decided, with the help of CIHT, to use this as the EPA. CIHT have registered with ESFA and are just completing the first EPAs. They thus made a major contribution to progressing the transport technician apprenticeship by making the engineering qualification available.

In order to hold EngTech, practitioners must be registered with an engineering institution, and the professional interview which is part of the EPA can only be conducted by people who hold an engineering qualification and are registered with the Engineering Council. CIHT have put a lot of effort into finding transport planners who are also registered engineers and the first round of interviews seem to be working well.

However, for those who want to follow a transport planning path rather than engineering, this is essentially a work around and is not without its problems. While some apprentices may wish to pursue an engineering pathway, many will not.

Early last year, TPS started to discuss how an alternative qualification could be created which would:

- 1 Be available to members of non-engineering bodies;
- 2 Draw on a wider pool of interviewers who are transport planners but do not have to be engineers as well;
- 3 Have the right title!

Before doing so, we explored other options with the Engineering Council (such as registration of other non-engineering bodies with them). However, a new title/qualification was clearly the best solution. The TPS Board recently approved its development, and we have discussed with employers, including both PDS licensees and those involved in the Apprenticeship Trailblazer Employer Group, how we can take this forward. The idea has also been sounded out with professional bodies, but we now need to consider it in more detail. The title which we have come up with is Transport Planning Technician: TPTEch.

A high level “UKSPEC” underlies engineering qualifications including EngTech and is produced by the Engineering Council ¹. This is used by all licensed engineering bodies.

A draft and very close equivalent for TPTech has now been prepared by us and accompanies this note. It is clearly quite generalised in the same way as UKSPEC.

In fact, the detailed content of the apprenticeship maps to the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for transport planning. These are also the basis for both the PDS and the TPP. It is thus fairly straightforward to set TPTech requirements out in further detailed guidance. We are hoping to complete this process in conjunction with the current review of the Level 3 Apprenticeship. Our aim is to gather further views from all concerned by the end of September, and in light of these move towards detailed documentation and application to become a registered End Point Assessment body.

At this stage, we are open to your thoughts on how TPTech would operate and interested to hear how stakeholders might be involved. At the moment, the plan is for TPS to hold the standard for TPTech, and encourage other bodies such as CIHT, CILT, RTPi and ICE to participate. It would follow the same open membership policy as the new TPP Agreement (i.e. a member of any suitable professional body with a Code of Conduct can hold it). This would be subject to a small annual fee for TPS to keep an up to date register (as with other qualifications such as the PDS and TPP). EngTech would continue to be available for those who feel that they prefer an engineering pathway in their professional life.

Many of you have been present where TPTech has already been discussed but I wanted to give you and others involved in the development of transport planning skills an opportunity to contribute to our proposals. Please let me have your thoughts by the end of September.

Best Regards

Keith Buchan

Skills Director

Transport Planning Society

skills@tps.org.uk

August 2019

¹

[https://www.engc.org.uk/engcdocuments/internet/Website/UK-SPEC%20third%20edition%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.engc.org.uk/engcdocuments/internet/Website/UK-SPEC%20third%20edition%20(1).pdf)