

QUALIFICATION LEVELS

The automotive sector offers a structured ladder of qualifications designed to support learners at every stage of their career, from complete beginners to highly skilled specialists and industry leaders. These qualifications span multiple levels, each with its own entry requirements, learning demands, and progression opportunities.

They can be completed through a variety of routes including full-time vocational college programmes, apprenticeships, workplace learning, higher education, and CPD short courses, allowing individuals to choose the pathway that best suits their circumstances, experience, and career ambitions. Funding options also vary: some learners may be supported through government-funded study programmes, apprenticeship funding, adult education budgets, employer sponsorship, or student finance for higher education.

Importantly, IMI qualifications are available at every level, ensuring that learners across the entire sector can access industry-recognised training that aligns with employer needs and supports both entry and ongoing professional development.

LEVEL 1

Designed for those just entering the automotive sector, Level 1 courses provide a practical foundation in essential workshop skills, basic vehicle systems, and safe working practices. They are ideal for school leavers or career changers exploring technical or generalist roles and help build the confidence needed to progress. An example IMI qualification at this level is the IMI Level 1 Diploma in Automotive Maintenance.

LEVEL 2

Level 2 qualifications develop core competencies across routine maintenance, customer service, basic diagnostics, and workshop operations. These programmes prepare learners for entry-level roles such as light vehicle technician, service assistant, or parts advisor. Example qualifications include the IMI Level 2 Diploma in Light Vehicle Maintenance & Repair Principles (VRQ) and the IMI Level 2 Award in MOT Testing.

LEVEL 3

At Level 3, learners build advanced technical capability and may specialise in areas such as diagnostics, electric/hybrid vehicle systems, accident repair, or service management. This level supports progression into skilled technician roles and aligns with advanced apprenticeships. Key qualifications include the IMI Level 3 Diploma in Light Vehicle Maintenance & Repair Principles and the IMI Level 3 Award in Electric/Hybrid Vehicle System Repair & Replacement.

LEVEL 4

Level 4 qualifications focus on complex diagnostics, systems integration, technical leadership, and advanced problem-solving. They are suited to experienced technicians progressing into supervisory, engineering, or master technician roles. Typical examples include the IMI Level 4 Diploma in Advanced Automotive Studies and the IMI Level 4 Award in the Diagnosis, Testing and Repair of Electric/Hybrid Vehicles and Components.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education routes such as HNCs, HNDs, and university degrees provide in-depth academic and technical knowledge for careers in automotive engineering, product development, sustainable transport, and research roles. Many programmes now incorporate content on green technologies, autonomy, and net-zero engineering, preparing graduates for future-focused roles in the sector.

CPD & SHORT COURSES

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses offer targeted, flexible training for individuals already working in the industry who need to update their skills or specialise in emerging technologies. These short courses support ongoing professional growth and can cover areas such as electric vehicle safety, ADAS calibration, diagnostic techniques, MOT updates, and customer experience. IMI provides a wide range of CPD modules and accreditations that help technicians and managers stay current with rapidly evolving automotive standards and technologies.