T-LEVELS
THE NEXT LEVEL QUALIFICATION

HOW TO IMPLEMENT INDUSTRY PLACEMENTS

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE FOR EDUCATION PROVIDERS COVERING LEARNINGS ON HOW TO SET UP AND DELIVER THE INDUSTRY PLACEMENT PROGRAMME

HM Government

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CONTEXT

Two-thirds of businesses found relevant work experience either critical or significant in candidates when recruiting. Work experience is an important facilitator for young people entering, and succeeding, in the workplace. Around two-thirds (65%) of employers reported that relevant work experience was a critical or significant factor when taking on (any aged) new staff. (Source: Employer Perspectives Survey 2016)

Current 1-2-week work experience placements, which are not specific to a student's course, don't enable students to develop technical skills that employers need, meaning there are critical skills shortages in the economy. That is why the Department for Education (DfE) made a commitment that all 16 to 19-year-old students following a new technical education route will be entitled to a quality industry placement to arm them with the technical skills they need to give them the best possible chance for entering skilled employment.

Industry placements are a mandatory part of T Levels. T Levels are rigorous, classroom-based, technical study programmes at level 3, designed to support entry to skilled employment in technical occupations at level 3 and above. A substantial, high quality industry placement with an external employer is an essential part of each T Level.

These industry placements give students a valuable opportunity to put their learning into practice, develop their technical skills and become more employable. Students will spend a minimum of 315 hours (45-50 days on average) with up to two external employers in a role directly relevant to their course. Recognising the importance of this placement – in a real world, working environment – to the T Level programme as a whole, they will be known as 'T Level industry placements.'

In the 2017 to 2018 academic year, 21 education providers and hundreds of employers piloted industry placements for approximately 2,500 students on related level 2 and 3 vocational and technical courses. In the 2018 to 2019 academic year, over 300 education providers received Capacity and Delivery Funding to develop their ability to deliver these new industry placements.

This resource has been designed from lessons learned during those years to support implementation of industry placements. For more information on the Capacity and Delivery Fund (CDF) for academic year 2019 to 2020, please visit the CDF General Guidance and CDF Principles for High Quality Work Placements.
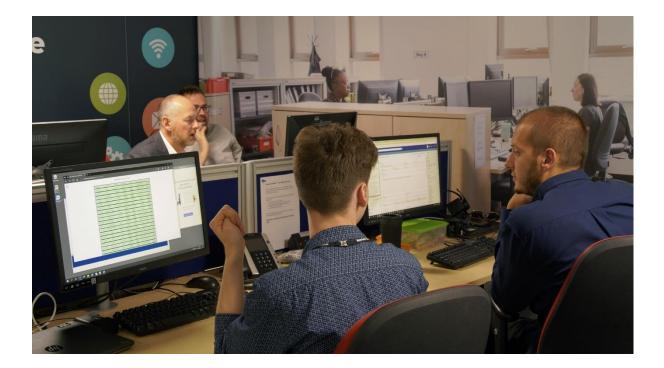
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INTRODUCTION

Successful implementation of industry placements requires a whole organisational approach. For more detail, please refer to the whole organisational strategic approach resource

Full backing from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) as well as curriculum staff buy-in is crucial, in addition to facilitating joint working between departments who have an employer facing role and having a well-resourced industry placements team.

This resource is aimed specifically at operational staff who will be delivering the industry placement project within their educational institution. However, good practice shows a whole organisational approach is essential for success, therefore all staff will need to familiarise themselves with this document and ensure this information is shared widely.

As forward planning (up to 1 year in advance) is also key to allow for successful curriculum planning, employer engagement and student preparation, it is recommended that this resource is referred to as early as possible.

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IMPLEMENTATION TASKS AND TIMELINE
TOP 9 TIPS FOR PLANNING

1. Create a Gantt chart or another type of timeline as you would with any project planning.
2. Engage all staff with this project as it requires a whole organisational approach.
3. Make sure you do not underestimate the amount of staff time required for implementation.
4. Involve senior leadership at the start and at key points (see examples in work plan below).
5. Conduct meetings with curriculum teams before Summer term in the previous academic year, in order to plan for a September or January start.
6. Agree delivery models prior to curriculum timetabling for the Autumn term. Gain buy-in from curriculum teams as soon as possible. Their backing will be important in planning industry placements.
7. Inform students during pre-enrolment, through marketing materials such as prospectuses and at open events, that placements will feature in their course.
8. Inform parents as early as possible and plan your communication with them to highlight the benefits of industry placements.
9. Remind students during induction week in September – be sure to present the opportunity of undertaking an industry placement as a positive one.

TIMELINE

The timeline below shows tasks that you could consider when planning the industry placement programme. They can be modified and adjusted to your specific needs.

	TIMING	*TASK*	*BY WHOM*
	12-9 months before placements start	Identify courses which will involve industry placements	Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
Before	*12-9 months before placements start*	• Plan staffing structure (how many industry placement coordinators? Job descriptions,	Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

		recruitment process, line managers...) • Recruit new staff if needed • Agree relationship between Apprenticeships and Industry Placement teams	
	12-9 months before placements start	• Create employer engagement strategy, including marketing material, how to "sell" the new extended placements • Agree strategy of collaboration with apprenticeship offer • Set up a customer relationship management (CRM) system to log contact with employers • Launch employer engagement strategy	Senior Leadership Team (SLT)/ Industry Placement team
	12-9 months before placements start	Plan internal processes: • Data collection (which data do you need to capture and how?) • Policies e.g. dealing with student refusal, caring responsibilities, part time jobs, travel arrangements, length of working day • Adjustments for SEND students • Set KPIs	Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
	12-9 months before placements start	Plan student preparation activities content, soft skills and behaviour, including: • expectation management • travel training • knowledge and technical skills and skills to secure an industry placement, e.g. CV	Senior Leadership Team (SLT)/ careers department/ tutors/ Industry Placement team

		writing, interview skills).	
	12-9 months before placements start	• Launch with curriculum staff • Plan timing and duration of industry placement (start dates, day release, blocks...) to fit with curriculum plans and maths and English	Senior Leadership Team (SLT) / Industry Placement team
	12-9 months before placements start	Market industry placements to prospective new students via brochures, websites, assessment and interviews	Senior Leadership Team (SLT) / Marketing departments / Curriculum staff
	6-3 months before placements start	Launch with parents/guardians and students	Senior Leadership Team (SLT) / Industry Placement team
	6-3 months before placements start	Assess student readiness	Industry Placement team/ tutors
	6-3 months before placements start	Deliver student preparation	Industry Placement team/ tutors
	1-2 months before placement start	Assess student readiness after student preparation	Industry Placement team/ tutors
	1-2 months before placements start	1:1 meetings with students to discuss interests, skills, any potential barriers (part time jobs, caring responsibilities)	Industry Placement team/ tutors
	1-2 months before placements start	Carry out employer checks: health and safety, employer liability insurance, risk assessments	Industry Placement team
	1-2 months before placements start	• Agree clear job descriptions with employers • Advertise placement opportunities to students	Industry Placement team/ tutors

	6 weeks before placements start	Matching students to employers (factor in time for interviews, informal meetings...)	Industry Placement team/ tutors
	5-3 weeks before placements start	Provide employers with a named contact at college/provider as point of contact	Industry Placement team
	2 weeks before placements start	Populate students' industry placements agreements and issue students logbooks	Industry Placement team/ tutors
	2 weeks before start date	Sign industry placements agreements	Industry Placement team
	2 weeks before start date	Finalise and confirm start dates	Industry Placement team
	Ongoing	Employers engagement: meetings, phone calls to sign employers up	Industry Placement team
During	*Ongoing*	Monitor students' attendance: have a plan in place for employers to promptly flag up students' absences	Industry Placement team/ tutors
	Ongoing	Fortnightly catch ups/ 1:1s with students to address any problems and assess progress	Industry Placement team/ tutors
	At placement midpoint	Mid-point review of students at industry placement	Industry Placement team/ tutors
	At the end of industry placement	Final review of students	Industry Placement team/ tutors
	At the end of industry placement	Final feedback session	Industry Placement team/ tutors

After	*After placements conclude*	• Ensure employer provides references for students • Support students to update CV to include industry placement experience • Host a Celebration Event or Graduation Event for students and employers (and parents) to collect certificates and acknowledgments and share what they have gained (could be used as promotion for the coming year)	SLT/Industry Placement team/ tutors

Preparing well in advance of industry placements starting helps to foresee potential issues e.g. timetable clashes for certain courses, or intense workload periods for students. Systematic planning can also help to reduce stress for placement coordinators.

Well-planned placements should reduce (and hopefully eliminate) the number of students who are unable to complete. The 2017 to 2018 and 2019 to 2020 academic years highlighted the following issues which could have been overcome with adequate planning:

- Some students were financially supporting the rest of their family with **part-time jobs**. These jobs took precedence over their industry placement, so any timing clashes between the two resulted in a non-completion of the placement.
- Students intending to apply for university were less inclined to attend or complete their industry placements. This tendency was particularly prevalent within certain courses or curriculum areas.
- For some providers, there was a lack of communication between the industry placement co-ordinators and the timetabling staff, meaning that some clashes occurred for students in certain subject areas.

STAFFING

The section will cover subject areas on:

1. Roles: using existing vs. creating new
2. Staffing structures: examples of difference across education providers
3. Importance of engaging and involving staff beyond the core industry placements team

Top tips for staffing planning

- There is no single ideal model for all education providers, however having sufficient resource is very important. Creating a new team (if you do not have an employer engagement team) or adding new roles to an existing employer engagement team may be beneficial. Please assess which would be best for you based on your needs and capacity.

- Identify a member of SLT with responsibility for industry placements and an operational manager who has responsibility for overseeing all of the placement implementation. Both these roles are crucial.

- Planning ahead and ensuring good communication across SLT, curriculum staff and industry placement staff is essential; holding regular meetings and creating shared documents are a good way of facilitating this.

- Securing staff buy-in and understanding of industry placements and their value is really important. The staff make the project happen. Their knowledge and understanding of industry placements is important as they will be speaking to and securing commitment from employers and encouraging student and parents.

- While launch events are suggested for students, employers and parents, an internal event and briefing pack for staff is recommended too.

- Early information events with parents and guardians is recommended detailing the benefits of industry placements for students' prospects.

- Work collaboratively with existing teams who engage with employers, e.g. apprenticeships team.

ROLES

It is up to you to decide on the roles your staff will play in industry placements, however provider experience has suggested that:

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Senior leadership team (SLT)
- helps set the budget,
- determine the strategy of industry placements, and
- ensure all necessary staff are engaged.

Team/representative(s) responsible for industry placements:
- approach and secure buy-in from employers,
- engage with the students,
- match students with industry placements,
- ensure placements are appropriately aligned to the students' learning programme, and
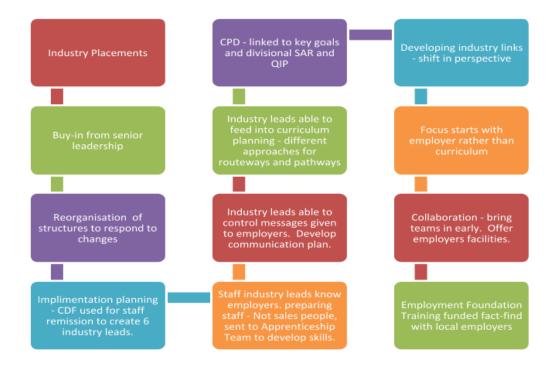- manage the industry placements.

Curriculum teams:
- be involved in the planning of when the placements should be and when they best complement the curriculum, and
- assess student readiness for placement.

More detailed suggested tasks can be found in the implementation timeline above.

STAFFING STRUCTURES

Example of good practice

Placements team structure

Education providers have considered changing their employer engagement team structure in future years. Some providers are considering having separate teams for industry placements and employer engagement due to the increased workload required for placements. The benefits are that the teams are able to specialise, for example, one team on employer engagement, and one on internal communication and matching.

Industry placement coordinators

Experience delivering industry placements showed it was important for both students and employers to be given specific coordinator contacts, for issues/day-to-day queries. Some education providers, particularly those with larger numbers of students, had several coordinators and chose to assign them to individual students.

For education providers offering multiple routes, it may be helpful to source industry placements staff with **route-specific experience**.

CASE STUDY

One education provider initially decided not to develop a separate employer engagement team for industry placements, believing that their existing resource could cover the additional work. Throughout the year however, senior management realised that there was too much work for existing staff and they are now making changes to their overall structure moving forward to accommodate this and include new roles.

They have decided that there will be a business development element that is responsible for online learning, apprenticeships, work experience and industry placements. Then, coordinators will take care of everything internal: quality visits, T level rollout, work experience for all study programmes, matching for students.

Creating new industry placement-specific roles vs. using existing (either curriculum or work experience/apprenticeships staff)

Some education providers gave their existing staff responsibility for sourcing industry placements, however this often resulted in too large a workload causing plans to fall behind or further support to be bought in. In order to avoid this, education providers found that it was best to create new roles, bringing in new staff to provide focused support on implementing industry placements, such as sourcing employers, matching students with placements, preparing students, and managing them. Project managing industry placement implementation can be done by an existing staff member as long as they are given sufficient time in their role to do this.

CASE STUDY: SECTOR SPECIFIC STAFF

An education provider recruited a new industry placement advisor in January who has a background working in construction firms and industry. She leads on construction and engineering placements and was able to access a lot more of the sites due to her experience and industry knowledge (for example, she has a CSCS card) and was cleared on health and safety checks already. She was therefore able to create new links with employers and also use existing relationships from previous roles. This is not essential across all fields, but this background experience can be particularly useful in some industries or where you are trying to develop a lot of new relationships.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Ensure senior leadership is communicating effectively with all teams around industry placements. Poor communication between the SLT and the staff responsible for delivering industry placements can lead to confusion over industry placement parameters and necessitate changes late in the process. Key messaging here is important so staff know what is involved.

This includes:
* Who is responsible at key stages for administrative duties with employers and students;
* Where industry placements sit in the wider context of the students learning, raising aspirations and career prospects for students;
* The importance of developing links with local and national industry

Moreover, poor communication between industry placement staff and curriculum leads risks confusion around student numbers and timetabling. **An agreed communications plan should be implemented to ensure effective communication between internal staff involved with industry placements.** Examples are: regular meetings, weekly emails, access to shared documents containing timetabling information, student numbers, project plans, etc.

The importance of engaging and involving staff beyond the core industry placements team

Curriculum staff (e.g. course tutor, head of curriculum) are encouraged to be involved regularly, from the beginning, and to be consulted throughout the industry placement matching process. Curriculum staff have a significant role and influence, so it is useful to speak to them early on in the process because exams will vary by course, so it is important to ensure planning accommodates for this. Moreover, having their 'buy-in' from the beginning is essential. If the importance of students completing the industry placement does not filter through all levels of the education provider, there will be barriers to its success. Some education providers found that staff resistance was just as much of a challenge as student refusal. To combat this, some introduced internal targets for curriculum staff so that industry placement numbers were incorporated into their progress reviews. Curriculum staff may also be more aware of student's individual strengths and weaknesses; this knowledge can be

invaluable when arranging a successful match with an employer. As curriculum staff have regular contact with the student it is essential that they highlight the benefits of industry placements as much as possible to help keep up enthusiasm and prevent non-completions.

CASE STUDY: WHOLE ORGANISAION APPROACH

A Vice-Principal at a general FE college said:

"Within this project there are a range of staff within the college involved, many settings, industry teams and a high number of students. Having a dedicated member of staff within the college to coordinate the project (and be a link between the managers of the settings, the social workers and the students) has helped in tracking progress of students and allowed swift resolution of any issues."

CURRICULUM PLANNING

This section covers all aspects of curriculum planning to embed a 315 hour (45-50 day) placement into the curriculum of second year students, and includes:

- Timing and duration models and formats tested on pilot
- English and maths provision and exams
- Industry-specific needs, employer preferences and industry-specific peak times
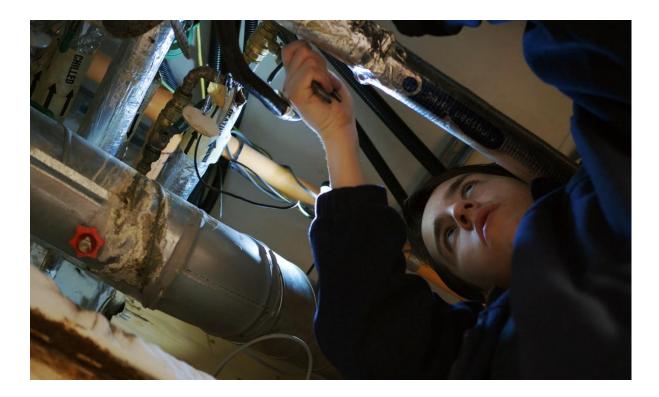- Staff scheduling
- Contingency planning

TOP TIP

Staff are essential to make a big change like this happen. Their knowledge and understanding of industry placements is important as they will be speaking to and securing commitment from employers, encouraging students, and parents. Launch events are useful to engage students, employers, and parents, as well as an internal event and briefing pack for staff.

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TOP TIPS FOR CURRICULUM PLANNING

- Timescales - Planning industry placements into the curriculum as early as possible is key to success. Most providers are considering next year and making plans already.
- Communication between curriculum team and industry placement team - It is vital there is a good line of communication between the two teams and a good working relationship. Lack of support from curriculum staff hinders progress. Prioritising curriculum planning and staff inclusion in the early stages will make later stages easier.
- Align the curriculum and placement to ensure they complement each other - Where there is no alignment between the placement and what the student is learning on the course, it is possible for curriculum leaders to take less interest in the placement and for it to not be prioritised. For students to also be on board and engaged, it is important to get backing of curriculum staff.

CASE STUDY: BLOCK MODELS

One provider in the North of England focussed their industry placement offerings to align with local industry; engineering and manufacturing. They spoke with employers who preferred a block model. They worked with curriculum staff so that the curriculum was front-loaded into the start of the academic year, enabling the students to go out on 9-week blocks from January – February.

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TIMING AND DURATION MODELS

In the academic year 2019 to 2020, education providers receiving the Capacity and Delivery Fund (CDF) will have to provide placements lasting on average 350 hours, with a minimum of 315 hours (45-50 days on average).

You can decide how best to embed this in the curriculum. Since the pilot, providers have tested various different models. These can be grouped as follows:

One block
Including:
- Spring block (all students in a course going out in Spring term)
- Summer block (all students in a course going out in Summer term)
- Spring or Summer (some students on a course going out in Spring, and some in Summer)

Feedback:
- Many employers (especially large organisations) preferred *block release* as they feel it gives the student a greater opportunity to develop the required technical skills and increases the likelihood a student can add value to the business.

- However, logistically it can be more difficult for providers to deliver the whole course out at the same time.
- Agriculture particularly favoured this model due to seasonality needs.
- Consider teachers' and tutors' workload given absence of students during block.
- May want to condense the curriculum content to be delivered outside of this block.
- Take English and maths provision into account (some students may need to have at least 1 day at the education provider per week throughout the block placement period for English and maths).

Multiple blocks

Including:
- Short block + long block
- Multiple shorter blocks throughout the year

Feedback:
- Shorter blocks are easier to schedule in.
- More frequent blocks may disrupt activity at the education provider.
- Multiple blocks can complement existing learning.

1-day release

Including:
- Autumn start, 1 day a week

Feedback:
- Can easily be integrated into the existing curriculum.
- Can complement ongoing learning.
- To achieve 315 hours (45-50 days on average) on a one-day release, the commitment requested from students/ employers entails a significant amount of weeks and requires a longer period than the weeks in one academic year.
- It may be harder to maintain enthusiasm from students, and for some industries it may be harder to provide meaningful continuative projects for employers in sectors such as in construction, engineering, and agriculture.

2/3 days release

Including:
- Autumn start, 2 days a week

Feedback:

- More days a week with an employer helps to develop the relationship between student and employer, allowing the student to feel part of the team.
- Smaller employers can often prefer day release or mixed (block + day release) models as it is easier for them to manage.
- It may be harder to maintain enthusiasm from students, and harder to provide meaningful continuative projects for employers in sectors such as agriculture and construction.
- Childcare particularly favours this model as this is the standard option in their industry.
- The lack of blocks means that the industry placement will continue for most of the academic year to achieve the required 315 hours (45-50 days on average), so it's important to consider the amount of commitment required by students.

Block first, then day release

Including:
- Short block + 2 days a week
- Short block + 1 day a week

Feedback:
- The block at the beginning helps to create a good working relationship between the employer and student, enabling a substantial induction period.
- The initial block is also a good way of helping the student to achieve a substantial amount of days at the start, when the placement is still "new and exciting"- rather than at the end, when students may start losing interest, or have a lot of coursework.
- For less confident students, the initial block could be intimidating, so relevant student preparation is important.

Day release first, then block(s)

Including:
- Day release then short Spring or Summer block
- Day release plus short blocks throughout the year

Feedback:
- Students are able to go on their industry placement alongside learning skills in their course and have the opportunity to put them into practice.
- This allows placements to start very early on in the year on a day release basis, with the blocks enabling the student to delve deeper into hands-on experience later.

- Students may lose interest or motivation towards the end, so it is good to work with the employer to ensure there is a substantial amount of work to be completed towards the end of the block.

ENGLISH AND MATHS PROVISION

Careful consideration needs to be given to the individual needs of students who have to re-sit English and maths as their participation in the industry placement can't impede their coursework, and vice versa.

You will need to devote time to understand how many students in the cohort have English and maths and plan their industry placements accordingly. Timing and Duration models need to take into account these timescales and providers should develop a clear plan for provision of learning. You also need to foresee a certain degree of flexibility (for example, in case students need more time for revision, they may need to be given a day release option to allow for this, or to add an extra block at the end post exams).

Feedback suggests it is advisable to inform the employers matched with students about their exam dates as it may impact attendance, or flexible arrangements may need to be put in place.

As T Levels are developed, further work will be done with providers on the sequencing of delivery for all of the components of the programme. This will include looking at the best fit for the industry placement alongside the taught core and occupational specialism content and the assessment points and may differ for each T Level.

CASE STUDY: EXAMS

A land-based education provider, which works on a 34-week academic year (Sept-June) needed to accommodate the exam and synoptic assessment dates related to their industry. As these dates couldn't be changed, curriculum planning needed to accommodate this. They implemented mostly block scheduling which had a knock-on effect on employers, given that they're seasonally based. They found that to have a meaningful industry placement, students needed to be sent out when employers needed them, however blocks required careful planning to ensure they did not impact on exam dates.

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Recommendations: ensure you have curriculum planning in place before summer, as it impacts on availability of staff, rooms, and other resources at the education provider. This way, you have more time to work with the employer to fit this in.

EMPLOYER PREFERENCES, INDUSTRY SPECIFIC NEEDS AND PEAK TIMES

Employer preferences
- Employers' model preference can vary by the size of the organisation, with larger organisations often more able to accommodate block models, and small organisations showing a preference for day release or mixed (block + day release) models.
- It has also been found that most employers are receptive to different arrangements as long as they can find ways for it to work for them.
- Experience has suggested that some employers are unable to offer the full 315 hours (45-50 days on average). However, it is now possible to offer students an industry placement with two employers, provided the learning objectives continue across the two host employers allowing progression to continue for the student.

Industry specific peak times
- *Catering:* the run up to Christmas is incredibly busy, therefore they are unlikely to have time for assessments, interviews, matching, etc. January is the least busy time of the year, so they are unlikely to onboard new staff (including industry placement students) at this time
- *Accounting:* the end of the financial year impacts the workload in the accountancy industry so they can often use more help then.
- *Agriculture:* given the seasonality of this industry, peak times are in the summer months.
- *Hair and beauty:* salons are often closed on Mondays, and busiest at the weekend. They experience busy periods before Christmas and summer holidays.
- *Construction:* projects can slow down or stop over the winter especially if there is snow and bad weather.

Industry specific needs
For any industry, it is important to speak with employers to establish what prior learning or additional requirements

students need to ensure a meaningful placement. Below are some examples which may be helpful.

- *Health:* At some education providers, it's mandatory for students on certain health courses to do one of their placements in a care home. Education providers were struggling to find enough care homes for all their students, so planning ahead to ensure that not all of the students are on industry placements at the same time may be helpful.
- *Health:* To ensure students can have meaningful, quality placements, employers fed back that they would need first aid training, moving and handling training, and dementia training. Some education providers are looking to incorporate this into the course / student preparation next year.
- *Construction:* For any industry placement that has on-site work or visits, the employer requires a mandatory Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card
- *Legal and accounting:* Due to the confidentiality of some of the employer documents, students may be required to sign non-disclosure agreements if they access employer databases
- *Agriculture:* Some employers might require Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) training to work in their perimeter and a certificate for the related training
- *Catering and hospitality:* Additional hygiene training is required by some of the employers working in this industry

CASE STUDY: STAFFING

At one education provider, the industry placement/apprenticeships lead will sit in on all curriculum planning meetings to plan the future curriculum. These meetings have curriculum managers, principal, vice principal and financial director involved so all the senior staff are present. Previously curriculum planning required 2.5/3 days, but the education provider has now decided to require 5 days for planning for best results. The education provider feels that this should make the scheduling of industry placements more suitable for all parties.

Contingency planning for delays
There will be instances when placements don't or can't go ahead on pre-planned dates for a variety of reasons. These could include: delays in sourcing employers, delays in

completing due diligence and health and safety procedures, or delays in students completing disclosure and barring service (DBS) checks/CSCS cards, as required. In these cases, it is important for you to put in place contingency plans to accommodate later start dates. The delivery model could be tweaked to add further days, such as changing 1-day release to 2-day releases or adding week blocks. Also, for any students who do not have maths and/or English study and/or exams, they could complete the additional days during those exam weeks.

Contingency planning for non-completions
Even with great planning and matching, some placements may not be completed due to student or employer reasons. To ensure you achieve your full target number of placements, it is advisable to secure extra placements to allow for possible non completions. If your target number of placements is 50 completions, it would be sensible to secure and start at least 70 placements.

DATA TRACKING
Data tracking is very useful for things such as:

- Tracking the progress of students (pre- and on-placement)
- Tracking employer engagement (from sourcing employers to post-placement engagement)
- Monitoring access and inclusion of disadvantaged students on industry placements e.g. SEND, pupil premium, ethnic minorities, ESOL
- Monitoring and reporting for Ofsted criteria such as personal development and behaviour and attitudes
- Staff reviews and KPI tracking
- Monitoring the impact of industry placements on student attainment and attendance in the classroom
- Evaluating which are the most successful employers/placements for your students
- Capturing evidence about why placements may breakdown

There are a variety of methods you can use to track data, such as spreadsheets, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, apps, and other available technology. We suggest you adapt your existing tools to allow for any additional functionality it may need. There are different types of tracking software which can be used, such as ProMonitor and Grofar or Connect to support and monitor students' progress.

Providers delivering placements over the past 2 years have highly recommended the use of CDF or other investment to

provide efficient CRM systems and other technologies that significantly reduce admin time and increase staff capacity.

Below are some suggested guidelines on what data to track, challenges and solutions to data tracking, and top tips for planning in this area.

Top tips for data tracking

- Ideally, data should be stored in a centrally accessed point so that all staff members involved have access.
- Assign clear responsibility for which staff are to maintain and update data.
- Data can update and change often over the course of the placement, so ensure this is regularly monitored and tracked.
- Employers and students need to be aware to notify immediately if any important change occurs which may impact their placement.
  Types of data to track

Below is an example of the kinds of data to collect for your **students**

Student: *Joe Bloggs*
Placement status: *Interview scheduled*
Is placement also a PT job? *No*
Route: *Construction*
Timing and duration option: *Spring block*
Placement start date: *March 31st*
Employer matched with: *Skanska*
Additional needs: *N/A*
Reason for drop out: *N/A*

Below is an example of the types of data to collect for your **employers**:

Employer: *The catering co*
Account owner: *Mr Smith*
Lead status: *Face to face meeting scheduled*
Contact details: *catering@gmail.com / 0800 888 8888*
Route(s): *Hospitality, Catering, Business Admin*
Assessment preferences: *Group assessment in college*
Number of placements: *10*
Reason for withdrawal: *N/A*

Considerations in data tracking
Tracking of data for industry placements has presented the following challenges to be mindful of:

Multiple staff keeping their own records

The pilot demonstrated that information should be stored in a centrally accessible point or regularly shared so that all staff members involved, such as the SLT, curriculum staff, and industry placement coordinators have accurate, up-to-date records for reporting.

It is better to save records on a shared drive as opposed to a personal drive and it is important to keep the trackers/databases up to date. Additionally, ensure there are processes in place in case of absences of key staff members so that progress is not affected.

Data can be fluid

Because the placements are on-going over a long period of time, the data can alter multiple times over the course of the placement. Ensure it is clear whose responsibility it is to capture and record any changes or updates to the data.

Whether employers and students are briefed about which data you may need to update

A change or update may occur which you need to know about urgently. Ensure that employers and students are aware they must notify you immediately if any important changes occur which may impact their placement.

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY INDUSTRY PLACEMENT

Industry placements are important in enabling young people to gain the skills that they need to move into employment.

When planning industry placements, providers should set clear expectations with employers and students. They should also follow the industry placement core principles, set out on page 27 and 28, to ensure that placements are delivered at a high quality.

Setting clear expectations with employers

High-quality industry placements should have clear role descriptions from employers in advance of the placement taking place. A good role description should demonstrate that the employer has a clear idea of how the student will:

- Contribute to the organisation
- Develop their skills
- Access the placement

- Personally progress towards their career goals

Setting clear expectations with students

Students should have a clear understanding of the role they are undertaking and how it will allow them to develop their technical and transferable skills. Through conversations with relevant staff and their employer, students should set measurable SMART targets and objectives for their placement, to ensure they get the most out of it. These should be recorded in log books (either hard copies or electronic) to enable students to record and reflect on their development.

T-LEVELS

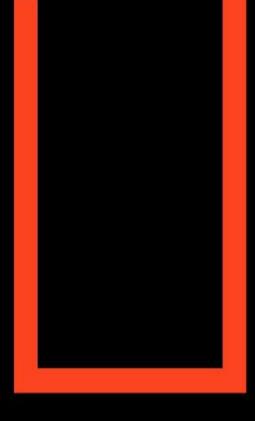## INDUSTRY PLACEMENT CORE PRINCIPLES

- **Takes place in a working environment:** must be external to students' normal learning environment so they experience what it is like to be in a real-life job, including travel to work, independence from their peers and working with new people, except for students with SEND or in Young Offender Institutions where alternative approaches can be applied

- **Relevant to the occupational specialism:** must be focussed on developing up-to-date technical skills and specialist knowledge required for the students' occupational specialism, which is underpinned by the qualification content that students are studying at Level 3. However, students studying Digital and Engineering & Manufacturing T Levels can undertake a route level placement that allows them to develop the knowledge and skills studied at route level rather than those only relevant to their occupational specialism

- **Number of employers:** a placement can be split across 2 employers, where this is considered necessary for 'breadth of content' and/or beneficial for students

- **Duration:** must be for a minimum of 315 hours (there is no upper limit), which can include up to 35 hours of work taster activities, if relevant to all the occupational specialisms within the T Level. The only exception currently is the Early Years Educator occupational specialism, within the Education and Childcare T Level, that must be for a minimum of 750 hours

- **Timing:** must be organised in line with the normal requirements of the industry, which may be outside the academic timetable or normal provider working hours. Placement hours must align with the [Working Time Regulations](#)

- **Industry placement completion:** to complete their placement students must:
  - demonstrate sufficient progress towards their learning goals
  - work directly to an external employer and
  - have been on placement for the minimum number of hours

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- **Industry placement completion exceptions**
    - special consideration can be applied in some exceptional circumstances where students *have* demonstrated sufficient progress towards their learning goals but have not completed the minimum number of hours within the 2-year programme
    - where students have not been able to meet the minimum number of hours and have *not* demonstrated sufficient progress towards their learning goals, providers can apply their discretion and allow the student to continue their placement following their 2-year programme to allow them to make up their hours and receive full T Level certification

- **Student readiness**: providers must ensure students are suitably prepared to enter the workplace before they go on their industry placement. This includes having the required technical and employability skills and knowledge, including a good understanding of the professional standards of behaviour and attitude they need to display on their placement and the importance of adhering to company policies and procedures

- **SEND accessibility**: providers and employers must comply with their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, including provisions for reasonable adjustments, so that students with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can benefit from high-quality external industry placements as much as their non-SEND peers

For more information about the core principles industry placements please see the Department for Education's industry placements delivery guidance.

You can also refer to the designated resource "Supporting and Engaging Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Learning Difficulties or Disabilities (LDD), and/or other Disabilities" for further information on supporting students with SEND.

T-LEVELS
THE NEXT LEVEL QUALIFICATION

Industry placements are a core part of the T Level courses.
Visit www.tlevels.gov.uk.