

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

T Level Context

Question

If we want to get involved what are the next steps?

Response

If you are interested in starting conversations with T Level providers, the best thing to do is talk to the **National Apprenticeship Service**. They will take some details from you and ask appropriate T Level providers to get in touch with you direct to start those conversations.

If you want to offer industry placements, but are open minded to who that young person is, then the best thing to do is find a school or college offering T Levels and ask them to 'recruit' a young person for you. You can get involved in interviewing, sifting CVs or setting selection activities if you wish. You can find your closest T Level providers by entering you postcode **here**.

Alternatively, if you have an existing relationship with a local Further education or Sixth-Form College you could simply ask them if they are planning to deliver T Levels, if so which ones and when.

When choosing a school or college to work with the **Working with the right provider tool** gives a list of questions to ask schools and colleges to find the partner that can best support you.

Question

Will a T Level be recognised by universities as A level equivalent, where 3 A levels are required for entry to degree courses?

Response

1 T Level is considered to be equivalent to 3 A levels. These are in-depth training programmes, and we expect the total time for a T Level to be around 1,800 hours over the 2 years, including the industry placement. This is a significant increase on most current technical education courses.

T Levels therefore carry UCAS tariff point that align to 3 A levels. A Distinction* in one T Level, is worth the same number of UCAS points as three A*s at A Level.

Each university will set their own entry requirements though a number have indicated they will take T Levels in the appropriate disciplines.

UCAS points will only be allocated to the overall T Level grade and completion of embedded qualifications will not count on their own. Students must achieve at least an overall pass grade to receive UCAS points.

How many students are the government expecting to enrol on each pathway?

T Levels are being introduced progressively with several 'waves' of implementation (2020 – 2022), starting with the first three T Levels in September 2020: Construction; Digital; Education and Childcare.

This phased implementation is designed to ensure that the sector is appropriately prepared and resourced to deliver these high-quality, innovative technical programmes, which must include an extended industry placement. There are 46 carefully selected schools and colleges that have been confirmed to deliver the first three T Levels from September 2020. A further 59 centres have been selected to deliver T Levels from 2021, when additional T Levels areas are also introduced. The lists of approved colleges, schools and other providers for the first two years of T Level delivery have been announced and this information is available [here](#)

It is anticipated that schools and colleges will only deliver T Levels to a relatively small number of students in the first years of implementation and these numbers will vary by T Level and region.

Question

What volume of students would an employer be expected to take onboard?

Response

Employers are encouraged to offer placements to as many students as they feel that they can comfortably accommodate, and to consider how they might benefit from increasing this extra support as part of their human resources, training and recruitment strategy over the next few years.

In the first years of T Level delivery, student numbers will be relatively limited but this will increase as more T Levels are introduced, and the demand for industry placements will also continue to increase significantly over the full roll-out period (2020 – 2022).

If your organisation has capacity to offer multiple industry placements, talk to local schools and colleges about making this work. It may even be possible to structure the curriculum around your placements needs. Although the number of industry placements will need to be sufficient to meet the needs of all T Level students enrolled, the focus for these placements will be on quality more than quantity.

To prepare for T Levels the government ran an industry placements pilot. During 2017/18 academic year 21 providers tested a range of models of industry placement with employers as additions to existing programmes of study. Over 100 learners took part. To read more about the industry placement pilots which were formally evaluated by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) in partnership with the International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS) read [here](#).

Can I use my Levy to fund a T Level placement?

Your levy money is specifically earmarked to pay for apprenticeship training and support. A T Level is a different programme and the money for training is made available to the education provider via a different funding route.

Question

What are the expectations for the student during the industry placement?

Response

Industry placements are an essential part of the new T Level programmes and present a significant change in education and training for these technical areas.

Students will spend extended periods on placement and will require the best opportunity to make a meaningful contribution within that workplace, gain a broad understanding of the role and raise their level of technical understanding and skills development. They need to experience the range of technical functions and occupational demands that arise within an employment setting, relevant to their T Level programme, and understand their future progression opportunities.

How does the Industry Placement differ from an internship?

An internship, as a period of work experience, is offered by an organisation, at their own behest and not as part of a government funded programme. When we talk of internships, we see these as typically undertaken by university students and graduates looking to gain relevant skills that complement their degree programmes. It is true that gov.uk does offer students some help in locating internships through Graduate Talent Pool or Find a Job but there are no specific rules attached. Internships which are embedded into degree programmes are usually facilitated by the university or college where the student is studying, but they are not always monitored except by completion of an associated project or piece of academic work.

Industry placements, on the other hand, are more structured work experience programmes. Employers will work with a school or college to design a placement that will help the student to gain real life experience of a particular job role, whilst the employer will have the opportunity to showcase their business to young people eager to work in that profession and benefit from additional, hands on support during the placement period.

T Level industry placements are a minimum of 315 hours, and a mandatory part of the T Level programme. The student will spend approximately two academic years learning the knowledge and skills that complement their industry placement experience. As an employer you can find out more about how the government views industry placements and what is required [here](#).

Question

Could offering industry placements help to increase the diversity of our workplace?

Response

Offering industry placements can support your equality and diversity strategy. By engaging a diverse set of people from a young age and showing them the career possibilities available at your company, you should have a wider pool of diverse talent to choose from when you go on to recruit for junior roles.

You can work with schools and colleges to help you offer industry placements to a diverse mix of young people and get involved in interviewing and selecting candidates that are representative of the communities you serve.

If improving diversity is one of your aims of offering industry placements then it is important to plan out the progression opportunities, so that young people can move into suitable paid roles and higher apprenticeships on completion of their studies.

Is there a preferred schedule to how this placement would look (e.g. 1-week blocks / day release etc)?

There is no preferred schedule and this flexibility is provided to ensure that the industry placement matches the specific organisation's needs with the students. You can offer industry placements as a block, series of blocks, day release or a mix of these options, depending on what works best for you, the training provider, and the student.

Industry placements should provide benefits to all parties involved in these programmes, so working alongside the school or college and student to plan and prepare the most appropriate structure and content of the placement is vital. The **which industry placement model could work for you** tool can help you understand the pros and cons of a student coming to you a day a week, in a block or a mixture of the two.

Question

Is there a minimum or maximum placement time?

Response

Industry placements can vary in length but must last for a minimum of 315 hours (approximately 45 days).

Some may be longer where this is feasible and/or required for a particular specialism (e.g. the industry placements for one of the Education and Childcare T Levels includes a minimum of 750 hours). It is anticipated that most placements will last an average of 350 hours (approximately 50 days).

In most cases, industry placements are expected to make up around 20% of the overall programme, with 80% in classroom-based technical education and training to complete the syllabus.

T Levels are large, two-year programmes of technical teaching and learning require considerable instruction-based and independent learning, so industry placement hours cannot be increased to a point where they might limit the students' ability to complete their programme.

Can the placement be done all year round, or does it have to align with college term dates?

Placements can be taken all year round and it is important to plan and discuss with schools and colleges how best to integrate technical placements into business and industry practices in ways that will benefit all the parties involved.

Some students may arrive with a firm view of which specialism they will undertake other students may require some time to consider options. Placement structuring also allows the potential to include 35 hours of work taster activities relevant to all the occupational specialisms within the T Level.

See Industry Placement Guidance (page 20): *“Placement hours should be delivered in line with the normal working practice and occupational expectations of the industry. Students should be made aware of these expectations and the placement demands, particularly where this is likely to fall outside of the normal academic timetable, as part of the information, advice, and guidance they are given about the T Level. Where relevant, providers must get students’ consent - and where appropriate, parental/carer consent for under 18-year olds - to working weekends, evenings, or early morning shifts and/or during the holidays. Providers are responsible for students’ wellbeing during their time on placement and should arrange for staff to be available and on call throughout.”*

Question

How much notice would we have as an employer of the number of students who might have chosen our placement?

By what point in the programme must a placement be completed?

Response

At the earliest point of negotiating placements for a planned T level the college or provider should be able to engage with you as an employer in identifying how many students you might be prepared to take and for which specialism. They can then share with you their planning considerations and you can negotiate what degree of choice or flexibility you are able to offer

There should be sufficient time to match numbers and requirements with good notice and to enable the student to prepare themselves for the placement but there is no set time as to when that placement must begin. If you need a realistic period of notice to plan your staffing you should discuss this with the provider in the early dialogue.

Although it is intended for placements to be organised as flexible as possible to allow them to meet employer and organisational needs, they also have to be appropriately integrated with the student's technical programme of learning and skills development.

It is expected that students will complete the majority of their placement within the second year of their programme, once they have a sound foundation in the technical area, and are better placed to apply, consolidate and secure their technical knowledge, skills and understanding within the workplace environment. This will also give the student – and employer – greater confidence about their readiness for taking on work-based responsibilities and allow them to become valued members of staff, who can make meaningful contributions to projects and other workplace activities.

Students have to complete their placement to achieve their T Level, so it is recommended that industry placements are completed within the two-year programme timeframe. However, some flexibilities are available in exceptional circumstances.

In cases where students have demonstrated progress towards their placement learning goals but have been unable to complete their full placement hours by the end of the second year due to factors beyond their control, they may be eligible for special consideration, or allowed to make up their hours up to 2 years after the two year programme. This aligns with the completion timeframes for other T Level components.

Question

Can we share a placement amongst a group of employers?

Response

A placement can be split across a maximum of 2 employers, where appropriate. In that instance you would need to ensure that the two designated employers are agreed with the provider. Sharing the student with more than one other business as separate employers would not accord with the current guidance.

One employer could work with partners/sub-contractors for visits and/or projects. Providing projects to learn from the other employers and their development teams would have to be carefully considered and related back to what they are learning and doing within your environment. You would retain responsibility for safeguarding, risk assessments, insurance, and quality assurance of the experience.

For more details on this approach look at [**The Sharing industry placements with other organisations**](#) tool.

Will Covid-19 affect arrangements for T Levels with lots of staff working from home for the foreseeable future could we offer a supervised home-based placement?

While it is recognised that Covid-19 presents challenges across business and industry (and beyond), and has implications for the management of industry placements, the schools and colleges delivering T Levels from September 2020 are working closely with the employers that will provide their industry placements to ensure that they are appropriately supported, reflect the changes expected for workplaces based upon the latest government advice, and that students' interests are fully protected.

T Levels have to follow core principles and the first one specifies that the industry placement "Takes place in a working environment" This is further defined: 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. A home-based placement, whilst it echoes the reality of some workers does not meet that criteria.

For more information on the steps being taken to support students, employers, schools and colleges to respond appropriately to the challenges presented by Covid-19, please see the following Department for Education [**link**](#).

Question

Who pays the students' expenses or travel, equipment etc?

Response

By law, you are responsible for providing a safe working environment so you should consider if you need to do anything further to manage the risks for young people. If employees need to wear protective clothing so will students. Wearing uniforms may help the student 'fit in' if all the other employees do so.

Employers normally meet the costs of equipment that would be used for employees but if this would place an additional burden your training provider has access to funding to help with industry placements and can use this to help you with upfront costs, such as providing protective gear or specialist equipment.

Employers do not have to pay students who attend on placement but may choose to support them with travel and lunch expenses. If costs are not covered as part of the industry placement, your training provider may also look at ways to pay for the student's travel and/or subsistence.

More detail on this can be found in the [Legal requirements](#) tool.

Do I have to write a report? Is there lots of paperwork?

All legal, health and safety, insurance and other documents will be given as templates, pre-filled where possible, to minimise your workload and the amount of paperwork required, in addition to any internal processes you will need to complete as a business. You will have to sign a final statement confirming the placement was satisfactory, but this will be provided by the education provider.

Some employers might want to provide a testimonial for their student if they have been successful as they can use this for future employment.

Question

Can the student's supervisor and mentor be the same person? Or does it have to be a different person?

Response

Where resourcing allows, it would be beneficial for the mentor and the supervisor to be different members of staff. This will increase the range of perspectives contributing to the industry placement and the student's level of direct engagement with members of staff. It should also enhance their overall understanding of the role, organisation, and industry context, as well as their own performance during the placement.

A mentor can provide the student with additional support and advice beyond their day-to-day tasks and responsibilities. An additional staff member may also be helpful in terms of planning, resourcing, communication, sharing responsibilities, and quality assurance relevant to the role and to the associated workplace tasks, activities and intended outcomes.

It is appreciated that this may not be possible in some cases but organisations are encouraged to try to ensure that the student has contact with a range of staff within the organisation, and that where a single, designated person is given primary responsibility for the industry placement, another named member of staff is made fully aware of the details and given some responsibility for the oversight of the industry placement. This person should be introduced to the placement student at the outset and be available as a contact for them, if required.

You might find the [**Effective mentoring for industry placement students**](#) tool useful.

Do I need to teach or train the students?

You are not required to provide explicit teaching or training. You are agreeing to provide a suitable environment, and opportunities, for the student to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in the technical area/s, and to make a meaningful contribution to the workplace.

You will need to identify and agree some learning objectives specific to your industry (and their programme). The student will need to evidence their experience and progress in these areas so you will need to identify how to support and monitor them.

You might find the [**Helping students learn**](#) tool useful. This outlines six tips for really getting a student learning and adding value to your workplace.

Question

Does the college or school come into the employer workplace to assess the student during the placement?

Response

T Level providers must arrange a minimum of 3 review meetings with the students and employers to review progress. The college, or training provider, should work with you to arrange when best to conduct these monitoring visits throughout the placement.

The placement is not assessed formally (as in a qualification such as an NVQ), but providers will work with employers to set placement objectives and identify stretching learning goals. Then during the review meetings, they will check that the young person is working towards their learning outcomes and that all parties are happy with how the placement is progressing. It is suggested that the 1st review meeting takes place at the beginning of the placement, the 2nd at the middle of the placement and the final one at the end of the placement.

At the final review, a decision must be made about whether the student has met the completion criteria and, thereby, completed their placement. It is therefore important that progress is monitored closely before that.

What do I do if the student is not suitable, e.g. ending a placement or replacing a student?

The school or college should maintain good communications with you about the students' progress and you should have a named contact who visits the student and discusses progress with you? If concerns arise notify your contact as soon as possible. They will help you address any issues and if necessary, withdraw the student as a last resort.

What do I do if issues arise?

Students might find their first experience of work more challenging. They will probably be much younger than other people in the organisation. They must balance their work with studying and potentially have other commitments such as caring responsibilities. They do have to be responsible for their own time when they are in school or college and the education provider should have supported them to understand their commitment and their responsibilities as if they were an employee.

Question

How much support will we get as employers from providers of T Levels, in areas such as challenging behaviour, mental health issues, and pastoral support?

Response

Schools and colleges will be responsible for supporting T Level students to successfully complete their industry placements, and an important part of this work will be ensuring that employers are also well prepared and appropriately supported in their delivery. They will work closely with you throughout the process to resolve any issues which may arise during the placement.

The support provided will include helping you to select suitable students and to prepare for the industry placement period, providing advice and guidance while the student is in the workplace, and monitoring and evaluate their progress so that they can be successfully completed. This guidance and support will commence well in advance of the placement starting, to give employers confidence that the student is appropriately prepared and ready to make a valuable contribution to the organisation.

It is important to recognise that a key feature of these new programmes is development technical knowledge, skills, understanding and behaviours that confirm that the students are occupationally ready, and professionalism, workplace behaviours, and personal accountability are an integral part of the new curriculum.

You might find the following tools useful:

- **Managing young people who are new to the workplace**
- **Effective mentoring for industry placement students**

Legal requirements

Question

If we are only able to hire individuals who are 18 and above, will we still be able to offer opportunities to T Level students? What is the implication for security clearance for under 18s?

Response

The short answer is yes. You could stipulate with the schools and colleges you work with that the students must be over 18, which would mean offering opportunities to second-year T Level students towards the end of their studies only. This would obviously rule out students who were born towards the end of the academic year, so is not an ideal solution.

However, if you are keen to offer industry placements, it can be a good idea to work with colleagues to see if an exception can be made to your under 18 policy for industry placement students. The students are not employees, so some organisations use this point to make exceptions.

You could look at the roles, tasks and security clearances you would be comfortable giving under 18s to decide which departments or sites industry placements would work best, before understanding if it would have any impact on procedures, policies or insurance premiums.

A student may need to have an enhanced DBS check before starting an industry placement in certain sectors. For example, a placement in the education sector where you may need to check that the student is not barred from regulated activity relating to children.

Training providers have access to funding to help with industry placements and may use this to help you with any costs for enhanced DBS checks on their students.

You might find the following tools useful:

- **Selecting relevant and appropriate projects and tasks**
- **Legal compliance**

Question

How do safe guidelines work and health and safety?

Response

Health and safety considerations are of paramount importance for all employees in contemporary workplaces and this will apply to industry placement students. Across most industries, there will be well established health and safety requirements and guidelines, and formal training and compliance with these protocols is particularly important in some industries, such as Construction.

Safe working practices will, of course, be an important part of all industry placements and employers will be responsible for the health, safety and well-being of students during their placements (with appropriate support provided by the student's school or college).

In most cases, organisations will be able to use their existing health and safety regulations for industry placement students, and placements may also present a useful opportunity to confirm the effectiveness of existing guidelines, training, and levels of understanding by staff about safe practices within organisations. However, it is recommended that employers carry out a specific risk assessment for young people entering the workplace.

It is essential that students, like all other employees, are provided with a safe working environment, that they are given an appropriate induction, and are provided with appropriate training, where necessary (e.g. with the use of specific tools or equipment).

In some industries, some workplaces may be considered "high-risk environments". If you use heavy or dangerous machinery, for example, you will need check that the student is old enough to use this equipment before giving them relevant training, and that it is appropriate for them to do so. Each organisation will have to decide which projects and tasks are suitable for an industry placement student to take part in, alongside any legal and regulatory requirements.

There is a whole suite of industry specific tools on the [**Employer Industry Placement toolkit**](#). You can filter by industry and more detailed information on supporting students will be shown to you.

Question

Do you have to pay a student while they are on an industry placement?

Response

There is no mandatory requirement to pay an allowance, although covering travel costs or paying wages can make a difference to the young person. Payments are not mandatory as it is recognised that employers who cannot afford to pay may still offer rich experiences.

Many employers choose to provide some form of payment as they wish to be seen to be an ethical employer. Students will find several differences in their placement experiences, pay or allowances might well be amongst them, but they will be encouraged to look at what other benefits and choices are at play.

You might find the following tools useful:

- **Making payments to students**
- **Legal requirements**