Department for Education

T Levels Industry Placements

Update on delivery models and support

May 2019

Contents

Executive Summary

The introduction of T Levels from September 2020 is one of the biggest reforms to technical education in a generation. T Levels are new 2 year technical programmes for young people aged 16-19. Industry placements will be a mandatory and critical part of every T Level and demonstrate a shift from traditional work experience to a longer, more substantial period of time in the workplace. The industry placement element of T Levels is our biggest opportunity to make sure that young people leave education better prepared to be successful and productive in the workplace – but we recognise that for both education providers and employers, there are challenges to delivering them.

We have been testing, trialling and building capacity to deliver T Level style placements since 2017, when we first ran industry placement pilots. We have also focused on building our evidence base - carrying out further research into industry placements in other international systems, user research with over 650 students from years 10 to 13 and research and engagement on employer capacity to inform our policy thinking. Over the last year (2018/19 academic year), we have supported a range of activity to build provider capacity for the provision of industry placements and to inspire, engage and support employers to offer these to young people. As well as building capacity across around 360 providers through the 2018/19 £60m Capacity and Delivery Fund, we have carried out extensive engagement over the last few months and have listened to suggestions, innovations and concerns raised by providers and employers engaged in early delivery.

Listening carefully to this feedback has been critical, and in response we have identified a series of additional models and approaches which ensure placements are high quality, meaningful and deliverable across different industries, as well as being accessible for all students. We have also developed a package of further support for employers to support the delivery of industry placements.

This document sets out the Department's updated policy in relation to acceptable models for industry placements[1], and our plans for supporting industry placements for the 2019/20 academic year and beyond, including the following announcements:

- An expanded framework of industry placement models and approaches:

All Routes

- In response to employer and provider feedback, a single placement (average 350 hours, minimum 315 hours) can now be split across two employers if needed. The time spent with these employers can still be carried out as day release, in one

[1] A statutory notice to the Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education will be made which will reflect this policy.

solid block, multiple smaller blocks or a mixture of any of these models, depending on what works for the provider, student and employer.

- Students can also undertake short work taster activities, of up to 35 hours total, which are relevant to their chosen T Level pathway to help them decide on an area in which to specialise. These will be counted towards a student's total number of placement hours, and can be used in addition to their time spent with up to 2 other employers.
- To ensure fair access to placements, a provider's on-site facilities can now be used for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) for up to 105 hours, where they are occupationally relevant to the student's field of study (and relevant to their pathway under T Levels). This must be in the best interests of the student and carefully aligned to their learning and development objectives.
- To enable young offenders to also undertake and attain T Levels, on-site facilities can also be used for the full duration of placements for young offenders studying T Levels within young offender institutions or other custodial settings.
- To support students with balancing the placement alongside their other commitments, a student's part-time job hours can now be counted towards the required placement hours, so long as the job is occupationally relevant to their specialism, takes place off the provider's campus and learning objectives are being worked towards.

Route-Specific

- **Construction**: Students can now complete a Commercial, Charitable or Community Project for a maximum of 105 hours of their placement, working closely with an external employer to develop appropriate technical skills. The rest should be spent individually with an external employer to ensure the student still gains experience of the workplace while working independently from peers.
- **Construction and Engineering & Manufacturing**: Students can now spend a maximum of 105 hours of their placement within an already-established Skills Hub or Training Centre; in such a case, students will then need to complete the remainder of their placement with this same employer.
- **Digital**: Students studying any of the Digital T Levels (e.g. Digital Support and Services), can undertake a placement that develops their skills at the Digital route-level[2] as opposed to those only relevant to their specific specialism.

[2] A route is comprised of one or more pathways, which are groups of common sets of occupations that have similar key Knowledge, Skills, Behaviour requirements, whereas a specialism is a specific occupational area.

- The fundamental principles underpinning industry placements remain - it is still the expectation that a placement will be for a minimum of 315 hours (excluding 1 hour for lunch, per day), in an environment outside of the student's normal learning environment or provider setting, and linked to the student's T Level specialism (unless otherwise specified). They should also have an agreed set of learning objectives that the student works towards throughout the placement.
- Placements are now to be formally recorded in hours (315 hours as a minimum). This will reflect differing industry practices, and will also enable shorter days for students with SEND, part-time work or other commitments while ensuring that they receive the same benefits from placements as those who are able to work longer hours.
- Development of an Industry Placement Quality Assurance Framework is underway, ready for 2020 delivery to ensure that industry placements are delivered consistently to a high quality and deliver the intended outcomes for all students.
- A £7m Employer Support Fund pilot will be launched in the 2019/20 academic year, to trial the provision of financial support to employers. This will help us to understand better the financial barriers faced by employers to offering placements and how these differ across industries.
- An Employer Support Package will be developed to support employers across all industries throughout the 2019/20 academic year, designed to equip employers with the information and understanding needed to build their confidence and effectively plan and implement high quality placements. We will procure an organisation to develop and implement this package of support including both general and industry-specific guidance, face-to-face workshops, presentations and webinars and "on-demand" hands-on support.
- Identifying good and imaginative practice to enable accessibility of placements for all, including students with SEND and those in rural and remote areas. We will work with partners to identify and promote adoption of good practice as well as using this to inform future-thinking on how to overcome these barriers.

1. Introduction

T Levels

T Levels are an integral part of the reformed technical education system as set out in the Post-16 Skills Plan. T Levels are high-quality, level 3 classroom-based technical programmes that will equip students with the skills, knowledge and behaviours to get a head start in skilled employment.

Our plans for roll out

To ensure T Levels are of a high quality from the outset and that providers and employers are well prepared, T Levels are being rolled out in phases. The first three T Levels are being delivered from September 2020 by a small number of providers. These T Levels are:

- Digital route: Digital Production, Design and Development
- Construction route: Design, Surveying and Planning
- Education and Childcare route: Education.

A further seven T Levels will be made available in September 2021, with the remainder being taught from 2022 onwards, with the aim of all T Level subjects being introduced by September 2023. Further information on the roll-out can be found in the T Level Action Plan 2018.

Industry placements are likely to take place during the second year of a student's T Level, although providers may choose to start these earlier at their discretion. However, students must be fully prepared and have a good grasp of essential workplace behaviours before they start their placement. A placement should occur after the student has chosen their specialism to ensure the placement gives them sufficient opportunity to hone relevant technical skills and that the employer is able to benefit from their time with them.

We recognise the need for providers to build capacity to be able to deliver placements successfully at scale and have rolled out a package of support including the Capacity and Delivery Fund (CDF) in the 2018/19 academic year to enable this and build provider and employer confidence. We expect providers who have accessed the CDF in the 2018/19 academic year to deliver more than 20,000 T Level style placements to current vocational students.

2. Industry Placements – Core Principles

An industry placement will be an essential part of a T Level and full certification of the T Level will not be possible without completing an industry placement. Students will spend meaningful time with an employer applying, developing and honing the technical skills and knowledge they have learnt in the classroom, in a real working environment. Industry placements are substantially longer than traditional work experience and therefore should bring significant benefits to all involved.

Benefits

The benefits of an industry placement have been evidenced throughout the Industry Placement Pilots and Employer Engagement and Capacity research. Placements give young people vital early industry exposure and the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of their specialism in an authentic setting for a substantial length of time, enabling them to develop the skills they need to progress in their chosen occupational area. They give employers the chance to ensure that young people are developing the skills, workplace behaviours and experience that industry needs. They also: provide extra resources for projects; bring in new ideas; develop existing employee's management skills; and aid recruitment for entry-level jobs. Employers involved in delivering placements via the Capacity and Delivery Fund this year have also reported that placements have been a valuable way of supporting their talent pipeline.

An FE College in the East Midlands said that:

> "[Employers see the benefits as being] the prospect of gaining an extra pair of hands, the ability to 'try before you buy' and also the chance to test the pool of local talent with a view to recruitment at a later stage. This is particularly the case where there are shortages in particular sectors e.g. catering or nursing, so businesses are keen to encourage young people into their industry. Some employers are keen to support young people and to help them get a foot on the career ladder by enabling them to attain hands on experience, knowledge and practical skills."

Case Study: Marriott Hotels

When the JW Marriott Grosvenor House hotel in London hosted a student as part of the industry placement pilot, they found it a positive experience and an excellent way of attracting new talent to their business. This year, the hotel has taken 6 students offering placements in IT, catering and construction (electrical and plumbing) as well as the more obvious hospitality area. Going forward Marriott Hotels have committed to offering more than 60 industry placements in over 20 hotels across England. These include opportunities in beauty, catering, engineering, finance, hospitality, human resources and land management.

Case Study: Karma Applied Science

Karma Applied Science, a digital healthcare organisation, offered placements to a group of students studying Digital and Business administration at Blackpool and the Fylde College. These students created a real business, '40 Day Technologies', and Karma supported them to develop a software solution to the NHS's bed-blocking problem. They marketed this to the NHS and completed two sales of their product during the placement. The students are now working full or part time in their own business.

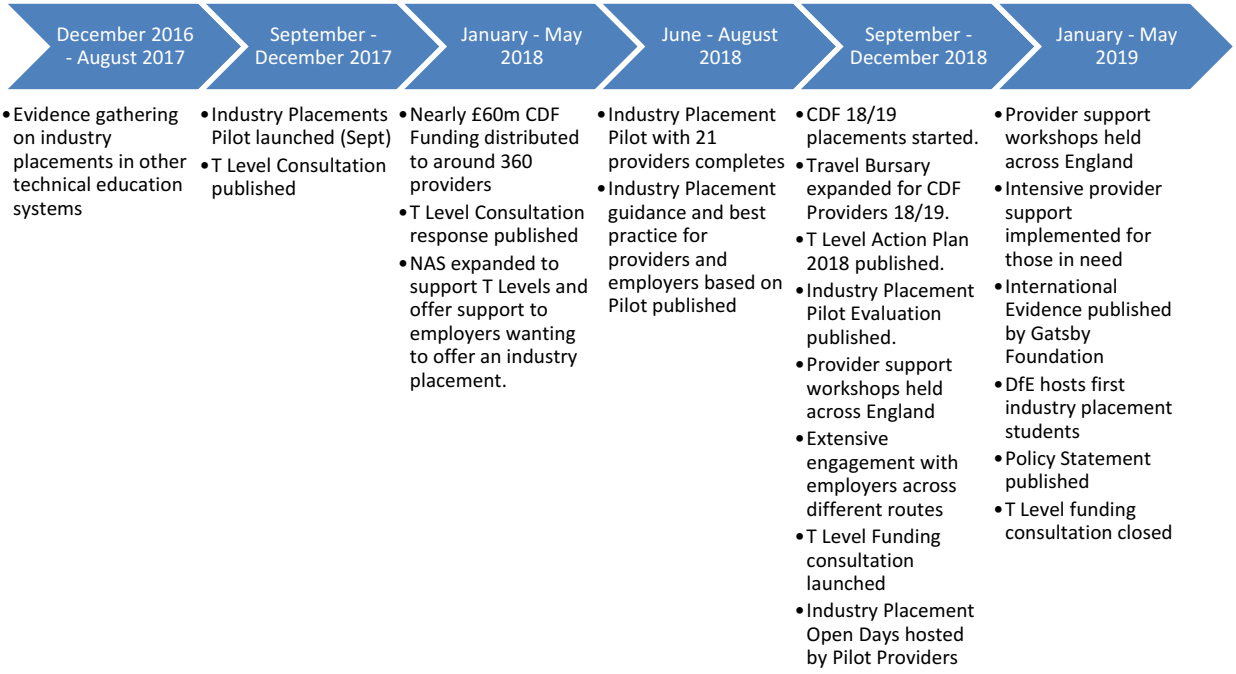
Industry placement models

We recognise industries have different working practices and that employers will also have differing preferences as to how and when placements should take place. There is no specific model that placements should follow with regards to whether this is undertaken in a block, through day release or a mix of both. We expect providers to work with employers and students to decide what works best for all parties, and factors such as the type of work activity being undertaken (e.g. time-limited client brief) and the teaching timetable should be taken into account. For example, one employer may prefer to host a placement for one day a week over a prolonged period of time, whereas another employer may prefer to host a student in a single solid block. A mixed model could also be used, for example a student could spend a solid 2 weeks with the employer followed by a series of day releases.

3. Progress to Date

We recognise the scale of the challenge that both providers and employers face in order to offer substantive, successful industry placements. We have therefore started early to build our evidence base, pilot industry placements through the Industry Placement Pilots in the 2017/18 academic year and increase capacity through the Capacity and Delivery Fund (CDF). This has enabled us to learn lessons, identify best practice and refine the policy well in advance of the first teaching of T Levels in 2020. This section details the activity we have completed to support implementation of T Levels.

Timeline of activity to date



Research and Evidence

Industry placement pilot 2017/18

In partnership with The Challenge, during the 2017/18 academic year we ran an industry placement pilot to support the shift to delivering longer, more substantial placements. This saw 21 providers across England trialling the delivery of placements for around 1550 students with over 1000 employers. 90% of students surveyed enjoyed their placement and felt it had developed their confidence and technical skills relevant to their future career. Pilot providers and the employers who got involved in this early stage of the T Level policy and implementation programme played a critical role in shaping the approach to T Level industry placements and we are grateful for the vital part they played in testing and trialling the policy for the benefit of other providers and employers.

An Independent Evaluation of the Pilot was carried out, which assessed the effectiveness of different placement and support models in multiple contexts and provided evidence on implementation, highlighting lessons for full, national roll-out. It also provided evidence on how providers and employers could best prepare for and make the shift to offering the longer-duration industry placements expected as part of T Levels.

The pilot also demonstrated that 'one size doesn't fit all' and that our piloted approach did not necessarily reflect the breadth of industry practice or accommodate all students with differing circumstances (e.g. SEND, caring responsibilities etc.). This sparked further research and engagement with the sector and has helped to shape these updates to the policy.

We would like to thank all those involved with the pilots for testing various models and providing essential feedback which helped shape industry placement policy and associated support.

Case Study: Ham Hill Cider

A Yeovil College Business and Administration student in the South West led on promoting and marketing a micro organisation which produces cider. The student ran a series of successful events to build brand awareness and has now progressed to university.

Case Study: Playful Productions

Playful Productions, a small independent theatrical production organisation, offered a theatrical and media hair and make-up student a placement at their Wicked production at the Apollo Theatre, London. Although there were initial challenges with regards to evening working hours, this was resolved between the student and employer reaching an agreement, facilitated by the provider. The student was able to develop complex technical skills in wig and costume and the company reported that it was a pleasure to host her.

Case Study: Signarama

Signarama, an international sign and advertising SME in Preston, took part in the pilot, and used the opportunity to offer placements to Creative students, in business areas where there was otherwise limited resource. The students undertook social media activities and created case studies and photographs of the businesses' work. Signarama enjoyed hosting the students and found them to be keen and enthusiastic members of the team.

Sharing best practice

Following the Pilot, a series of best practice guidance was developed, including comprehensive 'how to' guides created by The Challenge and the Association of Colleges (AoC) for providers and employers. This also includes a myth-busting document

covering health and safety, insurance and safeguarding guidance. These guidance documents are currently being updated based on continuing good practice in the 2018/19 academic year, and will be available, alongside case studies, in early Summer 2019. We also ran a series of open days, in partnership with the AoC, where pilot providers shared their experience and learning with other providers. We would like to thank those who shared their experiences and were involved in these events.

Learning from international systems

In addition to the extensive engagement with employers and key stakeholders, we have also reflected on best practice of industry placements as seen in other international technical education systems. In these world-leading technical education systems, industry placements are viewed as a valuable feature of a full-time technical education programme. As outlined in the Gatsby Charitable Organisation's Report on Industry Placements in International Systems, we looked at how placements are carried out in these countries and used this evidence to inform the framework of models and approaches outlined in this document.

Student voice

During spring term 2018, the DfE conducted user research and met with over 650 students at level 2 and 3. The students came from 13 different education institutions from the North East to the South West including FE colleges, sixth form colleges and school sixth forms.

The report highlighted that students liked the idea of industry placements and often identified this as the feature that would most persuade them to choose a T Level. They also indicated that they would like to use some of their days to gain experience of different roles related to their T Level before confirming their specialism. We have taken this evidence into account and used it to inform our framework of models, allowing up to 35 hours of work taster activities to be counted towards a student's total number of placement hours in addition to their time spent with up to 2 other employers.

Employer engagement and capacity research

Last year, we commissioned research into Employer Engagement and Capacity to Support Industry Placements, which was published in August 2018. This research examined employers' engagement with existing work-based learning opportunities, their initial reactions to industry placement policy and their perceived barriers and solutions to providing placements. The report found that employers were broadly positive about the policy principles of industry placements and were keen for more information on the costs and benefits of offering placements. This information is being gathered from the evaluation of the CDF and associated support running during the 2018/19 academic year.

Building Provider Capacity

Capacity and Delivery Fund (CDF)

Last year, we made a substantial investment in providers to build their capacity to deliver industry placements in advance of T Levels by establishing the CDF. We have allocated nearly £60m of the CDF for around 360 providers to start providing T Level-style placements for their current vocational and technical students in the 2018/19 academic year, with up to a further £74m in 2019/20 academic year to support them to build up future capacity to deliver industry placements.

An independent evaluation of this support has been commissioned which will explore how the CDF and associated support is being implemented and used by providers and employers. It will also identify the challenges of implementing placements within different contexts and whether greater support is needed.

We would like to thank the providers who have opted in to receive CDF and been proactive in building the infrastructure and resource to deliver high quality industry placements, and for those who have applied for the 2019/20 academic year. The intelligence gained through the termly reports and on-going feedback on the planning and implementation of these placements is invaluable.

Case Study: North Lindsey College

The CDF has enabled North Lindsey College to recruit a team and build new opportunities to support students, providing mentoring and coaching them with work related concerns. They also put students through additional training and development above their vocational qualification, for example, engineering and built environment have gained a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card, removing barriers to learning and gaining industry experience. This has given these students the opportunity to gain valuable technical experience, for example laying the track on a local steam train restoration project.

Case Study: bigdog

City College Norwich has a long-term partnership with creative agency **big**dog. Their Head of Development feels strongly about the invaluable nature of real work experience in the industry and sees the benefits of industry placements for the development of a future workforce and plugging the skills gaps. They recognise that the skills businesses want now are not necessarily what they will need in the future and therefore industry placements are an important part of recruiting new talent.

Case Study: Bruntwood

A Trafford College Group student fell in love with electronics at school and wants to become a mechanical and electrical design consultant. Through her industry placement at Bruntwood, a company that provides serviced office spaces across the UK, she has had the opportunity to learn a wide range of valuable industry skills. No two days are the same and her tasks vary from site visits, attending meetings, checking for faults in designs and installations, shadowing supervisors, to completing computer-aided designs (CAD). Thanks to Bruntwood's support, her drawings are now being used to build items used by the company.

Provider workshops and support

During the 2018/19 academic year, the AoC and The Challenge have delivered 22 workshops for providers across the country, drawing on lessons learnt from the pilot and offering support by covering fundamental implementation themes and challenges. Within these, they highlighted good practice and helped providers to pre-empt problems by putting in place effective processes and forward planning. These events were well received with almost 500 staff from 239 providers attending, of which 90% of attendees considered the workshops either helpful or extremely helpful.

ESFA

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) teams have provided continued support to those in receipt of the CDF and will continue to do so until the end of the 2018/19 academic year. Where providers need further support with implementing industry placements, the local field force team are now also able to make an assessment on the level of support required and arrange more intensive support if this is required.

Equality of access to placements

The existing travel bursary fund was expanded in 2018/19 academic year for providers in receipt of the CDF, to support students with travel and subsistence costs whilst undertaking an industry placement. Within the T Level Action Plan, published in December 2018, we explained that we were working with other government departments and speaking with providers to explore what practical solutions may need to be put in place to support students in rural, coastal and remote locations to access relevant placements. Further details of this work and the industry placement framework are below.

Case Study: Boston College

Due to the challenges of rurality they face, Boston College have used funding to invest in another college minibus, specifically to transport students from the college site to their respective employers. They have found this to be significantly helpful to ensure that they are able to take up placements with employers in more rural areas who are not on public transport routes.

Case Study: Clacton Coastal Academy

Based in a coastal town, the area the Academy is based in has fewer businesses within a realistic travelling distance to offer placements, with much of the town's work being seasonal. Public transport to travel to the nearest large town is expensive and the infrequency of transport is equally a barrier. To overcome these barriers, the Academy has broadened their targeted work-related Media skills to include social media, graphic design and signage, to increase the number of placements available to students. They have also engaged with local businesses that can offer placements that cover multiple sectors, to reduce the need and cost of extensive travel. For example, one employer can offer Business, Design, Engineering and Construction opportunities. The Academy has also offered students support with travel costs and trips training.

Employer Engagement

The National Apprenticeship Service

In response to feedback from employers, we have extended the remit of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) to cover industry placements alongside apprenticeships. NAS is now offering a national, impartial and tailored service to support and encourage employers to embrace industry placements from now, in readiness for T Levels. It is engaging more employers every day and generating interest in industry placements amongst employers of all sizes. NAS offers employers advice and guidance and access to employer facing materials to help them understand how they can get involved and crucially the benefits of offering placements. To date, NAS have raised awareness of T Levels and industry placements with over 10,000 employers through direct engagement. There is also an industry placement guidance page covering the key information for employers, which can be accessed here.

NAS also offers an internal matching service through which they connect employers with local providers and generate local employer referrals. It also works with local and national intermediaries such as large public sector organisations and their arms-length bodies, key figureheads within business, representative bodies such as Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and also the 38 Local

Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas, to develop a common approach to employer engagement.

For more information, please contact NAS on 08000 150 600 or email: tlevel.placement@education.gov.uk.

Case Study: Horwich Farrelly

Horwich Farrelly, a national law firm with their head office in Manchester, was keen to offer industry placements as a way to build a pipeline of local talent. They focused on attitude and application above all else and were less interested in academics or background. One IT learner from Trafford College Group proved himself to be such a committed and dedicated member of the team that he was offered a full time paid job as a Service Desk Technician at the end of his placement. A year later, he is still enjoying working with his team, now in the role of Service Desk Analyst.

Case Study: The Marches LEP

The Marches LEP, supported by NAS, have worked with providers to plan and deliver multiple employer engagement events to support industry placements. This has given providers the opportunity to engage with business early and demonstrate the excellent facilities and provision the providers have to prospective employers. Utilising their strong relationship with their regional FSB and chambers, the LEP has ensured that there is a diverse collection of employers represented at events, with the view to support small and medium business regionally. Although the region does not currently have a T Level early adopter provider, they have recognised the opportunity to engage with the agenda early to give the region opportunity to ratchet up activity over the coming years.

Case Study: Buckingham Thames Valley LEP

Buckingham Thames Valley LEP, supported by NAS, utilised a programme of campaign activities including e-shots, a website banner, social media activity, newsletters and promotion on partner websites and networking events in conjunction with a series of events held during National Apprenticeship Week to raise awareness of industry placements and T Levels. Their ‘Routes in to the Creative Industries’ event targeted industry-appropriate employers and interested young people. Their ‘Routes into Work’ event, Brexit Summit and Buckinghamshire Business Expo also gave them the opportunity to reach a wider business audience. By using weblinks directed to a Buckinghamshire College Group web page, employers ‘pledged’ their support and this activity was followed up by the college group team, resulting in a high proportion of industry placements.

4. New Announcements

In the T Level consultation, which ran in 2018, many respondents were positive about our approach of integrating the industry placement within the T Level programme. Within the Government's response we recognised that for industry placements 'one size doesn't fit all', and further work was needed to make sure the policy meets the needs of employers, ensures placements are high quality, meaningful and accessible for all students and supports employers to offer placements. The aims of an industry placement are to enable a student to:

- develop and put into practice up-to-date technical skills at Level 3,
- develop employability skills,
- have credibility with prospective employers, as well as to
- provide opportunities for employers to develop their local talent pipeline.

Framework of Industry Placement Models and Approaches

As outlined above, we now have a much richer evidence base of what works and where the barriers are to successful delivery of industry placements. We have carried out analysis of this and engaged with employers, education providers and key stakeholders to explore how the policy can reflect differing industry practices whilst also accommodating different students' circumstances e.g. SEND, those with caring responsibilities, in custodial settings, or in remote locations.

Following this work, we have developed a framework of additional models and approaches to delivering industry placements which ensure placements are accessible, deliverable and provide meaningful, high quality experiences for all students. We would like to thank all those who attended our roundtable events last autumn, and those included in the Acknowledgments section below who have engaged with us through other means, for sharing opinions and allowing us to test initial thinking.

The fundamental principles underpinning the industry placement model remain - it is still the expectation that a placement will be for a minimum of 315 hours (excluding 1 hour for lunch, per day) and an average of 350 hours, and a student must have agreed learning objectives in place before the placement commences. Industry placements should be linked to the student's T Level specialism (except for Digital placements which can be relevant to the route-level) and be in an environment outside of their normal learning environment and provider setting, unless stated otherwise below. We are currently developing an Industry Placements Quality Assurance Framework which will ensure industry placements delivered through all models are consistently of high quality, details of which will be published at a later date.

From the 2019/20 academic year, as part of placements delivered under the CDF, and beyond, our policy is that the following additional models and approaches can be adopted for industry placements where providers deem this necessary.

All routes

The following models are allowable across all industries and for all T Levels. Please note these are potential models that can be used with provider discretion where appropriate, and therefore are not mandatory.

Multiple employers (up to two)

A single placement (average 350 hours, minimum 315 hours) can be split across a maximum of two employers where appropriate. Whilst we would still expect one employer to be used in the majority of cases, where two employers are involved we would expect a student to have a single set of learning objectives which they work towards during the time spent with both employers. This enables students to experience their specialism in a variety of circumstances, e.g. to understand how a large company operates compared to a small and medium-sized enterprise (SME), and support SMEs with limited capacity to be able to offer placements.

Work taster activities

Work taster activities, up to a maximum of 35 hours, can be counted towards a student's total number of placement hours, as long as these are relevant to the student's chosen pathway. These activities should take place in conjunction with employers and be focused on developing skills or facilitating experiences that better prepare students to enter their placement and/or to make a more informed decision when choosing their specialism. Work taster activities could include job-shadowing, visits to different employers, etc. These hours can be counted in addition to the (up to two) other employer(s) providing the bulk of the placement.

Occupationally relevant part-time work

A student's part-time working hours can be counted towards the required hours of placement, as long as the job is occupationally related to the students' chosen specialism at Level 3, appropriate learning objectives are set and worked towards, and it takes place at an environment away from the provider setting and the student's normal learning environment.

315 hours minimum

Placements are now to be formally recorded in hours (e.g. a minimum of 315 hours as opposed to 45 days). This better reflects how industry professionals in some industries work and allows for shorter working days where needed, such as for SEND students who may find a full working day too much, or those with caring responsibilities, while still enabling them to complete the same overall length as others and therefore attain the benefits associated with this longer duration.

Note: while the minimum requirement is set at 315 hours (excluding 1 hour for lunch, per day) our expectation is that placements will typically be on average 350 hours in length and in accordance with the normal full-time working pattern of the employer (which would typically consist of 7 hours a day).

For students in specific circumstances

The use of on-site facilities is allowable for students with special educational needs and disabilities or those in young offender institutions or other custodial settings:

SEND students

Where it is in the best interests of the student and carefully aligned to their learning and development objectives, on-site facilities (e.g. onsite restaurant; manufacturing products etc.) can be used for SEND students for a maximum of 105 hours of the placement, where they are occupationally relevant to the student's field of study (and relevant to their pathway, under T Levels). This is to help SEND students to prepare in a real-life work environment for an external placement. The rest of the placement must take place with an external employer, in an external environment away from the provider setting. The support and placement models for students with SEND will only apply where there is documented evidence demonstrating that the student has special needs (including those with an EHCP). This will be for the provider to determine. Providers should document the need, including formal appraisals where available. This will be reflected in our QA framework. Where some of the industry placement takes place onsite, providers should consider the suitability of a longer period beyond the minimum requirement to ensure they have all the benefits of working with an external employer. This model should be used sparingly and typically for a short period.

Students in young offender institutions or other custodial settings

On-site facilities (e.g. onsite restaurant; manufacturing products etc.) can be used for the full duration of placements for young offenders studying T Levels within young offender institutions and other custodial settings.

Industry-specific models

We recognise that different industries have differing working practices and industry placements should reflect these to meet employer needs and provide the most valuable opportunity for both the employer and student. Therefore, to reflect this, the following models are allowable for the following areas:

Digital: Route-level[3] Placements

Currently, during their industry placement a student must put into practice skills and knowledge that are linked to the specific specialism they are studying. We are aware that this restricts options for placements in very specific digital occupations, such as an Infrastructure Technician. Therefore, in response to provider feedback, within Digital T

[3] A route is comprised of one or more pathways, which are groups of common sets of occupations that have similar key Knowledge, Skills, Behaviour requirements, whereas a specialism is a specific occupational area.

Levels students can now undertake a placement that offers the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills studied at route level (e.g. relevant to any of the Digital pathways), as opposed to those only relevant to their particular specialism. These skills are essential and transferable across all digital specialisms in the route and should facilitate greater access to meaningful Digital placements.

We will review whether this should also apply to other T Levels when the outline content for each is finalised. We will publish further guidance on this ahead of their roll out.

Construction: Commercial, Charitable or Community Projects

Recognising social projects are an effective model of skill development used within higher education, students on Construction T Levels could work in small teams alongside external construction industry professional(s) to develop and implement a project that clearly develops students' construction skills (e.g. building a cricket pavilion, refurbishing a disused school building etc.), away from the providers' site. We expect students to work closely with an external employer during this time to develop appropriate technical skills and work towards agreed learning objectives. This could make up a maximum of 105 hours of their placement and would count as one of the two employers. The rest should be spent working individually with an external employer, independently from peers, to ensure the student still gains a true-to-life experience of the workplace.

Construction and Engineering & Manufacturing: Use of skills hubs or employer training centres

A student can begin their placement within an establshed skills hub or employer's training centre for a maximum of 105 hours. The student would then need to complete the remainder of their placement hours with this same employer in a live site environment. We would expect there to be a reason for a student to start a placement within this environment, a suitable objective(s) to be set accordingly (e.g. to develop a skill or knowledge needed to access a live site), and for as much time as possible to be spent working on a live site. Every action should be taken to ensure work completed in the skills hub or training centre environment is as close to the normal working environment as possible, including similar working hours and are also aligned to learning objectives. This enables employers, where necessary, to build their confidence in students' knowledge, skills and awareness prior to allowing them on to a live site, whilst still ensuring time is spent in a real-life environment and skills are put to practice in the workplace.

5. Further funding and support

Employer Support Fund pilot

In the T Levels consultation response last year, we committed to exploring what additional support may be needed for employers, particularly small employers, to offer industry placements. Research and feedback from extensive employer engagement identified costs associated with offering placements as a barrier to employer involvement. In order to better understand these financial barriers reported by employers and how these differ across industries, we will run a small-scale pilot in the 2019/20 academic year with approximately £7 million available to trial the limited provision of employer financial support for tangible costs.

The purpose of this pilot is to inform future thinking on the support needed by employers to deliver industry placements ahead of T Levels, and to understand whether financial support increases employer engagement to offer placements.

We will select a small cohort of providers within selected geographical areas to take part in this pilot. These providers will be able to compensate employers for some of the tangible costs incurred through offering industry placements (up to £750 per placement), such as personal protective equipment, software licences etc, as well as training costs for line managers or the student and the costs of setting up systems in advance of the placement, where those employers evidence that costs are acting as a barrier to offering a placement.

Funding will be targeted through providers in selected geographical areas to support a small cohort of employers who are working with them. The pilot will run throughout the 2019/20 academic year only. We will publish further details on this and the selected geographical areas in the coming months.

Employer Support Package

Our engagement with employers has made it clear that in addition to existing guidance, employers would like more tailored guidance, tools and hands-on support to help them effectively plan and deliver high quality placements.

Therefore, in addition to the role currently played by NAS, we will engage with industry partners to design, develop and implement a package of additional support for employers in the 2019/20 academic year to better support them to offer industry placements. This support should equip employers with the information and understanding needed to build their confidence and effectively plan and implement high quality placements.

The package will likely include both general and industry-specific guidance and tools, face-to-face regional workshops, presentations and webinars aimed at employers, line

managers and employer representative groups and “on-demand” hands-on support for employers who are identified as requiring additional support. This will be available in the academic year 19/20. More detail on this will be published later this year.

Improving access to Industry Placements for all

Our research and engagement with a range of stakeholders has identified a number of barriers which might affect access to industry placements. Young people may live in remote locations with poor transport or have special educational needs or disabilities. There are also other factors which can inhibit travel, such as those balancing other responsibilities such as part-time work or caring responsibilities, and those who face cultural barriers such as a reluctance to travel even where transport and support are available.

We are aware there is already existing good practice being undertaken at a local level to address some of these issues, including from providers using CDF to support best practice this year. These include independent travel training; travel mentors or buddies; upskilling teaching staff to mentor young people; building travel confidence; technological solutions such as apps to enhance real-time knowledge of local transport; and data sharing between employers and providers and transport companies to enable local joined-up approaches to travel. Over the next year we will identify and promote this good, imaginative and innovative practice in order to help other providers overcome these barriers. We are particularly interested in local co-operative approaches that foster economies of scale. This will also identify gaps in provision to help inform any further support that government needs to put in place to address these barriers, as part of our programme of support.

Industry Placement Quality Assurance Framework

We have begun work to develop and put in place a robust industry placements Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), which we expect to be in operation from September 2020. This will ensure that T Level industry placements are delivered consistently and to a high standard no matter where and when they take place. The QAF will put in place measures to ensure that every T Level student has the opportunity for a positive experience on their industry placement and to come away with the experience and benefits that an effective industry placement is designed to deliver. We will be testing the QAF with both providers and employers before publishing.

Outcomes and Progression

The core purpose of a T Level is to prepare students for skilled work and the outline content and qualifications specifications being developed by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education are designed to ensure T Levels get students

as close as possible to the same level of competence that a work-based apprenticeship provides. T Levels have been designed by employers with a focus on preparing young people for skilled jobs in their industry – each T Level includes occupational specialisms that could exceed 1,000 hours of training. We want to ensure we support the progression options available to T Level graduates into higher education, apprenticeships and employment. In particular, we need to ensure that T Level students have the same opportunities that are open to 16-18 year olds taking A levels, other courses or level 3 apprenticeships. We have already announced that T Levels will attract UCAS points in line with 3 A levels and will confirm further detail on this later in the year. We are working closely with Higher Education Institutions to make sure that they are clear about how T Levels will support progression into higher technical education.

As we set out in our response to the T Level consultation in 2018, many T Level students will be able to move on from their course to a relevant apprenticeship at level 4 or higher, building on the knowledge, skills and behaviours they have secured during their T Level course. Employers are already thinking about how T Level students can move on to higher level apprenticeships within their organisations – for example, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) are supporting the design of the Legal T Level with a view to potentially using T Levels as an access point to their higher level apprenticeships.

In some cases a young person might want the opportunity to work in a different or more specialist area, which might mean taking an apprenticeship at level 3 or below, particularly where these apprenticeships require 3 or 4 years to complete. In these instances, there will be additional specialist training needed that might be best delivered through a level 3 apprenticeship, which would take into account the prior learning gained through completion of a T Level potentially significantly shortening the duration of that apprenticeship (while still needing to meet the minimum 12 month duration).

In line with the current apprenticeship funding rules a T Level student, like any other candidate, would be able to move on to an apprenticeship at the same or lower level than a qualification they already hold, if the apprenticeship will allow the individual to acquire substantive new skills and the content of the training is materially different from any prior qualification or a previous apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship training providers are responsible for assessing the prior learning of the individual against the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the standard. This must be done before the person begins an apprenticeship to check they are eligible for an apprenticeship and that it is an appropriate offer for them. The apprenticeship funding rules state that the training provider must reduce the content, duration and price of the training to account for prior learning. This is to prevent training from being duplicated so that funding is not used to pay for training which relates to existing knowledge, skills and behaviours. This is therefore unlikely to be appropriate where a T Level graduate is progressing into an apprenticeship in a closely related occupation.

As qualification specifications for individual T Levels are developed, we want it to be clear to both students and employers how these compare to the learning outcomes that would be achieved through the existing apprenticeships and what opportunities for progression would be available to them. We and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education will be looking further at this, and other approaches to support these students to reach full occupational competence and we expect to say more about this over the coming months.

6. Next Steps

We will continue with a range of activities leading up to the roll-out of T Levels to support employers and providers to offer industry placements that will be accessible, meaningful, and high quality.

- **NAS** - The engagement activity conducted by NAS to raise awareness of industry placements is set to expand over the next year, supported by the wider T Levels communications campaign. NAS will look to include further enhancements to their internal matching service over the coming months, providing employers and CDF providers with a more streamlined service.

- **Communications and marketing** – Working alongside NAS and complementing other engagement work to promote industry placements, we will launch a communications campaign later in 2019 to increase awareness of T Levels, help employers to support their delivery and enable young people to decide if they are right for them. Using employers as advocates, it will encourage businesses to offer industry placements as well as to value and recognise T Levels when recruiting.

- **Launch of Employer Support Fund –** As set out above, we will launch a small-scale pilot in the 19/20 academic year to trial the provision of financial support to a limited cohort of employers to better understand the costs incurred by employers across different industries when hosting industry placements. Funding will be targeted through providers to support employers who can evidence costs as a barrier to offering placements. This will run throughout the 2019/20 academic year and will be delivered through providers in selected geographical areas **only**.

- **Launch of Employer Support Package -** We will procure an organisation to design, develop and implement a package of support for employers in the 2019/20 academic year to help enable them to offer industry placements. Examples of this support includes general and route-specific guidance, workshops and webinars and “hands-on” support for employers to effectively plan and implement industry placements.

- **Access research -** We will develop a programme of work to identify and promote good, imaginative and innovative practice throughout the 2019/20 academic year to support providers to help students overcome barriers to accessing placements.

- **Industry Placement Quality Assurance Framework –** We will continue to work on developing a Quality Assurance Framework for T Level industry placements to be in operation from September 2020, to ensure placements are delivered consistently and to a high standard irrespective of where and when they take place. We will test this framework with both providers and employers before publishing.

- **Dissemination of CDF guidance on the framework of industry placement models –** We will also be publishing updates to CDF guidance as per the updated industry placement policy outlined in this announcement and will engage with providers, employers and other key stakeholders to communicate this guidance. Latest guidance for the 2019/20 academic year can be found in the CDF factsheet. Within this, we have listened to the feedback from providers and revised our policy to allow students studying an Applied General Qualifications to be counted in the 20% target for 19/20 delivery. This was announced in April.

- **Industry placements across government -** We are working towards offering industry placements to students at the Department for Education in 2019. We plan to scale up this offer across all DfE sites in the future. We have also begun working with other government departments to develop a central process to coordinate industry placements across the Civil Service, with a view to piloting an approach from the 2019/20 academic year.

Get Involved

To find out more about industry placements, please see the information for employers on industry placements. Employers wanting to get involved or provide feedback on any of the services discussed above can contact NAS on 08000 150 600 or email: tlevel.placement@education.gov.uk.

Education providers can also contact the Education & Skills Funding Agency Service using this online enquiry form.

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National Union of Students
Nelson and Colne College
Neon Street
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New College Durham
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