



Fact Sheet on T-Levels – June 2023

Introduction

Member companies of FETA have for many years commented on the lack of younger people joining the industry. Furthermore there have been several initiatives on trying to widen the appeal and improve diversity within our membership. The fact remains, however that we have a real problem attracting new talent in to engineering. This has been recognised by wider industry and along with external training bodies and government there have been steps taken to try and improve this situation. As an association it is in our interest to understand how we can start to make a difference. The following fact sheet sets out how an organisation of any size can start to make the journey into engineering for people just leaving school and who want a technical skill and to be part of our future.

What are T Levels

We all recognise the fact that there is a skills shortage that is impacting the future success of our Industry. In response, the government has worked alongside hundreds of employers to design T Level courses that deliver the skills your organisations need.

Each T Level is equivalent in size to 3 A levels and helps young people develop the knowledge, attitude and practical skills to thrive in the workplace.

At the heart of each course, every T Level student completes an industry placement that lasts a minimum of 315 hours (approximately 45 days). Industry placements give you a unique opportunity to help develop new talent in your industry, and get young people work-ready. There are specific courses for our industry and more could be added if we work with colleges and training bodies.

Building Services Engineering for Construction

This course is suitable for anyone wanting a career in construction, specifically in areas such as electric installation and maintenance, plumbing or heating.

Students will develop an understanding of a broad range of issues relevant to the construction sector, and topics specific to design, surveying and planning, including:

- building technology principles
- building services engineering systems
- maintenance principles
- tools, equipment and materials

They will also choose one of the following specialisms:

- electrical and electronic equipment engineering
- electrotechnical engineering
- gas engineering
- protection systems engineering
- plumbing and heating engineering
- heating engineering and ventilation
- refrigeration engineering and air conditioning engineering



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To find out more about the content of this T Level, download the:

- [course specification from City & Guilds](#)
- [course outline from the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education](#)

How can our members be involved

If you are asking this question it's likely you'll have other questions about whether to and how to offer industry placements. Here are some of the basics.

Placements work for your organisation. They allow you to draw on a temporary and flexible source of talent. You may have a discrete project which would suit someone with higher-level skills. They allow you to get to know students who could work for you in the future. They raise your profile in the local area and develop the supervision and mentoring skills of your staff.

There are 3 typical models for industry placements: day release, block and mixed. As long as the total time for each placement adds up to a minimum of 315 hours (and on average we expect placements to be around 350 hours), you can adapt the models to suit your business needs, and to align with the student's course.

Questions you may want to ask yourself when determining which model best suits your organisation:

- do you operate a continuous service, with constant work throughout the year, so regular weekly hours would be best or is your work more project-based?
- which sites or construction environments are suitable and safe for students to work in?
- are there times of year when there are more opportunities for placement students, for example, daylight hours / better weather?
- does the placement fit with the timing of the student's course? Are there skills, such as using construction-specific software (like CAD) being taught during the course that could be of particular interest to you? Is it worth waiting for the student to have learned particular technical skills or knowledge for the tasks and projects you are likely to set on placement?

The placement model will be agreed between you, the school or college, and the student. T Level students choose their specialism in Year 1. The placement can take place later in that year, or entirely in Year 2, or across both years.

The reality is that placements are an opportunity and not a distraction. You decide what students do while they are with you, so you can make the placement useful and relevant to your organisation.



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Q&A

We already do apprenticeships – why should we do industry placements too?

If you already do apprenticeships, industry placements are a great way of getting to know potential future apprentices early on, before they leave education.

Apprentices can be 'buddies' for industry placement students and act as mentors. Also, when apprentices are doing off-the-job training, it might be appropriate for an industry placement student to cover their role.

I'm not clear about our roles and responsibilities when it comes to offering industry placements

The [roles and responsibilities – supporting learners on their placement checklist](#) will help you decide who does what in your organisation to make sure all the responsibilities are covered.

In general, it's not that different from taking on a temporary worker. It's not all down to you and your organisation. The school or college you work with will take on many of the tasks involved in designing and delivering placements.

Practicalities - There'll be loads of paperwork

There will be some. But your school or college will deal with most of it. They are experienced in making sure that any administration that's needed is as streamlined as possible for you and that it complies with the appropriate guidelines.

Won't this add to our health and safety, insurance and other responsibilities?

Not necessarily, if you already take on young people as temporary workers. Even if you don't, there are a few simple steps you can take. Your school or college will help you with advice and support.

The areas you might need support with could include health and safety for younger people on-site, Employer's Liability Insurance and Public Liability Insurance, DBS checks, safeguarding and students with special educational needs and disabilities. There is more information on these below and further guidance in the [legal compliance](#) article.

Health and safety

Employers are responsible for the health and safety of students while they are on an industry placement. You must provide a safe working environment, adequate induction and suitable training. If you are the lead employer and use the 'Supply chain and employer networks' approach, you are responsible for ensuring that your partners and/or subcontractors have the correct health and safety measures in place for students.

Insurance

If the student is doing work that is normal business practice and you already have up-to-date Employer Liability Insurance and Public Liability Insurance, then you do not need additional cover.

If you are unsure whether the work the student is doing counts as 'normal business practice', then you should talk to your insurance company. As the student will be working for you for longer than 2 weeks, you will need to notify your insurer about the placement.

Safeguarding

Schools and colleges are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of students on industry placements – but they need your cooperation. Employers generally do not need to carry out Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on members of staff supervising young people aged 16 or 17. However, where a student has a need for personal or health care due to a disability, the person providing that care may be required to obtain an enhanced DBS check.