

# Introduction to T Level industry placements

November 2025

# About us

NHS Employers is the employers' organisation for the NHS in England. We support workforce leaders and represent employers to develop a sustainable workforce and be the best employers they can be. We also manage the relationships with NHS trade unions on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

# Introduction

This guide is intended to support employers with understanding what a T Level qualification is, including the industry placement component, and how a T Level can support with developing a domestic talent pipeline in an organisation. It outlines the benefits of hosting students, post T-Level career pathways, how to get started and funding arrangements in place. It will also address the safeguarding of students and explore industry placement flexibilities.

For employers already offering industry placements and looking to expand, we have developed a guide with practical advice for scaling up your industry placement offer. These guides form part of our NHS Employers T Level hub, which includes an extensive FAQ section.

# What are T Levels

T Levels are delivered by many schools and colleges. They are taught full time and include an industry placement, with up to two employers (or three if part of an employer network), for a minimum of 315 hours (approximately 45 days). This can include up to 35 hours of work taster activities, delivered in an employment setting. T Levels are not currently available for adult learners.

Although students will complete their industry placement in an employment setting, they will not be an employee and are not required to be paid, though some employers choose to pay their students and/or offer them a supplementary bank role for paid employment.

There is a full range of T Level courses available which will support the NHS including: health, science, business services, childcare, digital, facilities management and HR. View the full list of T Levels and the occupations they can lead to on completion.

T Level programmes provide students with broad knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary for employment in an occupation or industry related to their field of study. In the second year students will study an occupational specialism, a deep dive into one area of their chosen T Level, beyond the core competencies they have developed. For example in health, this could be supporting the adult nursing team, dental nursing, supporting the therapy teams, amongst others. Students will also have the chance to further develop relevant maths, English and digital skills.

---

"T Levels have given me the chance to learn in the classroom and on the job, which has made all the difference. Being on placement has helped me understand what it's really like to work in the NHS and what skills I need." - T Level student, Oldham College

---

T Levels will provide a progression pathway to skilled employment, higher or degree-level apprenticeships and higher education. For those students who wish to go onto higher education UCAS points are awarded, with T Levels being accepted by many universities.

## UCAS points

On completion of a T Level course, UCAS points will be awarded. The table below shows the points and grade equivalents.

| UCAS Tariff Points | T Level grade  | A Level equivalent grade |
|--------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 168                | Distinction* (A* on the core and distinction in the occupational specialism) | 3 A*s at A Level         |
| 144                | Distinction  | 3 As at A Level          |
| 120                | Merit  | 3 Bs at A Level          |
| 96                 | Pass   | 3 Cs at A Level          |
| 72                 | Pass   | 3 Ds or Es at A Level    |

# Introduction of V Levels and BTEC defunding

In line with government ambitions to simplify the Level 3 qualification landscape and to reduce overlap with T Levels, some qualifications have been defunded. The UK government intends to introduce new qualifications, known as V Levels, which will be smaller vocational qualifications similar in size to one A Level. The first V Levels are intended to be taught from 2027.

In 2024, several qualifications were reviewed for potential defunding or extension, with many set to lose funding by 2026. However, with the introduction of V Levels, some qualifications may be extended further until suitable V Level alternatives are available. Employers can refer to the [full list](#) which will be updated accordingly given the outcome of the recent review.

Larger qualifications (720 or more guided learning hours) which have a T Level subject equivalent will still be defunded in 2026 and 2027 as planned. This can be presumed to include qualifications such as the Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Health and Social Care.

Should further changes be made this information will be updated accordingly. The full detail of the Post-16 education and skills whitepaper is available on the [Gov.UK website](#).

## T Level foundation programme

For those not ready to go directly onto a level three T Level qualification, a one-year T Level foundation programme is available for those students who have finished their GCSEs. Find out more about the [foundation programme](#).

In light of recent review, the final cohort of the T Level foundation programme will be in 2026 with a new transition programme to be offered from 2027.

## Case study

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust explores T Level industry placements in community settings. T Level students are offered up to two placements in the trust, rotating between hospital departments and community placements. In the community they visit patients in their homes, care homes and other settings. [Read the full case study.](#)

# Benefits to offering T Level industry placements

- Supports anchor organisation ambitions to develop the local economy and provide opportunity to the local workforce.
- An anchor organisation can provide guidance and support to other local employers to encourage them to develop T Level industry placements and support their talent pipeline.
- Provide an opportunity to tap into new talent pipelines and showcase the NHS as a great place to work.
- Allow you to showcase the breadth and depth of roles available in the NHS, including shortage occupations and hard to fill roles.
- Provide a new supply route into a variety of professions using T Level pathways.
- Offers opportunities for existing staff to mentor and supervise T Level students aiding staff development and retention.
- Encouraging young people with skills and new ideas into the health service.
- Build relationships with further education and other providers in your local area.

---

"T Levels have benefited us immensely! They have helped strengthen our relationships with local FE providers, offered invaluable experience to students and provided us with a local talent pipeline." - County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust

---

# Career pathways

Skills England has developed a number of occupational maps for T Level programmes which show the skills, behaviours and core competencies required for industry roles. However, T Level students do not achieve full occupational competency through their industry placement in the same way that they would if they completed an apprenticeship. The industry placement is designed to provide a taster of the variety of roles available within a subject area.

## Case study

Devon Partnership NHS Trust established a T Level industry placement pathway focused on supporting students who have an interest in working in mental health, learning disabilities and/or neurodiversity care. On completion students can apply for early career roles or an apprenticeship, such as the registered nurse degree apprenticeship. [Read the full case study.](#)

# T Level industry placements explored

The 315-hour T Level industry placement can be offered by two employers or three should they part of a network, which includes an integrated care system. It is an opportunity for the learner to apply the knowledge and skills learned in an education setting to the workplace, embedding within a team. Employers can choose to interview students prior to starting industry placement or allow the education provider to select students.

Industry placements can be formed in a variety of different ways. They can:

- be a continuous block of working days or one or more days each week, or a combination of both models
- be distributed across the first and/or second years of the T Level course
- include work taster activities of up to 35 hours which can be offered virtually
- employers can choose to interview the students who are coming onto placement, or ask the provider to select suitable students
- be gained by paid, part time employment aligned to their chosen T Level subject.
- use other flexibilities such as the small team project, virtual learning or partially spent in a skills hub or training centre.

Detailed information on industry placement flexibilities can be found in the Department for Education's [T Level industry placements delivery guidance](#).

## Honorary contracts

Your organisation may wish to ask the student to sign an honorary contract prior to starting a placement, depending on local policies. This can be a good way of emulating some of the elements present when they join the workforce, including a contract with expectations and terms of employment.

NHS Employers have created an [honorary contract template](#) that can be used.

---

## Placement offers at Sussex Partnership NHS FT

Placement offers

04:48

# Getting started

The [UK.Gov website](#) also has further information including guidance, tools and case studies across the full range of T Level subjects as well as [a resource library with useful information and materials](#) to help employer engagement with T Levels, including campaign guidelines and an employer toolkit.

# Funding T Level placement

An employer support fund (ESF) is currently available for employers hosting Health T Level students and SMEs providing placements for all T Levels. This will support industry placements that started between 23 April 2025 and 31 March 2026. Employers should ensure that providers they are working with opted-in to be eligible to receive the funding.

Providers are responsible for submitting claims using the online tool, employers may find it helpful to [review the guidance](#) to support their discussions with providers. There are multiple opportunities to submit claims using this tool, with claims windows opening intermittently throughout the lifetime of the ESF. Employers should ensure they share evidence of incurred costs with providers before each claims window closes, so that claims can be submitted on time.

Employers can also find out [more general information on the employer support fund](#) and a [template to support claims for employer staff time](#). This guidance also notes other claims windows.

Further details on how funding works for the T Level qualification can be found in the [T Level funding guide 2025 to 2026](#). Our T Level FAQ has also been updated with a [section addressing ESF queries](#).

# Safeguarding students

T Level learners may be under 18. Under 18s can work in clinical and non-clinical settings, however employers must provide a safe working environment with safe working hours. Working patterns should be agreed with the training provider as part of the work plan discussion. Read more on the legal requirements as an employer on the [GOV.UK website](#).

## T Level student working hours

In line with government [guidance on working hours](#) the following should be considered:

- Students cannot work more than eight hours a day, up to a maximum of 40 hours per week which includes two days of rest.
- They cannot work between 10pm and 6am, which can be changed to 11pm and 7am with provider and student agreement.
- There must be a 12-hour rest period between each working day.
- Students should be given a 30-minute break after working for more than four and a half hours.

## Protecting students and patients in the workplace

Students must be appropriately safeguarded during industry placements to both protect themselves and patients. Training providers hold overall responsibility for the student's welfare and will ensure the workplace is safe. This may include reviewing policies and conducting site visits before placements begin.

Where necessary, students must be provided with the relevant equipment to fulfil their duties, the cost of this should be discussed with the education provider.

A DBS check is typically required for T Level placements in health and care. Some providers arrange this at course entry, while others do so ahead of the placement. Line managers and supervisors will not generally require a DBS check; however, some providers might ask that this be done for when they are hosting industry placement students.

For more information, view the [NHS Employers DBS check](#) [eligibility tool](#) and the [GOV.UK T Levels web section](#).

NHS Employers  
2, The Calls,  
Leeds,  
LS2 7JU

0113 306 3000  
[www.nhsemployers.org](http://www.nhsemployers.org)  
@NHSEmployers