

T Level industry placements to support domestic talent pipelines

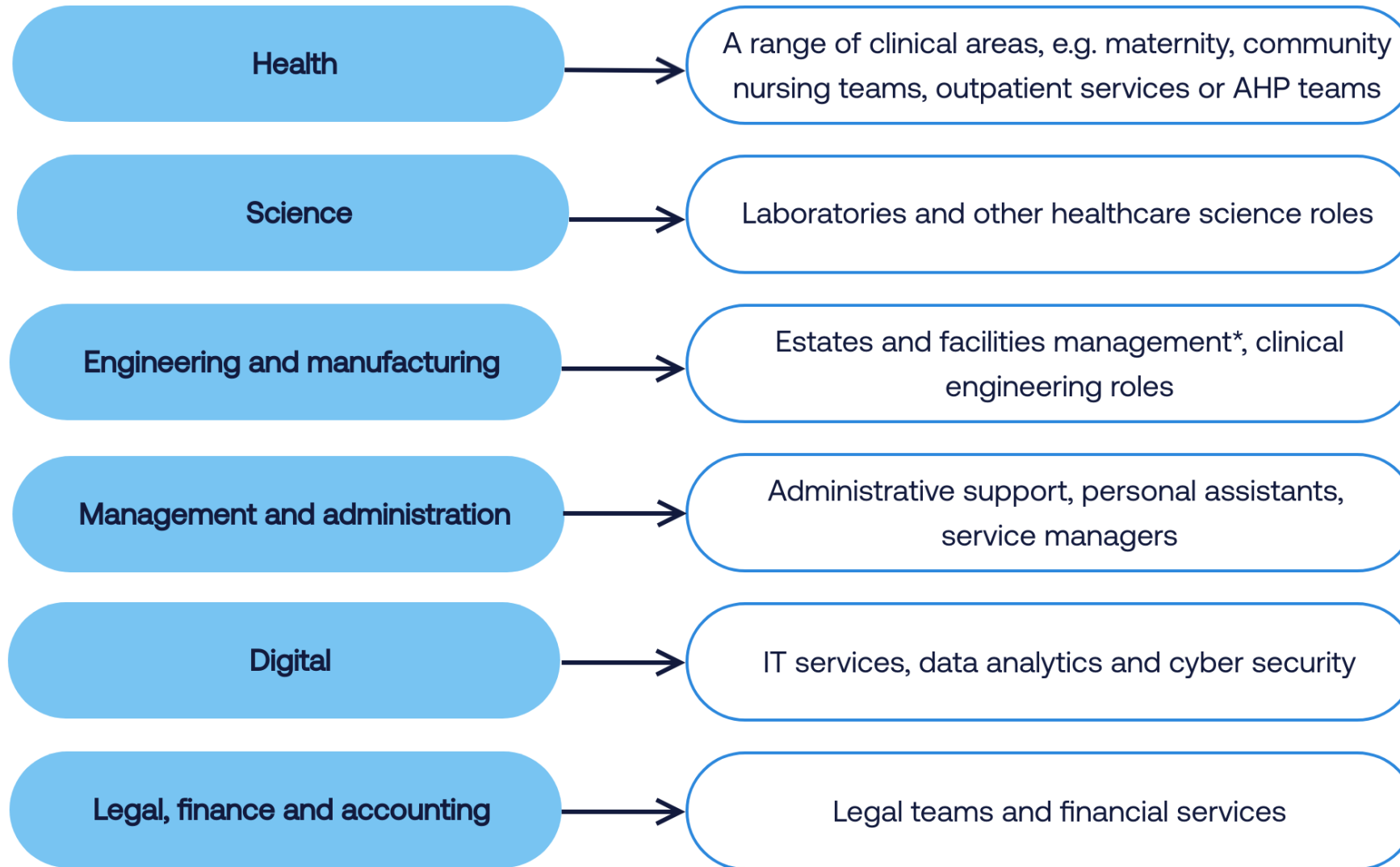
T Level qualifications at a glance

- A T Level is a Level 3 qualification for 16 – 19-year-olds.
- They are equivalent to **3 A Levels** and carry UCAS points.
- Combines classroom learning and an industry placement, a unique feature of the qualification.
- 315 hours spent in up to two, or three when part of a network, organisations which includes 35 hours of preparatory work taster activities.
- On completion, students can go directly into employment, onto higher education or start a higher-level apprenticeship.
- Students do not need to be paid, but they are able to join the staff bank at an employers' discretion.
- A wide range of subject areas, many of which are suitable for NHS organisations.

"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

Suitable T Level subjects for NHS organisations



This is not an exhaustive list, with new opportunities for students emerging constantly, for example hosting a student of Media, Broadcast and Production in a communications team.

*also suitable for Construction T Level students.

Why support T Level industry placements

- Aligned with the ambitions of the 10 Year Health Plan to recruit locally and embed a learning culture.
- Supports the organisation's role as an anchor employer, supporting economic development in the local area and providing employment leading to better health outcomes.
- Develops collaboration with local further education providers, working together to support local workforce needs.
- Colleagues working with T Level students report that they feel inspired and enthused by working with young people.
- Provides a development opportunity for those mentoring T Level students on industry placement.
- As a collaboration between the employer and further education provider, and through a raft of supporting resources, administrative burden is minimised.
- Empowers young people to discover a suitable career in the sector, showcasing organisations as the local employer of choice.

Gatsby Foundation found that 28 per cent of students move into employment, 11 per cent onto apprenticeships, and 47 per cent to higher education, potentially returning to their industry placement organisation.

The T Level industry placement explained

Placement models

An industry placement can be a combination of block placements over several weeks, or a day-release model with students on placement one or more days a week.

Work taster activities

Students can spend up to 35 hours of their industry placement developing their understanding of NHS careers and skills development including statutory and mandatory training.

Number of employers

An industry placement can take place across two employers, or three if part of a network such as ICS, allowing a diverse industry placement experience.

Other flexibilities

There are further industry placement flexibilities including simulated learning, virtual learning and small team projects.

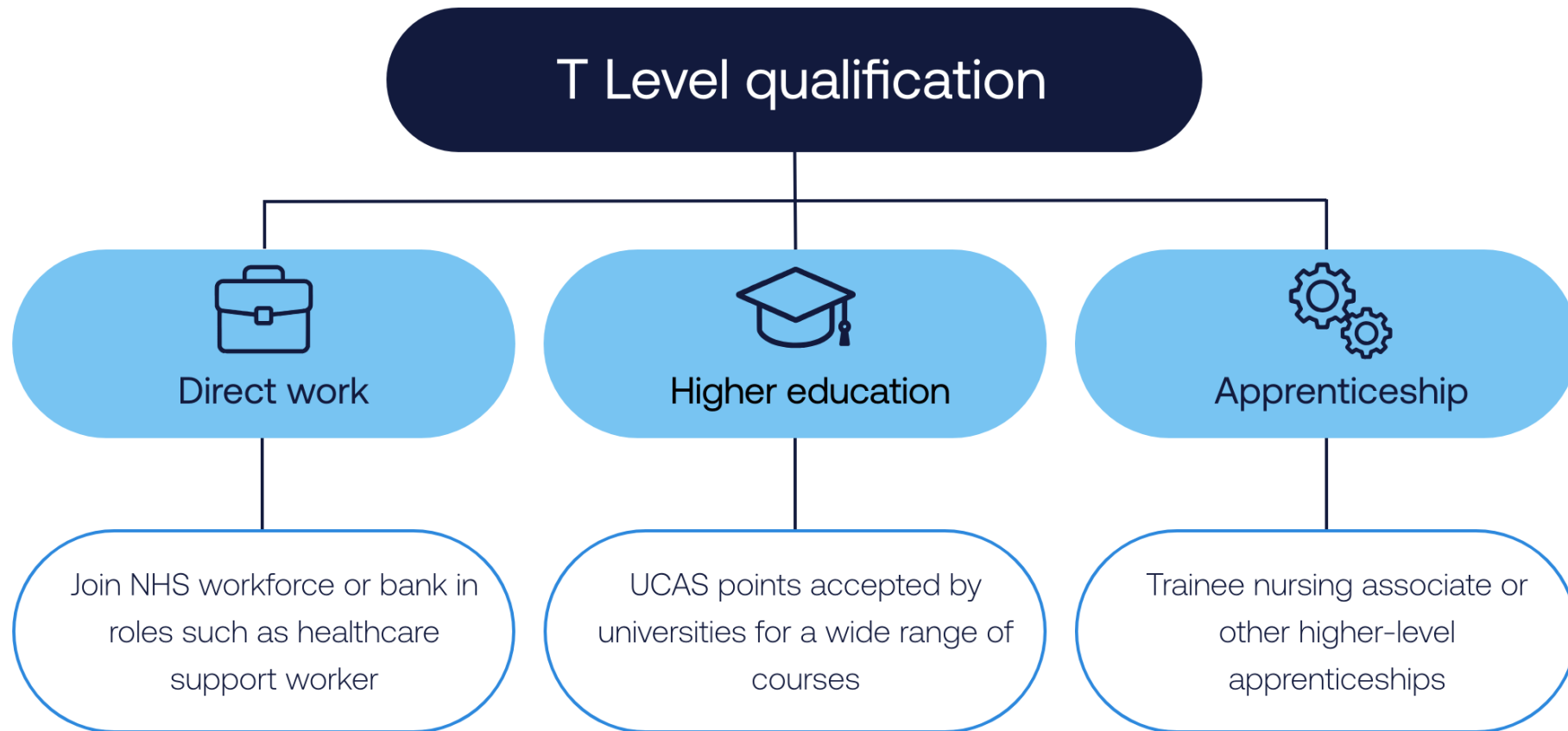
The industry placement does not require signing off competencies. It is an opportunity for students to reinforce their classroom learning and develop soft skills by embedding as part of a team.

“Working in partnership with our local colleges, we have been welcoming T Level student placements since September 2023. Fostering these relationships builds the students’ skill base in a supportive environment and helps us to grow and nurture generations of healthcare professionals to come”.

- Simon Whitehouse, Chief Executive Officer, Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust

Taken from [Creating safe and effective T Level placements in community nursing](#)

What are the progression routes for T Level students



Students have progressed to support worker or pharmacy assistant roles, started paramedic or physiotherapy apprenticeships and studied adult nursing, mental health nursing or midwifery, amongst other varied destinations.

Hosting students under the age of eighteen

- Check organisational insurance policies, but government guidance indicates no additional cover is needed beyond up-to-date employer's liability insurance and public liability insurance.
- A robust T Level industry placement policy can reassure colleagues that hosting students under eighteen is encouraged. Many employers adapt existing work experience policies as a starting point.
- Consider an industry placement policy tailored for each year of the qualification to address concerns about suitable areas within the organisation.



Benefits to the organisation



Students don't need mentoring from registered professionals. Most are supported by healthcare assistants or undergraduate students.



Could reduce undergraduate attrition as industry placement experience helps students feel more confident in the workplace.



T Level industry placements facilitate a low-cost, sustainable strategy for the creation of a domestic talent pipeline.



Lets students explore career options before committing to recruitment. They may even choose a different NHS career path.



Helps employers assess if the student is a good match for the organisational culture and values.



Students bring strong knowledge and often prior placement experience, allowing them to contribute immediately.

Developing an industry placement

- This is a continued collaborative discussion between the education provider and employer who are available to provide support.
- Employer can outline what industry placement structure works best for the organisation. Organisations may wish to consider pressure at certain points in the year caused by other placements.
- A memorandum of understanding or service level agreement can be signed with the education provider to outline roles and responsibilities.
- The scale of offered T Level industry placements can be changed. Employers can start with a pilot in one area or subject and then potentially increase the offer to other areas, learners and subjects.
- Discuss anticipated costs for with education providers, they will likely have worked with other employers and until March 2026 the Employer Support Fund may be able to be used.

The UK government has developed guidance and documentation to support organisations offering T Level industry placements for the first time.

Industry placements in action

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay

- **Three blocks of three weeks** spread across the two-year qualification.
- **First two blocks:** rotation through different areas including urgent treatment centres, community settings, pharmacy and frailty wards.
- **For the final block** of three weeks, students can choose to return to a previous placement or try a new area.

The Gatsby Foundation commissioned a report that showcases successful T Level industry placements in healthcare, with case studies and reflection questions.

Royal Surrey

- **Three block placements** across two years
- **Year 1:** Focus on outpatient settings, developing professional skills and introducing working in a multidisciplinary team.
- **Year 2:** Expanded to additional areas, including cardiac wards, medical wards and surgical wards.
- All placements include spoke days tailored to students' interests and a weekly reflection session to support learning.

A Department For Education survey found that 71 per cent of T Level completers agreed their course prepared them for the workplace, as opposed to 34 per cent of A Level learners.

Next steps

- **Find providers:** Use the [gov.uk website](#) to search T Level providers by town, postcode, and subject, or [register your details](#) for providers to contact you.
- **Collaborate with providers:** Explore ways they can help promote placements, e.g., webinars or student experience sharing.
- **Review policies:** Check work experience policies and develop as needed to support T Level industry placements.
- **Start small:** Pilot placements in one area before scaling across the organisation.
- **Join the network:** Encourage colleagues to join the [ICS Industry Placement Network](#) for support, research, policy updates, and peer learning.

The NHS Employers [Introduction to T Level industry placements guide](#) provides practical advice on creating placements. It covers career pathways, placement flexibility, and safeguarding students.

Resources to support employers

T Level Hub

The hub brings together information, case studies and resources on how to support T Level students on their industry placement journey.

What makes a great T Level industry placement

Learn from reflections shared by T Level Employer of the Year finalists to help develop and scale industry placements in your organisation.

T Level FAQs

Our FAQ section supports you with questions around industry placements, onboarding, supporting students on placement and financial queries.

