

T Levels in health and care

August 2023

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.

What are T Levels?

T Levels are delivered by selected schools and colleges. They are taught full time and include an industry placement for a minimum of 315 hours (approximately 45 days), which can include up to 35 hours of work taster activities, delivered in an employment setting. 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.



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 an opportunity to develop specialist technical skills relevant to at least one occupation relevant maths, English and

digital skills.

T Levels will also provide a progression pathway to skilled employment, higher or degree-level apprenticeships and higher education.

For those not ready to go directly onto a level three T Level qualification, a transition programme will be available. Find out more about the transition programme.

From September 2024, T Levels will be the technical qualification that young people can take at Level 3 replacing hundreds of BTEC's and other alternative qualifications to A Levels.

Until September 2025, the following qualifications in health will be available to support the transition:

- Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Health and Social Care
- City & Guilds Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care
- NOCN Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care (England)
- TQUK Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care (RQF)
- TQUK Level 3 Diploma in Healthcare Support (RQF)

Following this, the awarding bodies will need to create either T Levels or Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQ's) to take alongside other A Levels following Department for Education's recent review on Level 3 education.

Programme structure and career pathways

A T Level programme is expected to take students around 1,800 hours over two years to complete, including the industry placement.

There is a full range of T Level courses available which will support the NHS including: health, healthcare science, 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.

Towards the end of their first year, students must select a specialism to follow, which enables them to focus their learning toward an occupation, such as physiotherapy or mental health nursing.

‘Since taking part in the pilot, the trust has already created placements in maintenance, administration, and with porters and ward clerks. They have also agreed a placement plan for allied health professions and healthcare science.’

Read how [Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust](#) piloted industry placements with BTEC health and care students, in partnership with their local college.

Find out more about the structure of T Level courses and the stakeholders involved in developing T Levels on the [Department for Education website](#), or resources from [healthcare apprenticeships standards online](#).

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education 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.

For more information, including guidance, tools and resources visit [employer industry placements](#).

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

T Level industry placements explored

Industry placements are intended to provide a practical insight into a learner's chosen sector and should offer the young person a chance to embed their knowledge and skills learned in the education setting. For you as an employer, industry placements provide the opportunity to engage with a new talent pipeline and showcase the variety of roles available in health and social care.

A T Level industry placement can be formed in a variety of different ways:

- be a continuous block of working days
- be distributed across the first and/or second years of the T Level course
- include a taster placement of up to 35 hours
- be hosted by a maximum of two employers for further understanding of the industry
- be gained by paid, part time employment aligned to their chosen T Level subject.

'T Level Industry placements at Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust are finishing a second successful year and now host placement students from three different colleges. Their first cohort of five students have just finished and are now moving onto their next steps.'

Benefits to offering T Level industry placements

- 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.

As of 2023, the Department for Education (DfE) have implemented new delivery approaches that are intended to provide more flexibility, widen the pool and help ensure students can access high-quality and meaningful placements across the country. Further general guidance is [available on the GOV.UK website](#).

The delivery approaches can be used for T Level and all Capacity and Delivery funded placements, with immediate effect, and include:

- Skills hub and employer training centres, where students can spend up to one third of their total industry placement hours in an employer skills hub or training centre to improve their readiness for the real workplace.

- Special educational needs and disability approach (SEND) for students with SEND.
- Youth Offenders Institution approach for all young offenders studying T Levels within young offender institutions.

The below video explores industry placements in the NHS:

Getting started with industry placements

A key organisation which is assisting with industry placements is the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS). They are responsible for providing advice on T Level industry placements to employers. They can also provide a matching service which employers can use to find local education providers who are offering T Level programmes.

In June 2023, we held a webinar where employers shared their experiences planning and hosting T Level industry placements in the NHS. They reflected on preparing to host T Level students, reflections on managing capacity and what their next steps will be.

Industry placements in healthcare science

A report commissioned by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, brings together case study models for placement management. These models range from individual agreements between a single T Level provider and an NHS organisation, through to Integrated Care System agreements between 25 or more partner organisations. The report whilst focussing on placements in healthcare science will offer insight to employers planning multiple placements across health and care.

Funding T Level placements

There are several temporary funding initiatives for 2023/24 that support employers with implementing T Levels in their organisations.

- For financial year 2023/24 there is an employer support fund to provide financial assistance for employers who are hosting industry placements. Employers can claim funding to cover legitimate costs associated with the placement, including set-up costs, equipment and staff training. Employers can claim for relevant costs by following [guidance on the Gov.uk website](#).
- [A 10 per cent uplift in T Level funding for the 2023/4 Academic Year](#). T Level providers will see this in their 16-19 funding allocations that will come over shortly.
- [Careers Guidance Funding for T Level Providers](#). All providers delivering T Levels in the 2023/24 academic year will be given a one-off grant to support the provision of additional careers guidance to ensure all students have a good understanding about T Levels.
- [A Specialist Equipment Allocation](#) for providers delivering T Levels in 2023. Providers will receive a letter setting out their allocation later this month.

The below video showcases a student on an adult nursing industry placement in the NHS:

Placements for students under eighteen

There is a myth that students on industry placement who are under the age of eighteen are unable to work in clinical settings. This is incorrect, and we have created a page to provide [guidance on good employment practice](#) when employing people under the age of 18. This page includes links to case studies with Yeovil District Hospital NHS Trust and University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust. We have also spoken to [Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust](#) on how they have effectively supported students under eighteen.

NHS Employers held [a webinar](#) to discuss the benefits and barriers of hosting students under eighteen.

Safe working hours, DBS and safeguarding

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. Most placements will take place during regular daytime working hours, but in some placements, this may involve working outside normal working hours and should be evaluated to determine the necessity of working outside of these 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](#).

Students must have the correct safeguarding in place to protect themselves and patients while on placement. Training providers hold overall responsibility for safeguarding and the welfare of the student on an industry placement. The training providers will check policies and procedures to make sure the workplace is a safe environment for the student, they may carry out a site visit before the placement starts.

Where necessary, the student must be provided with the relevant equipment to fulfil their duties, the cost of this can be claimed through the education provider.

A DBS check is not required for learners or the staff supervising the student, however, you can request your training provider undertakes a DBS check if this is necessary. The training provider may also ask that the line manager or supervisor to undergo a basic DBS check if they feel this is necessary. For more information, view the [NHS Employers DBS check eligibility tool](#) and the [GOV.UK T Levels web section](#).

Supporting young offenders and students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

T Levels and industry placements are available to young offenders and SEND students. These learners may receive additional adjustments to their course, including a maximum of 105 hours of the industry placement being delivered in the education setting, before completing the remainder of the industry placement in an industry setting. This is to help young offenders and SEND students prepare for a real-life work environment.

Further information

NHS Employers have [created a comprehensive T Levels FAQ](#) answering your questions on T Levels.

For more information, including guidance, tools and resources visit [employer industry placements](#).

The government website also has [a resource library with useful information and materials](#) to help employer engagement with T Levels, including campaign guidelines and an employer toolkit.

To find out more about how you can offer industry placements or further prepare, contact the NAS at: tlevel.placement@education.gov.uk.

[The Challenge 22](#) resources for employers can be used to support the set up and delivery of industry placements and include how to

guides and templates.

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