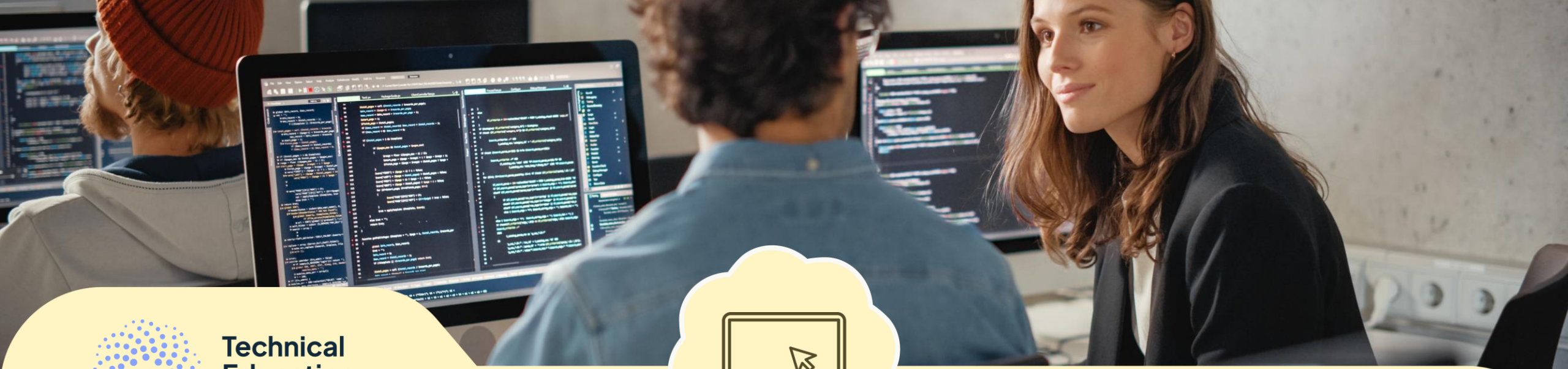


Technical Education Networks

Route: Digital

Digital Software Development

Debbie Eacott, T level Digital Lead, Fareham College

Nandini Vijay, Senior Lecturer, University College Birmingham

Bradley Chinn, Curriculum Area Manager for T level Digital, Exeter College

Version 1, March 2026

Purpose of the Day & Introductions

- Network and relationship building
- Tangible takeaways
- Celebrate progress made

Spend some time introducing yourself. Please include:

- the name of your provider
- T Level delivery experience.

Version 1, March 2026

Review from Opening Session

We have heard from Nigel Duncan and Charlie Moss, plus a Q&A panel.

- What are the key takeaways for you individually from the keynote speakers this morning?

We have also had testimonials from two T Level ‘Student of the Year’

- What one thing stood out to you the most from the student's presentations?
- Overall – what one thing might you develop in your organisation based on the introductory session & panel?

Version 1, March 2026

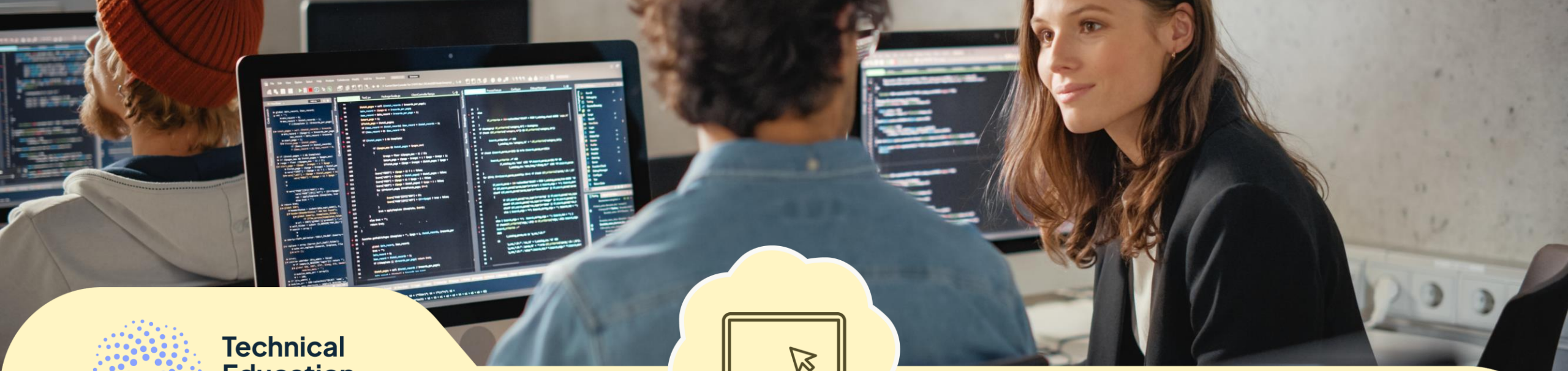
Review from CoP1 & CoP2

CoP 1 - Setting the scene:

- Task & Finish Groups
- Ideas for Gatsby to create teaching materials (DSD)
- Challenges in Student and Parent Perception
- Establishing Ethical Guidelines for AI Tools Occupational Specialism
- Core Exam – Teaching & Learning

CoP 2 – Developing Ideas:

- Challenges & Obstacles in delivery
- Year Planning/Delivery Planning
- Tips for Assessment
- Task & Finish Group updates
- Pearson Exam Wizard
- Employer Set Project Briefs



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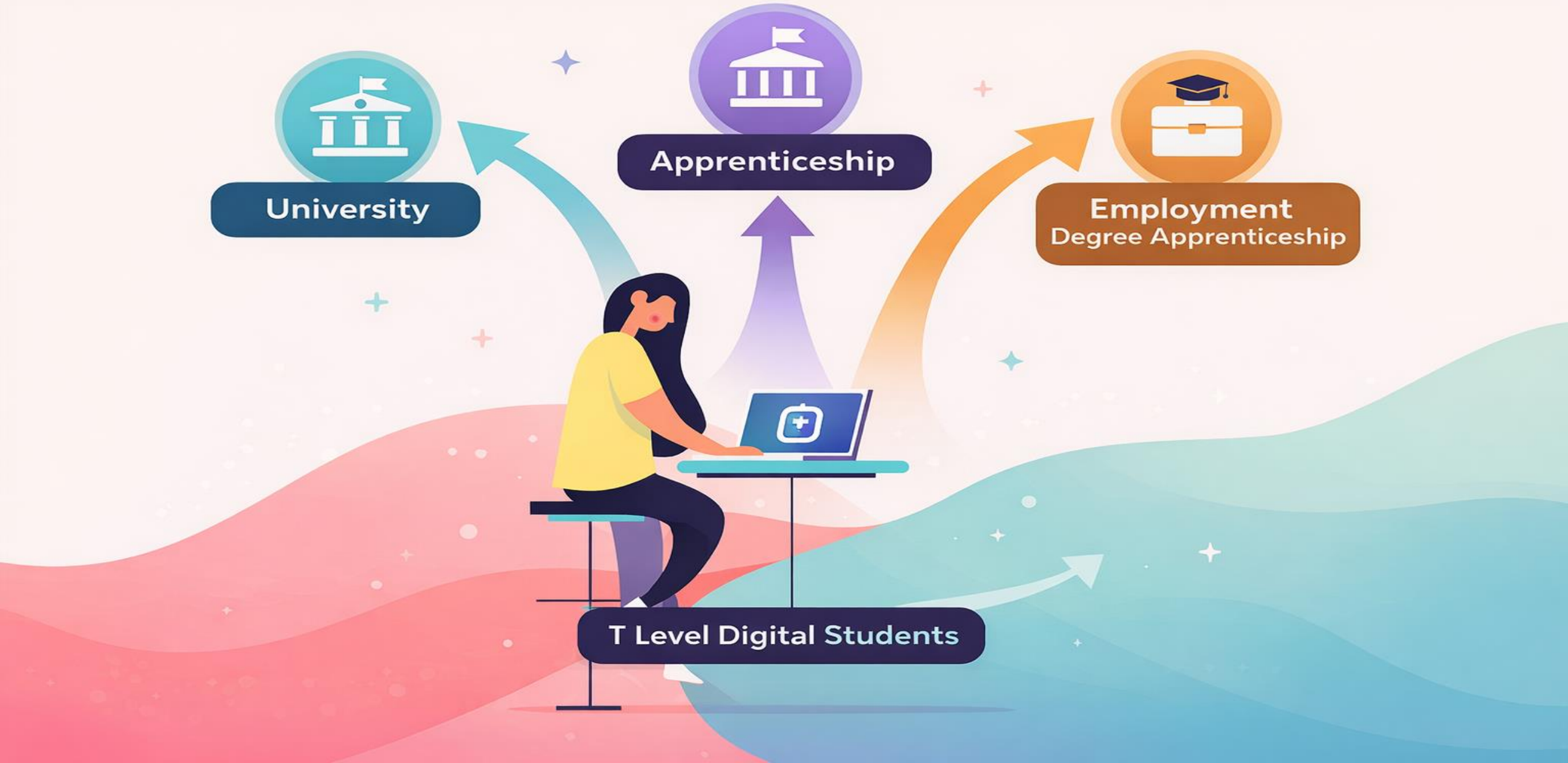
Hot Topics

Debbie Eacott, Nandini Vijay and Bradley Chinn

T Level Progression - Pathways and Support

Version 1, March 2026

T Levels Progression Pathways



Career Progression

01

Embed Structured support from year 1

02

Integrate Academic Readiness

03

Create awareness of different pathways

04

Develop Technical Portfolios

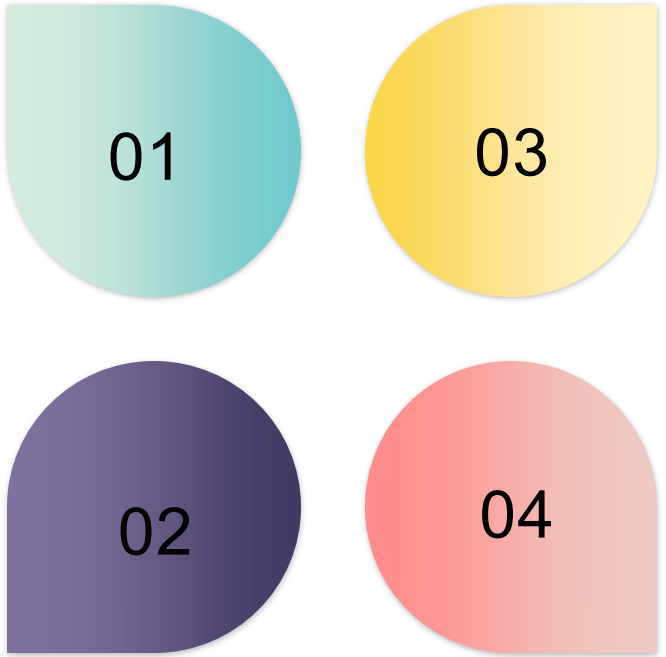
GOALS

Structured Support

- Early Planning- Pathway Identification
- Entry Requirement Mapping
- Regular progression Reviews
- Backup Planning

Academic Readiness

- Strengthen Academic Writing
- Develop Confidence
- Mock Interviews



Performance Preparation

- Refine Personal statements
- Employer Expectations – Workshops
- Apprenticeship/ Degree Apprenticeship/ UCAS application Workshops

Develop Technical Portfolios

- GitHub repositories
- Project case studies,
- Placement reflective documentation.

Current Challenges- For T level students in Progression

01

T levels- Not included in entry requirements in certain Universities inclusing Russell Group

02

Inconsistent Understanding of T level Qualifications – Across HE Institutions

03

Limited Employer Awareness about T level course pathways & progression

04

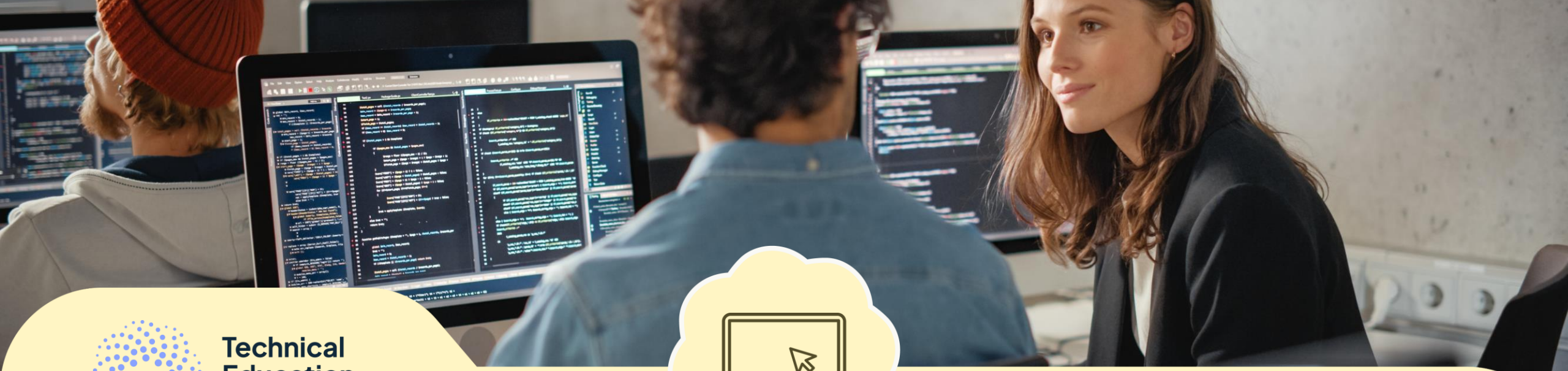
Limited L4 degree Apprenticeships oppurtunities in Digital

05

Limited Employment Opportunity / Apprenticeship opportunity

06

Prestige Gap – Students & parents perceive A levels as prestigious / Safer option



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Lunch & Networking

Session 2 starts promptly at 13:30pm

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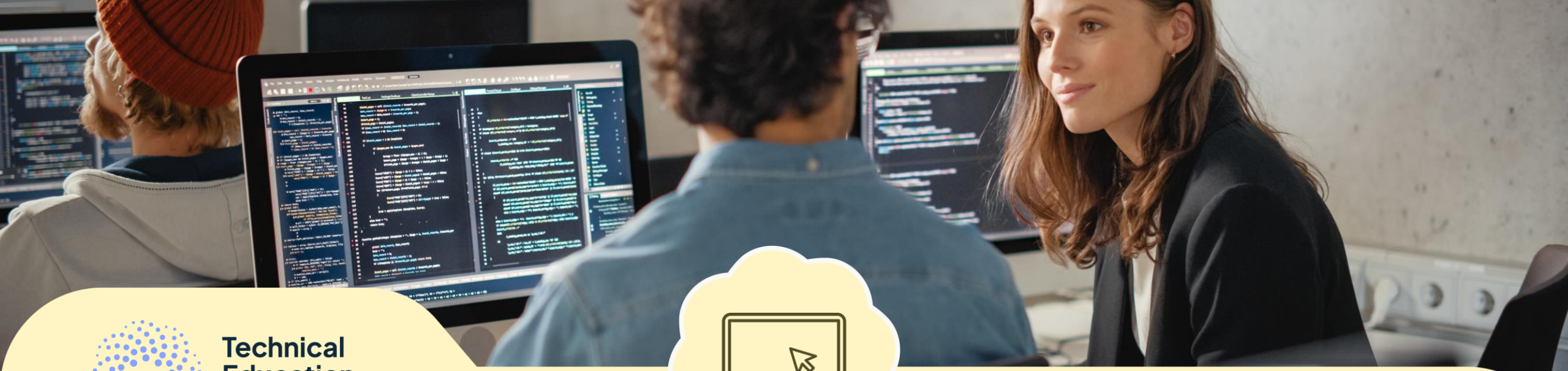

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Welcome Back

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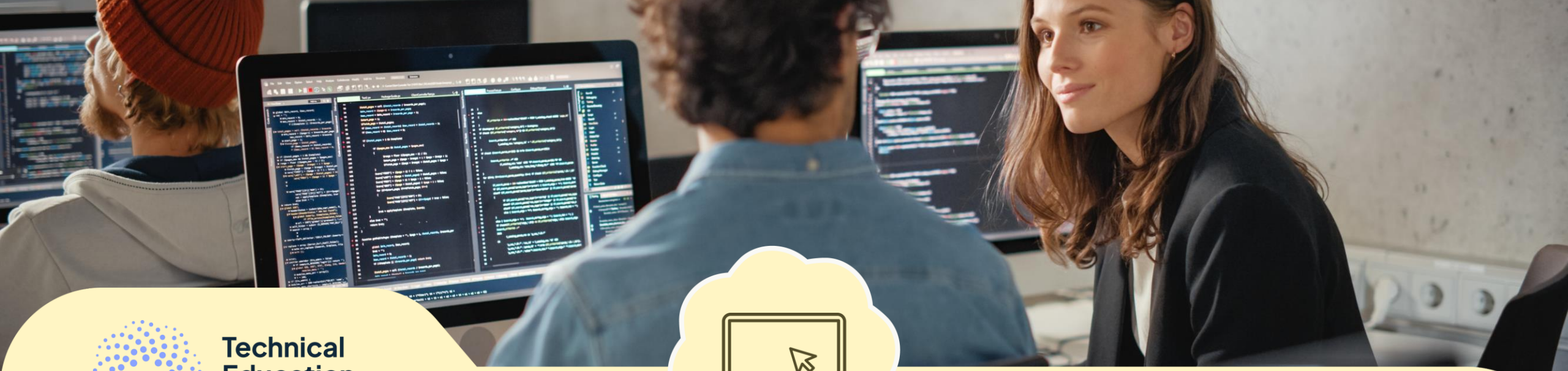


Technical Education Networks

Networking & Discussion

Preparing T Level Digital Students for Industry Success

Debbie Eacott, Nandini Vijay and Bradley Chinn

Version 1, March 2026

Core Technical Skills to Master

Programming & Testing

Coding, debugging, and software testing across multiple languages and environments.

Data Handling

Analysis, modelling, and secure data management aligned with real business needs.

Digital Environments

Working confidently across physical, virtual, and cloud-based platforms.

Emerging Technologies

Practical applications of IoT, AI, AR, and Blockchain in digital contexts.

Legal & Ethical Awareness

Data privacy, regulatory compliance, and cybersecurity fundamentals every employer expects.

Transferable Skills Driving Industry Readiness

- Problem Solving
- Project Management
- Communication & Teamwork
- Professional Behaviours
- Reflective Practice

Industry Placement: Bridging Classroom & Workplace

MINIMUM 315 HOURS · ~45 DAYS

Real Workplace Experience

Embedded in genuine digital businesses, tackling employer-set projects that mirror authentic industry challenges.

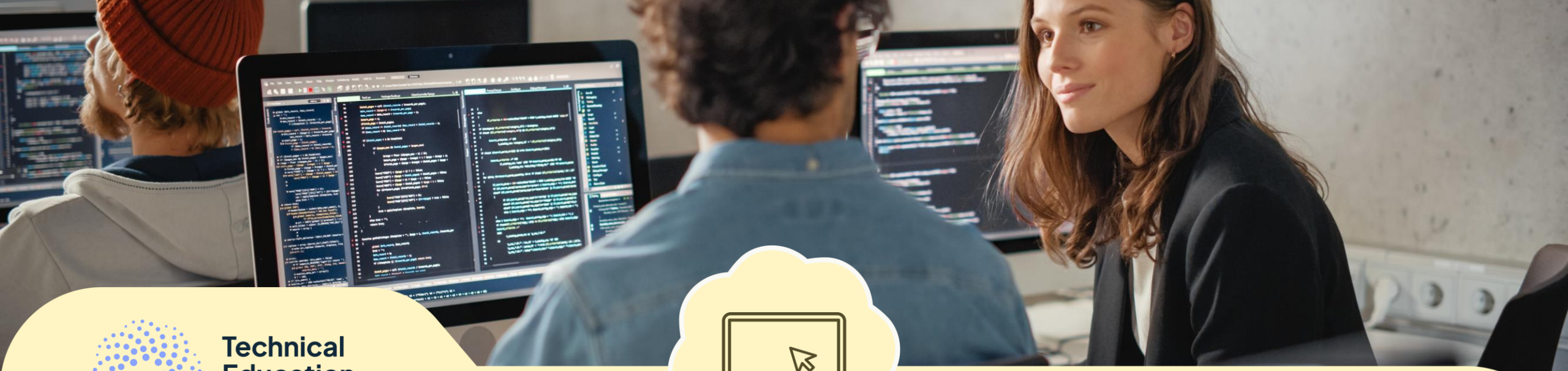
Current Tools & Workflows

Direct exposure to the tools, platforms, and team dynamics used by industry professionals every day.

Pathway to Employment

A proven route to skilled employment or higher education, building the professional standards employers value most.

Key Outcome: Students develop the behaviours, confidence, and technical credibility that make them genuinely industry-ready — not just qualified.



Technical Education Networks

Networking & Discussion

Preparing T Level Digital Students for Exams

Debbie Eacott, Nandini Vijay and Bradley Chinn

Version 1, March 2026

Exam preparation

- Occupational Specialism
- Core Papers & ESP

Never too late for preparation - Digital Software Development

EXAM READINESS

Occupational Specialism

- Peer marking
- Timing
- Research
- Exam rules

Never too late for preparation - Digital Software Development

EXAM READINESS

Core Papers

- Team work
- Understanding the command word/mark
- Timing for the larger marks

Never too late for preparation - Digital Software Development

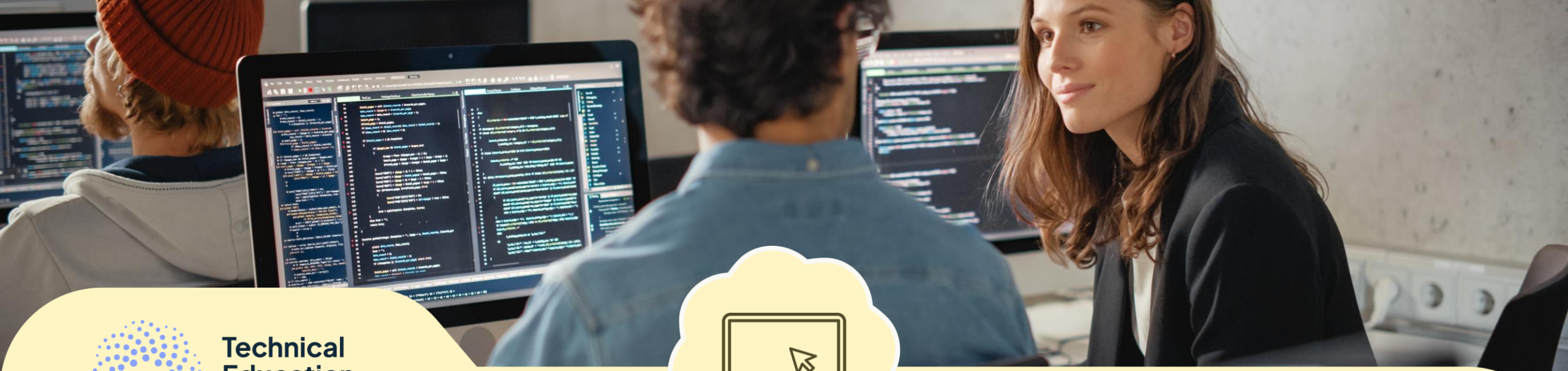
EXAM READINESS

ESP

- Practice
- Design
- Task 4b

Never too late for preparation - Digital Software Development

EXAM READINESS



Technical Education Networks

Resources

Debbie Eacott

Project briefs

Version 1, March 2026

Rationale

In response to teacher and examiner feedback:

- A need is identified for realistic, adaptable project briefs.
- Project briefs help students practise applying knowledge, justifying decisions, and preparing for the ESP.
- They are designed with step-by-step teaching guidance, worked examples, and independent tasks to support both teachers and students.

Version 1, March 2026

Overview of Resource

The resource is being developed to support teaching **computational thinking skills** in Digital Software Development. Core themes include:

- Problem solving
- Decomposition
- Abstraction
- Algorithms
- Strategic approaches
- Designed as **standalone, flexible resources** that teachers can embed into existing schemes of work.

Version 1, March 2026

Overview of Resource

The resource designed will include:

- teaching guidance
- a slide deck
- a short industry-focused video/animation
- project-based activities.

Version 1, March 2026

Overview of Resource

The **Teaching Guidance** will include:

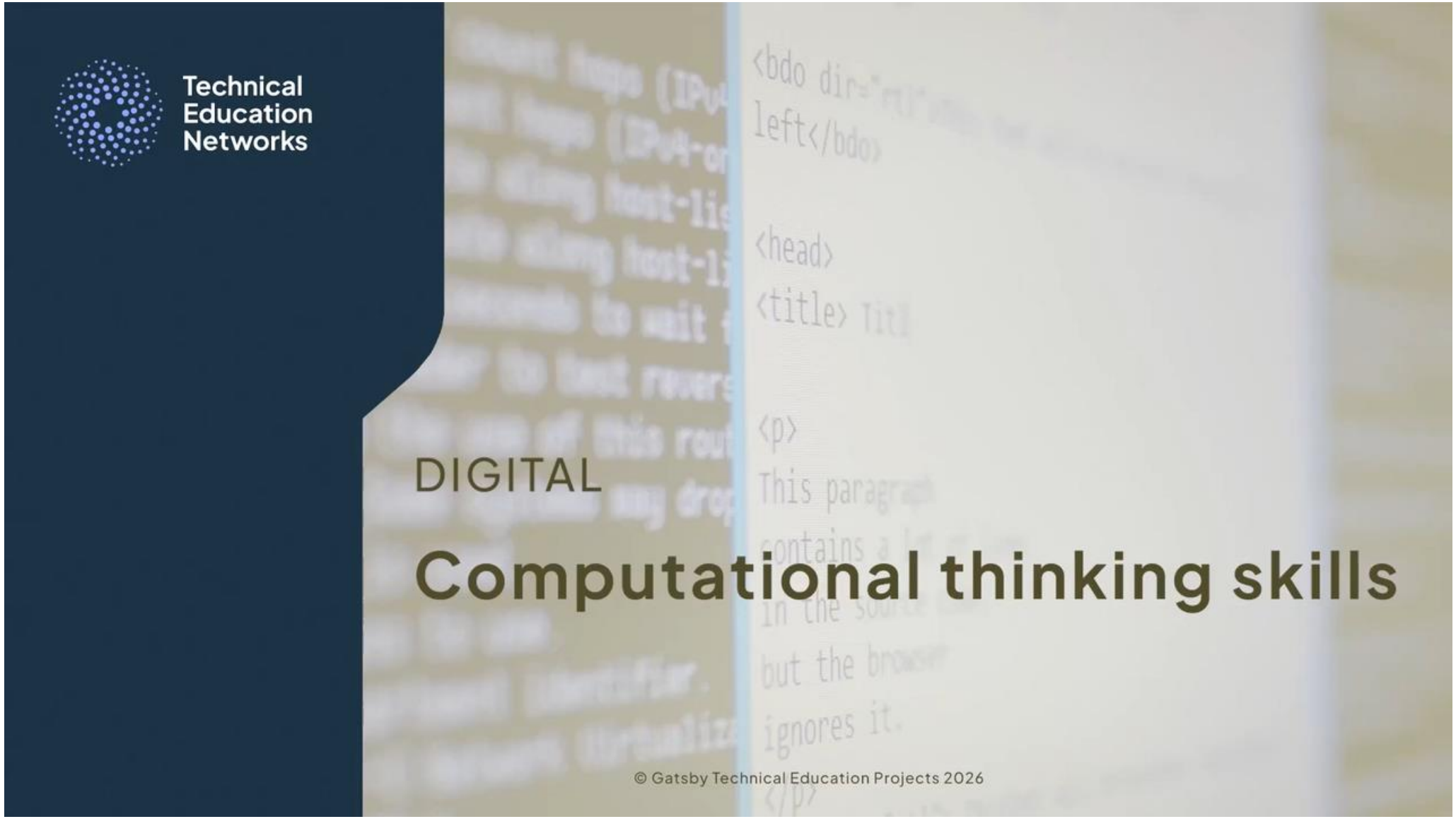
- clear sequencing following a **concept → application → evaluation** model
- support for teaching computational thinking beyond surface definitions
- guidance on helping students justify reasoning in extended responses
- advice on addressing common misconceptions (e.g. naming vs applying concepts)
- links to specification content
- links to supporting assets, including video, slides and worksheets.

Overview of Resource

The short video will:

- demonstrate computational thinking in a real-world industry context
- show how professionals use decomposition, abstraction and algorithms in practice
- help students see the relevance beyond the classroom
- act as a discussion stimulus before project-based application.

Please note these resources are currently in the Editorial and Production stages and are not final or published.



Version 1, March 2026

Overview of Resource

Project-based activities will provide:

- a realistic digital problem scenario
- structured tasks moving from analysis to solution design
- opportunities for peer review and reflection
- exam-style extended response practice.

Version 1, March 2026

Questions for CoPs

- **What are your initial thoughts on this resource concept?**
- **What's your initial reaction to this resource proposal?**
- **Are there other resources that you would like to be developed?**

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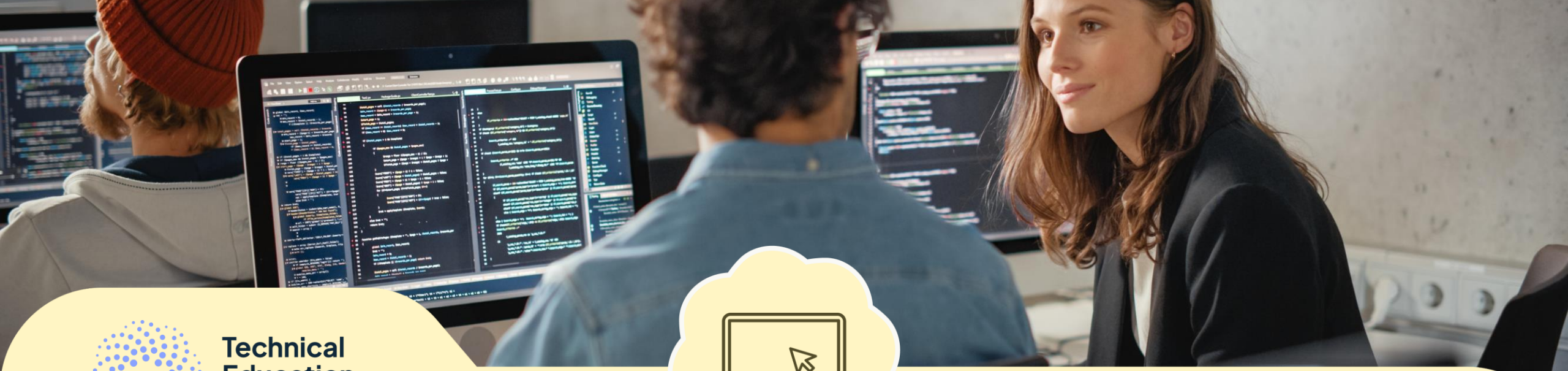

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Visual Curriculum Models

Friday 6th March 2026

Richard Patient

Version 1, March 2026

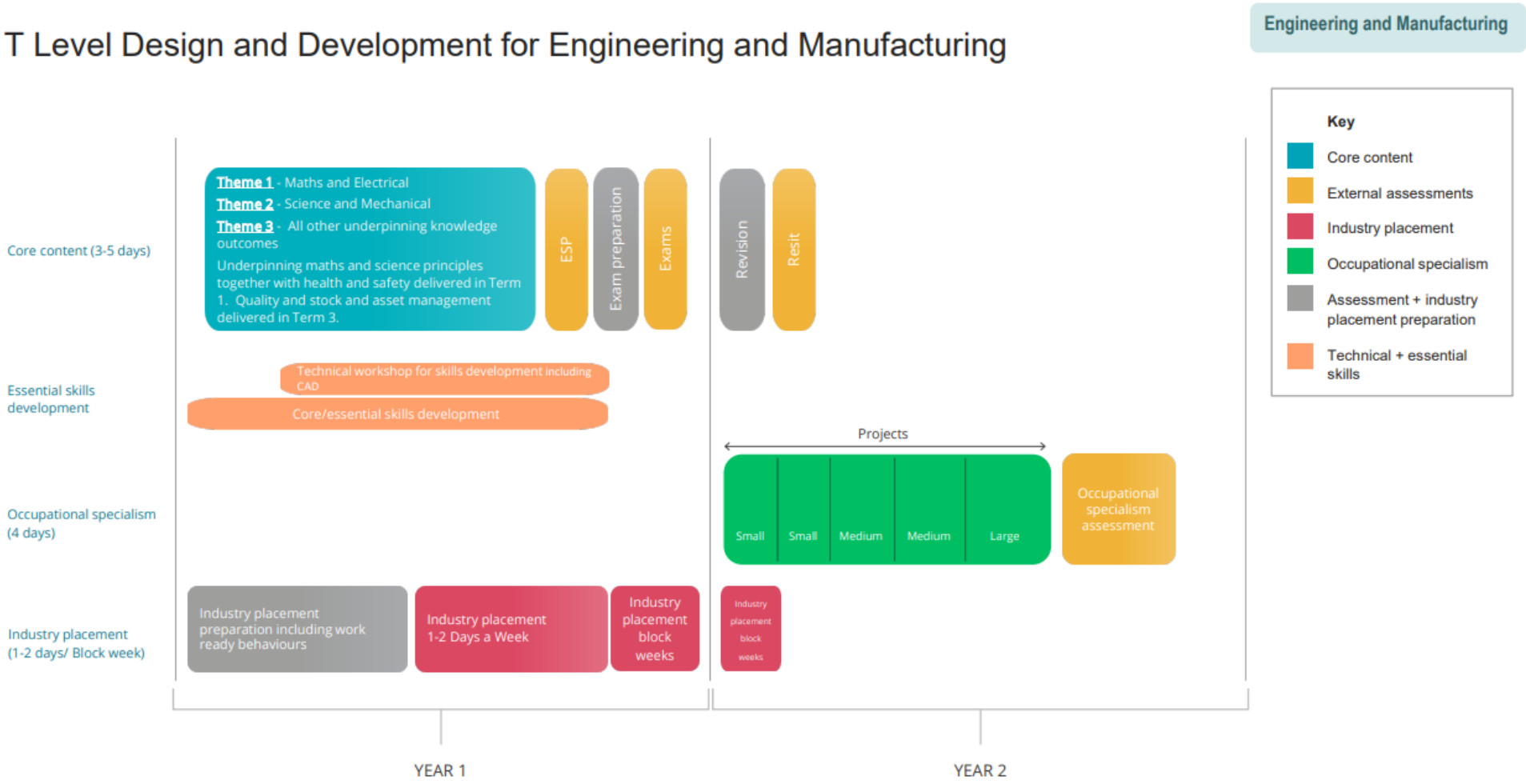
Curriculum Models

Gatsby undertook some work with AoC in 2023/24 to create macro sequencing curriculum models for four T Levels in Construction, Digital, Engineering & Manufacturing, and Health & Science.

For these routes, we want to update the models based on changes in delivery and decoupling of core assessments and create an additional document to support the curriculum model.

Version 1, March 2026

Curriculum Model Example



Curriculum Models

On your tables will be copies of the existing curriculum model and a blank model. Please can colleagues:

- discuss these on your table and update the models as clearly as you can
- add any useful information to the model you think will be helpful, especially for a new teacher wanting to use the model
- include names, emails and provider names on the back of the model(s) identifying who has contributed to these. We'll want to capture this in the information should we need to follow up before publication.

Version 1, March 2026

Supporting Document

On your tables will be an example of the supporting documents for Year 1 and Year 2 of the T Level and a blank version. On the blank versions, please can colleagues:

- discuss these on your table and update with the key information as clearly as you can
- add any useful information you think will be helpful, especially for a new teacher wanting to use the documents
- include names, emails and provide names on the back of the model(s) identifying who has contributed to these. We'll want to capture this in the information should we need to follow up before publication.

Version 1, March 2026

Supporting Document Year 1

T Level Technical Qualification in Digital Support and Security: **Year 1**

This document offers an overview of the key curriculum themes and skills that students will develop through each of the two years of the T-level.

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TERM 1

Half-term 1

- On entry to the programme, students will be introduced to college systems, procedures, lesson structures, and the unit setup and assessment.
- During induction, students complete initial assessments to gauge interest and suitability. The topics range from digital support services to English and Mathematics.

Half-term 2

- At the start of Term 1, students explore vocations in digital support services through modules in digital analysis, cyber security, software testing and business context. This aims to highlight the many opportunities in the sector.
- The term focuses on core topics within digital support services, covering digital analysis, cyber security, software testing and business context. Practical training provides hands-on experience with industry-standard tools and platforms – all chosen with input from experts in the main fields of digital support services.

TERM 2

Half-term 3

- By this stage, students will have showcased their skills and knowledge through mock examinations before and after the winter break.
- The start of Term 2 marks the midpoint of the course and introduces supplementary units to strengthen the curriculum and prepare students for end-of-year exams and the Employer Set Project (ESP).
- Students focus on applying theory in practice, to build skills and the confidence needed to thrive.

Half-term 4

- Alongside developing their core curriculum knowledge and additional pathway content, students will focus on revision techniques and materials, as there is limited time before the final exams.
- Towards the end of Term 2, students sit further mock exams to measure progress and identify strengths and weaknesses. The results will inform targeted recap sessions.

TERM 3

Half-term 5

- In the final term, students show advanced skills across the curriculum. The focus is on thorough revision, planning and organisation to prepare for end-of-year exams and the ESP.
- The ESP, made up of several tasks, assesses knowledge and skills from the 'Core' element of the course. Regular mock exams and embedded Assessment for Learning techniques give students the confidence to apply their knowledge directly.

Half-term 6

- After May half-term, the focus shifts to revising for the ESP and June exams.
- Students may also complete their work placement before Year 2, developing professional skills to meet employer expectations.

Supporting Document Year 2

T Level Technical Qualification in Digital Support and Security: **Year 2**

This document offers an overview of the key curriculum themes and skills that students will develop through each of the two years of the T-level.

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TERM 1

Half-term 1

- On entry to Year 2, students are reintroduced to college systems, procedures, lesson structures and classroom etiquette, with reminders of appropriate behaviour, motivation and work ethic.
- During induction, students review the previous year's grades and work placement, and the key skills and knowledge they developed.

Half-term 2

- At the start of Term 1, students explore careers in digital support services, focusing on networking and servers, digital security, and research techniques. Through dedicated modules, they gain insight into network infrastructure, server management, cybersecurity protocols and advanced research methodologies.
- The curriculum prioritises these core subjects, providing practical exposure to industry-standard tools and platforms to build students' proficiency.

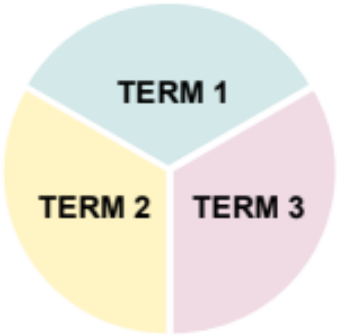
TERM 2

Half-term 3

- By this point, students have shown their skills through mock projects before and after the holidays. Term 2, the course midpoint , introduces additional practical and revision sessions to strengthen preparation for the final exams.
- Students focus on applying theory practically in areas such as networking and servers, digital security, and research techniques. They then refine their skills through practical exams and revision.

Half-term 4

- Alongside developing their core curriculum knowledge and additional pathway content, students focus on revision techniques and materials in preparation for the end-point synoptic assessment.
- At the end of Term 2, additional practical exams measure students' progress, identifying strengths and weaknesses to inform targeted recap sessions.



TERM 3

Half-term 5

- In Term 3, students put all course knowledge into practice to ensure they can meet the synoptic assessment criteria set by the awarding body.
- The synoptic assessment is a practical, task-based project graded at pass, merit or distinction. It focuses on meeting required performance outcomes.

Half-term 6

- End-of-programme celebrations and final assessments mark the culmination of students' T-level journey! Students can reflect on two years of growth and achievement. Awards for academic excellence, technical skill, creativity and overall contribution are presented at a graduation ceremony.
- Students leave with a strong foundation in digital production, design, development, a professional portfolio and industry contacts, ready for success in their digital careers.

Next Steps……

The models and documents created today will be given to Gatsby to work with their publishers to create new documents and hopefully published on the Technical Education Networks website.

Please ensure your name, email address and provider are included on the back of the models you have been working on should we need to follow up to clarify any suggestions made.

Version 1, March 2026

Dates for your diary

Industry Associates Training Programme and Event

29th April 2026

Gatsby have an in-person event in London for FE Leaders/Teaching and Learning leads and stakeholders to share findings and implementation of the Industry Associates training programme pilot

Please contact FEworkforce@gatsby.org.uk for more details or speak to Rory on the Gatsby stand.

Next Community of Practice meeting

- 24th June 2026 at 3:30pm

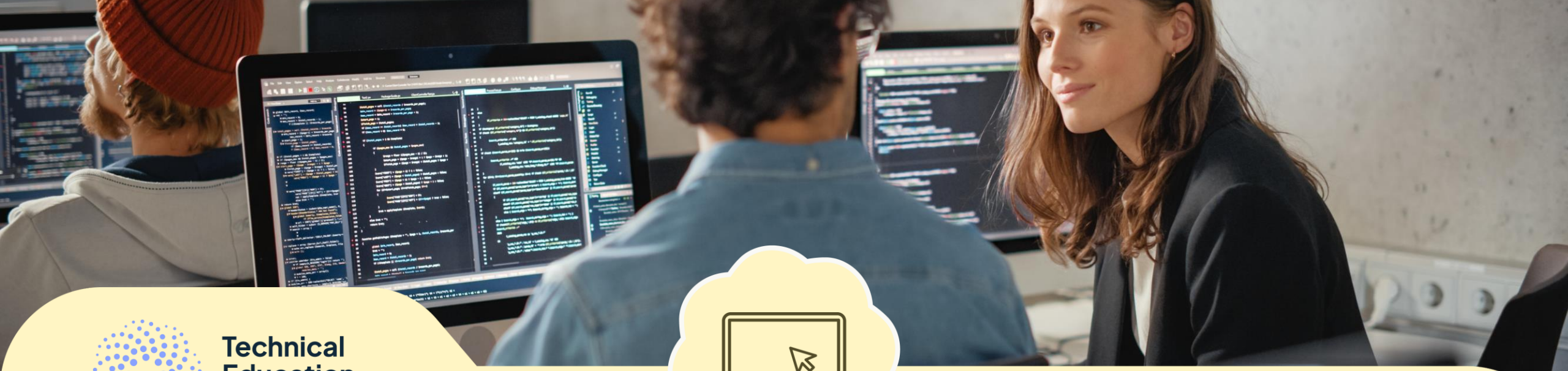
Route Reflections & Next Steps

Before you leave today

We would really value your feedback before you head off. It takes just two minutes and helps us improve future events.

Please scan the QR code now to share your feedback.

Version 1, March 2026



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Thank you for attending

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