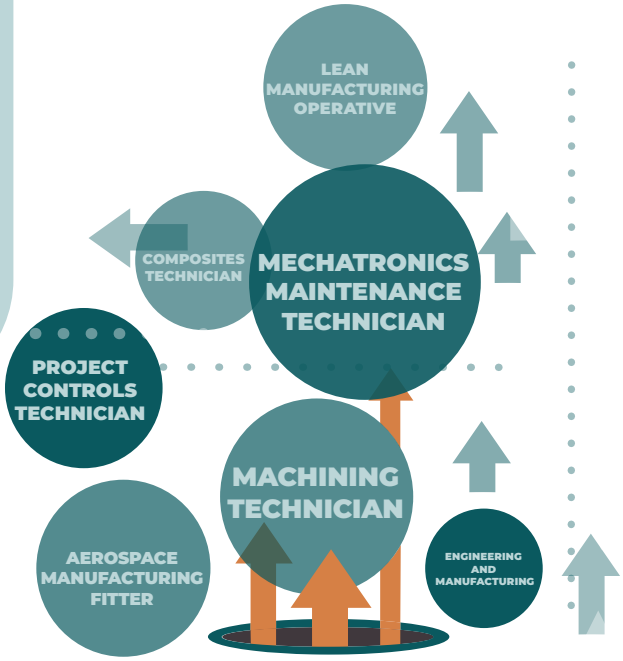
T-LEVELS
THE NEXT LEVEL QUALIFICATION

EMPLOYERS' GUIDE

HOSTING AN **ENGINEERING AND MANUFACTURING** INDUSTRY PLACEMENT

Developed in partnership with employers, colleges and schools and aligned to a shared understanding of what works well in practice for engineering and manufacturing industry placements.



Hosting an industry placement is a practical way to support your future workforce while bringing an extra pair of hands into your team.

It does not need to be complex or time-consuming. Many employers start small and build from there.

WHY EMPLOYERS CHOOSE TO HOST

Employers choose to host industry placements for a range of practical and strategic reasons. Common benefits include:

- Identifying potential future apprentices or recruits earlier
- Strengthening internal mentoring and supervision capability
- Bringing additional support to defined tasks or team activity
- Increasing team awareness of early talent pathways
- Contributing to local skills development
- Building relationships with colleges and schools

Most importantly, employers find that a well-planned placement is both achievable and worthwhile.

REDPACK

Gary Howard

"In engineering and manufacturing, students learn a huge amount by being around real work, real teams and real expectations. The key is to give them clear boundaries, good supervision and regular feedback, so they can understand what good looks like and can build their confidence safely. When we get that support right (and we do!), students do not just observe the workplace, they start to understand how they can contribute to it (and they do!)."

THINKING ABOUT HOSTING?

Many organisations are interested in supporting early talent but want a clear understanding of what it would involve in practice.

Students are not employees and are not expected to operate at that level. However, they can contribute to real work in small, structured and supervised ways, while building confidence and developing an understanding of engineering and manufacturing settings.

When expectations are clear from the outset, most employers find that hosting is straightforward and manageable for their teams.

WHAT MIGHT A STUDENT ACTUALLY DO?

Students are not expected to be fully trained employees, but they can support day-to-day activity while gaining exposure to how work is carried out safely, accurately and effectively.

Through this experience, students develop a practical understanding of how work is carried out in real engineering and manufacturing settings, including:

- Confidence working in a professional environment
- Communication skills with colleagues and supervisors
- Understanding of how teams work to defined processes and standards
- Awareness of expectations around time, behaviour and responsibility
- Insight into roles and career pathways

Many employers begin with a small number of clearly defined tasks and build from there as confidence grows.

Depending on your setting, this may include:

- Observing processes and how work is carried out
- Assisting with preparation, setup or basic tasks
- Supporting inspections, testing or quality assurance activity
- Carrying out simple, structured tasks under supervision
- Recording information, measurements or observations
- Helping maintain tools, equipment or workspaces
- Shadowing different roles across the team

These are often the areas where students can contribute most effectively.

Clearly defined tasks allow students to add value while learning how work is carried out safely, accurately and to the required standard.

Observation alone is rarely sufficient – students should move, where appropriate, into supported participation.

DESIGNING A PLACEMENT THAT WORKS FOR YOUR TEAM

Placements should reflect how work is organised and delivered in your setting, including processes, production cycles and team structures.

Many employers start by identifying a small area of work where a student can provide structured support.

For example:

- Structured blocks aligned to production or project phases
- Regular attendance over a defined period
- A mix of observation, supported contribution and supervised tasks

Your college or school will work with you to shape a structure that fits your capacity while ensuring the student gains meaningful and appropriate experience.

The aim is not to replicate a full-time role, but to provide structured exposure to real working practice.

1710 Naval Air Squadron in Portsmouth have been working alongside their local college to set up and facilitate two industry placements in engineering and manufacturing. In this video we look at the benefits industry placements can provide organisations like the Royal Navy and the other armed forces.

https://vimeo.com/981810505?fl=pl&fe=sh

HepcoMotion is an employer successfully delivering T Level industry placements and values partnering with education providers to develop future talent.

The video gives practical insight into how they have approached employer responsibilities, including health & safety and insurance considerations.

https://vimeo.com/947029511?fl=pl&fe=sh

SAFETY AND SUPERVISION

Safety is a central part of all engineering and manufacturing placements and should be considered from the outset.

In practice, this means the student should be able to:

- Follow instructions carefully
- Work within clearly defined boundaries
- Be supervised appropriately
- Understand health and safety expectations

Not all tasks can be undertaken independently by students, and this should be reflected in how the placement is designed.

Colleges and schools will support you to ensure placements are safe, appropriate and delivered in line with requirements.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS DURING THE PLACEMENT

Students benefit from clear expectations, structured support and regular feedback.

Employers typically:

- Provide a short induction
- Explain expectations around behaviour and safety
- Offer regular, informal check-ins
- Highlight strengths and areas for development
- Provide end-of-placement feedback

Feedback does not need to be formal or time-consuming – short conversations are often most effective.

Most employers find supervision becomes lighter once expectations are established and the student's confidence grows.

HF Bond is an SME engineering business delivering T Level industry placements.

This video shares insight into the real business benefits of participation, from developing future talent pipelines to strengthening workforce skills through early engagement with students.

https://vimeo.com/982504364?fl=pl&fe=sh

HOW COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS SUPPORT YOU

Colleges and schools play an active role in planning and coordinating placements, helping to ensure they are structured, appropriate and manageable for employers.

This usually includes:

- Preparing students before they arrive
- Supporting planning and task design
- Agreeing clear expectations and contacts
- Maintaining communication
- Resolving issues if needed
- Ensuring requirements are met

Employers are not expected to manage placements alone – Colleges and schools play an active role throughout.

SUPPORTING FUTURE TALENT AND PROGRESSION

Hosting an industry placement provides early insight into emerging talent. For many employers, it also provides an opportunity to identify individuals who may be suited to apprenticeships or entry-level roles within their organisation.

There is no expectation to offer employment, but many employers choose to:

- Stay in contact with students
- Offer advice or feedback
- Highlight apprenticeship opportunities
- Recommend students to others

Placements often contribute to longer-term talent pipelines.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND LONG-TERM ENGAGEMENT

Placements tend to improve over time.

Many employers find that a second placement requires significantly less planning than the first.

Small adjustments often lead to smoother, safer and more confident experiences.

Many employers who start with one student go on to build placements into their regular way of working.

Hosting an industry placement does not require perfection or additional infrastructure. It starts with a clear, manageable approach and develops over time.

REDPACK

Gary Howard

"No employer has to have the perfect placement model from day one. You start with a clear, manageable plan, learn from each student and keep improving it. At Redpack, every T Level placement has helped us strengthen how we support young people and build future engineering capability. The more you do it, the more it becomes part of how you grow your workforce."

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