T-LEVELS
THE NEXT LEVEL QUALIFICATION

EMPLOYERS' GUIDE

SUPPORTING AND SUPERVISING **MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION** INDUSTRY PLACEMENT

A practical guide for giving students clear, useful work in a busy management or administration environment.



PURPOSE

This guide helps employers host management and administration industry placement students with confidence. It focuses on what usually helps students settle in, contribute to real work and become integrated members of the team.

WHAT A STRONG PLACEMENT LOOKS LIKE

In management and administration, strong placements are usually built around the real work that helps a team, department or organisation run well. The aim is not to create artificial tasks for the student, but to help them take part in everyday business activity in a safe, supported and purposeful way.

POSITIVE STARTING POINT

Many students will start their placement with limited experience of the workplace. That is normal. With clear expectations, encouragement and practical tasks, they can build confidence quickly and make a meaningful contribution.

STRONG PLACEMENTS ARE BUILT AROUND FIVE CONNECTED ELEMENTS

CLEAR AND MANAGEABLE FOR EMPLOYERS

The employer understands the student's role, what support is needed and how the placement can fit within normal team activity. The student has a named contact, ideally someone they have met before the placement starts, and clear points for check-in and feedback.

STUDENTS READY FOR HOW WORK ACTUALLY HAPPENS

Students understand that management and administration work often involves communication, accuracy, confidentiality, organisation, routine tasks and working with different people across a team or service.

CONTRIBUTION TO REAL WORKFLOW

Students take part in useful activity that supports the team, such as updating records, preparing documents, organising information, tracking actions, supporting meetings or helping with team processes. Activities should build over time, with realistic expectations established for students from the outset.

LEARNING CONNECTED TO REAL PRACTICE

Placement activity helps students understand how classroom learning applies in a real workplace. Students are supported to reflect on what they are learning, what they are doing well and what they need to improve.

SUSTAINABLE AND REPEATABLE OVER TIME

The placement feels worthwhile and manageable for the employer and provider. Feedback is used to improve future placements, making it easier for the employer to host again.

A strong placement does not need to be complex. It works best when the employer identifies useful, manageable activity that already forms part of how the team works, and the provider helps prepare the student to contribute appropriately.

This short video case study features two students working in different teams with the John Lewis Partnership. They share perspectives on industry placements, including the types of workplace activities students undertake, the support they receive and the skills they develop in professional environments.

https://youtu.be/ZhH4Blx8c7c

START WITH REAL, EVERYDAY WORK

Employers do not need to create a special project.

Start by asking: what parts of our day-to-day work could a student support with guidance?

- Look at routine work that already happens in the team.
- Choose tasks that can be explained clearly and repeated.
- Start small, then build responsibility as confidence grows.
- Be clear about what the student can do independently and what they should check first.
- Agree the pattern of attendance and support with the college or school.

TASKS STUDENTS CAN USUALLY START WITH

Most students will need guidance at first. These examples are prompts to help employers identify realistic early tasks.

AREA	POSSIBLE STUDENT TASKS	SUPPORT THAT HELPS
General administration	Filing, scanning, photocopying, organising documents, updating records or trackers.	Show the process, provide an example and check accuracy at first.
Communication	Drafting simple emails from templates, taking messages, redirecting calls or responding to basic enquiries.	Agree wording, tone, confidentiality and when to check before sending.
Meetings and team support	Booking rooms, setting up online meetings, preparing attendance lists or taking simple notes.	Explain the purpose of the meeting and what needs to be recorded.
Reporting and information	Collating figures, updating a weekly summary, checking data or preparing simple tables.	Give a clear template and explain what accuracy looks like.
Processes and systems	Following a step-by-step process, updating shared folders, logging requests or tracking actions.	Provide written instructions and a named person to ask if unsure.

IN PRACTICE

A useful first task could be observing how incoming requests are handled, then helping to log or categorise them using an agreed template. This gives the student a real task while keeping the activity supervised and manageable.

GETTING THE FIRST DAY RIGHT

A simple, friendly first day helps students settle quickly. It does not need to cover everything. The priority is that the student understands the team, the basics of the workplace and what they can do first.

- Introduce the student to key people and where they will work.
- Explain working hours, breaks, dress code, any adjustments needed, communication routes and confidentiality.
- Show how work comes into the team and how priorities are managed.
- Make sure the student has access to the systems they need.
- Give the student something practical to do early on.
- Check they know who to speak to if they are unsure.

SUPERVISION THAT FEELS MANAGEABLE

Students do not need constant supervision. They do need clarity, access to support and regular feedback. Short, planned contact is often enough to keep the placement positive and productive.

Where any hours are completed remotely or in a hybrid pattern, agree this with the college or school in advance. Remote work should include clear tasks, regular contact and an agreed route for asking questions.

- **Name one main point of contact.**
- **Use short check-ins at the start or end of the day, or at agreed points during the week.**
- **Give clear instructions and examples of the standard expected.**
- **Encourage questions early.**
- **Where appropriate, use a current apprentice, junior colleague or former placement student as a buddy.**

HELPING STUDENTS BUILD PROFESSIONAL HABITS

For many students, this may be their first professional environment. They may be capable, but still learning how workplace communication, pace and expectations feel in practice.

This is where employers can make a real difference. Small explanations and early feedback often help students adapt quickly.

EXPLAIN	HELPFUL EXAMPLE
How tasks are given	"Check the shared task list each morning and ask me if anything is unclear."
What good work looks like	"Before you send anything on, check names, dates, spelling and whether the tone is right."
How to ask for help	"If you have been stuck for more than 10 minutes, come and ask."
How feedback will work	"We will have a quick check-in every Wednesday to talk about what is going well and what to focus on next."

KEEPING THE PLACEMENT ON TRACK

Most placements work well when expectations are clear and small issues are picked up early. If something needs adjusting, it is usually best to deal with it quickly and calmly.

- Be specific about what has gone well and what needs to improve.
- Explain what good would look like next time.
- Give the student a chance to try again.
- Use the college or school contact as a partner if extra support is needed.
- Keep feedback balanced so the student knows what to continue as well as what to change.

POSITIVE FRAMING FOR FEEDBACK

Try: "You are settling in well. The next thing to work on is checking details before you send work across. Let's look at an example together."

REVIEWING PROGRESS AND ENDING WELL

Short check-ins help students understand how they are doing and give employers a simple way to recognise progress. These informal conversations sit alongside the formal review meetings arranged by the college or school.

- What is going well?
- What has the student contributed?
- What have they learned about the workplace or the role?
- What would help them improve further?
- What should they focus on next?

The college or school will arrange formal review meetings with the student and employer during the placement. These reviews check that the student has settled in, is progressing towards their learning goals and has suitable tasks and support. At the final review, the college or school will confirm whether the student has met the industry placement completion criteria.

Employers will also be asked to provide an appraisal of the student's performance, including how they have progressed towards their learning goals. A short end-of-placement conversation, or a 5 to 10 minute student summary, can help bring this together in a positive way.

LINCOLNSHIRE CO-OP

Erika Stainton

"It's important to develop a close relationship with your training provider as this is the best way to ensure placements go smoothly and remain on track. We start preparing for them weeks or sometimes months ahead of placements starting. By understanding what students are learning in school/ college before they reach the workplace, what their strengths and interests are and what they're hoping to get out of the placement, employers can plan placements that immediately appeal to students so they can hit the ground running. Expectations can be set in the classroom then reinforced in the workplace so there are no surprises. Regular check-ins with students are key, if possible, employers should appoint an impartial colleague/ mentor who is not immediately line managing students who they can speak with regularly. This provides a safe space for students to share their honest thoughts about the workplace and issues are picked up and can be dealt with early."

HELPING STUDENTS THINK ABOUT THEIR FUTURE

One of the most valuable parts of a placement is the chance for a young person to see what working life could look like for them. Employers can help students explore different roles, notice what they enjoy and understand how people build a career over time.

This does not mean promising a job at the end of the placement. It simply means helping the student connect their experience to future possibilities.

- Talk about different roles in the team and how people moved into them.
- Explain the skills, behaviours and attitudes that help people progress.
- Encourage the student to notice which tasks they enjoy or find interesting.
- Where appropriate, introduce them to apprentices, junior staff or colleagues in related roles.
- Help them understand possible next steps, such as apprenticeships, entry-level roles or further study.

PROGRESSION IN PRACTICE

A simple conversation can make a big difference: "You seem to enjoy organising information and spotting errors. Roles in operations, project support, HR or business administration often use those strengths."

KEEPING IT MANAGEABLE AND WORTHWHILE

Placements are most sustainable when they fit naturally into existing ways of working. Start with a small number of real tasks, use simple check-ins and build from there.

Where a student shows potential, employers may choose to stay in touch, offer further experience or consider future apprenticeship and entry-level opportunities. Even where this is not possible, the placement can still help the student make better-informed choices about their future.

ANNEX: PLACEMENT CHECK-IN PROMPT SHEET

Use this as a short structure for regular informal conversations with the student. It is not intended to replace the formal review meetings arranged by the college or school.

PROMPT	NOTES
WHAT HAVE YOU WORKED ON SINCE WE LAST CHECKED IN?	
WHAT IS GOING WELL?	
WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?	
IS ANYTHING UNCLEAR OR DIFFICULT?	
WHAT FEEDBACK CAN I GIVE YOU?	
WHAT SHOULD YOU FOCUS ON NEXT?	
DO YOU KNOW WHO TO SPEAK TO IF YOU NEED HELP?	

LINCOLNSHIRE CO-OP

Erika Stainton

"For block placements, I use a weekly MS Form which is sent to supervising managers on a Friday. It only takes 5 minutes to complete, and it provides the student with valuable feedback about what they have done well and any areas for development. It also provides data into which business areas students excel the most in and highlights any areas for improvement from our side. We also ask students to complete a weekly MS Form which gathers their feedback, which is important to us as an employer."

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