WAYS AN INDUSTRY PLACEMENT COULD WORK

Flexible models for electrical, electrotechnical, plumbing, heating and other building services employers to explore with colleges or schools

Building services work does not always fit neatly into a regular one-day-a-week placement pattern. Employers may work across different sites, respond to customer demand, organise work around projects, or have quieter and busier periods. Some operate within a wider supply chain, where contractors, subcontractors or partner organisations could each contribute part of a student's learning experience.

Use this resource to support a practical conversation with an employer. Models can be selected, combined and adapted, but the college or school must confirm that the final arrangement meets current industry placement requirements and local safeguarding, insurance, health and safety and quality processes.

THESE EXAMPLES ARE STARTING POINTS FOR CONVERSATION. A PLACEMENT MAY USE ONE MODEL OR COMBINE MORE THAN ONE APPROACH.

Model	What this could look like	When this may work well	What to plan	Things to watch
Regular placement day	The student attends the employer on the same day each week over a longer period.	Where the employer has a steady pattern of work, a suitable base location and regular opportunities for the student to observe, support or contribute.	Agree where the student reports, who supervises them, what activity is usually available, which sites or customer settings are suitable, and what happens if work changes at short notice.	Can be harder if work is unpredictable, highly mobile or dependent on jobs that do not fall on the same day each week.
Block placement	The student attends for a concentrated block of time, such as one or more weeks.	Where the employer can provide a more consistent experience over a shorter period, or where travel, supervision and site arrangements are easier to manage as a block.	Agree the best timing, what work is likely to be happening, who will support the student each day, and what the student will observe or support as the block develops.	The student may need strong preparation before the block starts, as there is less time to settle in gradually.
Project or job-linked placement	The placement is linked to a particular job, project, installation, maintenance period, commissioning activity or handover stage.	Where useful learning opportunities cluster around specific work rather than regular days. The student may see how work is planned, prepared, carried out, checked and reviewed.	Agree which stages are suitable, what the student can safely observe or support, what is excluded, who supervises them, and what alternative activity is available if timing changes.	Project dates can move. Keep communication and a realistic back-up option in place so the student is not left without suitable activity.
Phased placement	The placement is built in stages, such as introductory visit, observation and shadowing, supervised support, then review and possible extension.	Where an employer is interested but cautious, or where the student needs time to build confidence before spending longer in the workplace.	Agree what each phase involves, when the placement will be reviewed, what needs to happen before moving to the next stage, and how concerns will be raised early.	Phased models need clear communication so everyone knows whether the placement is progressing, pausing or being adapted.

Model	What this could look like	When this may work well	What to plan	Things to watch
Multi-site, rotation or supply chain model	The student spends planned time across more than one suitable site, team, function or employer linked through a supply chain or employer network.	Where no single employer, site or team can provide the full experience alone, or where the student would benefit from seeing how planning, preparation, installation, maintenance, testing, customer communication or handover connect.	Confirm that the model is permitted under current requirements. Agree in writing who coordinates the overall placement, who is responsible for supervision and safety at each location, where the student will be each day, how travel and reporting work, which sites are suitable, how information is shared, and how learning goals and hours are tracked.	This model needs careful provider coordination. Supervision, safeguarding, insurance, travel, site access, customer permissions, communication and record-keeping must be clear before each part begins. The student should always know their named workplace and college or school contacts.
Holiday or non-term-time placement activity	Some placement activity takes place outside normal college or school timetable periods, such as holidays or quieter teaching periods.	Where the employer's work pattern does not align with regular timetable days, or useful activity is available during college or school holiday periods.	Agree availability, working hours, supervision, how attendance and hours are recorded, who the college or school contact is, what support is available if concerns arise, and how the activity will be reviewed.	Holiday timing does not reduce the need for employer supervision or college or school oversight. Confirm contact, safeguarding, communication and review arrangements in advance.
Optional: small team project-supported placement	A small team of students responds to a real employer-set building services challenge, usually involving planning, design, communication, sustainability, documentation or process improvement rather than high-risk technical activity.	Where an employer wants to support students but cannot immediately offer full workplace attendance for every student. It may work as a preparation stage, part of a phased model, or a way to involve an employer in planning/design/improvement activity.	Agree the real employer challenge, individual student contribution, outputs, employer briefing and feedback points, links to learning goals, whether and how activity contributes to placement hours, and what workplace activity may follow.	This must not become a loose classroom exercise or replace workplace experience by default. It needs meaningful employer input and must align with current T Level industry placement requirements. Confirm locally whether any hours can count.

SMALL TEAM PROJECT EXAMPLES TO EXPLORE

Where a small team project-supported model is appropriate, possible employer-set challenges could include:

Centrally approved employer or student examples may be used where provided. Do not add local quotations, snapshots, videos or links to this resource.

- Mapping the stages of a simple installation, maintenance or handover process
- Reviewing how PPE, site rules or safety expectations are communicated to new starters
- Developing a simple materials, preparation or handover checklist
- Producing a short communication guide for customers, tenants or other trades
- Creating a customer or tenant guide explaining what to expect during planned works
- Comparing product or manufacturer information for a defined scenario
- Researching low-carbon or energy efficiency options for a particular building or system

CHOOSING THE RIGHT MODEL

Use the questions below to shape a practical conversation with the employer. The aim is to identify a model that is safe, realistic and meaningful for the student while remaining manageable for the employer or employer network.

Question	Notes
What type of work does the employer usually do?	
Is the work mainly site-based, mobile, workshop-based, office-based or mixed?	
Is the employer part of a wider supply chain or contractor network?	
Could more than one employer or team contribute to the placement experience?	
Are there particular periods, jobs or projects that offer better learning opportunities?	
Who will coordinate the overall placement and who will supervise the student in each setting?	
What sites, customer settings, tasks or situations should be excluded?	
What preparation, health and safety learning, PPE or site access does the student need before starting?	
What communication, monitoring and practical support does the employer need from the college or school?	

There is no single right placement model. The best model is safe, realistic and meaningful for the student, manageable for the employer or employer network, and compliant with current requirements.

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