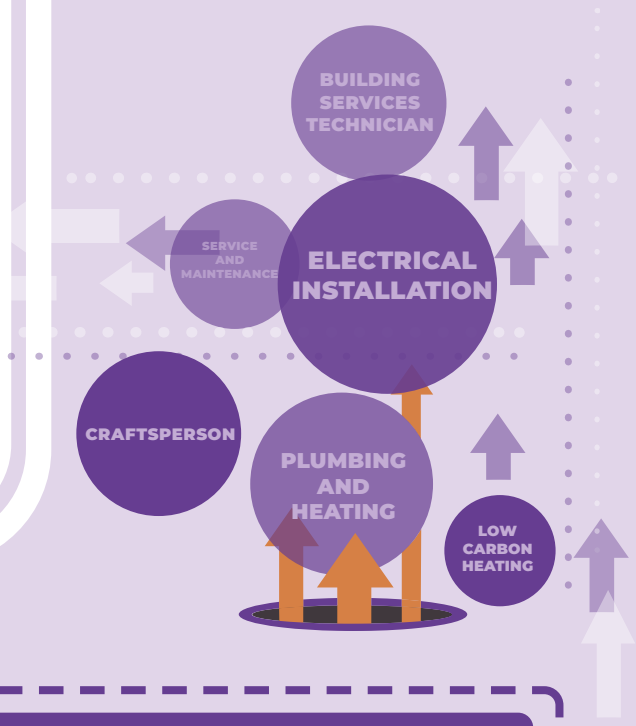
T-LEVELS
THE NEXT LEVEL QUALIFICATION

BUILDING SERVICES ENGINEERING EMPLOYER CONFIDENCE AND PLACEMENT DESIGN TOOLKIT

COLLEGE AND SCHOOL GUIDANCE: HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT



PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDANCE

This guidance is for employer engagement staff, industry placement teams, curriculum leaders, Building Services Engineering (BSE) tutors and managers using the employer confidence and placement design toolkit. It explains what each component is for, when to use it, which audiences it is aimed at, what can be shared directly, and how the toolkit supports curriculum-informed placement design.

The toolkit helps college and school teams and employers move from interest or hesitation into practical placement planning. It combines one employer-facing information guide with college and school conversation support and joint planning tools; it is not intended to operate as one long employer handbook.

THE RESOURCES ARE DESIGNED IN THREE LAYERS:

Read Me First: use this for the wider action-group context, what was prioritised for development under the funded project and a short overview of both BSE toolkits.

Toolkit college and school guidance: use this internally to understand the role, sequence and limits of each component.

Individual tools: use or share the component that matches the immediate employer or planning need. Avoid sending the entire toolkit unless that is genuinely useful.

CORE MESSAGE

The toolkit should support you to help employers recognise that placements can be safe, realistic and manageable when the model, activity, supervision and support are planned clearly.

WHO SHOULD USE THE TOOLKIT?

- Employer engagement staff and industry placement coordinators can use it in first conversations, follow-up discussions and planning meetings.
- Curriculum teams can use it to consider how industry placement design links to curriculum sequencing, technical readiness, health and safety preparation and opportunities to bring placement learning back into teaching.
- Employers, supervisors and mentors can receive tool 1 directly and use tools 3 and 4 jointly with college and school staff to explore and plan a suitable placement.
- Senior leaders and managers can use the guidance to support a flexible, sector-aware approach to placements across electrical, electrotechnical, plumbing, heating and other building services pathways.

USING THE TOOLKIT FOR CURRICULUM AND PLACEMENT PLANNING

Although the toolkit supports employer conversations, curriculum teams should also use it when planning how industry placements fit within the wider T Level programme.

Placement design is closely linked to curriculum sequencing. Students may need particular technical awareness, health and safety learning, PPE or skills-card preparation before they can benefit from some workplace settings. Employer opportunities may also align better with specific curriculum points, such as installation, maintenance, testing, commissioning, sustainability, customer communication or handover.

Curriculum colleagues can use the toolkit to consider:

- when students are likely to be ready for different types of placement activity
- which parts of the curriculum could be strengthened through workplace exposure
- where employer projects, site visits or placement blocks could align with taught content
- what technical language, tools, systems or safety expectations students should understand before placement
- how placement experiences will be used afterwards in teaching, reflection and assessment preparation
- whether flexible models, such as block, phased, job-linked, multi-site or small team project-supported placements, better align with curriculum delivery

The toolkit should not be used only after placements have been sourced. Curriculum, employer engagement and placement teams should plan together so that employer intelligence, student readiness and placement opportunities inform the programme from the outset.

WAYS OF WORKING ACROSS COLLEGE AND SCHOOL TEAMS

Useful approaches include regular cross-team meetings, shared curriculum and placement timelines, agreed information-sharing routes, joint employer visits where useful, and quick communication channels for changes or concerns. Teams should share enough information about student readiness, employer expectations, planned activity and placement learning to support quality, while following local data-protection and safeguarding processes.

PROMPT QUESTIONS FOR CURRICULUM TEAMS

- *At what point in the programme will students have enough technical awareness to benefit from different BSE workplace settings?*
- *Which occupational specialism content could be supported through employer exposure?*
- *What health and safety preparation needs to happen before students enter particular workplace environments?*
- *Are there periods in the curriculum where a block, project-linked or phased placement would make more sense than regular day release?*
- *How will students reflect on placement learning and connect it back to classroom teaching?*
- *How will employer feedback and placement learning be shared across curriculum, employer engagement and placement teams to improve future planning and readiness preparation?*

HOW THE FOUR TOOLS FIT TOGETHER

Tool	Primary audience	Use when	Main purpose	Share with employer?
1. Could an industry placement work in your business?	Building services employers; introduced by employer engagement or placement staff	During an initial conversation or as a leave-behind/ follow-up after contact	Provide concise employer information on value, non-complex activity, manageability, college and school support and possible future recruitment	Yes – designed as an employer-facing information guide
2. Common placement concerns: practical responses for building services employer conversations	Employer engagement and placement staff	Before or during conversations where an employer raises concerns	Help staff explore concerns respectfully and respond to under-18s, safety, supervision, mobile work, work-readiness, customer settings and suitable activity	Usually internal – use the wording in conversation rather than sending the full grid by default
3. Ways an industry placement could work	Employers and college and school teams	When regular day release or a single-employer model may not fit	Explore regular, block, phased, project-linked, multi-site/supply-chain, holiday and carefully bounded project-supported models	Yes – introduce and use jointly to explore options
4. Planning an industry placement	Employers and college and school teams completing the plan together	Once interest is established and a specific arrangement needs to be shaped	Agree activity, exclusions, locations, travel, supervision, contacts, learning goals, support, permissions and next steps	Yes – complete collaboratively; it is not a formal agreement or risk assessment

SUGGESTED USE ACROSS THE EMPLOYER JOURNEY

Stage	Provider action	Useful tool(s)	Notes
1. Early interest or first contact	Introduce the opportunity without overloading the employer; share tool 1 during or after the conversation.	1	Use as an employer information leaflet and leave-behind. Use an approved covering message and the trade language already provided.
2. Employer raises concerns	Explore what sits behind the concern and whether a safe model could work.	2	Do not treat concerns as myths. Use them as design prompts.
3. Standard model does not fit	Show alternative ways placements may be structured.	3	Use tool 3 jointly to compare models and confirm which options are permitted and realistic.
4. Placement looks possible	Agree activity, supervision, boundaries and support.	4	Complete tool 4 together before formal college and school paperwork and approvals.
5. Formalise and prepare	Complete college and school processes, risk assessment, agreement and student preparation.	4 plus local paperwork	This toolkit does not replace formal processes.
6. Review and repeat	Capture learning from the placement and refine the model for future employers.	4 plus local review process	Use learning to strengthen future employer conversations.

PRINCIPLES FOR USING THE TOOLKIT

- Start with the employer's real work and recognised trade language, rather than an idealised placement model or technical terminology they may not recognise.
- Treat concerns as legitimate and use them to shape safer, better placements.
- Avoid over-promising what students may be able to do. Students are still learning.
- Keep supervision, safety boundaries, named contacts and communication clear from the start.
- Explore flexible models where regular day release does not fit. Remember to confirm that the final arrangement meets current industry placement requirements.
- Complete all formal college and school processes, including safeguarding, risk assessment, insurance checks, placement paperwork and any local quality requirements.

What not to do

Do not use it as a formal placement agreement, risk assessment or insurance statement.

Do not imply employers must offer jobs or apprenticeships after placement.

Do not present placements as easy or risk-free.

Do not expect one model or one set of employer-facing terms to work for every building services trade or employer.

Maintaining the approved resources

Approved resource: do not alter its wording, branding, examples or structure. Complete only fields intended for use and provide any local information separately.

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RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

Introduce the toolkit internally before wider use. Employer engagement, curriculum and placement teams should agree how each approved tool will be used, when documents will be shared with employers, and how employer and student feedback will be captured. The tools themselves must not be altered.

- Brief employer engagement and placement staff on the purpose of each tool.
- Review employer concerns and use the approved responses in tool 2 - Common Placement Concerns. Feed recurring suggestions into a central review process rather than adding them to the tool locally.
- Use tool 3 - Ways a BSE placement could work, with employers and curriculum teams to explore flexible models that fit real working patterns, student learning and current requirements.
- Use tool 4 – Planning a BSE placement, collaboratively as the bridge between employer interest and formal placement arrangements.
- After placements, capture learning in line with consent and college and school processes. Use it to strengthen conversations and future delivery, and submit proposed additions for central review rather than inserting them into the resources.