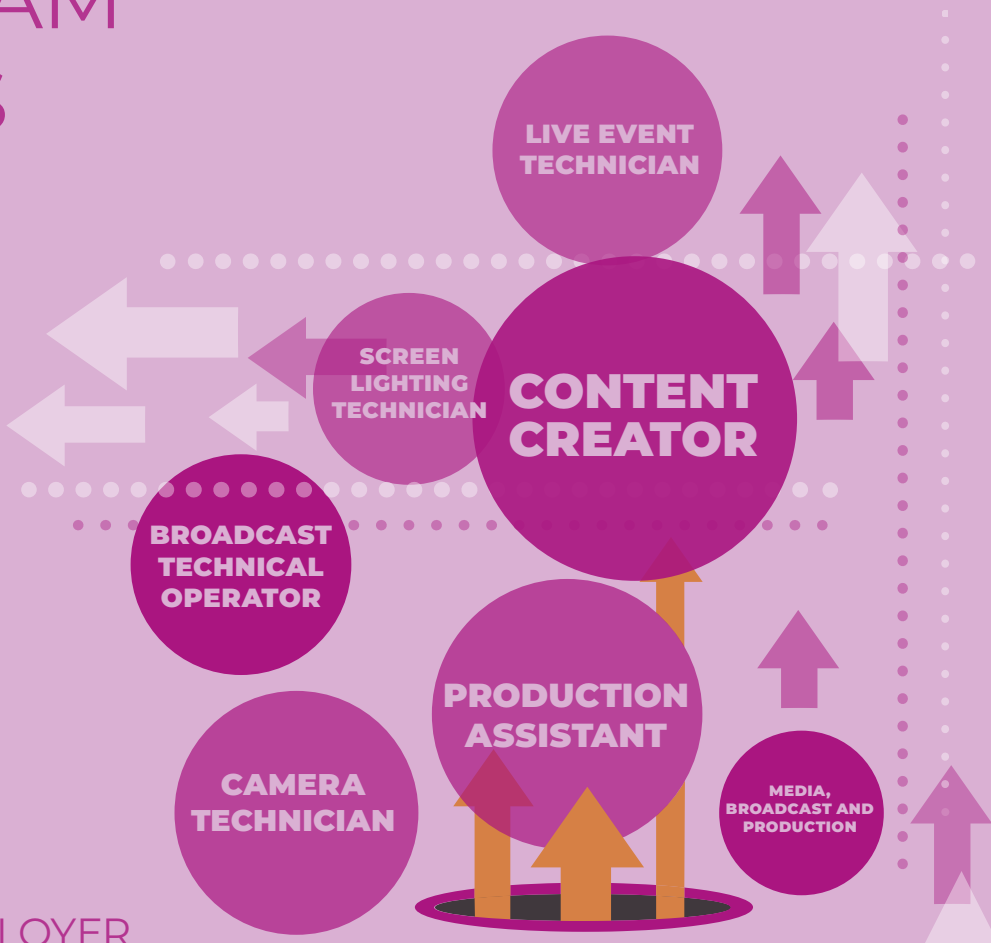
T-LEVELS
THE NEXT LEVEL QUALIFICATION

T LEVEL IN MEDIA, BROADCAST AND PRODUCTION

SMALL TEAM PROJECTS



TURNING REAL EMPLOYER NEEDS INTO MEANINGFUL PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

PURPOSE OF THIS RESOURCE

This resource helps colleges and schools work with Media, Broadcast and Production employers to identify a real organisational or production need and shape it into a meaningful, appropriately challenging sector project that could be taken forward as a Small Team Project (STP) within a wider T Level industry placement. The employer should identify or agree the real challenge and remain connected to the work through agreed contact, feedback and review.

The examples and prompts are starting points, not fixed templates. This resource does not replace national guidance on designing and delivering STPs or the wider industry placement requirements.

1. ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Small Team Projects can create valuable opportunities for students to engage with real Media, Broadcast and Production challenges. The difficult part is often not understanding the STP model itself but identifying a project that is genuinely useful to the employer, appropriate for students and rooted in the reality of content, production, events, venues or audience engagement.

This resource focuses on that sector-specific task. It helps employer-facing and curriculum colleagues work with the employer to move from an initial conversation to a clearly described project opportunity, while keeping individual student roles, learning goals, employer oversight, professional boundaries and intended value visible from the start.

Work together from the start

In this resource, “employer-facing colleagues” means colleagues responsible for employer engagement, industry placements or both. Job titles and team structures will vary between colleges and schools.

The strongest Media, Broadcast and Production projects bring together two perspectives:

- Employer-facing expertise: understanding the employer, audience, brand or client context; building the relationship; knowing what the organisation may value; and considering what is practical within an industry placement. Employer engagement and placement responsibilities may sit with the same person or team or be shared across different roles.
- Curriculum expertise: understanding what students are learning, what they are ready for and where there is potential for meaningful creative, technical and professional challenge at the appropriate level.

Bring these perspectives together early and involve the employer in shaping the opportunity wherever possible. A promising employer need should not be developed into a fixed project by one person or team and then passed on for others to implement. Employers, employer-facing colleagues and curriculum colleagues should work collaboratively so that the project reflects a real organisational or production need, is practical to deliver and creates meaningful learning for students.

Strong projects are built through active collaboration and alignment between employers, employer-facing colleagues and curriculum colleagues, not a sequence of handovers.

Use this alongside the national STP guidance

This resource complements two sources of national guidance. Use the first for the requirements applying to T Level industry placements generally, and the second for the specific requirements and arrangements for designing and delivering a Small Team Project.

T Level industry placements: delivery guidance for education providers

Designing and Delivering Small Team Projects (STPs) as part of T Level Industry Placements

What this resource will help you do

- bring employers, employer-facing colleagues and curriculum colleagues together to shape a project opportunity
- move from an initial employer conversation to a clearly described student challenge or brief
- use the project co-design template to capture the need, context, learning opportunity, potential value and boundaries
- identify individual student roles, contributions and learning goals
- agree employer contact, feedback and review arrangements
- identify what must be checked through the national guidance before delivery

2. WHAT MAKES A STRONG MEDIA, BROADCAST AND PRODUCTION PROJECT?

A strong project combines a real employer need with meaningful learning, appropriate Level 3 challenge and a clear route to useful employer feedback. Use the criteria below to test an emerging idea before it moves into detailed STP planning.

Starts with a real need. There is something the employer would genuinely value exploring, reviewing, developing or improving.

Is rooted in sector practice. Students need to understand the employer, audience, brief, workflow and creative, technical or organisational context.

Requires appropriate Level 3 thinking and challenge. Students interpret a brief, research context or audiences, analyse evidence, develop ideas, make choices, respond to constraints and justify or refine their response.

Leaves the thinking to students. The project defines the challenge, context and boundaries but does not fix the final creative or technical response.

Could create real value. The employer can see value in reviewing the insight, concepts, plans, prototypes, draft content or recommendations.

Is realistic and professionally appropriate. The project takes account of copyright and intellectual property, permissions and releases, brand or client requirements, safeguarding, accessibility, confidentiality, data, locations, equipment, technical access, publication and online sharing.

Keeps each student visible. Each student has an agreed role, individual learning goals and a defined contribution that can be reviewed and evidenced.

Remains employer-led. The employer sets or agrees the challenge, provides genuine workplace context, maintains agreed contact, gives feedback and contributes to review. The college or school structures and coordinates delivery but does not replace employer oversight.

3. THINK BROADLY ABOUT THE SECTOR

Media, Broadcast and Production activity takes place across a wider ecosystem than major broadcasters and large production companies. Look for organisations that create, commission, produce, distribute, present, promote or support content, events, experiences and audience engagement.

Possible employer settings include:

- broadcast, film, television, radio and podcast organisations
- content studios, digital agencies and social media teams
- independent producers, freelancers and production companies
- venues, theatres, festivals and live event organisations
- museums, galleries, heritage and cultural organisations
- charities, community organisations and social enterprises with communication needs
- local authorities, public bodies, tourism organisations and destination teams
- in-house communications, marketing, content and production teams
- education, sport and wellbeing organisations producing public-facing content
- technical production, lighting, sound, camera, post-production and equipment businesses

A small or specialist organisation may offer depth rather than breadth. The key question is whether students can learn from genuine sector practice and contribute to a real employer need.

4. FROM EMPLOYER CONVERSATION TO PROJECT

Use the four steps below to move from an initial employer conversation to a project opportunity that is clear enough to take into formal STP planning.

Step 1: Explore the employer need

Find out what the employer would genuinely value and what is realistic in the setting.

- What is happening now?
- What would the employer like to understand, review, improve, produce or develop?

- Why does this matter to the organisation, client or audience?
- Is there useful work the employer has not had the time or capacity to explore?

Step 2: Identify a student challenge or brief

Bring employer-facing and curriculum perspectives together. Keep the challenge rooted in the employer's reality while considering what students are learning and ready to undertake. This may influence when the STP is best undertaken within the wider placement.

- What genuine question, brief or production problem could students investigate?
- What context, assets, information, access or equipment could help them understand the issue?
- Is there enough substance for students to research, develop, test, analyse and make judgements?
- What should remain open for students to discover and decide?
- What kinds of outputs might be valuable without fixing the final response?

Step 3: Shape the project

Test the learning opportunity, student readiness and Level 3 challenge while keeping the idea anchored in a real employer need.

- What relevant sector knowledge, creative processes, technical principles or transferable skills might students apply?
- What would make the work appropriately challenging?
- What might be useful to the employer at the end?
- What professional boundaries and approvals need to shape the project?
- What employer contact, feedback or review will keep the project connected to the real brief as it develops?

Step 4: Agree what happens next

Check that the opportunity is clear enough and worthwhile enough to enter formal STP planning.

- Is the employer need, student challenge, potential value and scope clear enough to proceed?
- What still needs checking with the employer, employer-facing colleague or curriculum colleague?
- Who will take the project into formal STP planning using the national guidance?

The template in the next section can be used to capture the emerging opportunity during the conversation or shortly afterwards. It is designed to help employers, employer-facing colleagues and curriculum colleagues record what has been agreed, what still needs checking and what should be taken forward into formal STP planning.

MEDIA, BROADCAST AND PRODUCTION PROJECT CO-DESIGN TEMPLATE

Who is shaping this project?

Employer or organisation:

Employer-facing colleague(s):

Curriculum colleague(s):

Other relevant colleague or expertise:

Complete the template collaboratively wherever possible. The employer need, curriculum opportunity and placement requirements should inform one another from the start.

1. Employer need

What would be useful to understand, review, explore, create or improve? Why does it matter?

2. Sector context

What does the organisation need students to understand about its audience, client, brand, workflow, setting or production context?

3. Student challenge or brief

What genuine question, brief or problem could students investigate? What information, assets, materials, equipment or access might be available?

4. Opportunities for learning and development

What should students investigate, understand, analyse, apply, create, test, refine or justify? What would make the project appropriately challenging while leaving students to develop their own response?

5. Potential value

What insight, concepts, plans, prototypes, draft content, recommendations or other outputs might be useful to the employer? Avoid fixing the final creative or technical response.

6. Professional boundaries and approvals

What needs early consideration around copyright and intellectual property, permissions and releases, brand or client requirements, safeguarding, accessibility, confidentiality, data, locations, equipment, technical access, publication or online sharing?

7. Taking it forward

What has been agreed in principle? What still needs checking? Who will take the idea forward into STP planning?

8. Initial delivery considerations

Record these points at a proportionate level before the idea moves into formal STP planning. Confirm all delivery requirements against the current national guidance.

Named employer contact and proposed contact points:

Proposed number of students:

Individual student roles, contributions and learning goals:

Likely delivery location or pattern:

Assets, systems, equipment, software, studios, venues or environments students may need to access:

Boundaries and approvals, including copyright and intellectual property, permissions and releases, brand or client requirements, safeguarding, accessibility, confidentiality, data, locations, equipment, technical access, publication and online sharing:

How each student's progress, contribution and employer feedback could be reviewed and recorded:

How outputs could be presented to and considered by the employer:

Next step. Use the national STP guidance to design and deliver the Small Team Project, including the required delivery, employer oversight, review and evidence arrangements.

5. WORKED EXAMPLE: COMPLETED PROJECT CO-DESIGN TEMPLATE

Improving short-form video content for a community venue

This example mirrors the blank co-design template. The magenta handwritten-style text shows how the fields might be completed following a conversation with a community arts venue. It is illustrative rather than a ready-made project brief, and the details would need to be adapted to the employer, students and setting.

Who is shaping this project?

Employer or organisation: Example community arts venue

Employer-facing colleague(s): Industry placement or employer engagement colleague

Curriculum colleague(s): Media, Broadcast and Production curriculum colleague

Other relevant colleague or expertise: Venue communications lead and accessibility adviser

Complete the template collaboratively wherever possible. The employer need, curriculum opportunity and placement requirements should inform one another from the start.

1. Employer need

What would be useful to understand, review, explore, create or improve? Why does it matter?

The venue wants to improve short-form video content promoting events and participation opportunities to younger local audiences. Existing content is produced inconsistently, and the team would value evidence-informed ideas for formats, messages and production approaches that can be sustained with limited staff time.

2. Sector context

What does the organisation need students to understand about its audience, client, brand, workflow, setting or production context?

Students need to understand the venue's purpose, audiences, tone of voice, visual identity, event schedule, approval process and available production capacity. Content must represent participants respectfully, meet accessibility expectations and be realistic for the venue to produce and publish.

3. Student challenge or brief

What genuine question, brief or problem could students investigate? What information, assets, materials, equipment or access might be available?

Explore how the venue could use short-form video more effectively to increase awareness and engagement among younger local audiences.

Students could review current content and analytics supplied by the employer, research comparable organisations, speak with staff, observe an agreed event and develop concepts or prototypes using approved assets and equipment.

4. Opportunities for learning and development

What should students investigate, understand, analyse, apply, create, test, refine or justify? What would make the project appropriately challenging while leaving students to develop their own response?

- Interpret a real employer brief.
- Research audience needs, platforms and comparable content.
- Analyse existing content, engagement information and production constraints.
- Develop creative concepts, scripts, storyboards or shot plans.
- Apply filming, sound, editing, captioning and accessibility principles where appropriate.

- Work collaboratively while taking responsibility for an individual role and contribution.
- Respond to employer feedback and refine work.
- Present and justify recommendations and prototypes.

The venue may already have views about which messages and formats are practical. These provide workplace context without predetermining the students' final response.

5. Potential value

What insight, concepts, plans, prototypes, draft content, recommendations or other outputs might be useful to the employer? Avoid fixing the final creative or technical response.

The employer could receive an audience and content review, prioritised recommendations, a realistic short-form content plan and a small set of draft concepts or prototype videos for consideration. Student findings could help the venue decide what to test, adapt or commission next.

6. Professional boundaries and approvals

What needs early consideration around copyright and intellectual property, permissions and releases, brand or client requirements, safeguarding, accessibility, confidentiality, data, locations, equipment, technical access, publication or online sharing?

- Agree which assets, brand materials and analytics students may access.
- Confirm copyright and intellectual property ownership for source material and student outputs.
- Agree permissions and releases for anyone filmed or recorded, including arrangements for under-18s.
- Confirm safeguarding, supervision and location requirements.
- Agree accessibility expectations, including captions and readable on-screen content.
- Confirm equipment, software, storage and account access.
- Identify content, data or behind-the-scenes material that must not be captured or shared.

Confirm that nothing will be published or posted online without employer approval.

7. Taking it forward

What has been agreed in principle? What still needs checking? Who will take the idea forward into STP planning?

The employer has agreed in principle that the content challenge would be useful for students to explore. Employer-facing and curriculum colleagues will confirm the scope, permitted access, production expectations and review points with the employer before taking the opportunity into formal STP planning.

8. Initial delivery considerations

Record these points at a proportionate level before the idea moves into formal STP planning. Confirm all delivery requirements against the current national guidance.

Named employer contact and proposed contact points: To be agreed

Proposed number of students: To be agreed

Individual student roles, contributions and learning goals: To be agreed during formal planning, potentially including audience research, production planning, filming, sound, editing, accessibility and presentation roles

Likely delivery location or pattern: A combination of employer briefings or venue activity and structured college or school-based research and production work

Assets, systems, equipment, software, studios, venues or environments students may need to access: Approved brand materials, selected existing content and analytics, agreed venue spaces, suitable filming and sound equipment, editing software and secure storage

Boundaries and approvals: As identified above, with permission, release, safeguarding, copyright, accessibility and publication decisions recorded before students capture or share any content

How each student's progress, contribution and employer feedback could be reviewed and recorded: Agreed check-ins plus individual role, contribution, feedback and evidence records

How outputs could be presented to and considered by the employer: A short presentation accompanied by findings, recommendations, content concepts and agreed prototypes

Next step. Use the national STP guidance to confirm detailed delivery, employer oversight, student roles, review, evidence and approval arrangements before the project begins.

6. EXAMPLE SECTOR CHALLENGE THEMES

These themes are prompts for discussion, not ready-made project briefs. Begin with the employer's real needs and bring the emerging idea to curriculum colleagues before the focus becomes fixed.

Audience insight and engagement

Possible project direction. Students could review audience information, communication and engagement, then propose evidence-informed improvements.

Short-form or social content

Possible project direction. Students could explore a real communication priority and develop justified content concepts or prototypes.

Event or venue promotion

Possible project direction. Students could review how an event, programme or venue is communicated and develop practical promotional ideas.

Public information and accessibility

Possible project direction. Students could review agreed content for clarity, inclusion, captions, formats, navigation or audience needs.

Production planning and workflow

Possible project direction. Students could map an agreed workflow, identify pressure points and propose realistic improvements or planning resources.

Visual storytelling

Possible project direction. Students could develop concepts that communicate an organisation, service, place or community story through approved visual material.

Audio, podcast or radio content

Possible project direction. Students could research an audience or topic and develop a treatment, pilot or production plan.

Website or platform content

Possible project direction. Students could review agreed pages or channels and recommend clearer, more current or accessible content.

Community or public-awareness communication

Possible project direction. Students could explore how an organisation could reach a defined audience responsibly and effectively.

Behind-the-scenes and careers content

Possible project direction. Students could develop concepts that explain sector roles, processes or progression while respecting confidentiality and permissions.

7. BEFORE TAKING THE PROJECT FORWARD

Use this short check before moving from the project idea into formal STP planning.

- ☐ Is the need real and recognised by the employer?
- ☐ Have employer-facing and curriculum colleagues shaped or tested the idea together with the employer?
- ☐ Is the project clearly rooted in Media, Broadcast and Production practice?
- ☐ Will students investigate, develop, test or refine rather than simply complete a task?
- ☐ Is there appropriate Level 3 creative, technical and professional challenge without predetermining the response?
- ☐ Could the employer make genuine use of, respond to or learn from the students' work?
- ☐ Have copyright and intellectual property, permissions and releases, publication or online sharing, brand or client requirements, equipment and technical access, locations, safeguarding, accessibility, confidentiality and data requirements been considered where relevant?
- ☐ Is the idea clear enough to take into the national STP design and delivery process?
- ☐ Is there a named employer contact and meaningful employer oversight?
- ☐ Does each student have a proposed individual role, contribution and learning goals?
- ☐ Have review, feedback and evidence arrangements been identified for each student?
- ☐ Have statements about hours, review frequency, evidence or completion been checked against current authoritative guidance?

NEXT STEP

Use the current T Level industry placement delivery guidance and Small Team Project guidance to plan delivery, employer involvement, student roles, review, evidence, approvals and other requirements.

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