Digital industry placement resources

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Introduction

This short guide introduces the digital industry placement resources available on this page and explains how they can be used. The resources are designed to support colleges, schools, employers and students to develop and deliver meaningful, high-quality digital T Level industry placements.

The collection includes resources developed through the Digital industry placement action group, alongside other materials to support different aspects of industry placement delivery. This guide provides an overview of the resources and their intended audiences, helping you identify which materials are most relevant to your role or context.

About the Digital industry placement action group

The Digital action group brought together T Level providers, employers and sector colleagues to explore how digital industry placements can be made more meaningful, manageable and sustainable.

The group focused on the practical realities of digital placements, and how teams from across institutions can influence their success. Key areas include how employers understand the role of students, how students are prepared for real digital working environments, and how colleges and schools can work with employers to shape placements that reflect genuine digital practice.

The resources hosted on this page that were produced from the digital industry placement action group are:

- Employer's guide to hosting a digital industry placement
- Students: getting ready for your digital industry placement
- Digital: Delivering strong industry placements

Action group participants

Employer engagement and/or curriculum staff from the following colleges and schools participated:

Access Creative College
East Durham College
Education Partnership North East
Gateshead College
Leeds City College
Middlesbrough College
New College Durham
Newcastle College
Sunderland College
South Tyneside College

Sunderland City Software
North East Ambition

Findings

Across the action group discussions, several key messages emerged:

- Strong digital placements need clear expectations, manageable employer involvement and a shared understanding of what students can realistically contribute.
- Digital placements often work best when they reflect live workflow, team-based activity, ticketing systems, project cycles, hybrid working and iterative delivery, rather than artificial standalone tasks.
- Student readiness is critical. Students need to understand that digital work can include routine tasks, collaboration, feedback, communication and professionalism, not only visible technical outputs.
- Employers are more likely to host again where placements feel worthwhile, supported and repeatable, and where feedback is used to improve future delivery.

What we produced

In response to these findings, three practical resources have been developed.

They do not represent an exhaustive set of possible support materials for digital industry placements, but reflect the areas the action group identified as most useful for immediate development.

Resource	What this resource is	Primary audience	How it can be used
Employers' guide to hosting a digital industry placement	A practical employer-facing guide explaining: • what hosting a digital industry placement involves • why employers choose to host • what students may be ready to do • how colleges and schools support the process.	Digital employers and digital teams considering or hosting a placement.	Use it before an employer commits to hosting, during early employer engagement conversations, or as a follow-up resource after an introductory meeting. It can help explain realistic student contribution, placement structure, supervision, feedback and provider support.
Students: getting ready for your digital industry placement	A student-facing preparation resource that helps students: • understand what it means to take responsibility for a placement • how digital teams work • what behaviours matter in the workplace.	Students preparing for a digital industry placement.	Use it in placement preparation sessions, tutorials, one-to-one readiness conversations, placement induction and reflection activities. It includes practical preparation prompts and a before you start checklist covering expectations, independence, travel, working hours and who to contact if something goes wrong.

Resource	What this resource is	Primary audience	How it can be used
Digital: Delivering strong industry placements	A shared ambition and quality lens for strong digital industry placements. It sets out the key features of placements that are meaningful for students, manageable for employers and useful for colleges and schools. The resource is structured around five connected elements: 1. employer clarity 2. student readiness 3. real contribution 4. connection to learning 5. sustainability	Employer engagement, placement and curriculum teams in colleges and schools.	Use it to support planning and feedback conversations with employers, align curriculum and employer engagement teams, review placement design and strengthen student preparation. The resource also includes 'in practice' questions for employer engagement colleagues to consider and a quick check tool to review whether a placement is emerging, developing or strong across the five key areas.

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