Employer Engagement Guidance & Toolkit

A comprehensive guide for education providers on how to engage and source employers for industry placements
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INTRODUCTION

Two thirds of employers rate work experience as being of significant or critical value for young entrants to the labour market and half of employers believe a top priority for education providers should be developing awareness of working life with support from businesses\(^1\). That is why the Department for Education (DfE) made a commitment in 2016 through the Post-16 skills plan that all 16 to 19 year old students following a new technical education route will be entitled to a quality industry placement to arm them with the technical skills they need to give them the best possible chance for entering skilled employment.

Industry placements (formerly ‘work placements’) will be a mandatory part of new T Levels. T Levels are rigorous, classroom-based, technical study programmes at level 3, designed to support entry to skilled employment in technical occupations at level 3 and above. A substantial, high quality industry placement with an external employer will be an essential part of each T Level.

These industry placements will give students a valuable opportunity to put their learning into practice, develop their technical skills and become more employable. Students will spend a minimum of 45 days with an external employer in a role directly relevant to their course. Recognising the importance of this placement – in a real world, working environment – to the T Level programme as a whole, they will be known as ‘T Level industry placements’, or ‘industry placements’ until the introduction of T Levels from 2020.

This resource has been designed to support implementation of industry placements. For more information on the capacity and delivery fund (CDF) for academic year 18/19, please visit the CDF General Guidance and CDF Principles for High Quality Work Placements. The CDF will be available from April 2018 to facilitate the build-up of capacity and capability to deliver substantive work placements in the 2018 to 2019 academic year.

In 2017/18, we at The Challenge were responsible for helping source industry placements for education providers participating in the pilot. We were responsible for sourcing these placements across 11 of the new technical routes:

- Agriculture, Environment and Animal Care
- Business and Administration
- Catering and Hospitality
- Childcare & Education

\(^1\) (UK Commission’s Employer Perspectives Survey 2014)
● Construction
● Creative & Design
● Digital
● Engineering & Manufacturing
● Hair & Beauty
● Health & Science
● Legal, Finance and Accounting

The aim of this handbook is to share insights and best practice to help you and your employer engagement team with sourcing industry placements with best practices and examples of success from the initial pilot.

This is primarily for staff members who have not carried out this role before. We recognise many of your team will be skilled in this area, but for those who are new we hope that this guidance will be helpful.

**About The Challenge (TCN)**

The Challenge is the UK’s leading charity for building a more integrated society. Our vision is for a more integrated society where there is an understanding and appreciation of each other’s differences.

As an organisation, The Challenge aims to design and deliver programmes that bring together people to increase their confidence and skills in connecting and understanding with people from different backgrounds. With the Department for Education’s objective to make industry placements a mandatory part of T Levels from 2020, this presents significant opportunities to facilitate new connections and interactions for young people and employers from a wide range of different industries and walks of life.
ELEMENTS OF A HIGH QUALITY INDUSTRY PLACEMENT

High quality, structured industry placements will be an integral part of the new T Level programme – a student will not be able to complete their T Level unless they have undertaken an industry placement. However, industry placements will be important to enabling young people gain the skills needed to move into employment.

In planning for a high quality industry placement, the following principles are suggested:

Setting clear expectations with employers

High-quality industry placements have clear role descriptions from employers in advance of the placement taking place. These should demonstrate that the employer has a clear idea of how the student will contribute and have the opportunity to add value, whilst developing their skills, as well as ensuring that the placement is accessible and a good fit with the student.

Setting clear expectations with students

Students should have a clear understanding of the role they are undertaking and how it will allow them to develop their technical and transferable skills. Through conversations with relevant staff and their employer, students should set measurable SMART targets and objectives for their placement, to ensure they get the most out of it. These should be recorded in log books (either hard copies or electronic) to enable students to record and reflect on their development.

Principles for high quality industry placements

The following principles are taken from the Work Placement Capacity and Delivery Fund (CDF), outlining a high quality industry placement.
Timing and duration

1) Our expectation is that industry placements are on average 50 working days in length within an acceptable range of 45 to 60 days covering a minimum of 315 hours. (The normal full time working pattern of the employer, which would typically consist of 7 to 7.5 hours a day). This applies to 2018 to 2019 delivery only after which it will be reviewed. It is important to note that the minimum length of 45 days is non-negotiable. The exact duration for the T Level industry placement from 2020 is to be determined and this hourly total is subject to change.

2) The industry placement should be within the academic timetable as far as possible, but we recognise that in some occupations, peak times will either be seasonal or fall outside the institutions’ normal working hours, such as catering, hospitality or events management.

3) Providers must ensure that student GCSE Maths/English exam preparation (where this applies) is not compromised.

Occupation specific

4) The industry placement must be occupation specific and focussed on developing the practical and technical skills required for the profession or trade that the student is studying for.

5) It will be expected that students will already have a number of occupation specific skills to apply and practice in the workplace. The provider must agree a structured work plan with the employer for the duration of the placement and meet with the student and employer formally at least twice (mid-point and end-point) to review student progress and to meet the student fortnightly on an informal basis.

Student readiness

6) The student must be considered work-ready (have an appropriate work ethic and etiquette) to undertake an industry placement, to manage both student and employer expectations of the appropriate behaviours in the workplace.
Externality

7) The industry placement must take place with an external employer (such as, it is on a site external to the student’s learning environment and not on another site operated by the provider). It is critical that the student experiences a real life job role and work life pressures (including travel to work, independence from their peers, working with new people and dealing with the public). This requirement applies even where the institution has extensive facilities mirroring the workplace.

Special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) provision

8) Students with SEND must be able to access high quality external industry placements so they can benefit from that real-life experience as much as their non-SEND peers. Providers should consider what preparation and support students with SEND would need in order to access industry placements, and complete them successfully. Providers should use available industry placement capacity and delivery funding, alongside other available funding where appropriate (e.g. High Needs or Disadvantage Funding) to provide additional support in the workplace and assist with reasonable workplace adjustments. This could include the services of an independent workplace mentor or, where students have more complex needs, a job coach.
CONTACTING EMPLOYERS - WHO SHOULD DO IT, HOW, AND WHEN

Organisation - The Task, Targets and KPIs

The key to successfully engaging employers and managing those relationships is understanding your task and targets.

The task is very simply to persuade employers to take technical education students on an industry placement which is a minimum of 45 days and in a role relevant to their course.

In order to be successful, it's important that we prepare for each element of the tasks that make up the daily activities.

You will have a target number of industry placements to source and this will be further broken down to help you focus and make sure you meet the required task.

Understand

- Your employers and routes
- What is required – profile of the stakeholders

Organise

- Collate your target data, identify your stakeholders
- Know your targets & break them down

Prioritise

- Plan your day – set your goals according to your targets
- Tackle the hardest or most complex first

Execute

- Focus on the goals and plan for outcomes of an action
- Make the calls/e-mails/LinkedIn messages, etc., as part of your daily plan

Record

- Use a notebook, update a tracker, highlight the important
- Respond as required, follow up promptly as needed

Assess

- Discuss and assess the results of your actions
- Plan again based on your numbers
Targets and KPIs

In order to achieve your targeted number of industry placements, you might want to track and measure the following KPIs on a weekly and monthly basis:

- Number of employer leads / accounts generated and contacted
- Number of new contacts engaged, i.e. those you have heard back from them and have made them aware of industry placements
- Number of first stage meetings / conference calls held
- Number of Expressions of Interest (EOI’s) / Sign Up forms submitted
- Number of EOI’s signed
- Number of industry placements confirmed

The following diagram is a suggested process on how you might want to monitor your progress.

Plan for success - Actions and targets

Breaking down your targets into relevant daily and weekly targets will help you focus and target your activities as necessary.
Contacting prospective employers

When contacting leads you need a mixture of perseverance and different methods to maximise your chances of speaking with the right people.

The best way to determine who the right person to speak to is to:

- Use the employer’s own website to identify the key stakeholder within the company and glean any important information such as Corporate Social Responsibility policies (CSR).
- Read any PR about the company, check Google and LinkedIn for publications and blogs.
- Research using LinkedIn and Google etc.
- Ring the company directly, a "Can you help me phone call" can be useful.
- Attending networking events, such as business breakfast briefings, Career Days, local businesses showcase events etc. Use local business sites and blogs to look out for events. Sign up for chamber of commerce updates and follow any large employers on LinkedIn, this can be a good source of news stories about a new contract being won or new offices opening, etc. These also provide good reasons to contact employers and show you have done your research.

Normally you will need to send emails before having the chance to speak to the employer.

- Use your insight into the company and the correct person(s) to contact to create a highly relevant and personalized e-mail. Click here for examples of “Magic e-mails” and Approaches on LinkedIn advice.
- Send your e-mail and then follow up by phone no later than the next day.

Before any contact, whether it’s via phone, e-mail or social media such as LinkedIn, it is helpful to know the “reason” for contact and the outcome you want:

- Why are you calling? Is it to get the right contact information?
- If you speak with the right person, do you know your pitch? - Click here for an example of an elevator pitch.
- It might be helpful to ask discovery questions - Click here for examples.
• If the aim of the call is to agree a meeting, then follow up with a calendar invite and short agenda in the meeting invite. Do this immediately after the phone call.
• Note the outcome and mark for follow up as necessary.
• Send highly personalised e-mails.
• Follow up the e-mail with a phone call (it yields more results).
• Send all relevant information - Click here for marketing literature.

You might encounter some objections from employers. For suggestions and solutions on how to overcome these, click here for some of the objections and answers we had during the pilot phase. This can also be found in the Objection Handling guide below.

Careful management of your contact strategy will ensure you can maximise your chance of conversion and the prospective employer will not feel they are being overly approached.

Below are some suggested activities and timelines. Accurate records of contacts and outcomes are helpful to keep track of these.
Suggested timelines and contact methods

Preparing for the Meeting (call or face-to-face)
Once a call or meeting is established and you have confirmed this immediately with a meeting invite, it is vital that you plan for a call or face-to-face meeting. If it’s a call, book a meeting room or somewhere where you can fully concentrate on the call.
Click here for employer sign up templates and marketing material.

Make sure you are prepared to listen and discover what the employer's needs are and what their attitude towards industry placements is.

You might have researched their business and think you know what they could accommodate, but keep an open mind about what routes they could offer industry placements in and make sure the employer has the top level view of all possible placements they could offer across all technical routes.

Assuming they will only want hospitality placements because they are a hotel / restaurant chain, could preclude them from taking some head office digital placements, business and admin placements, etc.
Once you have built up a comprehensive picture, you are in a position to suggest routes and discuss potential regional differences for routes depending on which areas of the business are covered in locations.

You can then “ask” the employer if they would be willing to go ahead with discussing placements further and taking on some students in the areas discussed.

**Closing the placements**

Now you will have a clear picture of the employer’s needs and potential opportunity for industry placements. You have overcome their objections and helped them fill in the Expression Of Interest (EOI) / Sign Up Form as much as you can and established which offices and what routes they will be taking -- you can progress to the next level!

**Converting a submitted EOI to a completed EOI**

The ideal scenario is that you’ll be able to complete an EOI with an employer either during a meeting, or in the week after any meeting / conference call is held. As we know though, in reality, it is much more likely that it will be down to you to drive the process forward to ensure you get the employer signed up.

To ensure the conversion rate is as high as possible, you should take as many steps as you can to ensure a clear process is in place. This could include:

- Agreeing a clear deadline / date with the employer to return the EOI (explaining the benefits for them of a quick return of the EOI e.g. they will be first in line for student matching / assessment). Can you book in a follow up call / meeting with an employer at the end of a first engagement to discuss the EOI and complete it?

- Ensuring you’re using your CRM or data tracking system to clearly record when follow ups are needed.

- Ensuring your follow up email with the EOI is clear, with a succinct recap on your discussion and required next steps from the employer.
Once you’ve had an EOI submitted, you should then plan follow up contact over the next couple of weeks. Reasons that you could get back in touch with the employer could include:

- A short-term follow up (either on email or phone): ‘I just wanted to check back in to confirm you did receive the EOI? Did you have any initial questions you wanted to ask on the document?’

- Is there any follow up information you need to share e.g. answers to any queries, sharing the list of providers? Use this as a way to also follow up on the EOI.

- Get back in with touch with any ‘updates’ on the set up of industry placements for next year e.g. ‘I just thought I’d update you that we’ve now had all our students confirmed that are due to be taking up placements and we’re due to start matching in the next couple of weeks – would you be able to complete the EOI and send it back through to me by INSERT DATE so that we can ensure your details are passed to the course tutors as we start to work with them on matching?’

**Building on success**

The easiest way to find new leads and opportunities is to ask the employers you are already engaged with if they can recommend employers and contacts who they think would also be interested in industry placements.

Inevitably there may be times when for various reasons you can’t overcome an employer’s objections and you can’t work together. However, always ask for referrals as they might know other employers who would be interested.

Maintaining a good relationship is important as is keeping in contact as circumstances change and they could be a good lead for next year.
ANALYSIS OF NUMBERS FROM PILOT

For the industry placement pilot that occurred in 2017-2018, data was collected from an employer engagement standpoint to understand the conversion rates between each stage of interaction with an employer. The following percentages are to showcase what could be expected when sourcing your own industry placements so that plans can be put in place to ensure you meet your desired target.

The total numbers and conversions are shown, as well as split by routes to show the differences, if any.

Conversion of employer engagement

The overall conversion of employers contacted to having meetings with them was 10% -- of these meetings, 40% ended up having a positive interest in providing industry placements. Below is a more detailed conversion between each stage of interaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total achieved</th>
<th>Conversion %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New employer leads</td>
<td>9,663.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First stage meetings</td>
<td>923.00</td>
<td>9.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second stage meetings</td>
<td>142.00</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIs submitted</td>
<td>538.00</td>
<td>58.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIs signed</td>
<td>405.00</td>
<td>75.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total industry placements sourced</td>
<td>692.00</td>
<td>7.16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average placements offered per employer: 1.71.
Of the 9,663 new employer leads that The Challenge contacted for the industry placement pilot (for all routes), 692 industry placements ended up being sourced by The Challenge (7.16% conversion rate). This can be used as a general guideline to understand the number of employers and the amount of work needed to source industry placements. This conversion rate seemed to differ by route and industry though, so these are shared below.

### Business and Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business and Admin Total</th>
<th>Total achieved</th>
<th>Conversion %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New employer leads</td>
<td>1,432.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First stage meetings</td>
<td>165.00</td>
<td>11.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second stage meetings</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIs submitted</td>
<td>105.00</td>
<td>63.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIs signed</td>
<td>87.00</td>
<td>82.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total industry placements sourced</td>
<td>127.00</td>
<td>8.87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average number of placements offered per employer = 1.49

Based on the general nature of Business and Administration roles, we had a fairly untargeted approach with lead generation in that we went out to businesses at scale based on a lot of cold leads we had. With a targeted approach with warm leads, you could expect this to be fair higher.

This is the highest % conversion rate from meetings held to EOIs submitted - generally showing (as you’d expect) that Business and Administration placements are the easiest to source and get an interest from a business to host when discussing with them. This conversion rate is also so high on the basis that a lot of EOIs were submitted for Business and Administration through leads engaged in other routes / industries, i.e. always ask about business and administration roles when engaging organisations on other areas. Generally speaking, an organisation should have a placement available within Business and Administration somewhere across the business.
Catering and Hospitality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospitality &amp; Catering Total</th>
<th>Total achieved</th>
<th>Conversion %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New employer leads</td>
<td>190.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First stage meetings</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>8.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second stage meetings</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>76.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIs submitted</td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>105.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIs signed</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>61.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total industry placements</td>
<td>74.00</td>
<td>38.95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average number of placements offered per employer = 6.7

We could have generated a lot more leads here but we sourced the required number of placements very quickly.

Average 6.7 placements per EOI - the biggest number across all routes. A slight bias here in that we had 2 employers offer considerable volumes of placements (25+) - this was the main route where this did happen though so still indicative of the route generally.

Construction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction Total</th>
<th>Total achieved</th>
<th>Conversion %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New employer leads</td>
<td>405.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First stage meetings</td>
<td>31.00</td>
<td>7.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second stage meetings</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>16.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIs submitted</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>54.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIs signed</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>205.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total industry placements</td>
<td>57.00</td>
<td>14.07%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average number of placements offered per employer = 1.62

Our construction courses were very specific, so our lead generation was naturally fairly targeted - this probably means the conversion rate here is slightly
biased / favourable and across the overall route we’d expect it to be slightly lower.

Creative & Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creative &amp; Design Total</th>
<th>Total achieved</th>
<th>Conversion %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New employer leads</td>
<td>1,152.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First stage meetings</td>
<td>128.00</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second stage meetings</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIs submitted</td>
<td>74.00</td>
<td>57.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIs signed</td>
<td>53.00</td>
<td>71.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total industry placements sourced</td>
<td>79.00</td>
<td>6.86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average number of placements offered per employer = **1.49**

The overall success rate here is potentially slightly skewed as 43 (over 55% of total placements) came from Shrewsbury. Employer engagement was very focused on micro-businesses and within a relatively rural area. The conversion rates may differ in a larger city, where this has proven to be a more challenging route.

Digital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Digital Total</th>
<th>Total achieved</th>
<th>Conversion %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New employer leads</td>
<td>2,404.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First stage meetings</td>
<td>190.00</td>
<td>7.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second stage meetings</td>
<td>27.00</td>
<td>14.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIs submitted</td>
<td>103.00</td>
<td>54.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIs signed</td>
<td>71.00</td>
<td>68.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total industry placements sourced</td>
<td>102.00</td>
<td>4.24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average number of placements offered per employer = **1.44**
Digital was our biggest route covered within the pilot, so it was inevitable that our lead generation would be very high here. The route was also very broad in terms of containing a lot of different courses covering very general Digital / IT related courses in addition to highly specialised roles e.g. Computer Games Design - this inevitably meant that we spread the net slightly further in terms of lead generation, which might have impacted on the lower conversion rate. However, this could be location specific as in London placements were a lot more specialised. This is still symptomatic of the route generally though in terms of the challenge in finding the specific placements required within such a vast industry.

**Engineering & Manufacturing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engineering &amp; Manufacturing Total</th>
<th>Total achieved</th>
<th>Conversion %</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New employer leads</td>
<td>734.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First stage meetings</td>
<td>76.00</td>
<td>10.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second stage meetings</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>17.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIs submitted</td>
<td>46.00</td>
<td>60.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIs signed</td>
<td>41.00</td>
<td>89.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total industry placements sourced</td>
<td>71.00</td>
<td>9.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average number of placements offered per employer = 1.73

A good number of these engineering placements were in Preston where, due to time constraints, we had to be very targeted with our lead generation. At scale, the conversion rate may be lower for this route as it was generally one of the more difficult routes to source for in terms of the number of challenges to overcome with employers.

**Hair & Beauty**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hair &amp; Beauty Total</th>
<th>Total achieved</th>
<th>Conversion %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New employer leads</td>
<td>611.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First stage meetings</td>
<td>63.00</td>
<td>10.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second stage meetings</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hair & Beauty already have a very structured career pathway in the form of apprenticeships and work experience, which is why the conversion is slightly higher.

Health & Science

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health &amp; Science Total</th>
<th>Total achieved</th>
<th>Conversion %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New employer leads</td>
<td>1,896.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First stage meetings</td>
<td>165.00</td>
<td>8.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second stage meetings</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIIs submitted</td>
<td>82.00</td>
<td>49.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIIs signed</td>
<td>49.00</td>
<td>59.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total industry placements</td>
<td>84.00</td>
<td>4.43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average number of placements offered per employer = **2.3**.

This is the lowest conversion rate from The Challenge seen in the pilot. As with Digital above, Health & Science was one of our largest routes that we had to source for in the pilot to number of leads generated was inevitably very high. There was also a significance split between the main two courses / pathways covered here - Applied Science and Health - see tables below for the split here.

**Applied Science**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applied Science Total</th>
<th>Total achieved</th>
<th>Conversion %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New employer leads</td>
<td>1,416.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First stage meetings</td>
<td>121.00</td>
<td>8.55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Second stage meetings  |  0.00  |  0.00%
EOIs submitted       |  70.00 |  57.85%
EOIs signed          |  39.00 |  55.71%
Total industry placements sourced |  54.00 |  3.81%

Average number of placements offered per employer = **1.38**

**Health**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Total</th>
<th>Total achieved</th>
<th>Conversion %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New employer leads</td>
<td>480.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First stage meetings</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td>9.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second stage meetings</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIs submitted</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIs signed</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>83.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total industry placements sourced</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average number of placements offered per employer = **3.00**

There were a lot more leads that we could have engaged here, but we hit the target very quickly. We had started engaging with businesses, but then found out that education providers already had sufficient placements in the route. This meant less follow up was needed thus reflecting a lower conversion rate than expected. We had a pipeline for significantly high numbers.

Although this is one of the lowest conversion rates across the data set, this is definitely not reflective of the route. In general, placements were very easy to source.
### Legal, Finance and Accounting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal, Finance &amp; Accounting Total</th>
<th>Total achieved</th>
<th>Conversion %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New employer leads</td>
<td>839.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First stage meetings</td>
<td>88.00</td>
<td>10.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second stage meetings</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>11.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIIs submitted</td>
<td>54.00</td>
<td>61.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOIIs signed</td>
<td>34.00</td>
<td>62.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total industry placements sourced</td>
<td>42.00</td>
<td>5.01%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average number of placements offered per employer = **1.23**.

This was the lowest of all routes - very much against what was expected. This is probably mostly due to larger law firms proving difficult to engage and secure sign up meaning we were mostly reliant on smaller firms, or small legal/finance teams within other organisations.
ROUTE-SPECIFIC TOP TIPS FOR ENGAGEMENT

From the industry placements pilot that occurred from 2017-2018, we developed some insights into route-specific ways for best engagement which may help you when you approach employers in these specific areas. Below is a list of our top tips we have compiled for general engagement and per route:

General

It is generally helpful to target the industry specifically through different marketing techniques aimed at where these industries appear.

Possible areas include:

- Trade publications
- Social Mobility Charters
- Digital marketing
- Membership bodies
- Trade unions
- Events

CASE STUDY: Having industry meet with students and staff

One education provider has a technical advisory board (TAB) that meets annually, comprised of members from industry, staff, and students, which allow them to engage and see how courses can fit in to industry placement opportunities. This helped hugely in engaging both employers and students (and staff).

Business and Administration

Considerations:

- Smaller organisations mean students are more likely to be able to be involved in various tasks, whereas larger organisations have different departments and less exposure to different areas. However, this can also be great for a student interested in a specific part of the business e.g. HR.
Employers are generally quite responsive, but it is easy to get poor quality placements, e.g. only working on basic administrative duties, social media posts, etc.

**Top Tips:**

- Good to approach the third sector, e.g. charities where funding is minimal, and an extra pair of hands is well valued and needed.
- It is important to work with the employer to ensure an appropriate fit between business needs and the students’ technical ability, ensuring the placement is as meaningful as possible.
- It is helpful to explain how a student can grow in responsibilities throughout the industry placement. It is useful to describe any experience they have already and their specific interest in that organisation, not just business generally.

**Catering and Hospitality**

**Consideration:**

- Usually offer flexibility to students on timing of industry placements, e.g. weekends and evenings.

**Top Tips:**

- This route is generally very receptive to industry placements.
- Employers are much more likely to offer placements in the run up to peak periods e.g. in the lead up to Christmas.

**Creative & Design**

**Considerations:**

- Flexibility to shape the placement around busy periods (ex. shoots) and quieter periods (ex. between shoots) is important.
- Music-specific:
  - Generally, a very friendly sector with lots of people willing to help, but also many unable to as they themselves are working freelance, from home (where lots of work is done online), or are part-time.
Top Tips:
- Independent production companies are more interested in engaging when they hear of other independents they knew who were already involved.
- Music-specific:
  - Being friendly and slightly more informal works well as the music sector is creative and relaxed. Also, being flexible to their working hours, e.g. students being able to work evenings and weekends, helps and allows venues/event managers to get on board.

Digital

Considerations:
- It is good to understand the nuances of exactly what the students are learning and which software packages they are using when approaching Digital employers, as they will ask. This was also important for video games production and animation industry placements.

Top Tips:
- Establish a good relationship with the course convenor so you can ask them about specifics that the employer will want to know in relation to their learning. It was important that they are able to gauge the fit between business needs and students’ technical ability. Students can help with this by ensuring their CV accurately reflects their skills.
- Helpful to have a clear separation between the students wanting to follow the creative digital routes e.g. digital marketing, and the students who are working within IT Departments, fixing computers and laptops, etc.
- Found most success within smaller companies who could benefit from a student helping them develop something new / modern.
- Confidence was gained with employers when the education provider offered to support the student in any additional technical learning they may need to help them on the job throughout placement.

Engineering and Manufacturing

Consideration:
- For Vehicle Maintenance & Paintwork, companies did not respond well to emailing or phone calls and rarely had the time for a cold call discussion on the project.
**Top Tips:**
- Many reacted well to employer engagement staff visiting the garage and asking to speak to the manager.
- There are often good relations between smaller companies and a strong local network. Therefore, it is worth asking one company to put you in contact with other surrounding companies.

**Hair & Beauty**

**Consideration:**
- Set realistic expectations with the student on what they will be able to do on the placement as often more on-the-job experience is required for some tasks.

**Top Tip:**
- Generally, hair and beauty salons are very open to having industry placement students as this is already embedded within this industry as the general training pathway into employment.

**Health and Science**

**Considerations:**
- High street pharmacies get paid to take pre-registered pharmacists so often use their training/supervision resource for that, which can make it harder to find placements.
- Hospital pharmacies can be interested but usually need quite a long lead-in due to administrative processes.
- Healthcare specific:
  - There can be issues with safeguarding working with vulnerable groups if students themselves have special needs. Duties could be assisting the main carers with running activities, cleaning, talking to residents, etc.
  - Most industry placements need to have DBS checks for roles in social care settings.

**Top Tips:**
- If you have a National Citizen Service (NCS) link person, approach them if you’re looking for placements in schools e.g. lab assistants.
● For larger companies, ask to speak to someone involved in equality and diversity and sell the ability to diversify their workforce -- this worked well for companies like NHS.
● Look for companies with apprenticeship schemes and sell how industry placements can help with the recruitment pipeline.
● Focus on companies that have health and safety checks which would involve scientific measurements, e.g. health and safety officers in factories where students could measure and test water, air, chemicals, etc.
● Pharmacies, science departments, and breweries are quite responsive as it is easier to be involved at a lower qualified level.
● Healthcare specific:
  ○ Nurseries and care homes are quite responsive. An extra pair of hands is often welcomed and needed.
  ○ It is useful to promote that hosting a placement allows for integration of different ages, which this sector appreciates.

**CASE STUDY: Options when students don’t have necessary training/qualifications in Healthcare**

Issues arose with the level of care a student can deliver due to training and qualifications needed. As a result, a care home got a group of 5 students to deliver activities of fun and entertainment to its elder residents. They had previous experience of this working well through national citizen service (NCS) and the older people really enjoyed the youth engagement. The students could also assist with smaller care activities whilst there and get great experience of the work inside a care home.

Legal, Finance, and Accounting

**Considerations:**

● It can be hard to speak to senior people in large law firms, but the practice manager can be very interested in diversity and inclusion, which may be a good angle to approach from.
● Law students may struggle to find placements which give them responsibility or personal experience within the industry. Therefore, it is important to ensure expectations are aligned for both the students and the employer, and to work with the employer to ensure as meaningful placement as possible.
**Top Tips:**

- As soon as employers know of other larger companies getting involved, they are more likely to sign up, so give examples of other employers who are on board.
- It is good to target larger companies as they have the possibility of taking on students from a selection of routes.
- You can target larger companies with a finance department for students studying Accounting / Finance.
LIST OF CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

The following alternatives have been used during the industry placement pilot when a standard approach did not work for an employer:

- In industries that are generally more online-based or larger companies harder to find, engage with freelancers who could use an extra hand.
- If specific training or requirements are needed for a certain employer which the student(s) may not have, explore what other roles/duties may be available in the same organisation that would not require such training where the student would still receive a quality industry placement.
- Employers can create innovative projects for students within the workplace, such as creating digital placements outside of the digital environment (e.g. fundraising projects, social media/website, advertisement, research).
- Reach out to parents of students for industry placements for other students at their place of work.
- Allowing students to set up their own business with a deliverable to a customer.

CASE STUDY:
Students set up their own business to deliver industry changing technology

At an inner-city education provider, one provider allowed 7 of their students to set up a business with mentorship from an employer to develop a solution to a problem they chose. While the employer organisation is a software company, placements in Business, Media, and IT were created to achieve their objectives. This team worked with the employer to identify a key health-related issue, then used their placements to develop a technological solution to this issue. They delivered industry changing technology and completed tasks like launching their first product, writing code, issuing a press release, and even allocating shares to a new member of the team.
**TOOLS**

**Help with phone calls**

These are incredibly simple yet can be very effective.

When trying to engage employers and get past gatekeepers the following guide is useful.

The normal aim of this call is to establish the correct contact and to obtain their details.

Do your research and be ready with what you think the stakeholder’s e-mail is and have a general e-mail identified like the “info@..” or the “enquires@...”, so you can quickly establish where that e-mail would go and who you will need to chase if you can't get the stakeholders details immediately.

*Employer Engagement Team - Hello, I wonder if you could help me please.*

*Gatekeeper - I can try.*

*Employer Engagement Team - Thank you - I am trying to contact (name of who you think is responsible for industry placements) as I understand they are the best person to speak to regarding student industry placements.*

Various outcomes:

1. Gatekeeper confirms it is and puts you through! Be ready with your elevator pitch.

2. Gatekeeper confirms it’s the right person but will not put you through - Now you can either 1) Confirm the e-mail you think is correct for that person - If they won’t help with the e-mail, ask if it's possible to have their e-mail for them to forward onto the contact. If they still say no, thank them for their time and end the call.

3. The Gatekeeper says it's not the correct person, but won’t tell you who is. Again, ask if it’s possible to have their e-mail for them to forward onto the contact. If they still say, no thank them for their time and end the call.

4. The Gatekeeper gives you an alternative contact and the contact details. Thank them and end the call.
5. The Gatekeeper won't help at all - Ask where the general enquiries e-mail goes. So you can send it to that department and then you know where to ask your call to be directed next time you call. If it’s a no, then again thank them and end the call.

Whichever outcome:

Thank them for their time and appreciate the help and advice, even if it's not exactly what you wanted.

Now look at what you have been given and progress with either sending your magic e-mail or by researching again for stakeholders and trying to establish contact by other means, i.e. LinkedIn, etc.

LinkedIn Advice

Suggested LinkedIn activities:

- Build your network in given routes / industries by connecting with senior stakeholders / target leads.
- Update LinkedIn profile and upload key documents.
- Join related groups that could have employer leads in e.g. apprenticeship / industry-specific recruitment groups.

Example LinkedIn connecting messages:

_Hi xxxxx,

_I hope you are well. I am keen to connect regarding industry placements we are delivering for our students. This is part of the Department for Education’s broader reform on technical education and the introduction of T Levels- it would be great to understand how it could fit in with your apprenticeship / early talent strategy at INSERT COMPANY NAME.

Is there an email address I could send through some information to? Or a number to reach you on for an initial discussion?

Regards,

XXXXX_
Magic e-mails

Research tells us that the e-mails that get the best response are:

- Short e-mails (5 sentences or less)
- Have plenty of “white space” (easy to scan)
- Personalised
- Have an “ask”
- Have a call to action even if it’s on you - i.e. “I will call you”.
- Flatter the user, but only a little.

Hello Andrea,

I am contacting you to see who the correct person would be to speak with about a new initiative.

From 2020, industry placements will form a mandatory requirement for students taking new Level 3 technical programmes called ‘T Levels’.

To gear up for this, we are implementing industry placements in suitable courses from the start of this academic year 18/19. We are looking to find employers in these industries to offer these 2nd year students a 45 day industry placement in the academic year 2018/19.

We have students who are studying a wide range of technical courses in your area and who will be needing a placement.

If we could discuss this further, I would be very grateful and I would appreciate your feedback.

Kind regards
Elevator pitches

We are looking for employers in suitable industries to offer our 2nd year students a 45 day industry placement in the academic year 2018/19.

We have students who are studying a wide range of technical courses in your area and who will be needing a placement.

The new technical courses will have an industry placement as a mandatory part of the course with a gradual rollout, so we are starting early to prepare for this.

Discovery questions

Examples of questions that could be suitable to ask:

1. Have you had any industry placements or student placements in the past?
2. Do you have a strategy for industry placements/apprenticeships?
3. What functions do you have at head office and regional / national offices?
4. What CSR programmes do you have?

Objection Handling guide

The guidance below covers some of the expected common objections and our suggested responses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTION</th>
<th>POTENTIAL SOLUTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● We don’t have roles available for ‘unskilled’ / under 18 workers</td>
<td>● This programme is trying to address skills shortages in young people – this has the potential to change the landscape of technical education and how ready young people are for entering skilled employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● These students are studying a course relevant to your industry – so they will already have some skills and knowledge of the industry and have the opportunity to develop these and gain more on the job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● With growing uncertainty around the UK work force and skills shortages – this programme has the potential to be a pipeline of work ready, engaged and motivated employees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Although a large proportion of the young people will be 17, some will be turning 18 soon and in the next year. At that point, they could take on additional responsibilities.

| We already have an intern or have committed to developing apprenticeships this year | Your current intern or apprentice could help to train up the new placement student giving each of them a valuable experience. |
| Industry placements should act as a complimentary youth development opportunity, helping you to develop an additional pre-apprenticeship pipeline of candidates that have already proven themselves over 45+ days in the business. |

| We’re too busy to train someone | This is a great chance to get an extra pair of hands to help you out during this busy period. Students are studying a relevant course and will be able to assist and add value – potentially taking on a project over the 45+ day period. |
| Hosting the industry placement will offer development opportunities for any managers / aspiring managers in your organisation. |

<p>| We’ve had a bad experience in the past | This is a NEW model of industry placements, specifically designed to address the issues previously experienced with work experience. Industry placements are considerably longer and involve students having already acquired technical skills and knowledge of your industry, and will have completed preparation before their placement within their education provider. |
| It would be a shame to let one bad experience prevent your company from the experience of having a motivated and work ready student looking to develop their skills for the future. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We can’t afford to pay an industry placement student</td>
<td>Companies are not obliged to pay students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We work with another provider</td>
<td>We encourage a diverse work environment, so students interacting from different providers would be good! They could support each other and work as a team on similar projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is no charge for hosting the student -- so you could have students from multiple providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The placement is too short and not worth our while training a young person</td>
<td>If the placement is successful on both sides there is the potential to signpost the student into longer-term employment opportunities or an apprenticeship, once the student has completed their studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unlike an apprentice coming through a traditional pipeline, you would have had the chance to observe the candidate over a 45+ day period to be sure of their fit for the business – improving likely retention rates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do we know the quality of the candidate we’ll be getting?</td>
<td>All businesses are welcome to meet and/or interview your student ahead of the placement if you so desire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We don’t have the resource to do the paperwork / admin required</td>
<td>We have worked to reduce the amount of admin required to confirm placements – we can offer guidance surrounding legal, health &amp; safety, insurance and have template documents for you to use (including an industry placement agreement for the student).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any forms required will be pre-filled wherever possible to minimise the level of input required from employers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>During the placement, the education provider will lead on most administrative tasks – only asking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
for your input at certain stages as the employer.

Links to Documents - Employer Templates

- Employer Information Request Form
- Employer Sign Up Form
- Due diligence of employers form

Marketing Collateral

An employer flyer / industry placements overview can be found below.
Our learners are ready

All of our placement students have been given a basic training of skills in your industry and can’t wait to join you.

Are you?

What are Industry Placements?

Industry Placements, formerly known as Work Placements, are being introduced by the Department for Education to give learners on Level 3 Technical education courses the chance to put into practice the knowledge and technical skills they have learnt. Placements provide employers with additional support from a learner studying the relevant course. They will involve a 45-60 day placement in a relevant role with a host employer. In 2018-2019 we are entering the second stage of Industry Placements development with ~400 providers offering Industry Placements before the introduction of the T-Levels from 2020.
Bright eyes, a fresh perspective

Why should my business get involved?

Immediate benefits
- To bring fresh perspective into your business
- To give your employees opportunities to coach and mentor

Long term benefits
- To help address the current and future skills shortages in your industry
- To strengthen your recruiting pipeline
- To inspire the next generation to work in your industry

What do I need to do?
- You will provide a minimum of 45 day work placement for a student studying a course relevant to your business
- You will arrange this with a participating post-16 provider for some time in the next academic year
- You will have a line manager who would be responsible for the learner
- You will provide a safe environment for the learner to work in and opportunities to develop their technical skills within your industry

Are you ready?

If you’re ready to take on an Industry Placement student please get in contact with us...

e-mail: workplacements@the-challenge.org
or for further information see our website: www.the-challenge.org/work-placements
These materials have been created by The Challenge. For all enquiries regarding industry placements, please contact the Education & Skills Funding Agency Service using this online enquiry form, or by searching gov.uk for the Industry Placements page.