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T Levels: Pilot 2024

Employer Information

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T Levels

T Levels are a new qualification for students aged 16 to 19 in England who've finished their GCSEs.

They're an alternative to A Levels and apprenticeships, giving young people the technical and practical skills to be an asset in the workplace. T Levels combine classroom learning with a substantial industry placement.

Each T Level is equivalent in size to three A Levels and are designed to help young people develop the knowledge, attitude and practical skills to thrive in the workplace.



The T Level Technical Qualification in Finance has **two mandatory** components.

Core component

This component covers the underpinning knowledge, concepts and skills that support threshold competence in the finance industry. It has 500 guided learning hours and is assessed through two externally set Core Examinations and an Employer Set Project.

Occupational Specialist Component

There are four Occupational Specialist components in this Technical Qualification, each are 600 guided learning hours. Students undertaking the T Level Technical Qualification in Finance will choose one single specialism.

- 1. Investment Banking and Asset and Wealth Management Analyst (financial adviser)**
- 2. Insurance Practitioner**
- 3. Financial Compliance/Risk Analyst**
- 4. Retail and Commercial Banking Analyst**

These components cover the occupational specialist knowledge and skills required to demonstrate threshold competence for the specialism. Each occupational specialism will be assessed by a skills-related project that assesses the performance outcome skills and associated underpinning knowledge.

At the heart of each course, every T Level student completes an industry placement that lasts a minimum of 315 hours (approximately 45 days). Industry placements give you a unique opportunity to help develop new talent in your industry, and get young people work-ready.

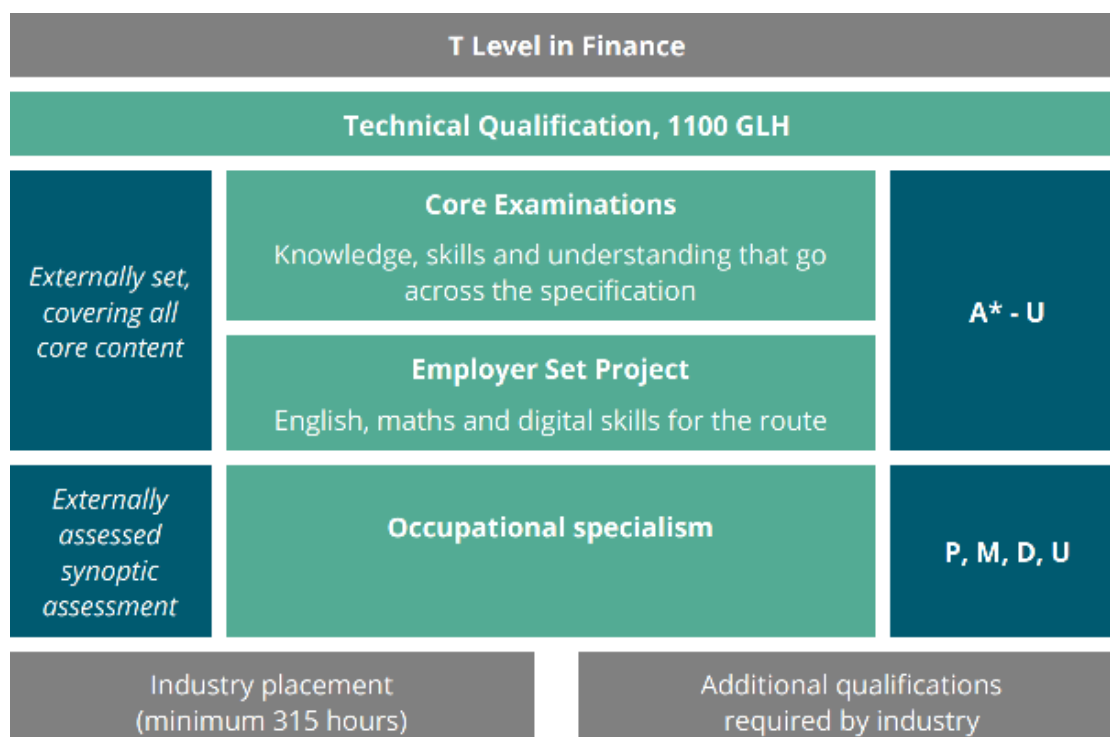


The CII Pilot

We believe the T Levels could support employers and our professions by offering early access to a talent pipeline for entry level positions, could help with recruitment, improve innovation and increase an organisation's productivity.

To test this theory, the CII are committed to piloting the T Level qualifications in insurance and Personal Finance. By supporting employers and colleges in a controlled test of the qualification we can review and develop the most effective way to manage the T Level in the future, making the most of this opportunity to create an early pipeline of talent.

Qualification Structure



Placements

How industry placements work

Industry placements are at the heart of each T Level course. CII and the school or college will support you at every stage so you can focus on getting the most out of your placement student. Here's an overview of the process. You can find more detail in the following pages.



1: Find a school or college to deliver the T Level

For the pilot, CII will manage this stage for you.

Usually, you would get in touch with schools or colleges near you to discuss your business, their students and whether they can deliver the Insurance or Personal Finance related T Level courses. For the pilot, once we have a group of employers signed up as interested in taking a student, or students, on placement, CII will work with Pearsons to find the best school and/or college locally to you. We will then put you in touch to start the conversation about how you will manage the placement together.

2: Find the right student

Tell the school or college about your organisation, the placement's roles and responsibilities, and the sort of person you need. The school or college will find suitable students and you can choose the right person for your business. You will then interview, assess and choose the right student. We will support you in this process as part of the pilot.

3: Plan the placement

This is where you'll:

- Agree dates and times that work best for everyone
- Discuss how often the student will attend
- Plan the projects and tasks

You can also decide if and how you'd like to pay the student.

The school or college will work with you to make sure you know about your responsibilities and will support you with the practicalities like health and safety, insurance and risk assessments.

Placements cont.

4: The Placement itself

When the student is on placement, it is a good idea to assign a mentor or manager to track their progress against their objectives.

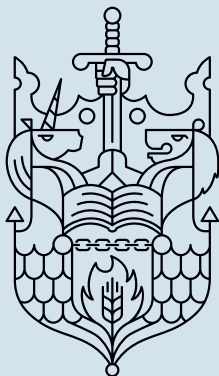
The school or college will always be on hand to help with any questions or issues.

5: After the placement

At the end of the placement, you'll have an end-of-placement review with the student and the school or college.

This is when you can talk to the school or college about your experience with the student and give them constructive feedback to help them reflect on their placement and career direction.

This may also be a great opportunity to bring a young person into your workplace permanently and build a pipeline of talent for your industry. If you'd like to continue to work with the student, you can talk to the school or college about hiring them or taking on another industry placement student.



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Your industry placement

responsibilities

This shows you what responsibilities you have at different stages of the placement.

Planning and preparation

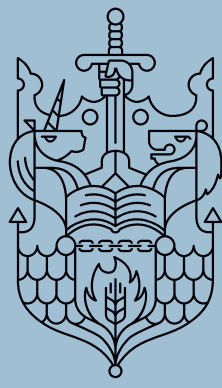
- Tell the school or college what kind of student you would be keen to place and the skills you're looking for
- Draft a role guide for the student and give it to the school or college
- You may choose to hold a CV screening and/or interview process - if so, discuss it with the school or college
- Decide whether any of the optional delivery approaches are applicable to the placement and would benefit the student
- Decide who's going to supervise the student, and check that they're willing and able to do so
- Review and agree legal and policy requirements with the school or college, for example health and safety, safeguarding and Employer Liability insurance
- Identify any equipment and other things that the student will need, including IT access
- Discuss with your school or college how you might need to support students with special educational needs or disabilities

Final preparations

- Agree and sign the industry placement agreement with the school or college, and the student, including the student's working hours, development objectives and learning goals and other arrangements
- Carry out due diligence of partners and/or subcontractors, if you are the lead employer and are using the 'Supply chain and employer networks' approach
- Work with the school or college, and the line manager, to develop a suitable work plan and tasks for the student
- With the school or college, agree joining instructions and expectations to be shared with the student before the placement starts
- Work with the school or college to prepare an induction

During placements

- Take part in the student's induction
- Support the student to develop practical skills to do the job well - this could include training on specific processes, systems or software
- Ensure that students have appropriate support from a mentor or buddy, if you are using the 'Hybrid (remote) placements' approach
- Use planned and unplanned opportunities for students to practise their skills and step out of their comfort zone
- Let them experience a variety of tasks, avoiding too much repetition
- Give regular feedback so the student knows when they are and aren't meeting expectations, what they're doing well and how they can improve



During placements cont.

- Contribute to progress reviews
- Tell the school or college about any successes or concerns so they can give the student extra support

Review and evaluation

- Review the benefits of the placement to you and the business
- Decide if you can offer more placements in the future
- Consider offering the student further temporary work and/or employment - note that they should finish their course of study before becoming employed
- Contribute to the end-of-placement review, giving feedback on the student's commitment, achievements and behaviours, and summarising the practical skills the student has gained
- Write an appraisal for the student for their future use

Legal compliance for industry placements

When you get to the detailed preparations for industry placements, the school, college or training provider you work with will support you on the practicalities of:

- Health and safety
- Risk assessment
- Insurance
- Safeguarding
- the Prevent initiative
- Equality
- Data access and security



Selecting students for industry placements

An industry placement might be the first time a young person has been through a recruitment process. Your organisation may be very experienced at running recruitment processes which involve young people. If you are less experienced or are not used to a structured recruitment practice, you can follow this simple approach, tailored to recruiting potential industry placement students.



Step 1: Write a placement role description

Describe your organisation, the student's responsibilities and the kind of person you are looking for as an industry placement student: look at example job role descriptions for some ideas. Give practical information such as dates, times and locations of the placement, and payments to be made to the student (if applicable).

Step 2: Advertise

Use your own channels (for example, website or social media) and/or ask your school/college.

If you use your own channels, tell the applicants how, when and where to apply. If you don't advertise yourself, ask the provider to send you the required number of completed applications to allow you to get involved in the recruitment and selection process.

Step 3: Assess applications

We suggest this is a shared process with the school/college. Agree the criteria and process in advance. You could:

- assess them separately and compare results
- assess them jointly
- make an initial sift and prepare a shortlist - or ask the provider to do this
- make a decision straight away or go to the next stage (interview) if you want to see the applicants before deciding

Step 4: Interview

You are providing a great opportunity for young people to test their CV, application and interview skills. Some young people will not have had expert help to prepare, and may have some anxiety about taking an industry placement. Consider what you can do to help them feel relaxed and confident so they can show you their best selves during the recruitment process.

Step 4: Interview cont.

You could do this with the school/college as well. Decide who's on the interview panel, when and where it happens - in your premises, at the school or college, by video link or phone. Use standard questions for fairness (see list of example questions below).

Example placement interview questions:

- Tell us a bit about yourself - what do you do in your spare time? Have you ever had a part-time job? What do you like doing best?
- Which skills do you think you could use during your time with us, if you're successful?
- How have you used these skills in the past?
- What do you already know about a career in insurance/personal finance?
- What do you hope to learn on this placement?
- Tell us about a time when you were part of a team - it could be at work, in a club or at college: what was your role in the team? What did you learn about yourself?
- What do you do when you come across a problem that's hard to solve?
- What do you know about our organisation?
- What do you hope to do after coming on this placement?
- What questions can we answer for you?

Step 5: Communicate the outcome

Agree who does this, you or the school/college. Contact your first-choice applicant, check that they still want to take up the placement and tell them about the next steps.

Tell unsuccessful applicants, give them feedback and encourage them to keep trying.

Consider the type of feedback you could give. Even when a candidate is unsuccessful, you may have valuable insight to help them on their journey.

Step 6: Get feedback

Talk to the young people you offer placements to about your recruitment, induction and training processes.

Involve them in the design and thinking for your next round of industry placement student recruitment. The insight you will get will really help you to become youth-friendly and create even more opportunities.

Which placement models work for you?

These are three typical models for industry placements: **day release**, **block** and **mixed**.

You can design a mix of all models to suit your business needs, as long as the placement is a minimum of 315 hours, with an average of 350 hours.

The placement models below are not prescriptive. For example, placements don't have to take place over two years. T Level students choose an occupational specialism during Year 1, so their industry placement could start later in Year 1, or even be delivered entirely in the second year.

The T Level school or college will work with you to develop models that works for the student and for you.

Which model is best for you?

The suggested models are examples only and you will want to divide up the hours to suit your needs and the student's needs. Here are some questions to think about:

- are there any peaks and troughs in the work cycle?
- is there a time of year that's best? When are you most confident that you can provide work and line management?
- are there any projects planned that would influence the timing? When could your student contribute the most?
- how does the placement fit into the student's course? Which model lets the student apply their coursework in their placement with you?
- can you offer the full number of hours, or would it be better to share the industry placement with another employer?
- would fixed or flexible days work best (that is, on the same day or days each week, or using a more flexible approach based on when work is available)?
- how much is location and travel to work a factor? Is travel straightforward, or could this influence the pattern (for example, adjusting for winter timetables on public transport, or offering week blocks to support the purchase of weekly travel cards)?



Placement models

(using c.350 average hours as examples)

Day release

Example 1:

- Year 1: 1 day per week using, for example, 100 of the 350 hours
- Year 2: 1 day per week using the 250 hours not used in year 1

Example 2:

- Year 1: 2 days per week, for 10 weeks using 160 of the 350 hours
- Year 2: 2 days per week, for 12 weeks using hours not used in year 1

Block

Year 1: A single block using, for example, 175 of the 350 hours

Year 2: A single block using, for example, the 175 hours not used in year one

Mixed

Example 1:

- Year 1: 1 day per week, using 100 of the 350 hours, for example
- Year 2: 1 day per week, using 150 hours, for example - A single block, using the remaining 100 hours

Example 2:

- Year 1: 1 day per week for 10 weeks, using 80 of the 350 hours
- Year 2: a block using the remaining 270 hours



Making payments to industry placement students

T Levels are qualifications for students aged 16 to 19 in England who've finished GCSEs. Industry placements are part of the T Level course and offer high-quality, meaningful 'real-life' experiences of the workplace, not employment.

Industry placement students are not entitled to a salary because the placement is part of a further education course. There is no legal requirement or expectation that students will be paid.

However, you can pay students if you want to. The goal is, to help as many students and employers as possible to benefit from industry placements, and to prevent students from facing any avoidable costs.

You can choose to pay students a wage. You can also pay bonuses and attendance allowances to cover travel and other costs.

Here's a list of the different types of payments you can make, and the potential reasons for each. Your provider can advise you about all of this, and tell you what payments other employers are making.

Types of payment

Wage

- Motivates the student to work hard and to deliver
- Recognises the contribution made by the student to the business
- Differentiates students from volunteers
- Avoids negative effects on your reputation as a good employer which may result from unpaid work
- Wages paid to students are subject to tax and National Insurance



Types of payment cont.

Bonus

(if the student achieves agreed milestones)

- May motivate the student and boost their morale by encouraging achievement
- This could be in the form of vouchers
- Should be clearly agreed upon in advance to avoid misinterpretation.

Allowance

(covering costs of equipment, travel, food etc.)

- Provides a safety net so the student isn't out of pocket
- Doesn't affect families in receipt of benefits
- Helps to remove financial barriers to taking part in the placement

Non-financial rewards

- Can boost morale through recognition of achievement. For example, mentions in newsletters or as case studies promoting their contribution.

Managing young people who are *new to the workplace*

Students on industry placements are moving out of a school, college or other training environment they know and into one that's new. It could be their first time in a workplace.

How to make an industry placement a good experience

- Recognise it's a change
- Going to work for the first time can create a mixture of confusion, anxiety and excitement, which everyone handles differently – some take it in their stride, others need more time and support
- Watch how your student is settling in, be ready to help and be patient
- You could consider whether the student would benefit from carrying out projects in small teams with their peers outside your organisation, working alongside another employer or professional

Emphasise professionalism

- Experienced workers know how important it is to be professional, but students may not know how to conduct themselves at work
- They'll need to learn the basics such as email etiquette, how to approach colleagues and customers and when to take a break
- Students might need help to navigate more touchy subjects like handling emotions, mobile phone policy and dress codes

Start off well

- The first few days are crucial - it's worth spending some time at the start of the placement, so students feel they'll get the support they need to carry out their placement role. They'll quickly become part of the organisation, once they understand how things work
- Remember this may be their first time working in any business. If they continue to struggle, remember that the school or college is also there to provide advice and support

Give them a good supervisor

- Students learn a lot from having a supervisor who enjoys developing students' skills and building their confidence
- Someone who's willing to spend time with them, is a good communicator, isn't worried about providing frequent feedback and is open to ideas and suggestions is ideal

Find them a mentor

- A mentor can help to integrate students into the organisation by sharing first-hand knowledge and experience. Mentors provide a different type of support than a supervisor does – more focused on learning than performance
- Good mentors can become a valuable sounding-board for students. People who've had a few years' experience and are not too far away in age from the student can make great mentors, as can staff who are rather older, and who have more workplace experience

Managing young people cont.

Welcome questions

- Students can soon go back into their shells if they feel uneasy or overwhelmed, so make them feel part of a team and tell them they can ask questions whenever they want
- It's good to be curious in a new environment – no matter how obvious the answer may seem, how does anyone know something until they've learned it for the first time?

Give feedback

- Students get a huge amount out of being told how they're doing – what they do well, and where to improve
- Give them lots of feedback as they navigate new tasks and responsibilities, they will appreciate it and learn from it
- Providing formal feedback as part of the mid- and end-of placement reviews set up by providers will help to ensure all are aware of progress, and the alignment with wider learning goals

Provide plenty of variety

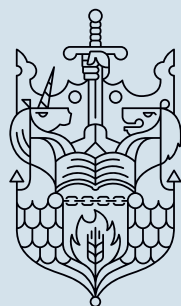
- Many students thrive on variety and change. They may learn best and be most productive when working on short-term tasks. If they're part of a project team, think about breaking the work down into smaller tasks
- You could consider delivering the placement jointly with another employer, so that they experience a wider variety of work and working environments. You could also collaborate with other employers within your supply chain or employer network, by arranging for students to spend part or all of their placement time with partners or subcontractors

Keep an eye on the workload

- Students don't always know their limits, they might be keen to take on new projects and responsibilities, or they may feel they can't say 'no'
- Watch out for signs of overload, and keep in mind that students may not yet have learned how best to manage their time or prioritise their work, thus supporting the student will be a team effort

Set a good example

- Students learn most from what they see and do, not from what you say to them. They'll view the people around them as a model, copying behaviours and actions
- As they start to learn the norms of workplace behaviour, they'll take on positives and negatives from whatever they observe. Recognise their malleable nature and help as much as you can to shape them in positive ways



Planning industry placement *projects and tasks*

You will need to decide on and plan the projects and tasks that students will do during their placements. They can do what anyone else in the job role does - as long as they are trained to do it, and properly supervised.

The school or college will advise you on how to select tasks that support students' progress with their course, developing both technical and employability skills.

Tips for choosing projects and tasks

- Reflect the role - most job roles involve a range of tasks, so projects should give students a chance to learn a wide range of skills
- Make them interesting and challenging - projects should challenge students and help them develop a breadth of skills so they can progress into a career
- Vary tasks throughout the placement - giving students repetitive tasks won't build a broad range of skills and could demotivate them
- Be realistic - giving students too much to do or asking them to carry out difficult or complex tasks without support won't help their development
- Supervise and train students - so they can learn to do the tasks well, with supervision at first and then without that when they have shown they are competent
- Ensure they add value to your organisation! How can the student contribute to live projects?

Other helpful activities

- **Induction** - helps students settle in and covers things like working practices and health and safety requirements that students need to know about before doing the tasks
- **Shadowing** - watching an experienced person doing the job gives students a feel for the tasks they will be doing in their placement role
- **Feedback and progress reviews** - to let students know how well they are doing the tasks and what they need to do to be even better at performing those tasks
- **Extra training** - to help the student do their tasks to a high standard, and/or tackle a wider range of tasks
- **Small team projects** - students may also spend up to a third of their placement time carrying out projects in small teams with their peers alongside another employer or professional



Effective monitoring for industry placement students

Your industry placement student should be allocated to a supervisor who will be responsible for their day-to-day activities. It's not essential for students to have a mentor as well, but a good mentor can add a lot to a student's experience.

A mentor will provide additional support and advice on issues wider than just their team role and responsibilities.

What is mentoring?

It's a relationship in which the mentor passes on useful skills, knowledge and insights which help students learn about themselves, what they can do and what it takes to be a professional at work.

What do mentors do?

Mentoring is a supportive relationship. It focuses on the student's development as a person and as a professional. Mentors help students by drawing on their own experience. They aren't supervisors – they don't set tasks or assess performance. And they don't have to tell the student everything they know about a subject, at every opportunity. Mentoring is about sharing what 'good' looks like, and sharing experience. It builds confidence and a 'can-do' attitude. A mentor also can step in when things get tough, helping students to find a way through to the other side.

Why do it?

Mentoring helps students make the most of the time they spend in your organisation. And it helps the supervisor as well by being another source of support.

Who can do it?

A good mentor has experience relevant to the student's role – technical, management and life experience are all equally valuable. Mentors should be able to quickly grasp what students need. They should listen, ask the smart questions and lead students to a possible solution. Mentors may be from a different team to the student or their supervisor. This can add breadth to the understanding of your organisation. In a smaller organisation, it might not be practical to spare the time of two

What's the process cont.

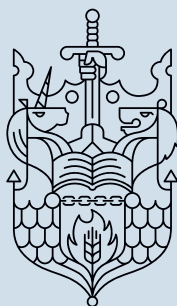
Keep the student on track and focused on their learning. Suggest goals, agree them with the student and help to come up with practical actions. Ensure that meetings are kept to time.

Discuss progress and problems openly – there should be no hidden agendas. Explore options, look at different angles and welcome alternative ideas. Provide coaching in specific areas of the placement role. Get extra support for the student, if they're struggling. Help students to come up with ideas themselves.

Giving a simple answer to a problem is not as useful as helping a student to understand how to approach problems in future.

Get students used to reflecting on situations and events. Sketch out pathways to move on from difficult situations. Give structure to what's happening and lead students to think clearly about what they and other people have done.

Continue the mentoring relationship until both of you decide it's time to stop. This might be at the end of the placement, or it may just reach a natural end. It's good to have a last meeting to reflect on what the student has learned, how far they've come, and where to go next.



Progressing into work

T Levels:

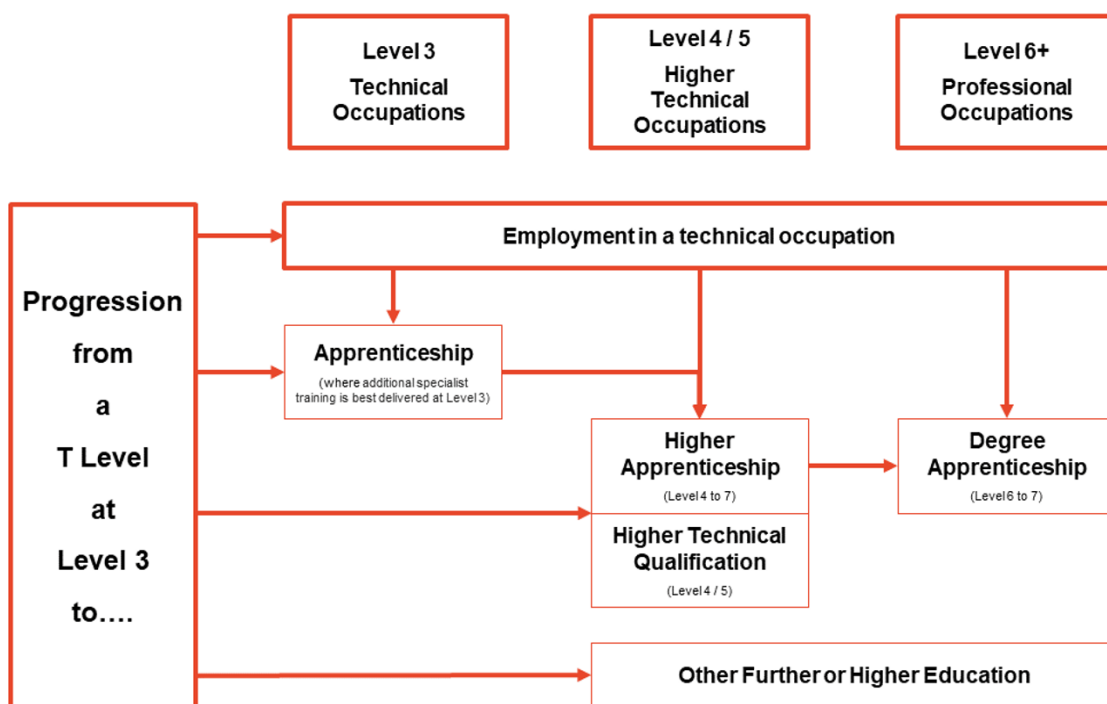
T Levels are 2 year technical programmes at local colleges, schools and training providers. 80% classroom based and 20% in a placement. Includes industry placements to build attitudes and behaviours and to develop practical skills.

This is followed by possible progression to roles in your organisation:

- **Internship**
- **Supported Internship**
- **Entry level role**
- **Apprenticeship**

Progression routes:

Below is an outline of the further learning or qualification possibilities for students after a successful T Level. T Levels are at Level 3 where one T Level is equivalent in size to 3 A Levels.



CII T Levels Pilot

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Shape the future of our professions**



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