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Research and analysis

A review of the quality of T-level courses: interim report

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Applies to England

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Executive summary

T levels provide learners aged 16 to 19 with a new opportunity to study a high-quality and ambitious technical qualification.

We visited a sample of providers that were among the first to offer these qualifications. This study evaluates the quality of T-level courses in those providers.

We hope that this interim report will help providers, employers and policy-makers to reflect and build on how T levels are taught in the future.

In 2023, we will visit these providers again, and some new ones, to see how T-level courses have been developed further.

Main findings

Our research shows that providers are committed to making T levels a success.

On T levels, we found that:

- some providers gave learners initial advice and guidance that focused on preparing them for the expectations of T levels. Learners were given information about the different components of the course and what their next steps could be. However, not all learners felt prepared for how much work they had to do for a T-level course
- although some teachers were well prepared for teaching T-level courses, many did not receive comprehensive training and found teaching the new curriculum challenging. Recruitment and retention of staff with sufficient knowledge and experience were challenging due to the pandemic

and sector workforce challenges

- some providers did not have access to resources such as textbooks and practice exam papers
- providers that were more effective had already used the flexibility in the new T-level courses to sequence different components in a coherent way that develops learners' knowledge and skills
- learners were appreciative of the quality of teaching on their T-level course. However, teachers faced challenges in balancing all the requirements of the course
- the more effective industry placements gave broad, high-quality and appropriate experiences that helped learners make decisions about their futures
- the more effective T-level curriculums were developed by providers in collaboration with employers
- at the time of our visits, many learners were experiencing delays in starting industry placements, primarily due to the impact of COVID-19. Providers of digital, construction, and health and science courses in particular were struggling to find employers

On the T Level Transition Programme (TLTP), we found that:

- the TLTP did not always result in learners progressing to a T level as intended
- teaching on the TLTP was generally of a high standard.
- the quality of work experience for learners on the TLTP was not always high. Providers did not always help learners on the programme to find meaningful work experience relevant to their course

Background

T levels are 2-year technical qualifications that the Department for Education launched in September 2020. Learners can choose to study these after completing GCSEs. They are broadly equivalent in size to 3 A levels and include a substantial industry placement.

They were developed in response to the [2016 Sainsbury Review](#). This review recommended 'systematically reform[ing] technical education for the long term' and 'ensuring individuals can develop the technical knowledge and skills that industry needs'. Courses are now available in occupational areas where there is a substantial requirement for technical knowledge.

The courses have been developed in collaboration with employers and education providers.^{[footnote}

^{1]} They combine practical and knowledge-based learning at a college, other further education provider or school with significant work experience through an industry placement. T levels therefore provide an opportunity for learners to gain the knowledge and skills needed for university courses, higher apprenticeships or skilled employment.

T levels include:

- exams, which test theory, concepts and contextual understanding of the sector
- a substantial employer-set project based on a real-life work problem that assesses contextual English, mathematics and transferable skills
- assignments or projects that assess technical competence in the selected occupation
- an industry placement of at least 45 days
- employability, enrichment and personal development sessions

At the point of our visits, between December 2021 and April 2022, providers could offer T levels in:

- education and childcare
- health and science
- construction and the built environment
- digital

There are plans to introduce more T levels until over 20 courses are available. This will cover sectors ranging from agriculture to catering and engineering to science.

Some providers are also offering learners the TLTP. This is a 1-year level 2 course designed to support progression to a T level.

The TLTP gives learners the opportunity to study technical content and develop English, mathematics and digital skills, alongside work experience and personal development.

Methodology

Our overall research aims to evaluate the quality of T-level courses. For this interim study, we wanted to assess early implementation. [\[footnote 2\]](#) Next year, we will carry out a final study evaluating how the quality has improved.

This study investigated the strengths and weaknesses of the new T-level courses. During the visits, inspectors evaluated:

- the main strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum
- how well industry placements were being implemented
- how well providers met the needs of learners

We visited a sample of 24 providers.^{[[footnote 3](#)]} Ten of these were running the TLTP, which inspectors also evaluated.^{[[footnote 4](#)]}

A group of inspectors visited each provider to carry out visits. The T-level visits took place over 3 days and the TLTP visits over 2 days. We evaluated the quality of provision of each subject in line with the criteria in the [education inspection framework](#).

Inspectors carried out deep dives into each T level and the TLTP. The deep dives covered:

- the curriculum
- the integration of personal development and wider curriculum
- how learners were assessed
- the quality of learners' work
- the quality of teaching
- the quality of industry placements and work experience
- the appropriateness of teacher training

During each visit, we spoke to the following:

- leaders
- curriculum managers
- teachers
- learners
- employers

Following each visit, inspectors completed evaluation reports on each course. Our research and evaluation team carried out a thematic analysis of these reports using qualitative analysis software.

Report findings

Some providers gave learners initial advice and guidance that focused on preparing them for the specific expectations of T levels. Learners were given information about the different components of the course and what their next steps could be. However, not all learners felt prepared for how much work they had to do for a T-level course.

T levels aim to be ambitious. The specific expectations include a combination of exams, a substantial industry placement and an employer-set project.

Inspectors saw examples of some providers managing learners' expectations well. Some providers informed learners about the expectations of T-level courses before they enrolled. Providers arranged information and guidance events and held summer schools. They also ensured that learners knew about their suitability for the course, the structure of the course and progression opportunities. As a result, most learners felt well informed about the course before it started.

Most providers considered carefully which T-level courses to introduce. Providers used their existing relationships with local employers to offer relevant opportunities for their learners. They also considered the subject-specific expertise of their teachers. Providers also used data on the career or further education destinations of their previous learners to identify which T levels to offer.

Most staff gave learners plenty of information about career choices and the different options available. Learners who received this were clear about their chosen careers and the different ways to get there, for example through an apprenticeship or university course.

Learners are not required to achieve a grade 4 in mathematics and English at GCSE to do a T level.^{[\[footnote 5\]](#)} However, teachers in some providers were conscious that there were gaps in learners' knowledge, particularly in mathematics and English. This was because of the disruption they had experienced during the pandemic and because they had received centre-assessed GCSE grades that did not always accurately reflect their knowledge. Therefore, some providers chose to require learners to have a minimum of GCSE grade 5 in English and mathematics. This was to ensure that they could cope with course expectations.

Despite this, at the start of their courses, learners did not always have the requisite knowledge and skills. Some teachers assessed learners before the start of the course to identify knowledge gaps. They then ensured that they covered any gaps in their teaching. For example, on one digital course, teachers identified through initial assessments that learners did not know the programming language 'Python' and, as a result, they ensured that this was taught. Teachers also set projects for learners to complete in the summer holidays before they started.

However, some learners still commented that the course turned out to be more challenging and involved a greater depth of learning than they had anticipated.

In a small number of cases, the initial advice and guidance to learners was not effective or was non-existent. Furthermore, learners were not always aware of T levels because of poor information and guidance from schools. In providers where initial advice was weaker, some learners were placed on T-level courses without a clear idea of what they entailed.

Furthermore, the route from T levels to university has not been made clear. Among leaders,

teachers and learners, there were concerns about how well university admissions staff understand T levels and the knowledge and skills that learners develop on these courses.

If T levels are to be successful, providers need to inform learners about the expectations of their chosen T-level course. They should help learners to understand how the course helps them to achieve their chosen career. Universities need to recognise and value T levels as qualifications and include them in their entry requirements.

Although some teachers were well prepared for teaching T-level courses, many teachers did not receive comprehensive training and found teaching the new curriculum challenging. Recruitment and retention of staff with sufficient knowledge and experience were challenging due to the pandemic and sector workforce challenges.

Some teachers were well prepared for teaching T-level courses. Providers supported teachers delivering T-level courses by:

- having regular meetings and informal discussions, including feedback from observations on what is working well and what can be improved, and planning the curriculum and industry placements
- providing internal training sessions and inset days
- allowing time for teachers' continuous professional development (CPD)

Providers also used their links with local employers to support teachers' CPD. For example, teachers sat in on employer workshops or visited workplaces. Curriculum leaders spoke positively about using external industry specialists to fill gaps in teachers' knowledge.

Staff from different subjects and industry specialist teachers worked together to ensure that teaching was based on an expert understanding of the core concepts needed and how to sequence them. In one example, teachers on a construction course did not have experience of the kind of written assessment required for T levels. These construction teachers worked with the English department to understand what to expect from the learners' written assignments and how to improve learners' English.

Awarding bodies also provided training for staff. For example, teachers and managers had direct contact with a specialist from the Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education to help them teach. Some providers were complimentary about the direct help that their awarding body gave. Teachers said the awarding body provided detailed schemes of work and devised webinars that enabled them to explore how best to plan and teach the programme.

However, many teachers reported that developing and teaching the new T-level curriculum alongside other commitments was challenging. They struggled to keep up to date with the new curriculum area.

Most leaders and teachers had taken part in the T Level Professional Development programme run by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF). However, many teachers did not feel it prepared them to teach T levels. Training was disrupted due to COVID-19. Staff found placements to update their industry knowledge useful, but some of these were delayed or not available. Some teachers said they were not given sufficient time for training and had not attended all the sessions provided. Many teachers participated in ETF webinars on troubleshooting aspects of T levels. Some found them useful at the beginning, while others described them as 'poor'.

Some providers had found it difficult to recruit industry specialist teachers. They reported that it was more challenging to recruit teachers for the construction course than for the other courses because of a lack of applicants with suitable knowledge and expertise. One provider had concerns about offering other T levels in the future, because they thought they would struggle to recruit specialist teachers.

Some providers did not have access to resources such as textbooks and practice exam papers.

Across all T levels, providers were dissatisfied that some resources from awarding bodies were initially not available. Textbooks, teaching materials and sample exam papers were either delayed or in short supply. Staff reported that the quality of resources varied. They identified inconsistencies in both the curriculum content and assessment content, and spelling errors. Some staff were frustrated about not having clear direction, support and timely answers from their awarding body.

As a result, some teachers were unsure of the breadth and depth of content that they should cover in modules. They were also uncertain about how to ensure learners had the required level of knowledge and skill to pass their exams.

Consequently, not all learners were confident about how prepared they would be for the summative T-level exams. Most 2022 learners had never taken external exams and said that they would value more opportunities to practise exam questions.

Providers will now be in a stronger position, since course textbooks and awarding body materials have been published. However, all awarding bodies must ensure that resources are available in good time for future T-level courses.

Providers that were more effective had already used the flexibility in the new T-level courses to sequence the T-level components in a coherent way that develops learners' knowledge and skills.

Providers have flexibility to structure curriculum content in the best way to develop learners' knowledge and skills. Inspectors saw good practice in some providers where teachers sequenced and linked topics in a way that complemented each other. As a result, learners were better able to make links between concepts and developed foundational knowledge first, which they then built on over time. For example, in one health T level, learners were taught foundational knowledge on infection control, safeguarding and musculoskeletal systems at the beginning of the course to prepare them for industry placements.

Teachers used practical examples and case studies to develop knowledge. Some providers built high-quality, industry-standard simulated work environments, such as hospital wards, often using capital funding awarded from central government. This helped learners to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need for work. For example, learners on a healthcare course commented that learning how to use medical equipment, such as blood pressure cuffs, gave them a realistic idea of what it is like to be a healthcare professional.

However, not all courses or providers could provide realistic working environments to help learners develop their theoretical knowledge when not on placement. For example, on education courses, some providers had only built simulated early years environments. This was despite many learners on the T level working with other age groups.

Some providers set a project for learners to complete at the beginning of their course to develop fundamental vocational knowledge. In one construction course, learners carried out a project based on building a house. The design brief allowed them to demonstrate a range of skills and knowledge, including:

- research skills, when finding suitable land
- law knowledge, when obtaining the appropriate permissions
- mathematics and design skills, when sourcing materials and costing the build

When structuring the curriculum, providers also considered the most beneficial time for placements. Some providers planned for learners to take placements in blocks. For example, employers in digital industries gave learners experience of working intensively on time-bound projects. Other providers chose to begin their placements early in the course. This was so that learners could practise the skills they learned throughout the course.

Teachers made sure that learners could apply theoretical concepts in practice. For example, in one education and childcare T level, learners studied theorists such as Pavlov, Thorndike and Skinner.

This helped them to understand children's behaviour and responses. They then applied this knowledge when planning activities for children on their placements.

In the weakest examples, learners reported a disconnect between their industry placement and theory sessions. Some employers didn't know what learners were studying in the classroom, so they did not routinely give them the opportunity to put theory into practice.

In a small number of providers, inspectors found the curriculum to be underdeveloped and not sequenced effectively. Fundamental concepts were not introduced early enough or revisited sufficiently so that learners could apply them in different contexts. In one example, the provider taught project management tools without considering what tools learners would need in the other parts of the course. As a result, learners were unable to apply these in their other learning. Without coherent sequencing, learners will not be able to make links between topics and modules or make good progress through the curriculum.

Concerningly, a number of providers simply used the list of topics in the specification from the awarding organisation as a curriculum. This meant that they did not sufficiently consider learners' needs when planning the curriculum. This led to providers teaching subjects in the order set out in the specification of each T level.

Many leaders talked about adapting and improving their curriculum planning after the first year. They mentioned changes to the sequencing of course content and the time spent on certain aspects of the course. They also mentioned running more refresher sessions on study skills. In future, providers will need to use the flexibility of T levels to ensure that they teach content in the best way for learners.

Learners were appreciative of the quality of teaching on their T-level course. However, teachers faced challenges in balancing all the requirements of the course.

Inspectors found that the curriculum was often at the right level for learners to develop the skills and knowledge required for the T level. Teachers asked pertinent questions to check and develop learners' understanding. Learners appreciated this high-quality teaching.

Teachers used a variety of assessment methods to check learners' understanding, knowledge and recall. Teachers used this information to identify gaps in learning and to adjust their teaching. Learners said that feedback helped them to improve their work and address weaknesses.

However, in a few cases, inspectors found that the curriculum was not challenging enough. For example, in one digital course, the problems that learners were expected to solve were mundane,

requiring them to copy and paste code into a solution rather than writing it from scratch.

Providers faced challenges in balancing all the requirements of the course. Course leaders and teachers expressed concerns that there was too much content to cover in class. This led to some modules feeling rushed.

Some providers struggled to offer personal development or wider curriculum sessions on topics such as mental health, money management and team working. They found it difficult to make time to include these in the timetable along with the vocational curriculum and the large industry placement.

Most learners received study skills sessions, such as academic writing and referencing. However, inspectors found that learners did not always remember or use this knowledge correctly or consistently when producing research-based work.

Furthermore, teachers told us there was insufficient time for learners to work towards re-sitting their GCSEs if they needed to. There was some concern that studying for mathematics and English GCSEs alongside a T level would add stress and pressure.

The less effective providers were not monitoring learners' progress enough, checking for understanding in lessons or giving effective feedback. Not all teachers had yet developed a fully effective assessment strategy. Some assessment activities were poorly planned and executed, or pitched at the wrong level to check learners' understanding. As a result, learners did not make good progress and struggled to remember concepts they had been taught.

Most providers had appropriate arrangements in place to identify and support learners who had additional needs. [\[footnote 6\]](#) However, in a small number of cases, the help providers gave was not effective. For example, they dealt with requests for support too slowly. Where support was weaker, inspectors reported that some learners seemed disengaged in lessons.

The more effective industry placements gave broad, high-quality and appropriate experiences that helped learners make decisions about their futures.

Every T level includes an industry placement to develop technical occupational skills. [\[footnote 7\]](#) Learners develop work-related skills by working with experienced professionals.

The more effective placements involved providers linking these to learners' future career goals. These placements helped learners to make decisions about their future careers. In the best examples, placements inspired and excited learners and helped them to make progress. Learners' experiences developed their thinking in a way that purely classroom-based learning would not

have. These placements were highly valued by learners. Learners said that placements were enjoyable, productive, informative and helped to develop their life skills and interaction with colleagues.

Most learners benefited from high-quality industry placements with employers. In the education T level, for example, learners managed the behaviour of a whole class of children with support. In a digital course, learners were taught how to edit code, monitor website analytics, design graphics, post social media content and create email campaigns.

Placements offer learners a broad experience by giving them opportunities in different departments or roles, for example different hospital wards in health and science placements. In one construction placement, the employer planned for learners to experience the whole of a building project. This helped them to understand how different specialisms, such as plumbing and electrical engineering, contribute to a building project.

Placements with a good breadth of experiences helped learners to make career decisions. Learners said that placements helped to identify areas they wanted to specialise in, some of which they would not have considered previously.

In the more effective placements, employers helped learners to secure their practical learning and progress through the curriculum faster. Learners were given specific responsibility for a task or additional responsibility. In one education T-level placement, the employer saw learners as trainee teaching assistants or nursery practitioners. In one digital placement, an employer entrusted a learner with the redesign of the company website. This learner modernised the website, made it more accessible and used analytics to increase the site's social media presence.

However, a small number of learners reported that they had only been allowed to observe or complete basic tasks. For example, they were asked to prepare the children's snacks in education settings or complete data entry on digital placements.

Inspectors also reported that some placements lacked structure. This meant that learners had no clear expectations for what they needed to do and when. Some managers had ensured that an agreement was in place to allow learners to cover the required criteria and learning outcomes. However, in some providers, there was no focus on specific knowledge and skill development over time.

When designing the next T-level courses, employers should focus on giving learners experiences that are relevant to their course. Providers should monitor learners' achievements and progress, ensuring that placements have a positive impact. We found that this was not happening in some cases.

The more effective T-level curriculums were developed by providers in collaboration with employers.

The most effective T-level curriculums were developed through collaboration between providers and employers. Learners benefited from employers' expert and up-to-date knowledge and skills. For example, the head of clinical education from the local hospital helped to develop facilities and taught on a health T-level course. Employers also taught learners about professional behaviours in the workplace and what they could expect on placement. Consequently, learners got an excellent introduction before starting their placement. Industry specialists and staff from employers had given skills classes, for example on interview skills or employer expectations, and workshop-based sessions. Learners enjoyed these sessions.

Collaboration between providers and employers was also essential to organising placements. Inspectors saw examples of good practice where providers worked with employers effectively to plan high-quality experiences. Employers were well briefed in the requirements and expectations of the industry placement and were involved in planning the T level. Employers valued regular updates from the provider's staff. They felt that strong communication helped them to support learners on placement. During many placements, teachers monitored learners' progress closely. They visited learners while they were on placement and assessed their practical work. On the best placements, employers encouraged learners to reflect on their own progress.

In a small number of cases, providers did not tell employers what was being taught and when. As a result, employers were not able to plan a placement that put into practice the knowledge and skills that learners gained in the classroom.

In a small number of cases, neither employers nor learners could explain how learners were assessed in the workplace. [\[footnote 8\]](#) These employers reported that they had not been asked to complete any assessments of learners' work or provide feedback on their progress.

The strongest employers and providers worked together to ensure that learners understood and worked in line with health and safety procedures when on placement. Some employers were clear about their safeguarding responsibilities. However, others were less confident about safeguarding arrangements for learners. To help these employers, some providers had developed employer guidebooks and established a point of contact.

At the time of our visits, many learners were experiencing delays in starting industry placements, primarily due to the impact of COVID-19. Providers of digital, construction, and health and science courses in particular were struggling to find employers.

Work-based learning is a fundamental part of the T-level course. Without this, learners will not have sufficient experience of working with experienced professionals or work environments. They will therefore miss out on opportunities to learn skills needed for their career.

Not all learners had been on a placement at the time of our visit. Inspectors reported that learners were experiencing delays in starting placements, often due to the impact of COVID-19. In some cases, learners had a placement planned but it had not yet started. In others, learners did not have any placement planned. Learners who had not been able to go on placement felt that they were at a disadvantage and had had a lesser experience than their peers.

Providers of digital, construction, and health and science courses struggled to attract enough high-quality employers. The pandemic was a significant barrier for employers when offering placements. Many businesses required their staff to work from home, or had experienced staff shortages and could therefore no longer host a learner on placement.

Health and science placements were particularly affected. To work in some health settings, learners had to be over the age of 18 and double vaccinated against COVID-19. Disclosure and Barring Service checks were delayed, which prevented learners from starting placements. Some placements in local hospitals were unable to go ahead. Therefore, many learners were on placement in pharmacies and care homes, which did not always directly link to their future career goals.

Providers of digital T levels also had difficulties organising placements. They reported that IT support is often provided by small businesses with limited capacity to take on placement learners. Providers offering digital T levels also expressed some concern that the industry capacity for placements will not be enough when the number of providers increases.

Providers that have historically offered childcare and education courses told inspectors that their pre-existing relationships with employers were vital in providing placements. As a result, employers understand the requirements of the placement and have experience in supporting learners. In one provider, learners benefited from excellent placements with schools that were committed to providing high-quality, relevant experiences. This contrasts with digital programmes, for example, where providers did not always have these relationships.

There were a handful of cases, mostly on health and science and digital courses, where no learners on the course had been able to start a placement. Providers reported that industry placements were due to start later in the year.

Two providers delayed the start of the industry placement because learners were not ready for work. These providers felt that the effects of isolation and the pandemic had led to weaker social skills and a lack of confidence. However, these learners were on placement at the time of our visit and employers thought it was a positive experience for both learners and themselves.

Delays to placements led to frustration and anxiety for learners.

The TLTP did not always result in learners progressing on to a T level as intended.

At some providers, the TLTP was preparing learners effectively to study a T level. The curriculum design enabled learners to gain the skills, knowledge and positive behaviours they needed.

Learners gained a good basic understanding of topics that they would expand on in the T level. However, during our visits it was clear that many learners would not necessarily progress to a T-level course from the TLTP.

In some cases, this was due to providers setting up TLTP courses without the clear purpose of preparing learners for a T level. For example, providers had offered learners the TLTP in subjects that are not yet offered as a T-level course, making immediate progress to a T-level course impossible. For example, there is no T level in sport for learners studying a sport TLTP. Inspectors also saw examples of learners being placed on the TLTP to retake GCSEs before progressing to their preferred A-level courses. [\[footnote 9\]](#)

Indeed, many learners were unclear about their next steps after the TLTP. Some learners said that this was because of a lack of careers advice and guidance. Some could talk about their preferred career paths but were unsure of how to achieve their ambitions. Learners were not always able to identify the different T levels that they might take on completing the TLTP.

Some learners on the TLTP did not expect to get the grades required to progress to a T level. Additionally, learners did not always feel well prepared for the quantity of work they would need to complete on their TLTP. Some found the timetable and workload difficult to manage, particularly those who were also studying English and maths GCSEs.

As a result, it was clear that many learners would not necessarily start a T-level course once they had completed the TLTP.

Teaching on the TLTP was generally of a high standard

Even though the TLTP was not always clearly going to lead to a T level, the quality of teaching on the TLTP was generally of a high standard. Teachers were well qualified and learners benefited from their experience. The strongest teachers understood what learners needed to gain from the TLTP.

Most learners completed work to a high standard and engaged well in lessons. Learners benefited from constructive and developmental feedback from their teachers, which improved their knowledge and skills.

As with T-level courses, teachers used a range of assessment tools to check learners' understanding and make sure that they were retaining knowledge over time. These included written tasks, verbal discussions and presentations. When teachers found that learners had not understood topics, they extended sessions or revisited learning to overcome learners' difficulties. Some teachers taught learners exam techniques to make sure that they were ready to sit T-level exams.

Leaders had generally planned a good range of personal development activities as part of the TLTP. Teachers were running regular sessions on professional and personal skills. Some providers were also offering targeted help to improve their employability. This included interview practice and CV writing sessions.

The quality of work experience for learners on the TLTP was not always high.. Providers did not always help learners on the programme to find appropriate work experience relevant to their course.

Learners' work experience, a fundamental part of the TLTP, was not always of a high quality. The best work experience was organised by staff, who ensured it was relevant to the course content. Providers had sometimes integrated level 2 qualifications into the TLTP. This is because the qualifications often required learners to complete industry placements in multiple settings. [\[footnote 10\]](#)

Concerningly, at a few providers, learners themselves were responsible for sourcing work experience. Learners were not always successful at arranging work experience or ensuring that they were relevant to their learning. At one provider, only one learner on the course was on work experience at the time of the visit. This had been arranged by a member of the learner's family and there was little evidence of input from the curriculum team. Additionally, unlike learners on T-level courses, TLTP learners did not always have access to work experience coordinators.

Without strong coordination and planning from the provider, TLTP learners may not be gaining the full opportunities and skills they need from their work experience, if at all. This is a fundamental element of the course, giving learners the workplace skills they need to progress to a T level. Providers need to ensure that they are providing this fundamental component of TLTP.

Recommendations from our visits

Based on our findings, we recommend that providers:

- provide initial advice and guidance to learners before they start a T-level course, such as summer schools and projects, to help them decide on which pathway to study
- make sure that the curriculum sequences the different components of a T level in a coherent way that develops learners' knowledge and skills
- reduce any delays to learners going on placements
- collaborate with employers to make sure that learners get a high-quality curriculum
- monitor learners' achievements and progress and the impact of placements on learners' knowledge and skills
- ensure that learners on the TLTP get relevant work experience

We also recommend that employers:

- provide placements that give learners appropriate experiences relevant to their T level

The Department for Education should:

- evaluate the effectiveness of the TLTP in helping learners progress to T level courses
- work with universities to make sure they accept T levels for entry to all relevant courses

We recommend that awarding bodies:

- make sure that teachers and learners have access to the resources they need in good time

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1. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) is responsible for overseeing the technical qualification component of T levels. IfATE works with panels of occupational experts to develop the standards at the heart of T levels. [↩](#)
 2. We intended to carry out 2 separate studies on the quality of T levels. We were due to carry out the first in 2021; however, this was delayed because of the pandemic. The providers we visited in this study in 2022 therefore would have been carrying out either their first or second year of T levels. [↩](#)
 3. There were 44 providers of T levels in 2020/21. [↩](#)
 4. We intended to visit 12 TLTP providers but were unable to complete deep dives at 2 providers because of low learner numbers. [↩](#)
 5. According to the Department for Education's guidance, learners will also be required to work

towards attaining maths and English qualifications if they have not already achieved grade 4 at GCSE, as they do on other 16 to 19 courses. However, T-level learners are no longer required to achieve either a grade 4 in English and mathematics GCSE or level 2 in functional skills to pass their course. [↩](#)

6. This includes those with education, health and care plans, mental health difficulties and English as an additional language. [↩](#)
7. Placements will last 315 hours (approximately 45 days) but may last longer. Employers can offer industry placements in a block, on day release or a mix of these. They can share part of the placement with another employer if necessary. [↩](#)
8. The employer-set project that learners complete on placement is set by the awarding body. It was designed in consultation with employers nationally. Employers taking learners for placements were not necessarily involved in the consultation about the employer-set project. Some employers were therefore unaware of the requirements and expectations of the employer-set project. [↩](#)
9. Entry to the TLTP does not require a GCSE in English and maths. However, the maths and English funding condition for 16 to 19 learners means that learners without these qualifications must study them as part of their further education programme. The TLTP therefore offers an opportunity for learners to retake these qualifications, regardless of whether they intend to progress on to a T-level course or another qualification or into employment. [↩](#)
10. The TLTP is not a qualification in its own right. However, most leaders and managers have decided to include qualifications as part of the course, including GCSEs and other level 2 qualifications relevant to the subject being taught. [↩](#)

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