

# MYTH-BUSTING

## RAISING AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING



You'll have questions about whether to offer industry placements.

This fact-sheet answers some of the common questions that employers have been asking. If you want more information or want to go into any of these in more detail, have a look at some of the other tools and checklists, or contact us through the [employerindustryplacements.co.uk](https://employerindustryplacements.co.uk) website.

## QUESTIONS

“Placements will distract from our core business and won't add value.”

## ANSWERS

Placements work for your organisation. They allow you to draw on a temporary and flexible source of talent. You may have a discrete project which would suit someone with higher-level skills. They allow you to get to know students who could work for you in the future. They raise your profile in the local area and develop the supervision and mentoring skills of your staff. The reality is that placements are an opportunity and not a distraction.

You decide what students do while they are with you, so you can make the placement useful and relevant to your organisation.

“We already do apprenticeships – why should we do placements as well?”

If you already do apprenticeships, industry placements are a great way of getting to know potential future apprentices early on, before they leave education.

Apprentices can be 'buddies' for industry placement students and act as mentors. Also, when apprentices are doing off-the-job training, it might be appropriate for an industry placement student to cover their role.

“Industry placements don't bring tangible benefits or return on investment.”

There are many benefits to placements – see the **What are the benefits and costs of industry placements** tool. You have to identify which are most important to your organisation and make sure that the placement is designed to align with your business priorities.

“I'm not clear about our roles and responsibilities when it comes to offering industry placements.”

The **Roles and responsibilities – supporting learners on their placement checklist** will help you decide who does what in your organisation to make sure all the responsibilities are covered. In general, it's not that different from taking on a temporary worker. It's not all down to you and your organisation. The college or school you work with will take on many of the tasks involved in designing and delivering placements.

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### QUESTIONS

### ANSWERS

**“It’s too difficult to support students.”**

Students aren’t all that different from other new recruits. You may already have the resources and experience to support placements. Your provider, such as a local college or school, will help as well, both to recruit the right students and support them before, during and after the placement.

**“There’ll be loads of paperwork.”**

There will be some! But your college or school will deal with most of it. They are experienced in making sure that any administration that’s needed is as streamlined as possible for you and that it complies with the appropriate guidelines.

**“It takes too much time to set up a placement.”**

It can actually be done quite quickly. The tools in this pack take you through each step, so that you end up with a placement that works for you. Your college or school will be able to help as well.

**“We’re a business in a rural area. Transport is difficult.”**

There are students available everywhere, including in rural areas, although you may need to think a bit more carefully about travel. Your school or college will be able to help make sure you locate the right student(s) for your organisation.

**“It’s going to cost us, at a time when resources are scarce.”**

Yes, it’s an investment. But the costs aren’t high and the benefits are real. When the Marriott Grosvenor House Hotel in London hosted a student as part of the industry placement pilot, they found it a positive experience and an excellent way of attracting new talent to their business. In 2020, the hotel has taken six students, offering placements in IT, catering and construction (electrical and plumbing) as well as the more obvious area of hospitality. For one thing, placements can add resource to your team at a time when you need more people. Have a look at the **Exploring potential benefits and costs** tool.

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## QUESTIONS

## ANSWERS

**“ We don’t have any links with colleges or providers. ”**

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) provides advice on industry placements. You can contact them on 08000 150 600. They can also match you with local colleges, schools or training providers who offer industry placements.

**“ There isn’t going to be a T Level for our industry in the foreseeable future. ”**

You can still offer industry placements, even if there’s no T Level yet. All T Level students from 2020, will have an industry placement. Many providers are already offering industry placements to other students as part of existing courses. The benefits are the same and so is the process. By getting involved now, you’ll be in a great position to take full advantage of the T Level when it arrives. It may be that you could offer several types of industry placement, for example in digital or business and administration, as well as placements that link directly to your industry.

**“ We have a recruitment freeze – how do placements apply to us? ”**

Placements aren’t the same as job vacancies. There’s no commitment to offer students a job afterwards – although it’s great if this is a possibility. So, there’s no impact on headcount. If you do decide to recruit, you may have saved significant resources by establishing the placement student’s suitability.

**“ Too many staff will need to be involved. ”**

Some staff will be involved – but not many, and you choose who they are. The key people are a supervisor and/or mentor – they help students settle in and learn, just as they do for any new recruit or temporary worker. This could be a great opportunity for your existing staff to develop their management skills. You shouldn’t need extra staff.

## QUESTIONS

**“Won’t this add to our health and safety, insurance and other responsibilities?”**

### *Health and safety*

### *Insurance*

### *Safeguarding*

### *Special educational needs and disabilities*

## ANSWERS

Not necessarily, if you already take on young people as temporary workers. Even if you don’t, there are a few simple steps you can take. Your college or school will help you with advice and support.

The areas you might need support with could include health and safety for younger people on-site, Employer’s Liability Insurance and Public Liability Insurance, DBS checks, safeguarding and students with special educational needs and disabilities.

There is more information on these below and further guidance in the **Legal compliance** tool.

Employers are responsible for the health and safety of students while they are on an industry placement. You must provide a safe working environment, adequate induction and suitable training.

If, for example, your business may be considered a ‘high-risk environment’ where you use dangerous materials or machinery, you must check that the student is old enough to use it before giving them training.

If the student is doing work that is normal business practice and you already have up-to-date Employer Liability Insurance and Public Liability Insurance, then you do not need additional cover.

If you are unsure whether the work the student is doing counts as ‘normal business practice’, then you should talk to your insurance company. As the student will be working for you for longer than 2 weeks, you will need to notify your insurer about the placement.

Colleges and schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of students on industry placements – but they need your cooperation. Employers generally do not need to carry out Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on members of staff supervising young people aged 16 or 17. However, where a student has a need for personal or health care due to a disability, the person providing that care may be required to obtain an enhanced DBS check.

A student may need an enhanced DBS check before starting an industry placement in certain sectors - for example, in the health care and early years sector where the employer would need to check that the student is not barred from regulated activity relating to children or vulnerable adults.

Employers and colleges, schools or other providers, have legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010. This includes making reasonable adjustments for students who may be placed at a substantial disadvantage because of their disability compared with non-disabled people. You will need to cooperate with your school or college to make sure that any legally required reasonable adjustments are provided.