Department for Education

Further guidance on delivering pathway level placements for Health, Healthcare Science and Science T Levels

June 2023

Contents

Summary

This publication provides guidance from the Department for Education. It has been produced to help providers and employers to plan and deliver pathway level industry placements for Health, Healthcare Science and Science T Levels.

Expiry or review date

This guidance will be reviewed before June 2024.

Who is this publication for?

This guidance is for:

- Education providers delivering T Levels
- Employers

Introduction

We introduced pathway level placements for Health, Healthcare Science and Science T Levels as a temporary flexibility for Wave 2 students (those who started their T Level in 2021) to respond to the impact of Covid-19. This flexibility was announced in November 2021, and published on gov.uk here: Temporary flexibilities for Wave 1 and Wave 2 industry placements (publishing.service.gov.uk).

Covid-19 is having on employer capacity to host placements, particularly in acute hospital settings. Offering placements at pathway level helps to facilitate greater access to meaningful placements by broadening the range of employers that providers can look to work with.

In January 2023, we announced that **pathway level placements** will be a **permanent** delivery model for all industry placements (with the exception of Education and Childcare). More information can be found in Annex A of the Industry Placements Delivery Guidance.

This document provides further guidance about how to ensure students get the best outcome from undertaking a pathway level placement.

What do we mean by a pathway level placement?

A pathway level placement is based on developing the core knowledge and skills at pathway level, alongside inclusion of as much of the knowledge and skills at the specialist technical level as possible.

What are the benefits of a pathway level placement?

Pathway level placements will mean that students will have an opportunity to learn and practice a broader range of knowledge and skills and will be able to apply them in a wider variety of settings. This will also increase the number of placement opportunities available, across a broader range of employers and this can expose students to new areas within the industry.

Why is a pathway level placement a suitable option for Health, Healthcare Science and Science students?

The core knowledge and skills developed at the pathway level of Health, Healthcare Science and Science are relevant to all occupational specialisms within each of pathways. Table 1 demonstrates these principles. Therefore, offering placements at pathway level provides greater scope for students to

undertake placement hours in a variety of settings that offer the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills studied at pathway level.

Pathway	At pathway level, core knowledge will be developed on:
Health	• The Healthcare sector • Providing person centred care • Health and wellbeing • Further science concepts • Health & Safety regulations applicable in the healthcare sector • Infection prevention & control in health specific settings • Manging personal information
Healthcare Science	• The Healthcare Science sector • Providing person centred care • Further science concepts • Health & Safety regulations in healthcare science • Infection prevention & control in healthcare science settings • Managing information and data • Good scientific practice
Science	• The Science sector • Further science concepts • Application of Health, Safety and Environmental practices • Scientific methodology • Data handling & processing • Experimental equipment & techniques • Ethics

Table 1: Core knowledge and skills developed at pathway level

Why should this flexibility be used?

Providers are expected to make every effort to source placements relevant to the occupational specialism, however, this approach can be used where students cannot spend the full 315 hours in a setting directly relevant to their occupational specialism and where a pathway level placement is a suitable alternative for the remaining placement hours.

How long will this delivery approach be available for?

It can be applied to any applicable placements that take place from January 2023 onwards.

How does pathway level relate to the occupational specialism?

Below is a list of the occupational specialisms that relate to the T Levels Health, Healthcare Science and Science and therefore suitable for pathway level placements.

Pathway: Health

Occupational Specialisms:

- Dental Nursing
- Supporting Healthcare – Supporting the Adult Nursing Team
- Supporting Healthcare – Supporting the Care of Children and Young People
- Supporting Healthcare – Supporting the Mental Health team
- Supporting Healthcare – Supporting the Midwifery team
- Supporting Healthcare – Supporting the Therapy team

Pathway: Healthcare Science

Occupational Specialisms:

- Assisting with Healthcare Science
- Optical Care Services
- Pharmacy Services

Pathway: Science

Occupational Specialisms:

- Technical: Food Sciences
- Technical: Laboratory Sciences
- Technical: Metrology Sciences

How do we ensure that students still gail the necessary Occupational Specialism skills to progress?

There are several ways that providers can ensure that students will be able to develop skills relevant to their occupational specialism and demonstrate threshold competence that is as close to full occupational competence as possible:

1) **Ensuring that a majority of placement hours are relevant to the occupational specialism**. It's important that where possible, the majority of placement hours are spent within a setting relevant to the occupational specialism and then supplemented by hours in a different environment that still allows students to develop and practice the pathway level transferable skills. Please note, the only relevant setting is **not** the NHS, and there are other relevant settings. Please see example 1b below.

2) **Using the two-employer industry placement model to split the hours.** This allows students to complete a proportion of their placement in settings relevant to an occupational specialism, and the remaining hours the be completed at pathway level within another employer setting.

3) **Taking a holistic approach to the industry placement and classroom-based learning.** For any industry placement, learning from the industry placement and classroom-based learning should be considered together to support the student's learning. For pathway level placements, providers may need to tailor classroom-based learning to develop skills relevant to the occupational specialism.

4) **Being flexible on delivery models.** Providers may be able to adjust deliver models to maximise availability of placements, aligned to the working practices and capacity of opportunities with employers. This may mean changing the placement hours within the curriculum.

Where should we draw the knowledge and skills for the industry placement objectives for pathway level placements from?

You should draw on the pathway level content of the qualification specification**.** This is entitled 'Core knowledge and understanding across the Health/Healthcare Science/Science Pathway' in the specification. This should be in addition to the occupational specialism content whenever applicable.

Each T Level is made up of 2 main components:

- the **'core knowledge and understanding across the Health/Healthcare Science/Science pathway'** is the set of underpinning knowledge, concepts, theories, principles, and skills relevant to both the broader pathway and the occupational specialism. Some of the core knowledge and skills are essential and transferable across all the occupational specialisms related to the T Level; and

- the **'occupational specialism',** which covers the specialist knowledge and skills required to enter skilled employment within the relevant occupation.

Examples of pathway level placements

There are various models in which a pathway level placement can be used. Either students can complete their entire placement at pathway level where a placement relevant to their occupational specialism cannot be sourced, or a student can utilise the two-employer model and complete some of their placement at pathway level and some developing their specific occupation. We have provided some examples below.

Example 1a: Health T Level with Supporting Healthcare – Supporting the Midwifery Team occupational specialism

Two-employer model where a majority of the placement is occupationally-specific

A majority of this student's placement is spent assisting at a maternity outpatient clinic and antenatal clinic. This aligns with their occupational specialism.

The remaining hours of this student's placement could be spent with a general nursing team in an adult inpatient setting such as an elderly person's ward, or community function such as district nursing, offering the opportunity to observe and practice fundamental nursing skills with a variety of service users (pathway level). This can be supplemented with visits to delivery suites and attend training sessions alongside midwifery nursing staff.

Example 1b: Health T Level with Supporting Healthcare – Supporting the Mental Health Team occupational specialism

Entire placement at pathway level with supplementary classroom-based learning

This student's placement takes place entirely at a private care home. The student is developing pathway knowledge such as infection prevention and control in health specific settings, and manging personal information.

The provider recognises the need to supplement the student's knowledge of their occupational specialism, Supporting the Mental Health Team, and provided additional classroom-based learning to develop skills and knowledge.

Example 2: Healthcare T Level with Assisting with Healthcare Science occupational specialism

Two-employer model where a majority of the placement is occupationally-specific

This student spends a majority of their placement working in a radiography department in a hospital medical laboratory working alongside technicians in the operation and maintenance of highly specialised scanning equipment. This is an occupationally specific placement.

The remaining hours of the student's placement is spent assisting a clinical team working with patients and managing information and data (pathway level).

Example 3: Science T Level with a Technical: Laboratory Science occupational specialism

Two-employer model where a majority of the placement is at pathway level with supplementary classroom-based learning

This student spends a majority of their placement working at a university multi-use science laboratory being inducted in practical scientific techniques and practices including how to follow standard operating procedures, regulatory and health and safety requirements. The student assists with managing equipment in a scientific laboratory environment, carrying out maintenance, cleaning and calibration, and analysis of data. This portion of the placement is at pathway level and develops core knowledge.

The remaining hours of the student's placement is spent working at a private science laboratory to practice the scientific techniques to measure a range of physical properties, such as: polarity, temperature, pressure, conductivity and radioactivity. This build's the student's experiences with specialist equipment and techniques in the occupational specialism. This is an occupationally specific placement.

As a majority of the placement was not occupationally specific, the provider supplements the placement with additional classroom-based learning relevant to the occupational specialism.

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