***Case Study: Collaboration for group student placements***

***Background***

To gain opportunities for students enrolled in the Media, Broadcast, and Production T-Level programme, we explored local groups who networked locally. Our focus was to identify ways that could address the challenge of securing meaningful industry placements and employer engagement opportunities for our students.

One group was the **Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).** This is an initiative in every local area that targets skills shortages across various sectors through collaboration between employers, educational institutions, and industry bodies. Our LSIP operates multiple sub-groups focusing on specific industries such as care, construction, and screen industries. The Screen Industries subgroup aligned with our Media, Broadcasting and Production T level.

***Stakeholders and partnerships***

The Screen Industries subgroup comprises industry employers including film studios and animation companies, alongside educational institutions such as colleges, universities, and our school, the only secondary school involved. This subgroup is coordinated by LSIP and a local production company, which became a vital partner for our placement needs.

***Objectives***

To provide T level students with practical, industry-relevant placement opportunities within the screen industries.

To enable students to have access to employers, industry locations and equip them with relevant knowledge and experience.

To foster long-term partnerships between educational institutions and local employers.

***Process***

Our engagement with the LSIP Screen Industries group involved quarterly meetings where industry needs and educational goals were discussed. Through these forums, we discussed with the production company the potential of placement opportunities. We were asked to provide key information to them.

We submitted a detailed brief outlining:

* Overview of the T level programme
* Ideal placement dates (with flexibility)
* Number of students and required placement hours
* Student learning objectives and expected outcomes.

We held a series of in-person and virtual meetings and followed this up with email communication. This helped to ensure clarity on expectations, facilitated mutual understanding, and helped refine placement logistics. Key considerations included:

* Placement structure and scheduling
* Group attendance logistics and supervision
* Safeguarding and student support requirements.

***Placement structure***

Based on collaborative input, a draft placement itinerary was developed:

***Week 1:*** Pre-production activities

***Week 2:*** On-set experience

***Week 3:*** Post-production work.

Students would participate as a group within the production company’s environment, in a studio and on set. They would be assigned specific roles and shadow/assist in real production workflows.

***Placement structure (Expanded)***

Initially, the placement was structured as a 3-week group experience within the production company, covering pre-production, on-set, and post-production phases. However, through ongoing discussions, the programme was expanded to include attendance at other companies within the production company supply chain. This allowed students to experience a wider range of roles and work environments. The total placement duration was extended to 5 weeks, combining group and smaller cohort placements across multiple businesses.

***Challenges and solutions***

Facilitating work placements across multiple companies in the production supply chain presented several challenges:

* ***Time and persistence:*** Coordinating ongoing discussions and negotiations with various stakeholders required significant time investment and sustained effort from all parties involved. Building and maintaining these relationships was essential but can be time consuming.
* ***Administrative load:*** The placement process involved considerable administration, including paperwork, compliance checks, and communication with all parties involved. This administrative role increased with the inclusion of multiple businesses within the supply chain.
* ***Transportation logistics:*** Ensuring students could reliably travel between different placement locations proved challenging. Some placements were situated at considerable distances, and managing transport arrangements for students attending multiple locations during their placement required careful planning.
* ***Managing multiple stakeholders:*** Coordinating between all parties, ensuring everyone understood the placement objectives and safeguarding requirements, and maintaining consistent communication demanded diplomacy and effective relationship management.

To address these challenges, regular communication channels were established, detailed planning sessions were conducted, and flexibility was maintained to accommodate transport and scheduling complexities.

***Benefits***

The placement programme delivered significant value to all stakeholders involved:

***For students***

Participants gained a unique, real-world industry placement experience, working through the entire production process from pre-production to post-production. Completing the placement as a group fostered peer support, boosted confidence, and encouraged collaboration. Knowing each other’s strengths and weaknesses allowed students to effectively divide tasks and support one another, enriching their learning experience. The shared experience also enabled them to exchange ideas and reflect collectively on their progress.

***For companies***

Employers gained exposure to motivated, emerging talent who may represent their future workforce. Engaging with students early helped companies to identify potential recruits and contribute to developing local skills aligned with industry needs.

***For the Provider***

Facilitating group placements strengthened relationships with local industry partners and enhanced the relevance of the curriculum by integrating practical experience. The collaboration also highlighted effective strategies for managing group placements within complex supply chains.

This is a model of collaboration which we plan to build on and we’d recommend reaching out to your own LSIP to see if similar arrangements and introductions can be organised.

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