***Collaborating with Other T Level Providers***

This resource outlines why and how T Level employer engagement staff from different providers are working together to strengthen their industry placement offer and boost employer commitment.

***Who is this resource for?***

This resource is for employer engagement staff who are finding it difficult to secure enough placements for a particular T Level subject. It’s designed for those who want to work collaboratively with other providers to overcome barriers and improve the industry placement options for their students.

***The power of collective action***

To expand T Level industry placements, providers need to view each other not as competitors, but as collaborators working toward a shared goal: increasing employer participation.

Just like the snowball effect – where small actions build momentum – collaboration between providers can streamline the process for employers, making engagement easier and more appealing. Over time, more businesses will want to host placements, which benefits everyone involved.

This resource offers ideas to help you explore collective working with other providers.

***Initial approach***

Reaching out to local T Level providers might feel awkward at first, especially if you see them as competitors. But most people working in this space are passionate about helping young people into placements – wherever those placements happen – and are often open to working together.

Rather than jumping straight into conversations about employer engagement, start by introducing yourself to peers in similar roles at nearby providers. Suggest sharing best practice as a first step.

Setting up a regular, informal meeting to talk about what’s working, recent wins, and common challenges will improve everyone’s understanding and help generate solutions. This could involve just one other provider or a wider group across a city or county.

***Examples of where collaboration could lead***

***a) Curriculum planning***

When sharing best practice, you may discover another provider is securing placements more easily because they use block release, or offer shorter, project-based placements. You can feed insight from other providers back to your curriculum teams to make your offer more employer friendly.

***b) Sharing students***

Providers can offer placements internally – for example in their IT, HR, or marketing teams – but not to their own students. However, you could collaborate by hosting each other’s students in these teams, creating reciprocal placement opportunities.

***c) Regional offer***

In some areas, Combined Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships or Councils coordinate the industry placement offer to give employers a clear overview of what’s available. Whether this happens in your region or not, you could still work with other providers to deliver joint presentations, run shared events, or produce coordinated communications – raising awareness and increasing uptake across the area.

***Meeting agenda item ideas***

If your informal meetings become more formal and you decide to set up regular collaboration meetings, here are some topics you might want to explore:

***a) Purpose of collaboration***

Agree why you’re meeting. The focus might evolve over time – from sharing best practice initially, to making the local placement offer clearer and more accessible for employers.

***b) Competition***

If you offer some of the same T Level subjects, talk about it openly. You may not be comfortable sharing leads, but you won’t know unless you have the conversation. You could agree informal rules around referrals – based on geography, delivery model (block/day release), or employer preference. Don’t let competition block opportunities for collaboration**.**

**c) *Time constraints***

Monthly meetings may be ambitious. Consider what’s realistic – a termly meeting, or ad hoc catch-ups when key issues arise, might work better**.**

***d) Other stakeholders***

Would it be helpful to invite others into the conversation – such as skills leads from the local council, LEP, or Chamber of Commerce – to get their input and support around employer engagement?

***e) Key Performance Indicators***

If your partnership becomes more formalised, consider tracking its impact. You could monitor:

• Number of employer enquiries (direct and via joint events)

• Satisfaction scores from employers referred through the partnership

• Time taken to secure placements (as trust builds)

• Growth in placements secured across the group

Collecting this data will show colleagues and funders the value of collaboration.

***In summary***

Over time, collaboration between T Level providers can become more than a ‘nice-to-have’ – it can be a practical, strategic way to boost employer engagement and strengthen the placement offer across your region. However, just get started. Keep it simple: reach out, build rapport with your peers, and let things grow from there**.**