MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT

A Case study for T Level providers

# INTRODUCTION

Recruiting the right students, with buy-in from parents and employers, is crucial to any T Level programme.

It means:

* reaching the right people
* with the right message
* at the right time

For early T Level providers, it has meant fostering partnerships with regional networks and schools, whilst looking at the different communication channels available to engage effectively with students and parents. With T Levels being a new qualification, raising awareness has been an important first step whilst highlighting the progression and career opportunities for students.

# INSIGHTS FROM T LEVEL PROVIDERS

To help you shape your approach, the following themes are explored:

**Ctrl+click on a topic below to explore**

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| Raising awareness with students and parents |
| Establishing links with a diverse range of organisations to reach a wide number of school leavers |
| Starting with the basics |
| Using digital marketing to increase parental and student awareness and understanding of T Levels |
| Planning events |

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| Raising awareness with employers |
| Featuring employers as a core part of your marketing strategy |
| Raising awareness through regional networks to gain employer buy-in |

# Raising awareness with students and parents

| Topic discussed | Learning points | Insights from T Level providers |
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| Establishing links with a diverse range of organisations to reach a wide number of school leavers | As one of the first T Level providers in your area, consider the groundwork that needs to be in place as part of your marketing strategy. Consider engaging with:   * local authorities / combined authorities * feeder schools * career advisors * career hubs * other providers. | “Start early. We started at year nine options evenings because these are our future students for T Levels. We’re part of a careers cluster which includes 17 schools in Lambeth - presentations went out to all these schools who invited us to do assemblies and talk about T Levels.”  *Ruth Coyle, Director,* [*La Retraite Roman Catholic Girls’*](https://www.laretraite.lambeth.sch.uk/1194/t-levels) *School*  “We've worked with our local feeder schools and their careers advisors. We've also done quite a lot of work with our regional universities network. We’ve staged online events for prospective students to meet the teachers, college students, find out more about the course and see demonstrations of some of the equipment that we use on the programme.”  *Ashley Grute, Assistant Principal,* [*HSDC*](https://www.hsdc.ac.uk/study-with-us/t-levels/)  In this video, Ben Knocks sets out the different channels they have used to reach schools and young people. (1m21s - ctrl+click to view)  [Video clip of Ben Knocks](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=R58LiAng6ys)  *Ben Knocks, Director of Student Services and Learner Journey,*  [*Weston College*](https://weston.ac.uk/what-can-i-study/courses-16-18-year-olds/t-levels) |
| Starting with the basics | With T Levels being new, it has been important that marketing starts early and starts with the basics:   * what is a T Level and how does it differ to other Level 3 options? * what are the benefits? * what are the career pathways?   Make sure you educate school staff and parents, who will, in turn influence prospective students.  Consider:   * releasing early marketing messages to raise awareness of T Levels * developing early case studies giving an insight into the different career opportunities and occupations T Levels could lead to * training and equipping school staff and career advisers with the right information * introducing T Levels to year nine students considering their GCSE options and beyond * hosting virtual events and festivals setting out the different careers and jobs associated with T Levels. | Initially people did not know what T Levels were, so it was important to explain in a very simple format that T Levels are the equivalent of three A levels, they involve 45-day placement and the kind of career paths they lead to. So, for example, a digital T Level can lead to becoming a software engineer. The education and childcare T Level can lead to becoming an early years teacher. The construction T Level can lead to becoming an architect. We shared this in simple presentations which were delivered to parents.”  *Ruth Coyle, Director of* [*La Retraite Roman Catholic Girls’ School*](https://www.laretraite.lambeth.sch.uk/1194/t-levels)  “One of the biggest challenges is that T Levels are new for young people and their parents. It's an unknown”, says Ben. “They don't necessarily understand the differences between a T Level and other Level 3 provision, so a big focus is on dispelling myths, what a T Level is, its benefits and how it's really going to add value to someone's career pathway.” He goes on to talk about the importance of “influencing the influencer”. (45s - ctrl+click to view)  [Video clip of Ben Knocks](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DGog2fYxWts)  *Ben Knocks, Director of Student Services and Learner Journey,*  [*Weston College*](https://weston.ac.uk/what-can-i-study/courses-16-18-year-olds/t-levels)  “One of the top tips I would give other providers is to market early. T Levels are still an emerging curriculum option and they're not widely known yet, so use whatever methods and means you have to get that T Level message out.”  *Sam Hillman, Assistant Principal: Technical and Vocational Curriculum,*  [*Exeter College*](https://exe-coll.ac.uk/school-leavers/t-levels/) |
| Using digital marketing to increase parental and student awareness and understanding of T Levels | Reaching students and parents remotely has never been more important. It gives you an opportunity to reach your target audience more effectively, whilst answering questions and sign-posting parents to the right support.  Why not consider how you might:   * use social media to profile and target the right students and the right parents * set up special social media campaigns and ‘take-overs’ to give T Levels profile * engage with students and parents using social media ‘hang-out’ sessions * host regular webinar and Q&A sessions for parents * revamp T Level pages on your website with engaging video content. | “We use social media to target both prospective students and parents. We can use targeted profiling to look at the different age groups and demographics within a geographic area so that we communicate different messages to different audiences, dependent on who it is that we're speaking to.”  *Kirstie Cawley, Director of Marketing,* [*Bishop Burton College*](https://www.bishopburton.ac.uk/about-us/t-levels)  “We've been able to put on a lot of virtual events to promote T Levels reaching a wider geographical area. This sits alongside our mainstream advertising through billboards, outdoor media and social media including LinkedIn.  Alongside that we have developed the website to make sure there is lots of video content, talking about the importance of T Levels and their place in post-16 education. Parents can also sign up to find more information about the particular T Levels we are offering, as can students. We have offered virtual Q&A's as well for students and parents.”  *Adam Bird, Admissions, Marketing and IAG Manager*  *& T Level Development Manager,* [*Priestley College*](https://www.priestley.ac.uk/t-levels-at-priestley/)  In this clip, Lisa Fletcher provides examples of the different ways Weston College have used social media to raise awareness (1m40s - ctrl+click to view).  [Video clip of Lisa Fletcher](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=ssz3LPY1L6w)  *Lisa Fletcher, Head of Marketing & Communications,* [*Weston College*](https://www.weston.ac.uk/what-can-i-study/courses-16-18-year-olds/t-levels) |
| Planning events | When developing your marketing strategy, explore different milestones throughout the year and how these could be used as promotional opportunities.  For example:   * National Careers Week * school assembly timetables * events in the school calendar for key stage three and four students.   Think about:   * who your audience is * what keynote speakers would be the most influential * which aspects of T Levels would be the most attractive to parents. | In this video, Ruth Coyle describes the launch event they hosted for T Levels and the impact it had in getting buy-in from parents (1m10s - ctrl+click to view).  [Video clip of Ruth Coyle](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xj6XPM4OsvA)  *Ruth Coyle, Director of* [*La Retraite Roman Catholic Girls’ School*](https://www.laretraite.lambeth.sch.uk/1194/t-levels)  “We’ve put together digital calendars of activities and IAG resources for feeder schools, to drip feed across key stage four and key stage three students”, explains Ben. “We’ve recorded vlogs about T Level provision at the college so more detailed information can be played in school tutorials or assemblies and we’ve also recorded content for their virtual careers fairs.”  He goes on to talk about what they call “My Futures” month (1m42s - ctrl+click to view).  [Video clip of Ben Knocks](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pO2ltXCSbMo)  *Ben Knocks, Director of Student Services and Learner Journey,*  [*Weston College*](https://weston.ac.uk/what-can-i-study/courses-16-18-year-olds/t-levels) |

# Raising awareness with employers

| Topic discussed | Learning points | Insights from T Level providers |
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| Featuring employers as a core part of your marketing strategy | T Levels are about giving young people exposure to their future career and giving employers access to young ambitious talent.  Putting employers front and centre of your marketing strategy can prove to be really effective.  Consider:   * involving employers in events for students and parents * asking employers to set out career opportunities * using employer logos on marketing collateral to add credibility. | “It has been really beneficial to involve employers in our open evening events, so students have the opportunity to find out from employers about potential career paths and progression routes available once they've completed T Levels.”  *Ashley Grute, Assistant Principal,* [*HSDC*](https://www.hsdc.ac.uk/study-with-us/t-levels/)  “We approached employers that we were already working with who could effectively put their name against our T Levels. It added further weight and credibility for learners and parents”.  *Edd Brown, Director of Quality & Workforce Development,* [*Weston College*](https://www.weston.ac.uk/what-can-i-study/courses-16-18-year-olds/t-levels)  In this clip, Lisa Fletcher explains how Weston College established employer partnerships to endorse their T Levels (1m25s - ctrl+click to view).  [Video clip of Lisa Fletcher](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqcZI2LEA9c)  *Lisa Fletcher, Head of Marketing & Communications,* [*Weston College*](https://www.weston.ac.uk/what-can-i-study/courses-16-18-year-olds/t-levels) |
| Raising awareness through regional networks to gain employer buy-in | Engaging employers and scaling up your T Level delivery will require reaching a wider audience. Having the right networks in place is key.  Think about:   * building relationships with Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local Authorities, Chambers of Commerce and other business partnerships to reach regional employers of all sizes and across multiple industries * developing and building partnerships with key employers * making ‘future talent pipelines and the next generation workforce’ the core message to employers.   For more effective practice, take a look at the ***Employer Engagement*** case study. | “We’ve connected with a lot of our stakeholder partners such as our Local Enterprise Partnership. Our Principal and Head of Department have sat in on different meetings to raise awareness and understanding, the need for T Levels and how they are going to serve those needs and bring a point of difference that isn't currently available through other routes and qualifications.”  *Kirstie Cawley, Director of Marketing,* [*Bishop Burton College*](https://www.bishopburton.ac.uk/about-us/t-levels)  “We have a local initiative with our LEP that lead to well-created introductions to employers, which has really helped our placement coordinator.”  *Adam Bird, Admissions, Marketing and IAG Manager & T Level Development Manager,* [*Priestley College*](https://www.priestley.ac.uk/t-levels-at-priestley/)  “Our early messaging was all about how we can support regional and national employers with their recruitment, future talent pipeline and engaging with the next generation workforce. It was the driving force behind what we did. Employers engaged well. We began building lots of relationships across multiple sectors, including networks with local authorities, chambers of commerce and business partnerships.”  *Simon Bone, Work Placement Manager,* [*Weston College*](https://www.weston.ac.uk/what-can-i-study/courses-16-18-year-olds/t-levels) |