



**The Rt Hon Baroness Jacqui Smith
Minister for Skills**

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22 January 2025

Dear David,

Thank you for raising an important question about the cost of T Level industry placements at the recent Qualifications Reform Review debate. I promised to write to you further regarding this issue.

As you know, this government is committed to providing all young people with high-quality education options that equip them with the skills needed for successful careers. T Levels are a key part of this, and the industry placement is a vital component of the T Level – ensuring students gain valuable, hands-on experience and are fully prepared to progress into their chosen fields. Industry placements are also offering employers a valuable pipeline of talent and an opportunity to shape the future of their skilled workforce.

Our funding provision for T Levels includes £550 per student spread over two years for the industry placement element and this is allocated to providers as part of their 16-19 per student funding. This funding supports the infrastructure and resource required to plan, source, deliver and monitor industry placements. The fund can also be used to support students' travel to industry placements, ensuring all students can access quality placements regardless of location. The 16-19 discretionary bursary funds can also be used to cover travel and subsistence, ensuring students are not financially disadvantaged by undertaking their placements. Alongside this, we have a package of support available to support employers and providers who are newer to delivering industry placements – this includes online guidance materials, workshops and webinars. This funding is having a tangible impact. With student satisfaction rates at 78% and industry placement completion rates above 95%, placements continue to remain a highlight of the T level experience.

This targeted funding ensures resources are available to support the unique requirement of T levels without diverting funds from other post-16 programmes. However, we also recognise the importance of work placements in other post-16 study programmes and qualifications that offer practical experience. For example, a core aim of a 16-19 study programme may be work experience, if that is the most suitable route for a young person for their chosen pathway or aspirations. Our goal is to create a balanced approach to opportunities that benefit all students and our funding models are structured to accommodate the diverse needs of students, regardless of their chosen educational route.

Additionally, building on the Gatsby Benchmark 6: 'Experiences of workplaces', we are committed to building a pipeline of work experience through schools and ensuring students have multiple and varied work experience opportunities. This includes our commitment to guarantee two weeks' worth of work experience and improve careers advice in schools and colleges by the end of this Parliament.

Meanwhile, the government will continue to break down barriers to opportunity by raising standards and providing every child with the best start in life. We are developing a comprehensive strategy for post-16 education and skills, to break down barriers to opportunity, support the development of a skilled workforce and drive economic growth. One area of focus is considering how we can move from a fragmented skills system to a coherent one, providing clearer pathways for learners and value for money across the various forms of provision.

This government has also established an independent Curriculum and Assessment Review, covering ages 5 to 18, chaired by Professor Becky Francis CBE. The review will seek to deliver a cutting-edge curriculum that ensures children and young people leave compulsory education ready for life and ready for work, building the knowledge, skills and attributes young people need to thrive.

I trust this responds to the questions you have raised. Thank you again for your continued engagement on this important topic. I hope these further details have been useful and I will place a copy in the House libraries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jacqui Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

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