

# **STUDY PROGRAMMES: BUILDING FUTURE CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY**

## **A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS**

**AUTHOR: IAN GRAYLING**

# 1 STUDY PROGRAMMES

## WHAT ARE THEY?

All learners aged 16+, as well as those aged 19-24 with special educational needs, are required to follow a study programme (except for those on apprenticeships).

Study programmes are designed to support learners to achieve their career aspirations. They provide a stepping stone to an apprenticeship or to further or higher education or to employment. They enable every learner to find their career pathway whether they are starting on an entry level study programme (pre-GCSE) or a level 3 study programme equivalent to (and sometimes including) A Levels.

'An industry placement can open up people's eyes to the variety of options engineering and manufacturing has to offer and students could also become future potential employees.'

Colin Roe - BSC Filters

Study programmes are not just about 'qualifications', they also nurture the personal maturity, resilience and confidence you need in a new employee. They do this by combining vocational and/or academic qualifications with maths and English, work experience, volunteering and enrichment activities.



### STUDY PROGRAMMES

For all 16- to 19-year-old learners, or those aged 19 to 24 with special educational needs, in government-funded education, except for those on apprenticeships.



Responsive to local and national labour force needs as well as to the needs and career aspirations of young people.



Generally full-time but can be part-time for those who are combining education with employment or who have health issues.



## 2 STUDY PROGRAMMES ARE GOOD FOR BUSINESS

Study programmes are an example of how education is responding, more than ever, to the needs of local employers. They are designed to develop an able and adaptable workforce that will take businesses forward for the next decade and beyond.

We hope that this guide will inspire you to get involved and to see how study programmes are good for your business. For example by:

- providing work experience opportunities (see Section 6 below) that support your organisation's productivity, whilst bringing new skills and energy to your workforce
- by collaborating with education and training providers to raise your 'standing' within the community and with funding agencies, whilst ensuring that the content and structure of off-the-job training truly meets your needs in building your future workforce.

**Engineering** – 'College staff and employees from a local engineering firm explored the impact of emerging trends in engineering on the skills required for those delivering training in the workplace and at the college. They worked together to update and revise the curriculum, deliver training both on- and off-the-job and provide work shadowing opportunities for teachers and trainers.'

[Bishop Auckland College  
Teach Too case study .pdf](#)



**Travel and Tourism** – 'Being a small and growing local business, we welcomed the opportunity to take on a young, enthusiastic and local student with an interest in our industry. Jess is very capable and thoughtful and, as a business, we welcomed her feedback. I think she benefitted from us being a small company, which meant she could try her hand at most things.'

[MVPT Travel](#)

**Law** – 'We can't expect young people [at school or college] to come to us with legal knowledge... We can't give them case work to do but what we can give them is a flavour of what it would be like... Although some won't like it, others will... We consider both to be a positive outcome.'

[Legal Services Employer](#)



## 3

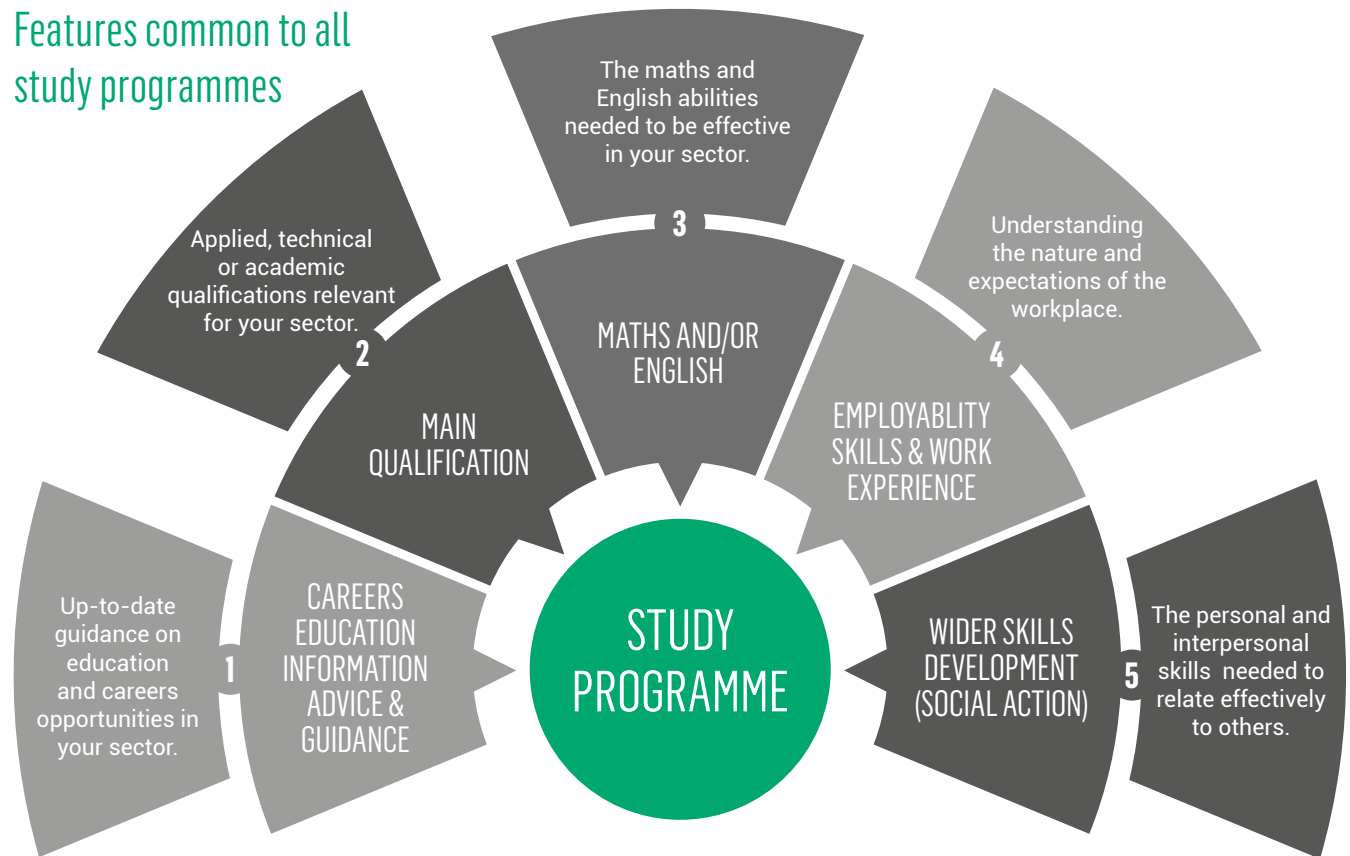
# STUDY PROGRAMMES

## MEETING YOUR WORKFORCE NEEDS

All study programmes share a common set of features (see diagram) and can be tailored to the roles your organisation needs for productivity and business growth.



Features common to all study programmes



How would these features benefit your future workforce development needs?



## New and revised qualifications

New applied and technical qualifications are already in place to support study programmes, with many more in the pipeline that are ready to go soon. These will be more responsive to the needs of employers and the career aspirations of learners. They range from entry level, through awards and certificates, to level 3 technical qualifications equivalent in size to three A Levels.

### Bespoke combinations

Some learners may mix technical qualifications with A Levels, for example a BTEC in Forensic Science with A Level Law.

Many of the qualifications are aligned to the new apprenticeship standards, providing a more seamless progression opportunity for young people.



# 4 EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS HERE TO HELP

The Further Education and Training sector's support for local businesses has been steadily evolving in recent years. Study programmes illustrate this well, taking employer responsiveness to new levels by preparing young people with the sector-specific skills and attributes that you as an employer need.

All businesses know what skills and attributes are needed for their evolving workforce. Colleges and training providers are the experts in designing and delivering the cost-effective education and training to build that supply-chain.

'Liberty Speciality Steels has a wealth of talented and experienced engineers along with various steel production and processing facilities, which the students will be able to access throughout their course.

Liberty recognises the importance of fully-trained engineers in taking the industry forward into an age of cleaner steel production and recycling.'

Mick Hood, Liberty's UK

**You can work with your local further education and training providers to -**



➤ Shape provision to your business needs

➤ Identify new talent for your team

➤ Lower recruitment costs and improve selection

➤ Develop your future workforce supply-chain

➤ Enhance your brand value and profile

The advantage of employers and providers working together in partnership is now, more than ever, clear.

How might a more strategic partnership with education and training providers enhance the success of your longer-term business plan?



Employers face significant challenges in maintaining the currency of their workforce against a backdrop of unrelenting advances in technologies, environmental challenges and increasing global competition. Building and maintaining valued products or services depends on securing highly effective new entrants to the workplace.

Take a look at this [video](#) to see how an employer and college are working collaboratively to design a bespoke training programme that will develop specific skills needed for industry.



## 5

# STUDY PROGRAMMES

## THE BENEFITS OF GETTING INVOLVED

The door is now wide open for employers to guide the content and delivery of study programmes through dialogue with local colleges and training providers.

The [Co-curriculum Development and Delivery Toolkit](#) offers tips on how employers can support the design of what is taught, how it is to be assessed and even the teaching and learning methods to be deployed. Investing in the development and delivery of study programmes will reap dividends in raising your organisation's profile and at the same time will create a sustainable recruitment pipeline, shaped to your needs.

**NHS** – Providers and employers jointly developed curriculum resources, learning activities, patient narratives and videos. A new module 'care of the older person' was co-created by local stakeholders to meet local needs.

[East Surrey College – Teach Too case study.pdf](#)



**Bakery** – Warburtons invited a group of Inspire learners, with low confidence and no experience of the workplace, to tour their bakery. 'The students thoroughly enjoyed viewing such a large operation which they relate to locally and by name. The employees gave the students an insight into how apprentices work their way through the company – and that it is achievable, with hard work and resilience.'

[Sophie Pennington, Inspire: Culture, Learning and Libraries](#)

**Early years** – 'We were able to offer training and a network of support; it was particularly good to be able to train a student into our way of working. We have offered Lydia a permanent job at the end of the placement.'

[Emma Elsworth, Twinkle Twinkle Nursery](#)

**Digital tech** – 'We want to create opportunities for young people to fulfil their potential, regardless of their background, and enjoy rewarding careers in Yorkshire and beyond. Our new recruits will have the chance to work on software that helps farmers plough fields, studios make movies and healthcare companies predict cancers.'

[David Richards WANDisco PLC](#)

How well could these cross-sector examples transfer and apply to your business or organisational context?



Business benefit of getting involved	Activities you could support
Finding new talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Inspiring learners with talks and presentations.</li> <li>➤ Offering workplace open-days.</li> <li>➤ Attending careers fairs and offering careers guidance.</li> <li>➤ Designing real projects for authentic off-the-job training.</li> </ul>
Evaluating potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Providing short work-taster sessions.</li> <li>➤ Offering (mock) interview experience.</li> <li>➤ Setting up opportunities for shadowing.</li> <li>➤ Offering work experience to evaluate learner potential.</li> </ul>
Developing new talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Providing longer work-placements to develop the talent you have spotted.</li> <li>➤ Offering an internship (supported in the workplace) for students with health or special educational needs.</li> </ul>
Growing brand reputation and value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sponsoring skills competitions.</li> <li>➤ Contributing locally to study programme design.</li> <li>➤ Influencing policy and programme development in dialogue with local providers.</li> </ul>
Building the future workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Offering progression onto an apprenticeship.</li> <li>➤ Engaging with education and training providers to develop your wider workforce for example in mentoring and coaching skills.</li> </ul>



How might involving your more experienced staff in these types of activities (re)energise and develop them in new and exciting ways?

If your organisation has a leadership role within your sector, how might you work with your national association, institute, sector body or Trailblazer group to contribute to the development of policy and programmes at the national level?





# 6 WORK EXPERIENCE

## GROWING YOUR OWN TALENT

One element of study programmes that many employers feel they can offer is work experience. A 2018 Confederation of British Industry (CBI) report noted that the leading area in which businesses support formal education and training is in providing work experience/site visits (83%). This was followed by offering information about apprenticeships and traineeships (70%) and giving careers advice and talks (68%).

Altruism is not the only motivation for providing young people with work experience. There are also business benefits, as well.



The **Learning and Work Institute** reports that an Employer Perspectives Survey showed two thirds (66%) of employers rate work experience as being of critical or significant value, ranking higher than academic qualifications. 54% of the employers sampled were motivated to provide work placements for altruistic reasons.

Your organisation may also share such values as 'giving young people positive life-chances' or 'contributing to social and economic wellbeing'.

How important for your organisation is:



- > having a rapid response, supply chain to meet both short and long-term staffing needs?
- > continuing investment in staff knowledge and skills?
- > keeping pace with rapidly changing industry practice?

### The added value of work experience

#### Staffing



- > Providing a cost-effective solution to short-term staffing needs.
- > Evaluating potential apprentices or employees.

#### Impact on employees



- > 'Seeding' new knowledge and skills (for example digital).
- > Developing mentoring skills of staff who supervise young 'recruits'.

#### Collaboration with providers



- > Ensuring off-the-job training reflects current industry practice.
- > Extending provider training support to the wider workforce

### Work experience aims to:

- > be relevant, purposeful and appropriately challenging
- > enable learners to apply their learning in the workplace
- > be a genuine and supported experience of the workplace
- > be planned, with the support of your provider, to offer mutually beneficial outcomes
- > have clear purpose and expectations, shared by all parties
- > provide useful feedback and/or a reference for the learner.

Work experience varies according to the needs and circumstances of the learner and what you can provide. As an employer, you can decide what works best for you. For example, work experience could be one day a week, a longer block placement or a rotation of shorter placements, enabling a learner to experience different aspects of a sector. Work experience could even include a learner's own part-time employment where the employer is willing to support the learner's enrolment onto a vocationally related study programme.

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), an organisation committed to positive change across education systems, has produced a suite of short [videos](#) to illustrate how employers have worked with education and training providers to successfully deliver work experience opportunities.

### Work placements for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

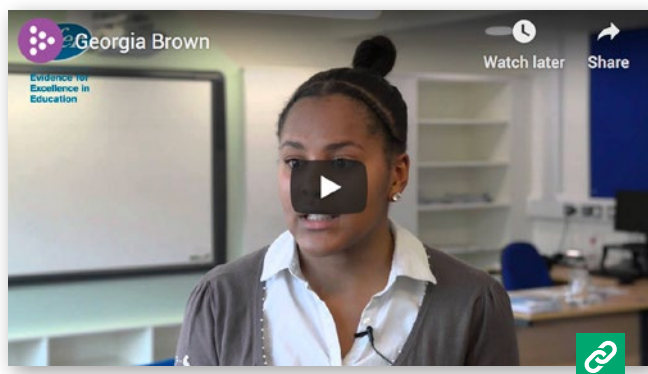
Offering work experience to a young learner with SEND is an ideal way for you to access the talents of an under-represented group of young people. As well as contributing to your local community, this will enable you to diversify your workforce, better reflecting your customer-base and society. You may want to consider offering

a supported internship which is a structured form of a study programme largely based at an employer (see below).

Supported internships are designed for learners aged 16-24 with special educational needs and/or disabilities detailed in an Education, Health and Care plan. They include a substantial, unpaid work placement of at least 6 months. Individuals are supported by an expert job-coach, supplied by the education provider. This means that you get loads of extra support for your intern and, as a result, also a really motivated member of staff.



### A student describes the benefits of work experience



How is your organisation currently realising the potential talent and commitment amongst learners with special needs and/or disabilities?



# 7 WORK EXPERIENCE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

You may have already been approached by a local school with a sixth form or a college or training provider asking you to offer work experience. If not, and you are keen to offer a young person this opportunity, you can easily get in touch with local education providers yourself (see section 9 for more information).

The education provider will allocate a named contact to liaise with you and the table below illustrates some of the key areas of support you can expect to receive.

It should be noted that work experience does not constitute 'paid employment'. You may, however, be willing to help learners with expenses such as travel or meal costs.

	Support available from your 'named contact' who will work collaboratively with you to: 
Preparing for work experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Agree mutual expectations of the learner's responsibilities and learning goals in the workplace.</li> <li>➤ Agree the learner's hours of work.</li> <li>➤ Induct the learner into the workplace.</li> </ul>
Supervising the learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Schedule review sessions with you and your learner.</li> <li>➤ Establish who will provide supervision of the learner in the workplace.</li> <li>➤ Help the learner to achieve their goals and responsibilities</li> </ul>
Dealing with issues or challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Set up procedures for raising any concerns that may arise relating to, for example:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— critical gaps in the learner's knowledge and skills</li> <li>— the learner's behaviour</li> <li>— the learner's wellbeing.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide advice about health and safety responsibilities.*</li> <li>➤ Provide risk assessment documents as templates, pre-filled where possible, to minimise your workload.</li> </ul> <p><small>* Whilst on-site, work experience learners come under your organisation's health and safety policies and procedures.</small></p>
Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Advise about any relevant legal matters and insurance.*</li> </ul> <p><small>* Whilst carrying out work on behalf of your organisation, work experience learners come under your Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance policies.</small></p>
At the end of work experience or a placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Gather feedback on the learner's progress and achievements during their work experience.</li> <li>➤ Obtain your views on the work experience, as a whole, to inform any future placements.</li> <li>➤ Advise on how best to provide a reference or feedback, based on the young person's performance.</li> </ul>



## 8 USEFUL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

**When engaging with your local study programme providers you may wish to ask some of the following questions:**

- › Who can talk to us about how study programmes could help our business needs?
- › How can we promote our industry to your learners?
- › What types of activities could we engage with?
- › If we offer a work experience placement what are your expectations about how we would support the young person involved?
- › How would you in turn support us?
- › What training or development opportunities would you provide to staff who are mentoring learners on work experience in my organisation?



# 8 FINDING OUT MORE

## Government guidance on study programmes

- [DfE 16-19 Study Programmes: guidance 2019-2020](#).
- The Health and Safety Executive has published [guidance for work experience placements](#).
- The Association of British Insurers has published [guidance for employers](#) planning to take on work experience students.

## Benefits for employers

- The following documents include statistics and/or quotes relating to the respective research into work experience and employer engagement.
- [CBI \(2018\) Educating for the modern world, CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Annual Report](#).
  - [Learning & Work Institute \(2017\), Work Experience Programmes, Briefing paper for the Department for Education](#).

## Supported internships and learners with SEND

- The [Preparing for Adulthood](#) website contains detailed information about supported internships, including a set of useful frequently asked questions.

## Finding your local education and training providers

- Carry out an internet search on colleges of further education and training providers in your area. Note: each organisation will have a business development, and/or a work-placement team who will likely be your first point of contact.
- Contact the national [LEP network](#) to locate your local education—business partnership who may be able to advise.

## Guides to providing work experience

- [Youth Employment UK: Work experience employer guide](#).
- [Industry placements guidance](#) and resources produced by the Association of Colleges.

## How to become involved in supporting the design and delivery of a curriculum that meets your needs as an employer

- NFER [video case studies](#) sharing innovative approaches to co-designing and delivering study programmes with employers.
- Example of effective partnership working between [Swissport and Craven College](#).
- An Education and Training Foundation [toolkit](#) exploring the characteristics of effective industry and provider programme co-design and delivery.



OUR PARTNER

**touch**consulting  
touch your people

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

VISIT: [etfoundation.co.uk](http://etfoundation.co.uk)

TEL: +44 (0) 20 3740 8280

EMAIL: [enquiries@etfoundation.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@etfoundation.co.uk)

Company registration number (England and  
Wales) : 08540597. Charity number: 1153859