

<b>Session Title:</b>	<b>T Levels: Where are we and how are we doing?</b>
<b>Speaker(s):</b>	<b>Catherine Sezen, Shelley Brown, Andy Cotterill</b>
<b>Chair:</b>	<b>Chloe Sinclair</b>
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<b>Speaker/Institution Bio/Information:</b>	<p>Catherine Sezen and Shelley Brown –  <a href="mailto:shelley.brown@nscg.ac.uk">shelley.brown@nscg.ac.uk</a>          Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group (NSCG)</p> <p>Andy Cotterill          Head of Global Student Recruitment at Keele University</p>
<b>Overview/Aim of session:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Where are we at with T Levels</li> <li>- The NCSG journey</li> <li>- Why this matters for universities</li> <li>- How you can get involved</li> </ul>
<b>Workshop Content</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>T Level overview</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- T Levels are being phased in - started in 2020</li> <li>- A T Level is a two-year qualification</li> <li>- Made up of core element and occupational specialism element in different proportions depending on course</li> <li>- T Level industry placement is between 315-400 hours with an external employer</li> <li>- T Level subject to English and Maths at GCSE</li> <li>- Students without GCSE Grade 4 in above need to study these alongside T Level</li> <li>- English and Maths are embedded into T Levels</li> <li>- 15 routes with different T Levels which may share some core elements with different specialisms</li> </ul> <p><b>Grading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Core knowledge exams make up typically no more than a third - can be as low as 12% of marks</li> <li>- Employer Set Project focuses on employability skills, worth up to 20% of the marks</li> <li>- Graded A* to E and fully compensatory</li> <li>- To pass occupational specialisms, students need to be competent, in line with employer</li> </ul>

expectations

- Graded Pass, Merit, Distinction
- Overall grading of the T Level is Distinction\* - Pass
- 9 Distinction\*s in UK last year, all in Education and Childcare – shows the rigour of T Levels, recognises exceptional achievement
- All T Levels have UCAS tariff points (Distinction\* = 168 points, equivalent to AAA\* at A Level)
- If students leave the course early or do not pass a T Level overall, they will be issued with a statement of achievement

## **NSCG**

- 5% of NSCG students are on T Levels, around 400
- Health and Early Years, Business and IT, Construction, Engineering pathways
- Target of 429 new starts in 2024/25
- Science and Legal Services new pathways for 2024/25
- Academic rigour of A Levels, with work experience of vocational courses – but they aren't for everyone
- High proportion of students retaking English and Maths at the college, hard to balance this with the T Level

## **Profile of a T Level Student @ NSCG**

- Qualification on Entry Score is 4.9 (BTEC 4.27 and A Level 6.21)
- Diverse backgrounds with different learning styles
- Good academic foundation on entry
- Strong interest in a specific vocational field
- Passionate about their chosen industry
- Practical and hands on
- Strong work ethic and commitment
- NSCG T Level retention level far higher than the national average

## **What can a T Level student bring to HE?**

- Occupational specialist skills
- Transferable knowledge and skills
- English, Maths and digital skills
- Variety of assessment methods
  
- Students go on to Apprenticeships, Skilled Employment and Higher Education

## **How universities can support T Level students:**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clear admissions processes</li> <li>- Parity between offers for T Levels and A Level/BTEC students</li> <li>- Communication with colleges</li> <li>- Joint outreach and events</li> <li>- Entry requirements, consideration of work experience element</li> <li>- Offering placements to T Level students</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Why this matters for universities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In 2022, 71% of T Level students who applied to university secured a place, while others moved into employment and higher apprenticeships</li> <li>- 144 HE providers have said they would accept T Levels</li> <li>- Entry requirements need to be clear and helpful – see examples section</li> <li>- A Level, BTEC and T Level requirements should be included in parity across university websites</li> <li>- T Levels are replacing BTECs at a lot of colleges – commercial risk to universities</li> </ul> <p><b>Keele</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keele have a named T Level route for all pathways except medicine and veterinary science</li> <li>- T Level networking events</li> <li>- T Level ambassador network</li> <li>- Working on the AoC on sector events</li> <li>- Supporting their staff to learn more about T Levels</li> </ul> <p><b>T Level Ambassador Network</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Made up of employers, providers, students and universities</li> <li>- Sharing best practice and knowledge and hopefully influence policy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Case Studies/Examples:</b></p>	<p>“Placement assessments are robust and linked to industry skills requirements, preparing students well for employment and university.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health placements at NSCG can include greeting patients, bringing them breakfast, giving washes/baths, shadowing nursing staff</li> </ul> <p>Examples of unclear T level entry requirements at universities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The university will consider applicants holding a T Level qualification in subjects closely aligned to</li> </ol>

	<p>the course.</p> <p>2. Acceptance of T Levels for this programme will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Academic School. Consideration will be given to the T Level grade/subject.</p>
<p><b>Scenarios/Roundtable discussions:</b></p>	
<p><b>Questions and Answers:</b></p>	<p>Q: Do you have settings other than the NHS for Health placements at NSCG?  A: Students can go to other setting such as care homes and school nursing.</p> <p>Q: What are students' perceptions of T Levels? Are they pushed at colleges?  A: It doesn't matter what pathway you choose, it depends how sure you are on your future career. E.g. a potential midwifery student can study A Levels, BTEC Health and Social or Midwifery T Level. It's not a qualification for everyone, but they are replacing some BTECs.</p> <p>Q: How hard has it been to encourage employers to get involved in T Level programmes?  A: A lot of improvement compared to 18 months ago. Health and Social Care and Early Years have been easier due to previous BTEC offers. They are used to apprenticeships where the students are basically employees, spending four days with the employer. It also depends geographically. Rural locations are more difficult. Universities can help with offering placements e.g. lab work, electrical maintenance, catering etc.</p>
<p><b>Summary/Key takeaways:</b></p>	<p>Useful links to follow up with on presentation e.g. case study videos, key contacts at exam boards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Put the student at the heart of your planning</li> <li>- Give them tools to make informed decisions about their next steps</li> <li>- Be clear, transparent and reduce barriers to information</li> <li>- Support your colleges – when they thrive, so will you</li> <li>- Lean on the experts and be open to learning and challenge</li> </ul>