

Consultation on the introduction of a CSCS logoed card for learners undertaking T Level and other industry work placements.

Background

The Government in England has introduced changes to its technical education policy to raise standards and improve quality, such that it better meets the needs of employers and is as highly respected as an academic education. This has seen the introduction of new occupational standards which underpin both Apprenticeships and T Level qualifications.

T Levels are one of three major options for students to study at level 3. They sit alongside apprenticeships for those who wish to study and train for a specific occupation in a work-based setting, and A levels for students who wish to continue academic education.

T level qualifications are designed with businesses and employers, are two-year, technical courses designed to give students the skills that industry needs. They bring classroom learning and an extended industry placement together, providing a mixture of:

- technical knowledge and skills specific to their chosen industry or occupation
- an industry placement of at least 45 days in their chosen industry or occupation

T Level graduates choosing to go onto an Apprenticeship may be able to accelerate and complete sooner than normal given the training and experience received throughout their programme. For example, learners will have gained a significant amount of the knowledge covered by the occupational standard and potentially an NVQ and had an opportunity to practise the skills involved.

As a result of these changes the Department for Education, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education and employers, training providers and other interested parties involved with these developments are calling on the construction industry to introduce a card to identify these individuals on site.

One Industry Logo action

At the beginning of 2015 the [Construction Leadership Council \(CLC\)](#) announced via the [Industrial Strategy: Construction 2025](#), that industry, including trade associations, contractors, clients and government, should specify and promote card schemes displaying the CSCS logo with no equivalents accepted. This is known as the One Industry Logo action.

The CLC listed several requirements necessary for a card scheme to qualify for the CSCS logo, which include:

- Cards will be required by those undertaking a recognised construction related occupation
- Setting a minimum standard for skilled occupations at NVQ Level 2

Full details of the CLC's requirements can be read [here](#).

Since 2015, 38 card schemes, across a range of construction sectors, have committed to the CLC requirements and can therefore display the CSCS logo on their cards. A full list of these schemes can be found [here](#).

Current position of industry skill cards displaying the CSCS logo

The CLC requires that cards for new entrants, apprentices, trainees, labourers, or workers in the process of obtaining formal qualifications will be clearly and easily identifiable. This has been interpreted by most card schemes as not incorporating the recognition of students on short duration industry placements for several reasons that include:

- The CLC's confirmation that cards should only be issued to those undertaking a recognised construction related occupation.
- T Level placement students are not registered onto an occupational competence qualification that will directly lead to the attainment of a recognised skilled CSCS logoed card.
- Work placement students are not considered construction workers as they are on site to gain some practical experience and insight of construction activities.

Of the 38 card schemes that use the CSCS logo, the Electrotechnical Certification Scheme (ECS) and the Joint Industry Board for Plumbing Mechanical Engineering Services in England and Wales (JIB PMES) are the only ones that issue a specific work experience card. Both schemes also issue Trainee cards as do a further 16 schemes, but these do not recognise students on short-duration industry placements.

However, with changes to the educational system which include the introduction of the T Level programme, it is agreed that now is the time to review this position.

Industry discussions

Following the introduction of the T Levels there has been considerable discussion between employers, training providers, awarding organisations and others over the requirement to introduce a means of recognising students on industry placements.

This concluded in a meeting held on 20th January 2021 involving the Department for Education, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, employers, training providers, card schemes and other interested parties. At this meeting it became clear that the industry's understanding of the CLC's guidance could also be interpreted in a way that allows the issue of cards to those completing T Levels and other industry placements. This is because, whilst not an occupational competence qualification the T Level is recognised as providing a clear pathway to obtaining a recognised occupational qualification. Consequently, T Level graduates can progress more effectively onto Apprenticeships or N/SVQs and other agreed alternative qualification programmes, therefore meeting the CLC requirements for a card to be issued.

From these discussions two potential solutions emerged:

Option 1: Trainee Card

Modify the existing Trainee card eligibility used by many cards schemes to include the T Level and other industry placements of a minimum duration of 45 days.

Option 2: Work Placement card

Introduce a card specifically for those learners undertaking T Level and other industry work placements of a minimum duration of 45 days.

Options explained

Option 1 - Modify existing Trainee cards

A number of card schemes issue a Trainee card, but these currently do not allow for the recognition of students on qualification programmes such as the T Level that require industry placement. This being because of the interpretation of the CLC requirement to mean that trainees should be registered onto an occupational competence qualification at Level 2 or above that will lead directly to the attainment of a recognised skilled card.

It is proposed that the 17 schemes that do issue Trainee cards could extend its eligibility criteria to include T Levels and qualification programmes requiring periods of work placement of a minimum 45 days.

This solution would ideally require that the Trainee card distinguishes between those on short-duration industry placement and those registered onto an occupational competence qualification that directly leads to the awarding of a skill card. This would help to make employers aware that work placement students are not registered onto an occupational competence qualification.

This option will be preferred by some schemes who feel they can easily flex their current Trainee card to suit the type of learner. Smart technology can help with this. Other schemes are not as well positioned to do this and feel that to make changes as stated will be both difficult and costly to implement. There is also a view that this option will make students feel more part of the industry as opposed to just being on a qualification programme that requires site visits.

Option 2 – Introduce an Industry Placement Card

A specific Industry Placement card could be introduced. The purpose of the card would be:

- To provide recognition to students on T Levels and other qualification programmes requiring work placements longer than 45 days
- To help non-employed construction related students carry out work placements.

As stated previously, both the ECS and the JIB PMES schemes issue a Work Experience card. The purpose of this card is:

- To help non-employed students attend high quality work experience placements.
- To help learners compete for apprenticeships after gaining meaningful experience.

These Work Experience cards identify the holder as taking part in work placement and allows them access to sites, with their designated employer, in order to gain on-site work experience.

Applicants for the ECS Work Experience card must also successfully complete a pre-work training period before starting unpaid work experience and have passed the ECS Health, Safety and Environment assessment. JIB PMES applicants must either pass the CITB Health, Safety and Environment test or have completed recognised Health, Safety and Environmental training.

No other scheme appears to issue a card for the purpose of recognising work experience but if implemented this option would more easily avoid confusion with differentiating between Trainees working towards occupational competence qualifications and students on work placement.

Industry consultation

It is agreed that to consult on the two options is a practical way of identifying a solution that can be supported by the industry. The consultation audience is considered to be:

- Employers and employer representative bodies
- Employee representative bodies
- All 38 card schemes displaying the CSCS logo
- Members of the Built Environment Awarding Body Forum
- Training Providers including relevant Universities and those involved with 14-19 technical education
- All attendees of the meeting held on 20th January 2021.

Recommendation

If it can be accepted by the consensus of the above parties that the CLC requirements do allow for the introduction of a card that will recognise students on T Levels and qualification programmes requiring periods of work placement of a minimum 45 days, then it is recommended that;

- The model used by ECS and JIB PMES of having a specific 'Work Experience' card is adopted by all schemes required to recognise these types of student
- The card will be named a 'Industry Placement' card to reflect the requirement of a minimum of 45 days on-site
- This option would require ECS and JIB PMES to rename their Work Experience card accordingly.

The eligibility criteria for this card should be as follows:

- Be aged 16 or above
- Registered onto a qualification or training programme requiring a minimum of 45 days' work placement and that will ultimately lead to becoming eligible for an Apprentice, Skilled Worker, Supervisor or Manager card.
- Short work experience initiatives such as the two-week statutory school curriculum requirement is not in scope and for these students. It remains the responsibility of the site management teams to ensure the safety of these students when working on site.
- Successfully pass the CITB Health, Safety and Environment test or one of the equivalent tests offered by CSCS Partner Schemes.

The card should only be valid for two years, not be renewable and of a design to fit with that currently used by individual schemes. It would be up to each individual card scheme to set the price of the card. It will be possible to extend the card validity should there be a valid reason.

The significant benefit for the industry is the simplicity of a single policy that is adopted by all card schemes involved in work placements.

Online questionnaire

We would welcome your views on the proposal to introduce an Industry Placement card as set out in this paper. Please complete the following online survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/QHDQQWR>

The consultation will close on **Friday March 5th 2021** and after which the feedback will be analysed, and a concluding report prepared for consideration by the CLC.