



Careers Information Advice and Guidance Policy

**2025/26
Academic Year**

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Department Area	Student Support Services
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Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Policy

1. Policy Statement

Sandwell College is committed to providing high quality, careers education, information, advice and guidance, which raises aspirations and helps learners plan and manage their progression through learning and work. This policy responds to the college's duties, Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) quality standards, and the Education Inspection Framework (Ofsted).

The provision of careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) at Sandwell College follows guidance "Careers guidance and access for education and training providers - Statutory guidance for schools and guidance for further education colleges and sixth form colleges" (DfE January 2023) which incorporates activities delivered under the eight Gatsby Benchmarks⁽¹⁾.

CEIAG is delivered alongside the student Personal Development Programme and underpins the achievement of the College Strategic Objectives:

This policy supports the following strategic objectives:

- To provide our students with the highest quality education and training and an experience to match
- To provide a robust education and skills offer for Sandwell and beyond
- To achieve external recognition for the quality of teaching, learning and outcomes for learners
- To foster a culture of respect, equality and safety for all

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Careers Programme for 2024-25

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2. Entitlement Statement

All Sandwell College learners are entitled to careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) which meets professional standards of practice and which is person centred, impartial and confidential. It will be integrated into learners' experience of the whole curriculum and be based on a partnership with learners, and where applicable, with their parents and carers. Students are entitled to access personal guidance from appropriately qualified (Level 6) careers Advisers. The Careers Programme will raise aspirations, challenge stereotyping and promote equality and diversity.

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3. Policy context

The Education Inspection Framework (EIF) has a greater focus on the ‘quality of education’, enabling Ofsted to assess whether learners are receiving education or training that puts them on a path to future success. Ofsted want to see providers developing the knowledge, skills and behaviours that learners need to progress and achieve. They also want to see how colleges are adding value to learners’ progression or employment prospects. See Appendix A. for key areas where the Careers Policy links to the Ofsted EIF. There is an expectation that colleges will be working to achieve the Gatsby Benchmarks for good career guidance (Appendix B.). Having achieved Quality in Careers Standard, the college will continue to plan, monitor and deliver CEIAG which meets the requirements to maintain the Standard.

- 3.1** All learners need a planned programme of activities to help them choose pathways that are right for them and to be able to manage their life choices and sustain employability throughout their lives.
- 3.2** The Careers Programme aims are outlined in Appendix C. Key activities are mapped to the Careers Programme aims, and careers frameworks including the Career Development Institute (CDI) Framework and Gatsby Benchmarks.
- 3.3** CEIAG is designed to meet the needs of the learners at this college and those who are considering enrolling here. It is differentiated and personalised to ensure progression, through activities that are appropriate to the learners’ stages of career, learning, planning and development. Learners are entitled to CEIAG which meets professional standards of practice and which is person-centred, impartial and confidential. CEIAG is delivered alongside opportunities for students to gain work experience.
- 3.4** The key principles upon which this policy is based are that CEIAG:
- Is personalised, provides opportunities to identify and respond to the needs of the individual, and builds on previous learning and experience;
 - Is inclusive, recognises and promotes equality and diversity, challenges stereotypes and is sensitive to faith, culture and background;
 - Is transparent, impartial and provides opportunities for confidentiality;
 - Is enhanced by strong networks and collaborative approaches involving Student Services, curriculum teams and external partners;
 - Contributes to increasing participation, retention and achievement by raising aspirations, helping students to make informed choices and to develop career management skills.
 - Provides comprehensive information and advice
 - Ensures that feedback is sought from learners and college staff, and where

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appropriate, parents/carers, employers and other external partners. Feedback is used to review the Careers Policy and Careers Strategy and develop and improve the Careers Programme.

- Is informed by student destinations.

The Careers Programme is designed to raise aspirations and challenge stereotypes. Careers education is delivered through a variety of approaches to suit a range of learner needs and learning styles including: Planned activities delivered through curriculum areas, careers related modules on vocational courses, and stand-alone careers and work-related learning (wrl) qualifications. Students also have the opportunity to further develop knowledge and skills through self-directed learning programmes/courses. This is supported by lessons, presentations activities and events planned through the Careers Team.

Staff and students access to online careers resources and guides developed and maintained by the Careers Team through Careers SharePoint Pages. Resources including careers information, guides, lesson plans, and presentations are supported by access to the Unifrog Careers platform, and Job Explorer Database (JED) careers package.

Careers and work-related learning activities include:

- Lessons and talks on topics linked to progression (such as UCAS) and job search activities (such as interview skills and looking for work)
- Planned visits to employers and universities
- Talks from speakers, such as employers, university staff and training providers
- A range of college based and off-site activities such as the annual HE/ Careers Fairs, trips, and workshops.
- Opportunities to participate in volunteering activities and enterprise activities within and outside of the college.
- Opportunities to undertake work experience placements and online work-related activities

3.5 Careers information, advice and guidance include:

- Pre-entry course information and advice on post 16 pathways for potential applicants and parents/carers available through the college website, during open days and enrolment and by appointment with Careers Advisers
- On course and progression information, advice and guidance
- Individual advice, guidance and support with areas including HE choices, UCAS

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applications, finding jobs, apprenticeships and other opportunities, CV's and application forms, student finance.

- 3.6** Careers resources aim to promote equality and challenge discrimination. A wide variety of resources are made available to students which suit different learning styles. Resources include:
- Careers software which is available to all students, parents/carers and tutors to support raising self-awareness, career exploration, career planning and goal setting, understanding careers and labour market information (LMI).
 - Books, prospectuses and other reference materials
 - Access to online careers information, presentations, opportunities for self-directed learning and career related courses available through Unifrog and the Careers SharePoint page/App.
 - Guides covering looking for employment and apprenticeships and all aspects of application to university.
 - Resources for tutors/ other support staff available through the staff SharePoint including guides, presentations and lessons linked to Careers programme aims, Gatsby Benchmarks and tutorial programme themes.

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4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Learners

- To be actively involved in and take ownership of their progression planning and career development;
- To attend punctually all planned tutorials, careers education and guidance activities;
- To register on the Unifrog careers platform and use this to record careers, plan and record work experience and enrichment activities;
- To work co-operatively with staff and fellow learners, respecting the views of others and the principles of equality and diversity.

4.2 College Management Team is responsible for ensuring that:

- The Careers Policy and Careers Strategy and Careers Programme links to college strategic objectives and is reviewed and approved at SLT level annually
- The Director of Student Services, is responsible for ensuring
 - the careers policy and programme are evaluated and reviewed annually
 - relevant staff and governors are aware of this policy;
 - there are sufficient qualified, experienced staff and up to date resources;
 - all staff have access to training, support and resources which are appropriate to their role;
 - management of a budget for Careers within the overall Student Services budget
 - the Careers Team and other relevant staff are supported to provide a high quality IAG service;
 - the planning and implementation of CEIAG activities supports achievement of Gatsby Benchmarks and quality standards including the Matrix standard and Quality in Careers Standard

4.3 The member of staff responsible for the coordination of CEIAG (Careers Co-ordinator) is responsible for:

- Coordinating CEIAG activities which are planned, developed and delivered by professionals from within and external to the college
- Developing the Careers Strategy, Careers Policy and Careers programme (supported by the Director of Student Services)
- Supporting curriculum areas to develop a planned Careers Programme for their area which meets Gatsby Benchmarks and wider Careers Programme aims

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- Ensuring that careers information resources are up to date and relevant.
- Ensuring that CEAIG services are promoted effectively and appropriately within and externally to the college.
- Overseeing the development and implementation of systems to record careers guidance activities within the college
- Ensuring Specialist CEIAG staff, teaching staff and other support staff are informed about careers resources and IAG services for students Compiling reports on careers related activities, in particular those delivered by the Careers Team

4.4 Specialist CEIAG staff are responsible for:

- Providing training for the college staff on use of careers resources including the Careers SharePoint pages and Unifrog careers package, UCAS and other topics on request;
- Linking with curriculum areas to plan and develop suitable careers education activities for learners;
- Delivery of 1:1 IAG sessions for learners and potential learners;
- Delivery of CEIAG topics through tutorials or curriculum learning to groups of learners;
- Developing resources and lessons that students and tutors can access through Moodle or the student SharePoint Hub to support delivery of careers education through the curriculum;
- Updating and maintaining Careers pages on the staff and student SharePoint Hubs;
- Recording careers related activities using Unifrog;
- Managing the UCAS process for all staff and learners (as UCAS Coordinators);
- Maintaining knowledge and skills through attending or participating in training relevant to the role.

4.5 Curriculum Managers/ Leads/ Heads of Curriculum working alongside the Careers Coordinator and specialist CEIAG staff are responsible for:

- Planning a Careers Programme for their curriculum area for learners at all levels which supports the achievement of Gatsby Benchmarks and wider Careers Programme aims;
- Ensuring careers related “Interactions” (1:1 meetings, lessons, workshops, talks, visits, etc.) linked to Gatsby Benchmarks are recorded by curriculum staff within their area using the Unifrog package (and where appropriate Promonitor);

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- Monitoring the delivery of careers activities within their career area.

4.6 Curriculum staff work with support staff through their roles as tutors, and are responsible for:

- Providing sufficient course information and advice to enable prospective learners to make suitable choices pre-entry and during induction activities;
- Ensuring that learners are aware of specialist services, maintaining effective working links and making referrals for pre-entry, on course and progression careers guidance when required;
- Ensuring that students are aware of the careers programme;
- Ensuring that learners are aware of careers resources, careers events and activities;
- Ensuring that there is a combination of careers education, information, advice and guidance opportunities offered which are appropriate to their learners' needs Delivering careers related lessons/ presentations through tutorial programmes, careers related modules on vocational courses and/or stand-alone careers related qualifications/programmes.
- Supporting students to take appropriate steps to undertake work experience placements and/or online work-related activities.
- Promoting equality of opportunity, being aware of confidentiality issues and dealing sensitively with information disclosed by learners.
- Recording careers related "Interactions" (1:1 meetings, lessons, workshops, talks, visits, etc.) linked to Gatsby Benchmarks using the Unifrog package

4.7 Work Experience staff are responsible for:

- Linking with curriculum areas to provide full time 16-18 learners with support and guidance to ensure quality work experience is provided and it is relevant to their programme of study.
- Tutorial visits to curriculum areas explaining procedures and the learners' responsibilities.
- Introducing the "Placements" tool on Unifrog to students and supporting learners to use the Placements tool to plan, record and reflect on work placements.
- Providing a safe environment for learners on placements through checks on insurance details and site visits for high-risk areas.
- Regular monitoring of the progress each curriculum area team is making and producing reports.

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- Facilitating access to virtual work experience opportunities
- Maintaining work experience information on the student and staff SharePoint Hub

5. Information, Advice and Personal Guidance

- 5.1** Learners are informed about support available through the Careers Team, Tutors and/or other support staff during their induction. Further information about the support available can be found on the College website in prospectuses and Careers page on the student SharePoint Hub
- 5.2** Independent specialist careers advice is offered to students with Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) through a Connexions Personal Adviser who holds a Level 6 Guidance Qualification and is experienced in working with students with SEND. Services provided by Sandwell Connexions are set out in a Service Level Agreement which is reviewed annually.
- 5.3** The specialist Careers Team provides individual interviews with qualified and experienced advisers by request or through drop-in sessions. Learners and potential learners who require an impartial and confidential careers guidance interview (personal guidance) can self-refer or be referred by any member of staff at the college at any point in their learner journey.
- A potential learner may benefit from careers guidance, for example, if they are uncertain of course choice
 - do not have the minimum grades for the course chosen
 - have a poor rationale for their course choice
 - have previously attempted to study the course
 - have non-existent or unrealistic career plans
 - have low confidence about previous studies
- 5.4** On course learners may benefit from careers guidance, for example, if they
- need help with planning their career path
 - would like to change to a different course within the college
 - are considering leaving the College before their course ends
 - are coming towards the end of their course
 - need help with applying to university or to another college
 - would like help with job search activities

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- 5.5** All learners have access to and are actively encouraged to register and use the Unifrog Careers package to support access to relevant information, guides and self-directed learning opportunities. The Unifrog Careers package enables students to learn from career and labour market information (LMI), link curriculum learning to careers, record and reflect on career, work experience and enrichment activities, and research and apply for opportunities including Higher Education and Apprenticeships. Entry Level and Level 1 learners have access to the JED careers package to support students to learn from career and labour market information and link curriculum learning and careers.
- 5.6** Relevant and up to date information and advice is offered on learning opportunities and career choices. All learners and prospective learners can also independently access the college careers advice and guidance within the dedicated careers areas at each college site at times as advertised. Students can also access the CEIAG resources available on the Careers page accessible from Student Central/ Student SharePoint Careers page.
- 5.7** Learners are offered a clear written summary of guidance where appropriate to help them know what their next steps are as agreed in their guidance interview. They may be given other written information, or advised to obtain relevant information, as appropriate.
- 5.8** Learners may be referred to other specialist advice, either within the college such as the Welfare Service or with external agencies e.g. National Careers Service.
- 5.9** College staff receive information about the careers guidance service during their initial induction. Further information is available on the staff SharePoint Hub. Staff can contact the Careers Team at any time for advice on referring learners.
- 5.10** Teaching staff have access to careers guides, presentations, lessons and activities linked to Personal Development Programme topics and the Careers Programme aims through the Staff SharePoint Hub and Unifrog Careers platform.
- 5.11** Parents are informed about CEIAG support through information on the College website and in prospectuses. Parents can also access information and advice through Open Days/Evenings, during enrolment and can attend appointment with Careers Advisers.

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- 5.12** The college Schools Liaison Team work closely with local schools to support them to achieve Gatsby Benchmarks and raise awareness of opportunities available within FE. The team attends careers events in schools and organises transition/ taster events where school pupils attend the college.
- 5.13** The college has close links with universities, particularly local institutions. The college is signed up to the Phoenix Partner Agreement with Coventry University and works closely with University of Birmingham widening participation programmes. We have close links to the University of Wolverhampton through the Aspire programme. Students are advised about widening participation activities and contextual offers. Local and national universities are invited to HE fairs, to deliver talks on HE related topics and to support other.
- 5.14** Close links with employers support the Careers Programme and careers related activities within the college as well as meeting the needs of local businesses. The Business Development Unit within the college work closely with employers to help students find suitable apprenticeship and work placements. Representatives from employers are linked to the college as Enterprise Advisers and contribute to both the evaluation of the Careers Programme and some elements of delivery of the Careers Programme. Curriculum staff work with employers to arrange talks and visits enabling students to gain further experiences of the workplace.
- 5.15** The college has links with the Careers and Enterprise Company in both Sandwell and Birmingham. Staff attend and contribute to Careers Hub meetings. Termly Compass reviews enable the college to assess progress against achievement of Gatsby Benchmarks. The college is an active member of the Careers Advisers in FE group of colleges across the West Midlands. The college also plays an active role in the Sandwell Networkers Group which includes charities and community organisations. Participation in networks enables the college to share good practice.
- 5.16** The service has robust quality assurance systems and is evaluated by:
- Regular reviews of the delivery of CEIAG against standards (at least annually)
 - Conducting regular internal reviews of the quality of CEIAG through Ofsted judgements, student surveys and other feedback mechanisms
 - Reviewing the Careers Policy and Careers Programme Annually and Careers Strategy at least once every 2 years.
 - Ensuring that the elements of the Matrix are being adhered to and working towards maintaining the Quality in Careers Standard

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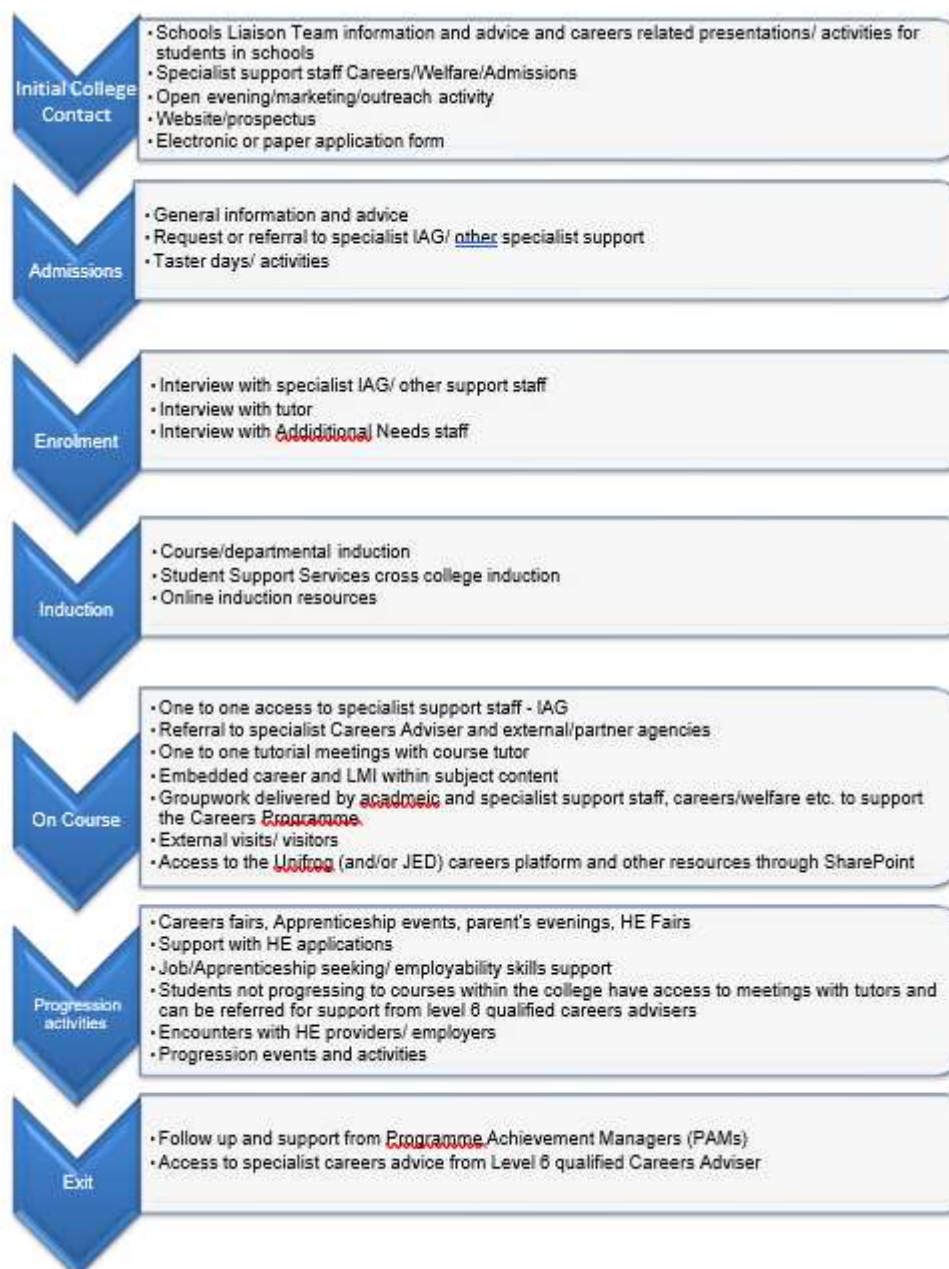
- Contributing to the college self-assessment processes.
- Seeking additional feedback from college staff and, where appropriate, parents/carers, employers and other external partners.

5.17 Careers and work-related learning activities are recorded using the Unifrog careers platform. These activities link to the Gatsby Benchmarks. A review of progress against Gatsby Benchmarks is conducted termly with the Careers and Enterprise Company using the Compass self-assessment tool.

5.18 The Careers Team and Staff delivering specialist CEIAG have the opportunity to attend training and undertake continuing professional development (CPD) relevant to their role. Staff delivering specialist careers guidance are expected to have or be working towards a Level 6 qualification in Guidance. Staff development needs are identified through annual staff appraisal meetings. In addition, sharing of good practice and information, as well as planning and review of activities takes place through regular Careers Team meetings.

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Appendix A. Links Between the Careers Policy and Education Inspection Framework (EIF)

Under the Ofsted education improvement framework (EIF) (updated September 2023), Ofsted inspectors are expected to comment on the quality of careers provision within the college. The EIF and Further education and skills inspection handbook outline areas relating to careers which inspectors may comment on:

- The college's aims for Careers Guidance
- The college's Careers Programme
- How the Careers Programme is managed and resourced
- How staff development supports the Careers Programme

This links with their assessment of overall effectiveness in the four areas of

- Personal Development
- Leadership and Management
- Behaviour and Attitudes
- Quality of Education

There is an expectation that colleges will have a lead governor with responsibility for careers and a Carers Leader appointed. They will expect colleges to be working toward achieving the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks and to have a Careers Programme and Careers Policy which are published on the college's website. There is a requirement that all students have access to independent and impartial personal (careers) guidance offered by appropriately qualified staff. They will also expect robust data to be collected on destinations.

Inspectors will assess the Careers Programme and Policy in relation to

- Intent –what you want to do
- Implementation –how you expect you will be able to deliver on your intent
- Impact –How you will measure your success in delivering your intent.

Key linked areas:

- The college prepares learners for future success in education employment and training by providing; unbiased information for all about potential locally relevant careers guidance; and opportunities for encounters with the world of work.
- The college ensures that participation is very high, particularly among those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and all benefit from these opportunities and experiences.
- Leaders ensure that all learners including those with SEND and high needs, and disadvantaged learners get the information, advice, guidance and support they need to achieve their next steps and progress into positive destinations.
- The curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment.

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- Leaders adopt or construct a curriculum that is ambitious, appropriately relevant to local and regional employment and training priorities and designed to give learners, particularly the most disadvantaged, the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life.
- Leaders' engagement with learners, employers, parents and the local community/ economy is very effective. They provide clear and direct evidence of the positive impact of how this engagement benefits learners and ensures continuous and sustained improvement.
- Teachers have expert knowledge of the subjects they teach.

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Appendix B. Gatsby Benchmarks for Colleges

Gatsby Benchmark 1 A stable careers programme Every college should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by learners, parents, teachers, employers and other agencies.	• Every college should have a stable, structured careers programme that has the explicit backing of the senior management team, and has an identified and appropriately trained person responsible for it. • The careers programme should be published on the college's website in a way that enables learners, parents, college staff and employers to access and understand it. • The programme should be regularly evaluated, with feedback from learners, parents, college staff and employers.
Gatsby Benchmark 2 Learning from career and labour market information Every learner, and their parents (where appropriate), should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make best use of available information.	• During their study programme, all learners should access and use information about career paths and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options. • Parents should be encouraged to access and use information about labour markets and study options to inform their support of the learners in their care
Gatsby Benchmark 3 Addressing the needs of each learner Learners have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each learner. A college's careers programme should embed equality and diversity consideration throughout.	• A college's careers programme should seek to challenge stereotypical thinking and raise aspirations • Colleges should keep records of the individual advice given to each learner and subsequent agreed decisions • The records of advice given should be integrated with those given at the previous stage of the learner's education (including their secondary school) where these are made available • Records should begin to be kept from the first point of contact or the point of transition • All learners should have access to these records to support their career development. • Colleges should collect and maintain accurate data for each learner on their education, training or employment destinations

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Gatsby Benchmark 4 Linking curriculum learning to careers All subject staff should link curriculum learning with careers, even on courses which are not specifically occupation-led. For example, STEM subject staff should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths. Study programmes should also reflect the importance of maths and English as a key expectation from employers.	Throughout their programme of study (and by the end of their course) every learner should have had the opportunity to experience how their subjects help people gain entry to, and be more effective workers within, a wide range of occupations.
Gatsby Benchmark 5 Encounters with employers and employees Every learner should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment activities, including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes, and should include learners' own part-time employment where it exists	- Every year, alongside their study programme, learners should participate in at least two meaningful encounters* with an employer. At least one encounter should be delivered through their curriculum area. - Colleges should record and take account of learners' part-time employment and the influence this has had on their development.
Gatsby Benchmark 6 Experiences of workplaces Every learner should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks.	By the end of their study programme, every learner should have had at least one experience of a workplace, in addition to any part-time jobs they may have.
Gatsby Benchmark 7 Encounters with Further and Higher Education All learners should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes, and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace	By the end of their programme of study, every learner should have had a meaningful encounter* with a range of providers of learning and training that may form the next stage of their career. This should include, as appropriate, further education colleges, higher education and apprenticeship and training providers. This should include the opportunity to meet staff and learners.

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Gatsby Benchmark 8 Personal Guidance Every learner should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a careers adviser, who could be internal (a member of college staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level*. These should be available for all learners whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all learners but should be timed to meet individual needs.	• Every learner should have at least one such interview by the end of their study programme
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Appendix C. Careers Programme Aims

- A. Students at all levels should be made aware of the careers information, advice and guidance support available to them during their studies
- B. Students are encouraged to reflect on their strengths and development needs and relate these to their course and future careers plans
- C. Students are supported to gain relevant “job seeking/ employability” skills
- D. Students are made aware of all relevant progression routes beyond their current course and supported to access these
- E. Students are able to research and use career and Labour Market Information (LMI) and understand different types of career pathway
- F. Students have the opportunity to learn from relevant work experience
- G. Students have opportunities to learn from employers in addition to work experience
- H. Level 3 students have opportunities for encounters with HE providers
- I. Level 3 students are informed about all aspects of researching and applying to HE
- J. Students’ individual needs in relation to careers and progression within and beyond college are identified and met (including students with SEND, personal, financial and other support needs)
- K. Students have access to personal guidance from appropriately qualified* careers professionals
- L. Students are made aware of resources and opportunities for further learning

*Careers Advisers who have or are working towards a Level 6 Qualification (or above) in Careers Guidance

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Encounters with Employers	Gatsby Benchmark	Careers Programme Aims	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Employer talks, visits, etc. within curriculum areas	2,4,5,6	D,E,G		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Careers Fair	2,4,5,6	E,G								x				
Online courses/ resources	5	C,G							x	x	x			

Careers Information, Advice and Guidance	Gatsby Benchmark	Careers Programme Aims	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Personal Careers Guidance Appointments/ Drop in	3,8	B,D,K		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
email/ telephone support	3,8	J	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
EHCP Reviews	3,8	J,K			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
LAC Reviews	3,8	J				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Progression Interviews	3,8	B,D,K,J									x	x	x	

Events/ Activities	Gatsby Benchmark	Careers Programme Aims	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Careers advice during enrolment	3,7,8	D,K	x	x	x									
Open days/ Evenings	3,7,8	D,K			x	x		x		x			x	
Careers Fair	2,3,5	D,G								x				
Progression Week	2,3	B,D,J										x		
Schools-based Careers Activities (delivered by School Liaison Team)	3,7	D		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Schools' Taster Events delivered at College	3,7	D			x		x	x					x	

Careers activities delivered within college

Online/ Interactive presentations

Online courses/ self-directed learning

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