



The Quality in Careers Standard >>>>

The ASSESSMENT GUIDE
for Licensed Awarding Bodies and Assessors
to be used for all [Quality in Careers](#) assessments from 16.1.2023

January 2023 Edition

First published 2018. Revised 2019 (twice), October 2021, January 2023

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1. Introduction

1.1 This *Assessment Guide*:

- is intended for Licensed Awarding Bodies and their [Quality in Careers](#) assessors appointed to assess secondary schools, special schools, colleges and work-based learning providers (“learning providers”¹) against the national assessment and accreditation criteria of the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) fully incorporating the Gatsby Benchmarks.
- should be read in conjunction with *The Guide to the National Standard* (January 2023) published on the [Quality in Careers](#) website: <http://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/documents/the-guide-to-the-standard.pdf>
- seeks to represent the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicators fairly and accurately; but in the event of any uncertainty, assessors should consult the Gatsby Foundation’s own documentation at <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance>
- offers advice to [Quality in Careers](#) assessors and Awarding Bodies on implementing the national criteria and includes required and suggested templates for assessors to use.

1.2 It is a public document; therefore, schools and colleges can see clearly what [Quality in Careers](#) assessors will be seeking when undertaking assessments.

2. The assessment framework for the [Quality in Careers Standard](#)

2.1 The purpose of assessment is to ensure that learning providers which are awarded the [Quality in Careers Standard](#):

- deliver impactful careers programmes consistently well and to a high standard,
- embed delivery partner engagement fully in their careers programmes,
- know what they need to do to continue to improve, and act in the best interests of their learners.

2.2 The national assessment and accreditation criteria for the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) fully incorporate the Gatsby Benchmarks and performance indicators for schools and colleges. The DfE **expects** all secondary schools and colleges to use the Gatsby Benchmarks as a framework around which they can develop their careers programmes in line with their legal requirements to provide independent careers guidance to all 12-to-18-year-olds and learners aged up to 25 with an education, health and care plan. The DfE² **“strongly recommends”** all secondary schools and colleges to work towards and achieve the [Quality in Careers Standard](#).

2.3 The national criteria also make explicit additional references to appropriate opportunity pathways for SEND learners which should be addressed in assessments to ensure the Standard is inclusive of special schools.

2.4 The national criteria are grouped under eight section headings mirroring the framework of the Gatsby Benchmarks. A clear distinction is made between the national criteria which relate to meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks and the additional career-related learning outcomes criteria which relate to fully

¹ For ease of use, the term “learning providers” refers to secondary schools, special schools, sixth form colleges, further education colleges and work-based learning providers unless otherwise stated.

² [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers, January 2023, p.13 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools)

meeting all aspects of the Standard.

2.5 The additional requirements made by the Standard include:

- greater emphasis on the importance of a centrally co-ordinated programme of careers education that provides relevant experiences and information for learners on different programmes and courses, and makes a real difference to their career development with evidence of career-related learning outcomes for learners
- the expectation of stronger engagement and partnership with parents/carers that goes beyond informing them about the careers programme and useful resources to encompass building their capacity to support the career development of their children
- co-design of careers programmes with learning providers working with learners, partners and stakeholders
- the expectation that careers leaders and all relevant staff will have access to professional learning and development opportunities that equip them for their roles in CEIAG
- recognition of the important contribution that fully qualified career development professionals can make when the learning provider has a properly funded vision and strategy for CEIAG.

2.6 **Quality in Careers** assessors will gather additional evidence to make their professional judgements as well as assessing the evidence of the learning provider's self-assessment using *Compass* (<https://tools.careersandenterprise.co.uk/oauth/login/classic>) or *Compass+* (<https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/resources/compass>) and other tools such as the 'Careers Impact Review System' (q.v.³) currently being piloted.

2.7 As explained in section 4.4.2 in the *Guide to the National Standard* (<http://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/documents/the-guide-to-the-standard.pdf>), and as agreed with DfE, the **Quality in Careers** assessment can have one of three outcomes:

- **Making insufficient progress towards fully meeting the Standard's national criteria**

"Making insufficient progress" means that the inputs into the careers programme are inadequate and the management and delivery processes are not stable or developed enough for the assessor to conclude that the learning provider is yet making good progress towards fully meeting the Standard. For the avoidance of doubt, if a learning provider is making insufficient progress on any single section of the eight elements comprising the national criteria, the assessor will conclude that the outcome is "making insufficient progress" and will identify the areas for development to address the shortcomings.

- **Achieving the Standard where the Standard is awarded using this citation –**

"Congratulations on achieving the Quality in Careers Standard which fully incorporates the Gatsby Benchmarks. This is an excellent achievement and recognises the quality and breadth of your careers provision. As you are "making good progress" towards meeting the Benchmarks and all of the accreditation criteria, as we comment upon below in the detail of your report, we will continue to review your progress with the Benchmarks, and the additional career-related learning outcomes for students which the national Standard requires, through our annual reviews with you." This

³ Where we cite "q.v." there is an explanation of the term in the Glossary in the appendices at the end of this Guide

is likely to mean that they meet or partially meet the requirements of some but not yet all of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Awarding Bodies will encourage learning providers to seek to secure “fully meeting all of the national criteria” as soon as possible by identifying areas to address.

- **Achieving the Standard where the Standard is awarded using this citation –**
“Congratulations on achieving the Quality in Careers Standard which fully incorporates the Gatsby Benchmarks. This is an excellent achievement and recognises the quality and breadth of your careers provision. As you are “fully meeting” the Benchmarks and all of the accreditation criteria, as we comment upon below in the detail of your report, we will continue to review your progress in maintaining meeting the Benchmarks, and the additional career-related learning outcomes for students which the national Standard requires, through our annual reviews with you.” Fully meeting” means that the learning provider meets all the national assessment and accreditation criteria in all eight sections of the Standard including all of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

3. Key characteristics of effective assessment

3.1 Assessment for the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) is the independent and external process of reliably assessing the performance of learning providers against the national assessment and accreditation criteria.

3.2 The key characteristics of effective assessment are:

- **Moderated self-assessment** – Moderated self-assessment is most effective when it is first ‘owned’ by the learning provider. This occurs more readily when it is carried out in a way that is compatible with the learning provider’s overall approach to quality and improvement. External assessors moderate self-assessment by applying their rigour and professional expertise to confirm or challenge the learning provider’s self-assessment. In best practice, assessment is a positive learning experience for the learning provider.
- **Best-fit judgements** – Where a learning provider may not meet the letter of all the national criteria under each section heading of the Standard, [Quality in Careers](#) assessors should make a best-fit or close-match judgement based on evidence to determine whether or not the learning provider (i) does not yet meet the national criteria, (ii) is making good progress and has robust plans in place to meet the national criteria, or (iii) fully meets the national criteria.
- **Minimal formal requirements** – [Quality in Careers](#) assessors should exercise professional judgement in determining the evidence required and should reduce the burden of assessment on learning providers by keeping demands on the way evidence is presented to a minimum.
- **Triangulation of evidence** – [Quality in Careers](#) assessors should look for corroborating sources of evidence where necessary to ensure their judgements are secure. It is important for assessors to consider evidence presented by the learning provider alongside that of delivery partners (such as employers) and learners themselves (the ‘learner voice’).
- **Internal quality assurance** – More reliable assessments can be achieved by a sampling process (i.e. second assessment or check on an assessment report or by two assessors working together) or, where feasible, by cross-moderation between Licensed Awarding Bodies. All Licensed Awarding Bodies should ensure that assessment procedures are applied consistently to maintain confidence in the Standard.
- **Focus on impact for learners**– [Quality in Careers](#) assessors should review evidence of the impact of the learning provider’s careers programme on career-related learning, behavioural and practical outcomes for learners. Impacts are hard to determine; but assessors should expect the

learning provider to use a recognised framework of outcomes such as the CDI's *Career Development Framework* (2021)⁴ and the DfE's destinations data⁵ for their learners to analyse impact. They should also use assessment to help learning providers make connections between the inputs (resources) and processes used in the careers programme and the outcomes they achieve.

4. The role of the **Quality in Careers** assessor in a professional model of assessment of quality

4.1 The Quality in Careers Consortium requires each Awarding Body to train its assessors in making reliable and valid professional assessment of the performance of learning providers against each of the eight sets of national criteria for the Standard. The Consortium also requires Awarding Bodies to have in place an appropriate appeals procedure should a learning provider seek to challenge the judgements made by an assessor.

4.2 It is for Awarding Bodies to determine their approach to assessments. The Consortium does not provide prescriptive sets of questions for assessors to follow – the individual integrity of each professional assessor is for each Awarding Body to maintain. This approach also enables the assessor to consider the context and circumstances of the learning provider. Schools and Colleges are free to choose the Licensed Awarding Body they wish to work with⁶.

4.3 The role of the **Quality in Careers** assessor, therefore, is to assess the performance of learning providers against the national criteria for the Standard. Each assessor's responsibilities include:

- determining whether the learning provider is either making insufficient progress towards meeting the Standard's national criteria, or when assessed as "achieving the Standard" is either making good progress towards meeting the national criteria, or is fully meeting all of the national criteria – and to identify explicitly areas for development to address any shortcomings and to stimulate continuous improvement
- applying the national assessment and accreditation criteria for the **Quality in Careers Standard** consistently and reliably when making judgements about the learning provider's careers programme
- behaving professionally and courteously towards all staff, learners, parents/carers and other providers of evidence
- providing oral and written feedback suited to different learning provider audiences, as required, which explains clearly what the learning provider is doing well and what they need to do to continue to improve
- providing feedback to the Awarding Body to enable the Awarding Body to support learning providers effectively
- staying up to date with research, theory and emerging practice in education, career development and assessment.

4.4 **Quality in Careers** assessors must not assess the performance of a learning provider if they have previously been advising or supporting that learning provider on how to achieve the Standard. However, it would be entirely appropriate for the assessor of a learning provider which has successfully achieved the Standard to be the assessor reviewing that learning provider's progress in annual reviews.

⁴ <https://www.thecdi.net/New-Career-Development-Framework>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-destinations>

⁶ [Getting Started with the Standard – advice for secondary schools, colleges and other learning providers \(qualityincareers.org.uk\)](https://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/Getting-Started-with-the-Standard-advice-for-secondary-schools-colleges-and-other-learning-providers)

4.5 **Quality in Careers** assessors may, at the first annual review of a learning provider assessed as “making good progress”, recommend to the Awarding Body that the certification should be reaccredited as “fully meeting all the accreditation criteria” if the provider has fully met the outstanding criteria as identified in the original assessment. The Awarding Body may then reissue the **Quality in Careers** certification, but the full accreditation review timeframe would not be extended (i.e. if the provider was due for reassessment three years after the initial assessment, that timeframe would be unaltered).

4.6 Where an Awarding Body also carries out a second annual review (i.e. all Awarding Bodies except the Complete Careers Awarding Body which awards the Standard for a period of 24 months not 36 months), the **Quality in Careers** assessor will also concentrate upon what the learning provider needs to address ready for its reaccreditation. Complete Careers’ assessors will address this in the first annual review.

5. Making judgements on the achievement of the national criteria in each of the eight sections of the Standard

This section provides the Consortium’s advice to Awarding Bodies and their assessors on making judgements on the achievement by learning providers in each of the eight sections of the Standard. For each section, the guide provides descriptors of the features of the three possible outcomes of the assessment:

- **making insufficient progress towards fully meeting the Standard**
- **achieving the Standard, making good progress towards fully meeting the national criteria**
- **achieving the Standard, fully meeting the national criteria**

[note: where we cite “q.v.” there is an explanation of the term in the Glossary in the appendices at the end of this Guide]

1. A stable careers programme

Insufficient progress towards fully meeting the Standard	Achieving the Standard, making good progress towards fully meeting the national criteria	Achieving the Standard, fully meeting the national criteria
<p>i. The concept of a ‘careers programme’ is missing or difficult to discern.</p> <p>ii. CEIAG is provided in an ad hoc way, based on the commitment and goodwill of individual members of staff. Other staff are not well-prepared for or accepting of their careers roles. It may be informed by the learning provider’s understanding of what it is required or expected to do but generally, inputs are insufficient to achieve a minimum standard.</p> <p>iii. The value of CEIAG is not fully recognised so provision is frequently squeezed by competing priorities.</p>	<p>i. The careers programme is embedded (q.v.) in the work of the learning provider with support from the Governing Body and the senior leadership/management team.</p> <p>ii. The strategic approaches adopted by the learning provider include systems thinking (q.v.), careers leadership (q.v.), a careers policy (q.v.) and having an annual careers plan (q.v.) alongside encouraging and enabling initiatives by individual staff. Awareness of their roles in careers is not yet consistent across all relevant staff.</p> <p>iii. Elements of ring-fencing the careers</p>	<p>i. The careers programme is strongly embedded in the work of the learning provider with proactive support from the Governing Body and the senior leadership team.</p> <p>ii. The programme is strategy-led and sustainable, e.g. the learning provider has adopted a systems-based approach, provides strong careers leadership and maintains a careers policy with an annual plan linked to the learning provider’s overall “development and improvement plan” as well as encouraging and enabling initiatives by individual staff. Awareness</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. It is difficult for learners, parents, staff, employers and other agencies to find out about careers activities from the website and/or the website is not up to date, e.g. not compliant with Provider Access Legislation (q.v.). v. The learning provider either does not have a nominated Careers Leader or the Careers Leader has insufficient status or resources to be effective in the role. vi. Little or no evaluation of careers activities takes place, e.g. in relation to their impact or the effectiveness of the contribution of delivery partners. vii. The learning provider does not meet the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicators for this Benchmark. 	<p>programme are in place to protect it from competing priorities and other resource constraints.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. Up to date information about the careers provision on the website for learners, parents, staff, employers and other agencies meets web accessibility good practice and is relatively easy to find. v. The learning provider has a nominated Careers Leader who is part of, or reports directly to, the senior leadership team. vi. Some evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the careers programme takes place. vii. The learning provider meets or partially meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicators for this Benchmark. 	<p>of their roles in careers is consistent across all relevant staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. The resourcing and prioritising of the careers programme is secure. iv. Up to date information about the careers provision on the website for learners, parents/carers, staff, employers and other agencies meets web accessibility good practice, is easy to find and well-used. The website also explains how the learning provider measures and assesses the impact of the careers programme for learners. v. The learning provider has a nominated careers leader who has completed or had access to appropriate training and who is part of, or reports directly to, the senior leadership team. vi. The learning provider has an explicit evaluation framework focusing on the impact and effectiveness of the careers programme including feedback from learners and parents/carers. vii. The learning provider fully meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicators for this Benchmark.
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2. Learning from career and labour market information (CLMI)

Insufficient progress towards fully meeting the Standard	Achieving the Standard, making good progress towards fully meeting the national criteria	Achieving the Standard, fully meeting the national criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The learning provider signposts few sources of career and labour market information (CLMI) (q.v.) on its website/VLE with little or no explanation of what they are important for or how to use them. Some links may be broken. ii. Little effort is made to demystify CLMI for learners and parents/carers. iii. The involvement of parents/carers is limited to sending them information periodically. iv. The learning provider does not meet the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicators for this Benchmark. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A range of CLMI is provided online from recommended or selected sources but some weaknesses are still apparent (e.g. it is not easy to find or to navigate on the learning provider's website or VLE, local LMI is inadequate or missing). ii. In the main, the learning provider decides when and how to encourage and inform parents/carers about using CLMI. iii. Parents/carers have not properly been consulted or involved in co-designing the approach adopted. iv. The learning provider meets or partially meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicators for this Benchmark. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The learning provider selects a range of suitable and up-to-date sources of national and local CLMI and makes these easily accessible online with navigational prompts (e.g. on the careers pages of the learning provider's website or VLE and on course descriptions in the online prospectus). ii. Curriculum plans (e.g. schemes of work, study programmes and programmes for options events) make clear when and how learners will be able to use CLMI to make informed decisions about future options and opportunities. The careers programme includes sessions on how to make a well-informed decision. iii. The learning provider goes beyond simply making CLMI available to parents/carers. They create opportunities for parents/carers to learn how to use CLMI by themselves and how to support their child's career thinking and planning. The learning provider facilitates structured sessions, led by an informed adviser (q.v.), for parents/carers and their children to talk together about study options and labour market opportunities. Learners demonstrate a good grasp of sources of careers and labour market information and can describe how they use them. iv. The learning provider meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicators for this Benchmark.

3. Addressing the needs of each pupil/student

Insufficient progress towards fully meeting the Standard	Achieving the Standard, making good progress towards fully meeting the national criteria	Achieving the Standard, fully meeting the national criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Staff leading on meeting the needs of specific groups pay insufficient attention to personal career development issues, and the careers leader (if appointed) has yet to establish a close working relationship with them. ii. Careers assessments (q.v.) are not based on clear principles and agreed purposes, and the impact is too variable to address the needs of all targeted learners. iii. Record-keeping, tracking and data sharing is inconsistent and/or incomplete. Learners feel that assessment and recording is done to them and not with them. The results are not used effectively in conversations between tutors, learners and staff (e.g. at report evenings) or in discussions with support agencies. iv. The learning provider prefers to start with a clean slate rather than look at the learners' careers records from a previous learning provider (e.g. from their primary school). v. The learning provider has not undertaken an impact assessment of its strategies to challenge stereotyping and raise aspirations. vi. The learning provider does not meet the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicators for this Benchmark. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The learning provider makes provision to meet the specific needs of targeted groups but the liaison between the careers leader and the staff supporting these specific groups is not yet close enough. ii. Careers assessments (q.v.) are based on clear principles and agreed purposes, and their impact addresses the needs of all targeted learners. iii. Record-keeping, tracking and data sharing protocols are largely in place. Learners feel that assessment and recording is helpful to them, but it is marginalised by the emphasis on academic reporting at parents' evenings. iv. The learning provider is starting to make good use of learners' careers records from their previous schools/colleges (e.g. from their primary school). v. The learning provider assesses the impact of its strategies to challenge stereotyping and raise aspirations. vi. The learning provider meets or partially meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicators for this Benchmark. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The learning provider has created leadership and guidance roles to identify and respond to the specific needs of targeted groups such as gifted and talented learners, learners from socially and economically deprived backgrounds, learners with special educational needs and disabilities, young carers, looked after children and refugees. The careers leader works closely with the senior and middle leaders on these issues. ii. The learning provider uses a range of careers assessment (q.v.) methods to identify individual needs and to monitor the learning provider's performance on tackling equality (q.v.) and diversity (q.v.) issues including raising aspirations (q.v.), and challenging stereotypical thinking. iii. The learning provider keeps records of assessments, advice given and agreed decisions which learners can access to support their career development. Learners give permission for these to be shared with other parties who support them. iv. The learning provider makes every effort to ensure continuity of record-keeping by co-operating with the learning providers that learners have come from (e.g. from their primary school) and are progressing to next (e.g. to a post-16 provider). They gather accurate data on the destinations of each learner and analyse anonymised data sets for the end of KS4 and KS5 to continue to meet the needs of individuals

		<p>and groups.</p> <p>v. The learning provider assesses the impact of its strategies to challenge stereotyping and raise aspirations, and acts on the findings.</p> <p>vi. The learning provider meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicators for this Benchmark.</p>
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4. Linking curriculum learning to careers

Insufficient progress towards fully meeting the Standard	Achieving the Standard, making good progress towards fully meeting the national criteria	Achieving the Standard, fully meeting the national criteria
<p>i. The learning provider does not promote a consistent view of the value of linking curriculum learning to careers. Linking curriculum learning to careers is ad hoc and largely incidental.</p> <p>ii. The learning provider does not make effective use of curriculum audit tools to map or record where embedded career learning is taking place.</p> <p>iii. Staff are sceptical about the benefits to learners (and the subjects they teach) from linking curriculum learning to careers and/or are reluctant to take the initiative as a result of time pressures and other accountabilities.</p> <p>iv. Learners feel that the links made to career are a distraction from achieving high grades and have little impact on their career development.</p> <p>v. Staff do not draw on any of their experience of careers and work before they came into teaching.</p> <p>vi. The learning provider does not meet the</p>	<p>i. The learning provider has a clear plan to involve all departments and faculties in linking curriculum learning to careers.</p> <p>ii. The documentation to support linking curriculum learning to careers is well-developed (e.g. in curriculum planning). The learning provider makes good use of curriculum audit tools to map or record where embedded career learning is taking place.</p> <p>iii. The careers leader can provide evidence of those subjects and courses which are proactive in linking curriculum learning to careers and welcome the support from specialist careers guidance staff, employers and other learning providers with whom they have links. For STEM subjects, for example, this will include learning about the relevance of the different STEM subjects for a wide range of career paths from the many organisations that aim to facilitate STEM learning.</p>	<p>i. The learning provider uses a range of approaches to highlight to learners the relevance of the content, techniques, skills and values of the subjects and courses they are taking to their future careers (e.g. through social media, course descriptions and prospectuses, classroom displays, starter activities and plenaries, units of work in course programmes and special events such as careers and HE fairs, visits to opportunity providers, visitors, and mentoring).</p> <p>ii. The learning provider makes effective use of curriculum audit tools to map or record where embedded career learning is taking place.</p> <p>iii. The links made by staff are at a sophisticated level showing, for example, how the skills learnt through a subject and 'subject clusters' can be used in career pathways in and beyond that subject or cluster. For schools, learners by the start of KS4 have had the opportunity to learn</p>

<p>Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator for this Benchmark.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. Learners recognise, value and enjoy the links to careers that subjects make. They can provide some evidence of the impact of curriculum linking through subjects on their career development. v. Staff are encouraged to draw on any experience of careers and work before they came into teaching for the benefit of learners. vi. The learning provider meets or partially meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator for this Benchmark. 	<p>not only about the relevance of the different STEM subjects for a wide range of career paths but of all the other main groupings of subjects too including the humanities, languages, social sciences and the creative arts which underpin important sectors of the economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. Learners can relate the opportunities that they have had to link curriculum learning to careers and use these to support how they manage and develop their careers. v. Staff make good use of any experience of careers and work before they came into teaching for the benefit of learners. vi. The learning provider meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator for this Benchmark.
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Insufficient progress towards fully meeting the Standard	Achieving the Standard, making good progress towards fully meeting the national criteria	Achieving the Standard, fully meeting the national criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Links with employers are ad hoc and limited and their objectives often unclear. ii. Too little use is made of opportunities offered by employers and local and national support agencies and their networks. iii. Recording of learners' contacts with employers and employees is ad hoc and learners are insufficiently involved in reviewing the possible benefits they have gained from encounters. The learning provider has not fully considered what is meant by 'meaningful encounters'. iv. The learning provider takes little interest in learners' part-time jobs and voluntary work except when it interferes with their studies. v. In respect of SEND learners, and where the learning provider is a special school/college, the level of encounters with appropriate employers (q.v.) and voluntary services is no more than adequate and does not benefit all learners. vi. The learning provider does not meet the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator(s) for this Benchmark. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Links with employers are well-developed and their objectives clear. The learning provider maintains the links it has made with employers and employees from one year to the next. ii. Good use is made of opportunities offered by employers and local and national support agencies and their networks, but these are not yet sufficient to provide all learners with multiple opportunities to benefit fully. Some activities are co-designed and planned with employer involvement. iii. Recording and reflection are well-developed for some groups of learners. The learning provider has a clear understanding of what constitutes a meaningful encounter. iv. The learning provider advises learners on how to get the most out of their part-time employment and voluntary work without it interfering with their studies. v. In respect of SEND learners, and where the learning provider is a special school/college, the level of encounters with appropriate employers and voluntary services (q.v.) is sufficient. vi. The learning provider meets or partially meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator(s) for this Benchmark. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Links with employers are highly developed and their objectives clear. Links are well-maintained and continue to grow. ii. Very good use is made of opportunities offered by employers and local and national support agencies and their networks. Learners have multiple opportunities, at least one per year of their education and training, to participate in and benefit from a range of activities which contribute to the achievement of the intended outcomes of the careers programme. Many activities are co-designed and planned with employer involvement. Examples include mentoring, competitions and challenges, simulations (e.g. enterprise, marketing, production), games, role-plays, mock interviews, giving presentations and taking part in discussions. iii. Recording and reflection are well-developed for all groups of learners. At appropriate times, learners record the impact of these activities and any part-time employment they have on their career development and discuss with relevant staff what this means for their further needs. The learning provider has a clear understanding of what constitutes a 'meaningful encounter' and monitors the overall impact on learners of the activities that have been arranged. iv. The learning provider harnesses learners' experience of part-time and voluntary work to enhance their career development. v. In respect of SEND learners, and where the learning provider is a special

		<p>school/college, the level of encounters with appropriate employers and voluntary services (q.v.) is comprehensive.</p> <p>vi. The learning provider fully meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator(s) for this Benchmark (At least one encounter with employers by year 11 involves a STEM employer. At least one such activity for 16-18-year-olds in colleges is closely aligned with their study programmes.)</p>
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6. Experiences of workplaces⁷

Insufficient progress towards fully meeting the Standard	Achieving the Standard, making good progress towards fully meeting the national criteria	Achieving the Standard, fully meeting the national criteria
<p>i. The resources allocated to organising virtual and/or actual experiences of workplaces by the learning provider are inadequate. Learners have few opportunities to participate in work visits, work shadowing or work experience either pre-16 or post-16.</p> <p>ii. Learners are given few opportunities to develop a range of career management and employability skills from their experiences of workplaces. The learning provider makes little effort to link learners' experiences of workplaces to the subjects/courses they are studying.</p> <p>iii. The learning provider does not meet the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator(s) for this Benchmark.</p>	<p>i. Learners benefit from a range of virtual and/or actual experiences of workplaces pre-16 and post-16.</p> <p>ii. Attention is paid to enabling learners to explore career opportunities, develop career skills and expand their networks through participation in experiences of workplaces, but more could be done by the learning provider to ensure that learners benefit from these experiences and make connections with their subject/course learning.</p> <p>iii. The learning provider meets or partially meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator(s) for this Benchmark.</p>	<p>i. Every learner, except in reasonable circumstances (e.g. learners with particular special needs and disabilities), has one recorded meaningful (q.v.) virtual and/or actual experience of a workplace pre-16 and another post-16 (i.e. a visit, work shadowing or work experience). Allowance should be made for Learning providers in special circumstances that are unable to achieve 100% but have made compensatory arrangements, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning providers in rural catchment areas may not be able to access sufficient placements and, therefore, generate some work experience virtually and in house; • very large learning providers that are making a sizeable investment in generating work experience placements but cannot realistically meet the full demand, so they have published criteria for allocating placements. <p>ii. Learners engage in a reflective activity after each experience. The preparation and follow-up include explicit discussion of how learners can relate their experience to the subjects/courses they are studying and make the most of their personal and professional networks of support.</p> <p>iii. The learning provider meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator(s) for this Benchmark.</p>

⁷ See also [Guidance Note for Quality in Careers Assessments: Benchmark 6 and our associated national criteria](#)

7. Encounters with further and higher education

Insufficient progress towards fully meeting the Standard	Achieving the Standard, making good progress towards fully meeting the national criteria	Achieving the Standard, fully meeting the national criteria
<p>i. The learning provider does not meet the requirement on “provider access” (q.v.).</p> <p>ii. The learning provider’s arrangements for assisting Key Stage 4 and/or post-16 learners with their further and higher education options, applications and transitions are limited, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learners interested in technical qualifications (e.g. T-levels, HNDs, HNCs, foundation degrees), apprenticeships (higher and degree-level) and jobs with training receive inadequate support. • The ethos of the learning provider values HE progression, especially to Russell Group universities, over other pathways and destinations for reasons that are not related to learners’ wellbeing and progression. <p>In respect of SEND learners, and where the school is a special school, the level of support for appropriate post 16+ options (q.v.) is no more than adequate.</p> <p>iii. The learning provider has not fully considered what is meant by ‘meaningful encounters’.</p> <p>iv. The learning provider does not meet the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator(s) for this Benchmark.</p>	<p>i. The learning provider meets the requirement on “provider access” (q.v.).</p> <p>ii. The learning provider is aware that it may still has some unresolved issues relating to the way it supports learners applying for opportunities across the full range of pathways, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At KS3 and KS4, the learning provider may promote its own post-14 and post-16 provision over learners’ personally valued destinations; • At post 16, the learning provider may promote academic pathways over technical education pathways without considering the best interests of the learner. Staff prioritise dealing with HE applications before helping learners seeking apprenticeships or employment. <p>In respect of SEND learners, and where the learning provider is a special school/college, the level of support for appropriate post 16+ options (q.v.) is sound but could be increased.</p> <p>iii. The learning provider can explain how it promotes ‘meaningful encounters’, especially for disadvantaged learners.</p> <p>iv. The learning provider meets or partially meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator(s) for this Benchmark.</p>	<p>i. The learning provider meets the requirement and expectations on “provider access” (q.v.).</p> <p>ii. Learners are clearly aware of when they will be introduced to the full range of opportunities relating to the next stage of their education, apprenticeship, training or employment (including self-employment) through the careers programme. All routes and pathways are fully supported. Guided option choices (q.v.) do not transgress ethical boundaries (i.e. the learning provider acts in the best interests of the learner, upholds equality of opportunity and does not put its own interests ahead of them). In respect of SEND learners, and where the learning provider is a special school/college, the level of support for appropriate post 16+ options (q.v.) is comprehensive.</p> <p>iii. Every learner has a ‘meaningful encounter’ (q.v.) with staff and learners (e.g. trainees, apprentices), online or in person, from providers of a range of learning pathways before they make choices at 16+ and again before they make choices at 18+. The learning provider ensures that learners are fully prepared for the encounter and debriefed afterwards. Learners considering applying for university have at least two visits to universities to meet staff and learners before the age of 18. The learning provider makes good use of sources of</p>

		<p>support for under-represented groups (e.g. the Uni Connect programme) and participates in local initiatives.</p> <p>iv. The learning provider meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator(s) for this Benchmark.</p>
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8. Personal guidance

Insufficient progress towards fully meeting the Standard	Achieving the Standard, making good progress towards fully meeting the national criteria	Achieving the Standard, fully meeting the national criteria
<p>i. The learning provider is not compliant with the requirement to provide independent and impartial personal careers guidance appropriate to the needs of every learner. The learning provider is not making sufficient progress to ensure that every learner has at least one interview pre-16 and another one post-16 from a qualified careers adviser. A joined-up approach to guidance and support is missing.</p> <p>ii. Interviews are seldom timely or of optimum duration, and their effectiveness is not evaluated.</p> <p>iii. The learning provider does not meet the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator for this Benchmark.</p>	<p>i. The learning provider is well on the way towards becoming fully compliant with the requirement to secure access to independent and impartial personal careers guidance appropriate to the learner's needs. In respect of schools, circa 70% of learners have the opportunity to have at least one impartial guidance interview with a qualified careers adviser pre-16, with the possibility of another one post-16 (see <i>Notes 1 and 2</i> below). In respect of colleges, good progress is being made to ensure that at least one such impartial guidance interview with a qualified careers adviser is to be offered by the end of their study programme (see <i>Notes 1 and 2</i> below). A more joined-up approach to guidance and support is evident.</p> <p>ii. Interviews are timely (e.g. before a decision point or to address a specific need) and of optimum duration. Their effectiveness is regularly evaluated.</p> <p>iii. The learning provider meets or partially meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator for this Benchmark.</p> <p><i>Note 1: The learning provider should ensure that access – individually or in groups (q.v.) if appropriate to learner need – is available when needed to a careers adviser</i></p>	<p>i. The learning provider is fully compliant with the requirement to secure access to independent and impartial personal careers guidance appropriate to the needs of every learner. In respect of schools, every learner has the opportunity to have at least one impartial guidance interview with a qualified careers adviser pre-16, with the possibility of another one post-16 (see <i>Notes 1 and 2</i> below). In respect of colleges, at least one such impartial guidance interview with a qualified careers adviser is offered by the end of their study programme (see <i>Note 1</i> below). A joined-up approach to guidance and support is evident (e.g. when a college integrates the work of its admissions, student services and work placement teams to provide continuity and coherence in pre-course, on-course and post-course guidance and support; and the work of these teams is closely aligned to the programmes followed by personal and course tutors).</p> <p>ii. Interviews are timely (e.g. before a decision point or to address a specific need) and of optimum duration. The effectiveness of personal careers guidance interviews is evaluated, e.g. by observation and/or questionnaires.</p> <p>iii. The learning provider meets the Gatsby Benchmark</p>

	<p><i>qualified at Level 6 or above and who is on the CDI's UK Register of career development professionals (see also glossary notes 1.7 in respect of CDI requirements, 1.17 and 1.20).</i></p> <p><i>Note 2: Assessors need to satisfy themselves that the learning provider has made a commitment to developing sufficient capacity to meet the demand for personal careers guidance from all learners – as appropriate to their needs (q.v.) – and also to be proactive in addressing social justice issues.</i></p>	<p>performance indicator for this Benchmark.</p> <p><i>Note 1: The learning provider should ensure that access – individually or in groups (q.v.) if appropriate to learner need – is available when needed to a careers adviser qualified at Level 6 or above and who is on the CDI's UK Register of career development professionals (see also glossary notes 1.7 in respect of CDI requirements, 1.17 and 1.20).</i></p> <p><i>Note 2: Assessors need to satisfy themselves that the learning provider has made a commitment to developing sufficient capacity to meet the demand for personal careers guidance from all learners – as appropriate to their needs (q.v.) – and also to be proactive in addressing social justice issues.</i></p>
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Glossary

1.1 Access

The minimum requirement is that interviews are arranged in a timely fashion for individuals who request one. Interviews should be arranged at a location which is convenient for the learner – this is especially important in the case of learning providers on multiple sites. The availability of the service should be well-publicised.

1.2 Annual careers plan

An annual careers plan is a management tool which makes explicit what the learning provider is doing in five main areas:

- *Priorities – setting goals for the current year*
- *Programme – summarising in calendar form the main activities and events planned for the year*
- *Provision – identifying the delivery mechanisms and allocation of resources to achieve the programme*
- *Partnerships – identifying the roles of key partners (e.g. parents/carers, career guidance provider, Careers Hub, local enterprise network, MAT, other learning providers) and the strategies for engaging them*
- *Performance – setting out the quality assurance and evaluation framework for the coming year.*

The benefits of having an annual careers plan are that it:

- *improves the budgeting process*
- *provides a focus for monitoring, review and evaluation*
- *can be shared with key partners to focus their contribution*
- *can be used to provide feedback to governors*
- *improves transparency for customers and stakeholders*
- *can be integrated with other processes, e.g. the learning provider's development/improvement plan, deciding on how to use the Pupil Premium.*

1.3 Appropriate post 16+ options in respect of special schools/colleges and SEND learners

Whereas encounters with universities may not be appropriate for many SEND learners, so that the national Standard's assessment criteria are fully inclusive of SEND learners and their learning providers, the required encounters should include providers of meaningful appropriate post-KS5 activities for SEND learners such as:

- *supported internships*
- *social enterprises (and other providers often funded by Local Authority Social Services)*
- *Children's Resource Centres, and*
- *Respite Care facilities.*

1.4 Career and labour market information (CLMI)

Career and labour market information (CLMI) is an umbrella term for the different types of information that learners need to assist them in their career thinking, planning and decision-making. It includes information about:

- *career pathways, patterns and structures*
- *the content and nature of work and how it is changing*
- *occupations and occupational groupings*
- *entry requirements and demands of jobs*
- *information on course providers and employers*
- *courses and how to access them*
- *lifestyle effects of chosen roles in learning and work*
- *career management and employability skills*
- *employment trends and forecasts.*

Labour market information (LMI) is specifically information about what is happening in labour markets. Learners need information about trends in local and national labour markets, and increasingly information about the supply and demand for labour in international labour markets, as a reflection of globalisation.

1.5 Career(s) Assessments

Careers guidance assessments can be carried out for a range of purposes, for example, to measure:

- *a learner's present situation (e.g. aspirations, careers problems checklists, decision-making readiness, work readiness)*
- *aspects of a learner's personality, aptitudes and skills, interests, values, adaptability, resilience, well-being and learning style*
- *soft skills and employability skills.*

Some assessment tools are freely available online and in paper form but more sophisticated instruments such as psychometric tests are priced and usually require an expert to interpret the results. Learning providers are generally advised not to seize on the first assessment tool that catches their eye but to systematically compare and evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of different tools alongside budgeting and value for money considerations.

Careers education assessments aim to measure cognitive and behavioural learning outcomes. Good practice emphasises the need to tie learning and teaching closely to assessment. Assessment may be linked to formal accreditation (e.g. where learners are taking public exams or gaining digital badges), but the most beneficial form of assessment is 'assessment for learning' which specifically focuses on assisting learners to maximise their progress from their starting points. The main ways of carrying out assessments for learning are:

- *eliciting information from the student,*
- *giving appropriate feedback (comments not subject grades),*
- *ensuring learners understand quality, and*
- *facilitating peer and self-assessment.*

1.6 Career(s) education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG)

Career (or careers) education, information, advice and guidance refers to the combination of education- and guidance-based activities provided by learning providers to promote the personal career development and wellbeing of learners and their contribution to the good of their communities, society and the economy.

Careers education primarily uses a range of learning and teaching including reflective, dialogic, enquiry and experiential learning approaches. Careers guidance primarily uses a range of counselling, coaching, information, advice and guidance approaches. Depending on the mission and vision of the learning provider, CEIAG may be combined with other aims such as preparing learners for work, enterprise education, citizenship education and personal, social and health education (PSHE).

1.7 Careers adviser

A professional careers adviser in the UK is an individual qualified to Level 6 or above in career development who:*

- *is on the UK Register of Career Development Professionals <http://www.thecdi.net/Professional-Register-> and complies with the Career Development Institute's CPD requirements (i.e. at least 25 hours of recorded CPD p.a.) and*
- *complies with the Career Development Institute's Code of Ethics <http://www.thecdi.net/Code-of-Ethics>*

**Qualifications: The main Level 6 and 7 qualifications for careers professionals are the Qualification in Career Development (QCD) at Level 7 integrated within a Master's Degree or Post Graduate Diploma in Career Development, (which replaced the earlier Qualification in Career Guidance (QCG) and Diploma in Career Guidance) or the Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development.*

There are two situations which require clarification in respect of moving from Level 4 to Level 6. The Career Development Institute states that practitioners in certain circumstances can hold a "conditional registration" until achievement of the full Level 6 qualification or equivalence at which point their status on the Register will be converted to full registration:

(Scenario i) A "careers adviser" who holds a pre-2011 NVQ 4 in Advice and Guidance or LDSS and is undertaking the three specified Level 6 units (Units 2, 3 and 6) or HE equivalent modules, is acceptable in a school or college being accredited by an Awarding Body as "making good progress". The careers adviser can join the CDI Register as a conditional Registrant.

(Scenario ii) For "careers advisers" holding the QCF Level 4 Diploma in Careers Information and Advice achievement of the full Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development is required. However, once they have completed the three specified Level 6 units (Units 2, 3 and 6) they too are acceptable in a school or college being accredited by an Awarding Body as "making good progress" and can join the CDI Register as a conditional Registrant.

For both of the above situations the school or college in question may later be awarded "Fully meeting" once the Awarding Body verifies that the careers adviser has either (Scenario i) achieved the full Level 6 equivalence which constitutes the pre 2011 NVQ 4 plus three specified units (Units 2, 3 and 6) or (Scenario ii) achieved the full Level 6 Diploma. This complies with the CDI requirements above.

This extract from the CDI website <https://www.thecdi.net/Professional-Register> explains that:

"Practitioners with S/NVQ Level 4 in a specified career development qualification can be conditionally registered as long as they achieve the three specified QCF Level 6 units or equivalent HE Modules. On completion of the units conditional registration can be converted to full registration."

If in any doubt, the Awarding Body should refer to the CDI website for further details or should contact claire.johnson@thecdi.net

1.8 'Careers Impact Review System' pilot

The Careers Impact Review System pilot has been designed to support secondary schools, special schools and colleges on a journey towards a progressive and differentiated careers provision, underpinned by relevant learning outcomes, that is embedded within whole school, special school or college improvement.

The pilot is testing a framework that represents a maturity model for careers leadership in schools, special schools and colleges. The pilot is testing two approaches: peer to peer reviews and expert reviews. There are six themes within the framework that will be explored in both types of review within the pilot and the Gatsby Benchmarks are central to these themes:

Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3
Resource and Support for Careers Leadership	Strategic careers planning, addressing the needs of all students & impact evaluation: (Benchmarks 1 & 3)	Access to high quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities and encounters with further education, higher education, and training providers (Benchmarks 2 & 7)
Theme 4	Theme 5	Theme 6
Linking curriculum learning to careers (Benchmark 4)	Encounters with employers/employees & experiences of the workplace (Benchmarks 5 & 6)	Personal Guidance (Benchmark 8)

Schools, special schools and colleges read four statements for each sub-theme and select the one that best fits their practice according to the organisation's level of maturity in careers leadership.–It is based on a systems approach to educational management with a strong focus on strengthening the careers leadership role, engaging senior leaders, reinforcing strategic career planning and combining support and challenge to stimulate improvement and change.

The DfE and Gatsby are funding the Careers Impact Review System pilot and the DfE hopes that it will encourage more schools and colleges to consider working towards the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) by increasing their confidence to seek external assessment. Working with the Careers & Enterprise Company, the Consortium will be analysing its data to track this.

There is much commonality and synergy, as would be expected, between the Careers Impact Review System pilot and the [Quality in Careers Standard](#). Schools, special schools and colleges that are working towards or have achieved the [Quality in Careers Standard](#), for example, will be well-placed to make accurate, substantiated self-evaluation judgements about their practice.

Assessors for the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) who carry out assessments in a school, special school or college participating in the pilot should take any indicators or learning from the Careers Impact Review System pilot into account and continue to make independent judgements on the quality of the careers provision irrespective of how well the school, special school or college rates itself within the Careers Impact Review System pilot.

1.9 Careers leadership

The careers leader is a higher-level role in a learning provider's leadership and management structure carrying overall responsibility for:

- *advising senior leaders and governors on the development of the careers programme based on policy, theory and research in the careers field, applying it to the learning provider's context*
- *leading, managing and developing the programme including securing the resources and professional development of the staff needed to maintain and deliver it as well as the quality assurance and evaluation framework*
- *co-ordinating the activities and events that make up the programme to strengthen impact including co-ordinating the contributions of the individuals and teams involved in its delivery*

- *networking with parents/carers, employers and employees, community agencies and other learning providers to engage them in enhancing opportunities for young people and to inform the development of the programme*
- *harnessing the learner voice in the design, delivery and evaluation of the careers programme.*

The careers leader role may be undertaken by individuals with other roles (e.g. assistant principal, careers adviser) providing they have sufficient authority and expertise to fulfil the requirements of the careers leader role. Further advice on the role of the careers leader can be obtained from the DfE, The Careers & Enterprise Company and the CDI.

1.10 Careers policy

A learning provider's careers policy is a succinct public statement of the values and priorities of the careers programme and how they relate to:

- *the core mission of the learning provider*
- *the current policy context including relevant legal responsibilities*
- *and the key features of the learning and employment systems that learners can access.*

The policy outlines who will do what, with what resources, and how the impact of the programme will be evaluated. The policy should be reviewed through a consultative process and be approved, at least every two years, by the Headteacher/Principal and by the Governing Body.

1.11 Embedded

An embedded careers programme is firmly and securely part of the context in which it functions (i.e. the culture, structures and curriculum provision of the learning provider). It is not loosely attached or bolted on.

1.12 Encounters with appropriate employers for SEND learners

So that encounters with employers are considered appropriate for SEND learners, and so that the national Standard's assessment criteria are fully inclusive of SEND learners and their learning providers, the required encounters will include providers of meaningful and appropriate post KS5 activities for SEND learners such as:

- *supported internships*
- *social enterprises (and other providers often funded by Local Authority Social Services)*
- *children's resource centres, and*
- *respite care facilities.*

1.13 Equality and diversity

The learning provider's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout. This is a legal requirement stemming from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to which the UK is a signatory and the Equality Act 2010. Learning providers should be proactive in aiming

to:

- *challenge and overcome stereotyping and profiling*
- *break down barriers to opportunity for individuals and groups with both visible and invisible differences*
- *challenge and counter prejudice and discrimination*
- *celebrate diversity and difference for the way it enriches our shared culture, identity and sense of community*
- *improve access to opportunities for previously disadvantaged groups through positive action*
- *ensure complaints about infringements are handled quickly and sensitively*
- *ensure that partners working with the learning provider are aware of the policy on equality and diversity and sign up to it.*

1.14 Guided option choices

A learning provider may, with or without the involvement of the parents, guide a learner towards a particular option (e.g. relating to what and where to study) because it is in the learner's best interests or because for practical reasons it cannot meet the learner's needs (e.g. it cannot afford to run their first-choice of course or create an additional group).

Interviews conducted for the purpose of guiding learner's choices in the interests of the learning provider are not impartial. They are unacceptable and unethical (see also note 1.17).

Transparency is required to ensure that the school's or college's actions are justifiable and do not infringe ethical considerations which would otherwise be the case, for example, in 'off-rolling' learners or not giving learners the benefit of the doubt to protect a department's pass rates.

1.15 Impartiality

Impartiality means acting in the best interests of the learner. Good record-keeping is essential so that the independence of the information, advice and guidance given can be verified if later contested.

1.16 Informed adviser

An informed adviser is someone in a relevant educational or guidance role who has undertaken the necessary accredited or non-accredited training to demonstrate their competence as an adviser. They should also adhere to expected codes of conduct in relation to independence, impartiality and respect for equality, diversity and inclusion.

A higher bar is set for personal career guidance professional careers advisers (in respect of Gatsby Benchmark 8 and [Quality in Careers](#) assessment criterion 8) who are required to be qualified in career guidance at Level 6 or above (see also notes 1.7 and 1.20).

1.17 Interviews

An interview is a conversation with a purpose. The ground rules should be explained to the learner beforehand (e.g. in respect of confidentiality, impartiality)

and their consent obtained. The purpose should be negotiated, and learners should be given time to prepare. Careful attention to the setting and beginning of the conversation is important so that learners feel at ease. The structure of the conversation needs to be related to the time available and made clear to the learner. Typically, it will include clarification of the purpose of the meeting, discussion and exploration, decisions and plans related to what the learner needs to do next. Often prompts and additional resources are useful (e.g. a whiteboard, careers websites on a laptop, or an action planning proforma).

The CDI's recommended length of time for a meaningful personal guidance interview that meets the requirement of Gatsby Benchmark 8 is at least 45 minutes. The Quality in Careers Consortium endorses the CDI's recommendation and commends it to assessors, schools and colleges.

See also:

- *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers (DfE, January 2023)*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools>

- *Guidance. What Works? London: The Careers & Enterprise Company (2018)*

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/xuzdf12s/what-works-personal-guidance.pdf>

Interviews conducted for the purpose of guiding student choices in the interests of the learning provider are not impartial, they are unacceptable and unethical (see also note 1.14).

1.18 Meaningful encounter

An encounter becomes meaningful if it has explicit intended learning outcomes, agreed with learners, and is well-managed to facilitate the intended learning. It is not possible to guarantee that every learner will benefit from a meaningful encounter, but it is possible to ensure that they all have the opportunity to do so.

1.19 Networking

Networking is an approach used consciously and unconsciously by countless individuals to give and receive emotional support (e.g. from family, friends or trailblazers who have overcome barriers), to share information about possible employment opportunities and to exchange professional knowledge. Networking only becomes unethical when it is used by individuals and groups to perpetuate structural inequality.

1.20 Personal career guidance (including in a group where this is agreed and meets the learners' needs)

Learning providers should ensure that access to a qualified careers adviser (individually, or in groups if this is appropriate to learner need) is available when required. In a formal sense, personal career guidance provides one-to-one challenge and support from a familiar, trusted and suitably qualified adult professional to enable a learner to make progress in meeting their mutually agreed career needs. These needs could be related to different aspects of their personal career learning and development. The approaches, selected according to their fitness for purpose, could include informing, advising, assessing, teaching, feeding back, counselling, enabling, advocating, negotiating, networking, coaching and mentoring (see also notes 1.7, 1.16 and 1.17).

Group work is any activity within a planned programme of CEIAG designed to promote the personal career learning and development of the learners taking part. It can be delivered by teachers and careers advisers working separately or together. For careers work involving informing learners, the group size needs to be relatively small (i.e. no more than 16) to facilitate an enhanced level of interaction and participation.

Distinctions can be made between different types of group work. Group work carried out for careers education or information is an extension of teaching and learning. Group work carried out as part of personal guidance may well focus primarily upon advice rather than guidance. For guidance group work to be effective, the group size should normally be much smaller (typically no more than three or four participants). It should be facilitated by a qualified careers adviser, there should be a clear rationale for choosing this approach, the impact should be evaluated and reported, and most importantly it should be confirmed as appropriate to meet each participating learner's needs.

Quality in Careers assessors will need to satisfy themselves that personal careers guidance delivered in groups is beyond doubt appropriate to the needs of learners in the learning provider being assessed for accreditation under the [Quality in Careers Standard](#).

1.21 Provider Access Legislation

The provider access requirements (or 'Baker Clause') were first introduced in 2018 to ensure that there is an opportunity for a range of education and training providers to access all pupils in year 8 to year 13 for the purpose of informing them about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

With effect from January 2023, the updated provider access legislation specifies that schools must provide at least six encounters with approved providers of apprenticeships and technical education for all their students:

- *Two encounters for pupils during the 'first key phase' (year 8 or 9) that are mandatory for all pupils to attend*
- *Two encounters for pupils during the 'second key phase' (year 10 or 11) that are mandatory for all pupils to attend*
- *Two encounters for pupils during the 'third key phase' (year 12 or 13) that are mandatory for the school to put on but optional for pupils to attend*

Further information about the legal requirements and expectations of the DfE, including a model policy statement, are set out in 'Careers guidance and access for education and training providers: Statutory guidance for schools and guidance for further education colleges and sixth form colleges' (January 2023)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools>

- *See also [Provider Access Legislation | The Careers and Enterprise Company](#)*

1.22 Raising aspirations

Raising and widening aspirations is important and should be addressed through the careers programme. Monitoring of learners' aspirations needs to begin in primary schools. Learners can have concealed and multiple aspirations, or conflicted aspirations that are guided by others. Staff have to be able to deal with these issues sensitively. Often the problem is not that the learner has low or limited aspirations but that they lack aspirational capability, i.e. the wherewithal to reach their goals.

1.23 Social justice

Social justice is about ensuring that support, resources and opportunities are provided for vulnerable, disadvantaged and oppressed learners to enable their participation and inclusion in political, economic, social and cultural life. Career guidance is not a magic wand that can banish social injustice, but it can help learners to build resilience, unlock their potential and challenge the barriers that they face.

1.24 Study programme

Every 16–18-year-old in full-time education should have a personal study programme consisting of the courses they are taking (leading to formal qualifications) and linked enrichment activities (e.g. experience of workplaces).

1.25 Systems thinking

Systems thinking, in the context of CEIAG, focuses on the careers programme as a sub-system and how it interacts with other sub-systems to impact on the learning provider as a whole. Systems approaches enable careers leaders to understand the different parts that come together to form the careers programme as well as how to manage the relationships between them for different purposes (e.g. for maintenance or innovation).

The careers programme is an open system as opposed to a closed system and is, therefore, able to affect or be affected by other subsystems. Systems thinking enables careers leaders to better understand how to manage the careers programme in a way that is beneficial for both the career development of learners and the learning provider's development as an organisation.

1.26 Work experience and experiences of workplaces

Work experience is an actual or virtual placement with an employer in which a learner takes on, more or less, the role of an employee and carries out particular tasks and duties with the emphasis being on the learning aspects of the experience.

Work experience helps learners to develop their employability skills and work readiness. It is more effective when the learning objectives are linked to the learner's study programme, e.g. enabling them to practise technical skills linked to their courses.

Work experience is a form of experiential learning which works best when learners are:

- *prepared well beforehand, and*
- *undertake structured reflection and debrief opportunities afterwards.*

We also recommend this briefing note on “Experiences of Workplaces” to assessors, schools and colleges - <https://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/GUIDANCE-NOTE-for-Quality-in-Careers-Assessors-BM6-8.April-2022.pdf>

1.27 Work shadowing

Work shadowing is primarily the experience of observing close-up the job role of an individual in a workplace and the tasks they perform in their role. The relationship that is built up between the work-shadow and the work-guide is the key to its success. Other types of experience of work have a different emphasis:

- *Work experience is mainly about learners doing work tasks themselves*
- *Work visits are mainly for learners to gain careers, business and economic insights and understanding from going into a workplace.*

Appendix 2. Required or Suggested Templates for Awarding Bodies and their assessors

1. Required Assessment Summary Grid (this must form part of all assessment reports by all Awarding Bodies)

Name of learning provider: _____ Date: _____ Name(s) of Assessor(s) _____

National criteria section headings for the Quality in Careers Standard	Insufficient progress towards fully meeting the Standard (✓)	Achieving the Standard, making good progress towards fully meeting the national criteria (✓)	Achieving the Standard, fully meeting the national criteria (✓)
1. A stable careers programme			
2. Learning from career and labour market information			
3. Addressing the needs of each student			
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers			
5. Encounters with employers and employees			
6. Experiences of workplaces			
7. Encounters with further and higher education			
8. Personal guidance			

Notes

- (i) **Insufficient progress towards fully meeting the Standard** = Inadequate inputs, unreliable processes and unclear outcomes/impact in this section of the Standard's national criteria. No robust plan in place to fully meet this section of the national criteria nor the expectations of the relevant Gatsby Benchmark indicators.
- (ii) **Achieving the Standard, making good progress towards fully meeting the national criteria** = Evidence of good progress in this section of the Standard's national criteria and robust plans in place to fully meet this section of the national criteria within two-three years. Has met or partially met the expectations of the relevant Gatsby Benchmark indicators.
- (iii) **Achieving the Standard, fully meeting the national criteria** = Has met all the criteria in this section of the Standard's national criteria including the relevant Gatsby Benchmark indicators.

2. Suggested Assessment Recording Grid for Assessors (this is not required, but is offered to Awarding Bodies)

This template is offered for use by assessors in lieu of/ in addition to the Award Provider's own assessment framework recording grid.

Codes	Description	Insufficient progress	Making Good progress	Fully meeting	Key evidence
1. A stable careers programme					
1.1	Ensuring that the governing body provides clear strategic advice and challenge so that the learning provider's senior leadership team have a clear and effective strategy for developing and implementing the careers programme (taking full account of current statutory duties)				
1.2	Securing effective day-to-day leadership, management, and delivery of the careers programme by all relevant staff – including giving full support to a named individual in the role of Careers Leader				
1.3	Ensuring that <u>all staff</u> involved in the careers programme – preparing all learners for choices, decisions, and transitions – are knowledgeable, skilled, and confident in their CEIAG roles (through appropriate induction training, professional learning and continuing professional development – <i>see also 8.1</i>)				

1.4	Securing clearly identified, appropriate and progressive learning and behavioural outcomes for learners – referenced to a recognised national framework of career development outcomes - with a range of effective methods to deliver them to suit learners’ needs <i>(see also 4.3)</i>				
1.5	Using clear and accessible language to promote awareness and understanding of the learning provider’s careers programme, commitments and contact information – including via the school/college website – for the benefit of learners, staff, parents/carers and employers/opportunity providers				
1.6	Regularly monitoring, review and evaluation of the careers programme focusing on its impact on learners’ career-related outcomes – including seeking feedback from a wider range of stakeholders and partners such as the Enterprise Adviser Network, link schools, further and higher education, work-based learning providers, employers, careers guidance services and children’s services				
1.7	Evaluating how the careers programme involves learners in assessing and meeting their own needs and those of their peers and evaluating its impact				

1.8	Evaluating agreements and contracts with external careers guidance services, where applicable, to ensure that those services remain effective and are aligned with the learning provider's overall careers strategy				
1.9	Actively participating in collaborative networks – such as a careers hub, multi-academy trust and professional organisations – and evaluating the impact of the learning provider's involvement on improving the quality of the careers programme				

2. Learning from career and labour market information

Codes	Description	Insufficient progress	Making Good progress	Fully meeting	Key evidence
2.1	Ensuring that all learners have access to impartial, up to date and user-friendly career and labour market information about career pathways covering the full range of opportunities in education, training and employment relevant to their needs, and that they are supported in its use				
2.2	Engaging with and informing parents and carers about ways of accessing and using careers and labour market information for the benefit of their child's career development				

3. Addressing the needs of each student					
Codes	Description	Insufficient progress	Making Good progress	Fully meeting	Key evidence
3.1	Actively challenging stereotypical thinking and low aspirations and building the capabilities to counter them of learners and those who support them				
3.2	Ensuring that records of advice given to learners by teachers, tutors and careers advisers, including previous records of advice wherever possible, are accessible to them and can be used to support their career planning				
3.3	Enabling learners to maintain records of their experiences and achievements and use these for a range of purposes including presenting themselves well to opportunity providers				
3.4	Analysing student destinations data for Key Stage 4 & Key Stage 5 and using the results of the analysis to make improvements to the careers programme				

3.5	Ensuring that advice given is effective in meeting the needs of all learners, particularly those who are under-achieving and disadvantaged, and those of groups targeted for specific support such as the 'Gifted and Talented'/'most able', learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)/learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD), young carers, and looked after children				
3.6	Ensuring that effective partnerships are secured with relevant services and agencies that provide additional support for vulnerable and disadvantaged learners				
3.7	Sharing school data with the appropriate authorities and agencies including monitoring the extent to which such data sharing agreements and processes benefit the learners concerned				

4. Linking curriculum learning to careers					
Codes	Description	Insufficient progress	Making Good progress	Fully meeting	Key evidence
4.1	<p>Raising learners' awareness – especially through utilising resources from the world of work - of the employability and enterprise skills they are developing and the wide range of careers that can be accessed through the subjects and courses they are studying (including through the study of English, Maths and STEM subjects)</p> <p><i>For college learners, this would include recognition of the importance of English and Maths as a key expectation from employers</i></p>				
4.2	Embedding careers-related learning in the curriculum for all learners including discrete provision, cross-curricular provision in subjects and courses, and co-curricular and enrichment activities				
4.3	Implementing effective ways of teaching, learning and assessing careers-related learning of learners				

5. Encounters with employers and employees					
Codes	Description	Insufficient progress	Making Good progress	Fully meeting	Key evidence
5.1	<p>Securing meaningful encounters with employers and employees for every learner.</p> <p>For schools, through a variety of methods, securing at least one meaningful encounter with an employer or employee for each learner in every year of their education from Key Stage 3</p> <p><i>For College learners, securing at least two meaningful encounters with employers during their study programme.</i></p>				
5.2	<p>Ensuring that encounters with employers and employees are an integral part of a planned and progressive careers programme with effective preparation and follow-up</p>				
5.3	<p>Enabling employers and employees to contribute effectively to the careers programme through effective planning and review</p>				

6. Experiences of workplaces					
Codes	Description	Insufficient progress	Making Good progress	Fully meeting	Key evidence
6.1	<p>Securing meaningful experiences of workplaces for every learner by the end of Key Stage 4, additional to any part-time jobs they may have</p> <p>For schools, this means securing at least one first-hand experience of a workplace visit, work-shadowing or work-experience by the end of Key Stage 4 and a further meaningful experience by the end of Key Stage 5, additional to any part-time jobs they may have.</p> <p><i>For colleges, this means securing at least one further meaningful experience of a workplace for every learner by the end of their study programme, additional to any part-time jobs they may have</i></p>				
6.2	Ensuring that evidence affirms that experiences have clear learning objectives and that career-related learning outcomes are measured and understood by learners and key stakeholders				

7. Encounters with further and higher education					
Codes	Description	Insufficient progress	Making Good progress	Fully meeting	Key evidence
7.1	<p>Securing meaningful encounters for learners with providers of the full range of learning opportunities open to them</p> <p>For schools, this means securing a meaningful encounter for all learners by the age of 16 with the full range of providers of learning and training that may form the next stage of their career; and by 18 at least two visits to higher education institutions to meet staff and students for those who are considering this choice</p> <p><i>For college learners, this means facilitating a meaningful encounter with a range of further learning providers by the end of their programme of study</i></p>				
7.2	<p>Ensuring that evidence affirms that the encounters have clear learning objectives and that career-related learning outcomes are measured and understood by learners and key stakeholders</p>				

8. Personal guidance					
Codes	Description	Insufficient progress	Making Good progress	Fully meeting	Key evidence
8.1	Ensuring that all learners have access to advice and support from teachers, tutors and other relevant staff who have been trained and prepared for their role (<i>see also 1.3</i>)				
8.2	<p>Ensuring that all learners have equity of access to independent, impartial, and timely careers advice and guidance - both from external as well as internal sources.</p> <p>For schools, this means ensuring that all learners have at least one appropriate interview by the end of both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, and the opportunity for a further interview during Key Stage 5</p> <p><i>For colleges, this means ensuring that all learners have at least one appropriate interview by the end of their study programme</i></p>				

8.3	<p>Ensuring that all internally appointed careers staff - including internally appointed professionally qualified careers advisers - are trained to appropriate levels and can act with impartiality in the best interests of learners. Staff must subscribe to relevant codes of professional practice, and quality assurance mechanisms must be in place to ensure their professional practice is appropriately assessed by someone occupationally competent to do so</p>				
8.4	<p>Where externally provided careers advice and guidance is secured from professionally qualified careers advisers, ensuring that the organisation providing such services meets the agreed sector standard (i.e. the <i>matrix</i> Standard) and that account is taken of the professional standards and qualifications determined by the Career Development Institute</p>				



The Quality in Careers Standard >>>>

The ASSESSMENT GUIDE
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to be used for all [Quality in Careers](#) assessments from 16.1.2023

January 2023 edition (first published 2018, revised May & October 2019)

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