



THE GUIDE TO THE NATIONAL STANDARD

Fully incorporating the Gatsby Foundation Benchmarks for 'Good Career Guidance'

To be used in all **Quality in Careers** assessments
for external national accreditation
from 16.1.2023

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**The Guide to the
Quality in Careers Standard
'National Assessment
and Accreditation Criteria'**

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1. Background information

- 1.1. This Guide sets out in detail for secondary schools, special schools, colleges and work-based learning organisations (“learning providers”) all matters relating to:
- the key principles upon which the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) is founded (Section 2)
 - the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) national criteria incorporating the Gatsby Benchmarks (Section 3)
 - the assessment and accreditation process (Section 4), and
 - information and advice for learning providers (Section 5).
- 1.2. The [Quality in Careers Standard](#) is owned by the Quality in Careers Consortium¹. It is the **single national quality award that recognises excellence in careers education, information, advice and guidance** (CEIAG) for learners². It provides professional and independent external assessment and accreditation of the CEIAG provision offered by schools, colleges and work-based learning organisations. The Standard has been designed to ensure that learning providers not only fulfil their statutory obligations, but also that they are inspired to continuously improve their careers programmes based on the best evidence from research and professional practice.
- 1.3. The Quality in Careers Consortium Board has licensed a number of Awarding Bodies³ across the country to undertake [Quality in Careers](#) assessments. Their assessors will make professional judgments on the impact of the learning provider’s careers programme on career-related learning outcomes for learners. They will also review and report on the evidence of the organisational factors contributing to the quality of the careers programme including vision and leadership; curriculum design and development; learning and teaching; professional learning and support; participation in wider networks and engagement with learners, parents/carers, employers and other partners. [Quality in Careers](#) assessment reports also make detailed comments on the strengths and areas for development in CEIAG as well as recommendations for further improvement.
- 1.4. A key aspect of the assessment process is listening to learners (‘learner voice’). The Standard will ensure that learning providers present sufficient evidence that their careers programme has had a positive impact and career-related learning outcomes for learners enabling them to gain the knowledge, skills and confidence to manage their next steps and prepare for their future pathways in learning, leisure and work. The **Assessment Guide** for Awarding Bodies and their assessors has been published on the [Quality in Careers](#) website so that learning providers can also see what assessors will expect to find in order to award the Standard (<https://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/2019/09/01/the-assessment-guide/>).
- 1.5. This **Guide to the National Standard** incorporates the statutory guidance for schools and the guidance for further education colleges and sixth form colleges on careers-guidance and access for education and training providers published by the Department for Education (DfE, January 2023)⁴. The DfE continues to **strongly recommend** that that all secondary schools and all colleges work towards the single national [Quality in Careers Standard](#) to support the

¹ For more information about the Quality in Careers Consortium <https://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/the-consortium/the-quality-in-careers-consortium-board/>

² Learners refers both to pupils (up to age 16) and students (16-18) unless otherwise stated

³ For a current list of Licensed Awarding Bodies see <https://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/2019/09/01/licensed-awarding-bodies/>

⁴ [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

development of their careers programmes. Currently, just over one-third of state secondary schools and sixth form colleges already meet or are actively working towards the Standard. The DfE guidance states:

Schools and colleges can gain formal accreditation of their careers programme through the Quality in Careers Standard - the single national quality award for careers education, information, advice and guidance.

The Standard is owned by the Quality in Careers Consortium which involves the major professional associations of school and college leaders alongside the Career Development Institute and Careers England.

The Standard is fully aligned to the Gatsby Benchmarks and incorporates Compass and Compass+ into its processes. The Standard seeks additional evidence of outcomes for students from the school or college careers programme.

As the Standard is externally assessed by one of the Licensed Awarding Bodies, appointed by the Consortium, student voice is a key part of assessors' evidence gathering on the impact the careers programme has had on students' career-related learning.

We strongly recommend that all schools and colleges work towards the single national Quality in Careers Standard to support the development of their careers programme.

Careers guidance and access for education and training providers DfE (2023) page 13

- 1.6. The assessment criteria for the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) were fully revised in September 2018 to incorporate the Gatsby Benchmarks⁵. The DfE expects all schools and colleges to use the Gatsby Benchmarks to enable them to improve their careers programmes in line with their legal requirements to provide independent careers guidance to all 11-to-18-year-olds and students aged up to 25 with an education, health and care plan⁶. The national criteria for the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) are grouped under the eight Benchmark headings.
- 1.7. Completion of the *Compass*⁷ self-assessment tool from The Careers & Enterprise Company is currently required evidence to be submitted by schools and colleges as part of the [Quality in Careers](#) assessment process. The Quality in Careers Consortium strongly encourages learning providers to upgrade to *Compass+*⁸ and use its new features to manage, track and report on their careers programmes. These tools protect the data of learners and learning providers while the anonymised and aggregated data enable The Careers & Enterprise Company to produce its annual 'state of the nation' report now called "Trends in Careers Education"⁹ which is beneficial to everyone. The Consortium encourages Careers Leaders to discuss learners' records on *Compass+* with them so that its use becomes part of their career-related learning journey. The Careers & Enterprise Company also offers a wide range of support to schools and colleges including Careers Hubs, the Enterprise Adviser network, the Careers Leader training programmes, the

⁵ Information about the Gatsby Benchmarks of 'good career guidance' can be found at <http://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/programmes/good-career-guidance>

⁶ The DfE's expectations concerning the Benchmarks are set out in pages 17-40 of *Careers Guidance and Access to Education and Training Providers* (January 2023) [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

⁷ <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/schools-colleges/about-compass>

⁸ *Compass+* is currently only available to schools, special schools, sixth forms and PRUs.

⁹ [Trends in Careers Education 2021 | The Careers and Enterprise Company](#)

Resources Directory and tools such as the Future Skills Questionnaire and the ‘Careers Impact Review System’ pilot (see the endnote about the pilot on page 25 of this Guide).

- 1.8. The Quality in Careers Consortium also strongly encourages learning providers to use the new (2021) **Career Development Framework** from the Career Development Institute (CDI) to assist them in identifying age and developmentally appropriate career learning outcomes to strengthen the impact of their careers programmes. The Framework and accompanying resources can be downloaded from the CDI’s website¹⁰. The CDI also offers a wide range of support for schools and colleges including conferences, regional support, CPD activities and resources (including Career Leader training under contract to The Careers & Enterprise Company), the Career Assured Quality Award for digital resources, the Community of Practice for Careers Leaders and the professional register for career development practitioners.
- 1.9. Under their statutory obligations, secondary schools must provide opportunities for a range of education and training providers to access all year 8 to 13 pupils to inform them about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships¹¹ (“**provider access**” under the so-called ‘Baker Clause’). The Ofsted school inspection handbook¹² has been updated to reinforce the requirements of this legislation. Careers information, education, advice and guidance is one of the key areas that informs inspectors’ overall judgements on Personal Development (see the box below). Inspectors will also state if a school is not meeting its requirements in respect of careers provision when carrying out ungraded inspections.

Careers provision on graded inspections

306. All secondary schools are expected to provide effective CIEAG¹³, in line with the statutory *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers*, to encourage pupils to make good choices and understand what they need to do to succeed in the careers to which they aspire.

307. As part of this, it is important that schools understand and meet the requirements of section 42B of the Education Act 1997 (referred to in DfE guidance as ‘provider access legislation’), which came into force in January 2018. Both maintained schools and academies are required by law to:

- provide opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils in Years 8 to 13 to inform them about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships
- publish a policy statement setting out the arrangements the school has in place for pupils to access education and training providers
- make sure the policy statement is followed so that all pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive information about the full range of education and training options

¹⁰ [New Career Development Framework \(the CDI.net\)](https://the CDI.net)

¹¹ See page 41 of the guidance issued January 2023 [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) for further information about the legal requirements and expectations of the DfE, including a model policy statement. See also [Provider Access Legislation | The Careers and Enterprise Company](https://www.careersandenterprise.com)

¹² [School inspection handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

¹³ Ofsted unhelpfully uses “CIEAG” rather than the universally-accepted “CEIAG” terminology. The ‘careers sector’ is seeking to persuade Ofsted to follow the CEIAG terminology.

308. In assessing a secondary school’s personal development offer, inspectors will assess the quality of careers provision and how well it benefits pupils in choosing and deciding on their next steps. This will include looking at:

- the quality of the unbiased careers advice and guidance provided to pupils
- the school’s implementation of the provider access arrangements to enable a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils in Years 8 to 13
- how the school provides good-quality, meaningful opportunities for pupils to encounter the world of work
- the school’s use of the Gatsby Benchmarks
- the school’s published information about its careers provision (as required by the School Information Regulations) and the school’s statement on its provider access arrangements (as required by section 42B of the Education Act 1997)

309. If a school is not meeting the requirements of section 42B of the Education Act 1997, inspectors will state this in the inspection report. They will consider what impact this has on the quality of careers provision and the subsequent judgement for personal development.

Guidance: School inspection handbook July 2022. Ofsted (2022) paras 306-309

1.10. **The impact of the Quality in Careers Standard:** Each year the Consortium Board provides The Careers and Enterprise Company with data on the schools and colleges successfully accredited and holding the [Quality in Careers Standard](#)¹⁴. The CEC undertakes a review of the *Compass* results for all schools and colleges nationally, and the results of holders of the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) are compared with the national average. Consistently the analysis confirms that schools and colleges holding the Standard achieve the highest *Compass* scores alongside those which are members of Careers Hubs¹⁵. *The Chairman of the Quality in Careers Consortium Board commends this analysis to all school and college leaders:*

“The analysis confirms the importance of schools and colleges joining Careers Hubs and working towards achieving the [Quality in Careers Standard](#).

By doing so, the evidence is that schools and colleges increase their achievement in respect of the Gatsby Benchmarks, and therefore provide better careers education and guidance for their pupils and students.”

¹⁴ [Quality in Careers – Award Holders](#)

¹⁵ [January 2022 News: Compass results – analysis shows added value of achieving the Quality in Careers Standard and joining a Careers Hub](#)

2. Key principles

The [Quality in Careers Standard](#) is based on these key principles relating to learners, learning providers and our Awarding Bodies:

2.1 Learners

- CEIAG that is age and developmentally appropriate enables all learners to make the progress they are capable of in determining and managing their learning, leisure and working lives
- CEIAG that upholds the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child¹⁶ enables learners to participate fully in designing, implementing and evaluating career learning for themselves and their peers
- CEIAG that is underpinned by the UN Sustainable Development Goals¹⁷ enables learners to aspire to rewarding careers based on social justice and sustainable living and working.

2.2 Learning Providers

- CEIAG that is strategically managed and led enables learning providers to continuously develop their provision and to harness the potential of CEIAG to contribute to school/college improvement
- CEIAG that is focused on continuous improvement enables learning providers to benefit their learners more than CEIAG limited to responding to external demands for compliance and accountability
- CEIAG that is recognised as a shared staff endeavour enables learners' needs to be met more effectively and enriches the professional learning and experience of staff themselves
- CEIAG that is co-constructed with key partners including learners themselves, parents and carers, employers, community agencies and linked learning organisations (e.g. in a multi-academy trust or a careers hub) enables learning providers to enhance the quality of their CEIAG.

2.3 Awarding Bodies

- A rigorous but straightforward assessment and accreditation process that makes manageable demands on the production of evidence by learning providers enables Awarding Bodies to motivate and inspire more learning providers to gain the [Quality in Careers Standard](#)
- Awarding Bodies that secure or provide professional support and challenge for learning providers on their [Quality in Careers](#) development journey add value to the accreditation process
- External, independent assessment of the learning providers' CEIAG by our Awarding Bodies enables learning providers to improve their day-to-day self-assessment.

¹⁶ <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

¹⁷ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

3. The Quality in Careers Standard national criteria

- 3.1 The national [Quality in Careers Standard](#) is available to all state and independent secondary schools, special schools¹⁸, further education and sixth-form colleges and has applicability in post-16 work-based learning.
- 3.2 There are extra factors to bear in mind when a special school considers seeking accreditation through the Standard. These apply equally when special schools view the *Compass* tool and the Gatsby Benchmarks. In this section, we have included additional notes to assist special schools in working towards the Standard.
- 3.3 **A note about primary schools:** *The Quality in Careers Consortium is also committed to supporting the development of CEIAG in primary schools to enable children to develop their career knowledge skills and confidence from an early age. The Consortium has developed a scheme to provide “national endorsement” of primary school careers education quality awards¹⁹. More information can be found on the [Quality in Careers](https://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/careers-education-in-primary-schools/) website at <https://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/careers-education-in-primary-schools/>*
- 3.4 To achieve the national [Quality in Careers Standard](#), learning providers will be required by one of our Licensed Awarding Bodies to supply sufficient evidence to show how their careers provision addresses the national assessment and accreditation criteria set out below.
- 3.5 The national criteria have been agreed with the DfE, the Gatsby Foundation and The Careers & Enterprise Company. They comply with the DfE’s latest (2023) guidance²⁰ on the statutory duties of secondary schools and colleges and the DfE’s expectation that all learning providers will use the Gatsby Benchmarks as a framework for developing their careers provision.
- 3.6 The national criteria fully incorporate the performance indicators for each Benchmark with some additional quality criteria, relating to career-related learning outcomes for students, that have been identified through research and practice by the Quality in Careers Consortium.
- 3.7 The [Quality in Careers](#) national assessment criteria are described in detail below:
- They are organised under the same headings as the Gatsby Benchmarks as this should be helpful to schools and colleges
 - The school and college Benchmarks and their associated indicators are reproduced below for ease of reference. Descriptions relating to secondary schools are in normal type and those relating to colleges are in *italics*.

¹⁸ Including Pupil Referral Units, Home and Hospital tuition services

¹⁹ The criteria for this scheme of national endorsement are closely aligned to Gatsby Benchmarks 4, 5 & 6. These are the three Benchmarks which are most relevant to primary-aged pupils.

²⁰ [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/115444/careers-guidance-and-access-for-education-and-training-providers.pdf)

1: A stable careers programme

Benchmark 1: A stable careers programme

This section of the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) incorporates Gatsby Benchmark 1.

Schools

Every school should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by pupils, parents, teachers, governors, and employers.

- Every school 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 school’s website in a way that enables pupils, parents, teachers, and employers to access and understand it
- The school’s programme should be regularly evaluated with feedback from pupils, parents, teachers, and employers as part of the evaluation process

Colleges

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 as part of the evaluation process*

QUALITY IN CAREERS NATIONAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Licensed Awarding Bodies will externally assess a learning provider’s arrangements for²¹:

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>)

²¹ The evidence submitted must include an up-to-date *Compass* or *Compass+* report

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 ²²
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

Benchmark 2: Learning from career and labour market information

This section of the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) incorporates Gatsby Benchmark 2.

Schools

Every pupil, and their parents, 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.

- By the age of 14, all school pupils should have accessed and used information about career paths and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options
- Parents and carers should be encouraged to access and use information about labour markets and future study options to inform their support to their children

Colleges

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.

²² To include a policy statement on provider access and contact details of the Careers Leader

- *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 future study options to inform their support to the learners in their care*

QUALITY IN CAREERS NATIONAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Licensed Awarding Bodies will assess a learning provider's arrangements for:

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 parents and carers about how to access, understand and use careers and labour market information to benefit their child's career development (See Note 1 below)

Note 1

The help for children may not only come from parents (or carers) but also come from other family members such as siblings and grandparents.

3: Addressing the needs of each learner

Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each pupil/student

This section of the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) incorporates Gatsby Benchmark 3.

Schools

Pupils have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each pupil. A school's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.

- A school's careers programme should actively seek to challenge stereotypical thinking and raise aspirations
- Schools should keep systematic records of the individual advice given to each pupil and subsequent agreed decisions

All school pupils should have access to these records to support their career development

Colleges

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 considerations throughout.

- A college's careers programme should actively seek to challenge stereotypical thinking and raise aspirations
- Colleges should keep systematic 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 from 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.

QUALITY IN CAREERS NATIONAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	
Licensed Awarding Bodies will assess a learning provider's arrangements for:	
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 (See Note 2 below)
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 (See Note 3 below)
3.7	Sharing school data with the appropriate authorities and agencies (See Note 4 below), including monitoring the extent to which such data sharing agreements and processes benefit the learners concerned

Note 2

The DfE's commentary and expectations in relation to destinations data are set out on page 23 of *Career Guidance and Access to Education and Training Providers* (DfE, January 2023). In respect of state schools, this should include the impact of Pupil Premium spending to support disadvantaged learners, where appropriate. [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/103112/careers-guidance-and-access-for-education-and-training-providers.pdf)

Note 3

The duties of local authorities concerning young people’s participation and the DfE’s expectations on the co-operation between schools and local authorities in respect of vulnerable and disadvantaged young people are fully explained on page 23 of Career Guidance and Access to Education and Training Providers (DfE, January 2023) [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Note 4

The DfE’s commentary and expectations in relation to information sharing with local authorities are set out on page 23 of *Career Guidance and Access to Education and Training Providers* (DfE, January 2023) [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

4: Linking curriculum learning to careers

Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers

This section of the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) incorporates Gatsby Benchmark 4.

Schools

For schools, all teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future paths.

- By the age of 14, every pupil should have had the opportunity to learn how the different STEM subjects help people gain entry to, and be more effective workers within, a wide range of careers

Colleges

All subject staff should link curriculum learning with careers, even on courses that 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*

QUALITY IN CAREERS NATIONAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Licensed Awarding Bodies will assess a learning provider’s arrangements for:

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>
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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

Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees

This section of the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) incorporates Gatsby Benchmark 5.

Schools

Every pupil 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.

- Every year, from the age of 11, pupils should participate in at least one meaningful encounter* with an employer

* A 'meaningful encounter' is one in which the student has an opportunity to learn about what work is like or what it takes to be successful in the workplace

Colleges

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' own part-time employment and the influence this has had on their development*

QUALITY IN CAREERS NATIONAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Licensed Awarding Bodies will assess a learning provider's arrangements for:

5.1	Securing meaningful encounters with employers and employees for every learner. 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 <i>For College learners, securing at least two meaningful encounters with employers during their study programme.</i>
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5.2	Ensuring that encounters with employers and employees are an integral part of a planned and progressive careers programme with effective preparation and follow-up (See Note 5)
5.3	Enabling employers and employees to contribute effectively to the careers programme through effective planning and review

Note 5

These criteria should be fully inclusive of SEND students and all learning providers. The terms 'employer' and 'employee' should encompass all providers of meaningful and appropriate post Key Stage 5 activities including:

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

6: Experiences of workplaces**Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces**

This section of the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) incorporates Gatsby Benchmark 6. See also [Guidance Note for Quality in Careers Assessments: Benchmark 6 and our associated national criteria](#)

Schools

Every pupil 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 age of 16, every pupil should have had at least one experience of a workplace, additional to any part-time jobs they may have
- By the age 18, every pupil should have had one further such experience, additional to any part-time jobs they may have

Colleges

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, additional to any part-time jobs they may have*

QUALITY IN CAREERS NATIONAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**Licensed Awarding Bodies will assess a learning provider's arrangements for:**

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</p>
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	<p>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

Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education

This section of the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) incorporates Gatsby Benchmark 7.

Schools

All pupils 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 age of 16, every pupil should have had a meaningful encounter* with providers of the full range of learning opportunities, including Sixth Forms, colleges, universities, and apprenticeship providers. This should include the opportunity to meet both staff and pupils
- By the age of 18, all pupils who are considering applying for university should have had at least two visits to universities to meet staff and students

Colleges

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 both staff and learners*

* A 'meaningful encounter' is one in which the student has an opportunity to explore what it is like to learn in that environment

QUALITY IN CAREERS NATIONAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Licensed Awarding Bodies will assess a learning provider's arrangements for:

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</p>
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	<p>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 (See Note 6 below)</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	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

Note 6

Whereas encounters with universities will be appropriate for some SEND students, they may not be appropriate for all. Therefore, so that these criteria are fully inclusive of all SEND students and learning providers, these will include providers of meaningful and appropriate post Key Stage 5 activities including:

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

8: Personal Guidance**Benchmark 8: Personal guidance**

This section of the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) incorporates Gatsby Benchmark 8.

Schools

Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a careers adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all pupils but should be timed to meet their individual needs.

- Every pupil should have at least one such interview by the age of 16, and the opportunity for a further interview by the age of 18

Colleges

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 their individual needs.*

- *Every learner should have at least one such interview by the end of their study programme*

** The college should ensure that access to a level 6 adviser is available when needed.*

QUALITY IN CAREERS NATIONAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	
Licensed Awarding Bodies will assess a learning provider's arrangements for:	
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	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 (see Note 7). 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 <i>For colleges, this means ensuring that all learners have at least one appropriate interview by the end of their study programme</i>
8.3	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 (see Note 8)
8.4	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 (see Note 9)

Note 7

The Consortium Board expects Awarding Bodies to stress to schools and colleges that an interview is a conversation with a purpose.

The ground rules for career guidance interviews should be explained to the learner beforehand (e.g. 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 Consortium Board endorses the CDI's recommendation and commends it to assessors, schools and colleges:

See also the CEC briefing note <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/xuzdf12s/what-works-personal-guidance.pdf>.

Note 8

The Consortium Board expects Awarding Bodies to stress to schools and colleges that all staff need to act with impartiality. Where the learning provider appoints a 'careers adviser' (careers guidance professional) to its staff, Awarding Bodies must satisfy themselves that:

- the adviser is qualified at a minimum of L6,
- is on the UK Register of Career Development Professionals
<http://www.thecdi.net/Professional-Register->
- complies with the Career Development Institute's code of ethics
<http://www.thecdi.net/Code-of-Ethics>
- and complies with the Career Development Institute's CPD requirements (i.e. at least 25 hours of recorded CPD p.a.)

Note 9

Every organisation providing professional careers advice and guidance should be expected to hold (or be working towards achieving) the *matrix* Standard (www.matrixstandard.com). However, it is accepted that there will be 'careers advisers' working as sole traders/in small partnerships/cooperatives, for whom it is not expected that they must be *matrix* accredited.

There are growing numbers of sole traders/small partnerships which are becoming *matrix* Standard accredited – therefore, the Consortium Board advises Awarding Bodies to recommend that learning providers securing services from sole traders/small partnerships should encourage these to consider *matrix* accreditation and to contact the Awarding Body for the *matrix* Standard: [The matrix Standard | Business Accreditation Standard](#).

The Consortium Board requires Awarding Bodies to ensure that sole trading careers advisers contracted to deliver careers services to schools fully meet the professional requirements set out in Note 8 above.

4. The assessment and accreditation process

- 4.1. The purpose of a [Quality in Careers](#) assessment is to recognise what the learning provider is doing well in CEIAG and to support continuous quality improvement. It is focused on the impact on the career-related learning outcomes for learners and the effectiveness of the processes that contribute to that impact. This is why listening to learners ('student voice') is a critical part of the assessment.
- 4.2. The [Quality in Careers](#) assessment is also designed to be a positive learning experience for the learning provider and the assessor will use the opportunity to engage in professional dialogue with the learning provider's staff. The assessor will also adapt the approach to suit the circumstances and context of the learning provider.
- 4.3. Assessment enables learning providers to show learners, parents and carers, employers and other key partners that the careers programme has been independently assessed against quality criteria that exemplify the best national practice in CEIAG.
- 4.4. Awarding Bodies are able to award the Standard for up to three years (all Awarding Bodies do so, except Complete Careers which awards the Standard for a two-year period). The main stages in the [Quality in Careers](#) assessment and accreditation process are:

4.4.1. Public commitment to work towards the Standard

Schools, colleges and work-based learning providers which make a public commitment to begin to work towards achieving the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) will receive a “certificate of commitment” from the Awarding Body, providing that:

- i. The Governing Body (or equivalent) has made a public commitment on the learning provider’s website to establish a robust and coherent approach to managing the quality of its CEIAG provision that is consistent with the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) key principles; and
- ii. The learning provider has *completed* the *Compass* or *Compass+* self-assessment tool and has begun working towards meeting the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) national criteria incorporating the eight Gatsby Benchmarks.

They will also be authorised to use the words *“Committed to work towards meeting the Quality in Careers Standard incorporating the Gatsby Benchmarks”* on their materials (in accordance with the Consortium’s ‘*brand guidelines*’²³) until their external assessment takes place.

4.4.2 External assessment which leads to one of these outcomes:

Outcome 1: External assessment where the Standard is not awarded as the learning provided is assessed as making insufficient progress towards meeting the Standard

“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.

Outcome 2a: External assessment where the Standard is awarded using this citation in the assessment report–

“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.”

The learning provider is awarded with the Standard being assessed as “making good progress” providing that:

- i. The learning provider has demonstrated a robust and coherent approach to managing the

²³ [Brand Guidelines \(qualityincareers.org.uk\)](http://qualityincareers.org.uk)

quality of its CEIAG provision that is consistent with the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) key principles; and

- ii. The learning provider has completed the *Compass* self-assessment tool, is already ‘making good progress’ in meeting the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) national criteria incorporating the eight Gatsby Benchmarks, and the [Quality in Careers](#) external assessor is confident that a clear plan is in place demonstrating that the learning provider will continue to work towards fully meet the national criteria in the future, maintaining a cycle of continuous improvement.

This will be supported with explicit evidence cited in the ‘external assessment report,’ including detailed assessments on progress towards meeting all national criteria including performance against each of the eight Benchmarks’ sections in the national criteria for the Standard, with action points for further development.

Schools, colleges and work-based learning providers which are assessed as “making good progress” towards meeting all the national assessment criteria for the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) will receive an “accreditation certificate” from the Awarding Body with these words *“Congratulations on achieving the Quality in Careers Standard which fully incorporates the Gatsby Benchmarks.”* They will be listed on the [Quality in Careers](#) website under the section showing ‘Award Holders’²⁴.

They will also be authorised to use the [Quality in Careers](#) logo and the words *“Nationally assessed as achieving the Quality in Careers Standard, making good progress towards meeting all the accreditation criteria incorporating the Gatsby Benchmarks”* on their materials (in accordance with the Consortium’s ‘*brand guidelines*’²⁵).

[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 learning 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 (e.g. if the learning provider was due for reassessment 3 years after the initial assessment, that timeframe would be unaltered).

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.

Outcome 2b: External assessment where the Standard is awarded using this citation in the assessment report–

“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

²⁴ [Quality in Careers – Award Holders](#)

²⁵ [Brand Guidelines \(qualityincareers.org.uk\)](#)

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."

The learning provider is awarded the Standard being assessed as "fully meeting," providing that:

- I. The learning provider has demonstrated a robust and coherent approach to managing the quality of its CEIAG provision that is consistent with the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) key principles; and
- II. The learning provider has fully met all of the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) national criteria incorporating the eight Gatsby Benchmarks.

Schools, colleges and work-based learning providers which are assessed and accredited as "fully meeting" all the national assessment criteria for the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) will receive an "accreditation certificate" from the Awarding Body with these words "*Congratulations on achieving the Quality in Careers Standard which fully incorporates the Gatsby Benchmarks.*" They will be listed on the [Quality in Careers](#) website under the section showing 'Award Holders'²⁶.

They will also be authorised to use the [Quality in Careers](#) logo and the words "*Nationally assessed as achieving the Quality in Careers Standard, fully meeting all the accreditation criteria incorporating the Gatsby Benchmarks*" on their materials (in accordance with the Consortium's 'brand guidelines'²⁷) until their full accreditation is due for reassessment by their Awarding Body.

- 4.5. As the Consortium has agreed with DfE, all Awarding Bodies are required, when a learning provider is assessed as "achieving the Standard" to use either of the citations shown above in Outcomes 2a and 2b, in the Assessment Report they provide to the learning provider.
- 4.6. Awarding Bodies are also required to undertake an annual quality review with current holders of the Standard, to support continuous improvement and to alert holders to any developments relevant to their preparations for renewal of the Standard.

4.7. An added note about an Awarding Body offering additional recognition:

The Quality in Careers Consortium recognises that some Licensed Awarding Bodies may additionally wish to offer exceptional recognition to celebrate schools, colleges or work-based learning providers which have repeatedly excelled for periods of time in their CEIAG provision.

*Where an Awarding Body wishes to make such an additional award to honour such long-standing outstanding provision it must be made clear that this additional recognition is **not** part of the national arrangements. It is determined solely by the particular Awarding Body which must be explicit about what such additional exceptional recognition is for.*

²⁶ [Quality in Careers – Award Holders](#)

²⁷ [Brand Guidelines \(qualityincareers.org.uk\)](http://qualityincareers.org.uk)

5. Information and advice for learning providers

5.1. All Awarding Bodies will advise schools and colleges directly on their particular evidence requirements. Below we offer advice on what schools and colleges should be ready to provide.

5.1.1 Before the assessment

Quality in Careers assessors will prepare for the assessment by analysing available evidence from learning providers. This may include:

- The learning provider's previous [Quality in Careers Standard](#) assessment report (if applicable)
- The most recent inspection report from Ofsted or ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate)
- The learning provider's destinations data for the last three years
- Information about the learning provider's CEIAG policy as approved by the Governing Body (or equivalent), its careers programme on the learning provider's website and social media platforms
- A "provider access" policy statement - compliant with the legal duty²⁸ set out on page 41 of the DfE's January 2023 guidance - setting out the circumstances in which education and training providers will be given access to students to inform them about the range of technical education qualifications, supported internships and apprenticeships (the so-called 'Baker Clause')
- Outcomes from self-assessment using the *Compass* or *Compass+* tool - which the school or college will be required to share with the assessor and supplement with qualitative evidence that activities and encounters meet the needs of diverse student populations and contribute to their career-related learning outcomes.
- Any experience of, or outcomes from, participating in the pilot '*Careers Impact Review System*' (see 5.3 Endnote on page 25 below).

The learning provider may offer additional evidence. The following list of suggested evidence is to help learning providers to identify what may be most relevant and is not intended to be prescriptive:

- contextual information about the learning provider, e.g. levels of socio-economic deprivation
- systems in place for managing the careers provision at senior leadership and Governing Body/Board level
- names of staff with key CEIAG roles and responsibilities including the Careers Leader's job description
- Evidence offered by local external partner organisations, e.g. careers guidance service provider, Careers Hub, Enterprise Adviser Network, Local Enterprise Partnership, Uni Connect Partnership.

5.1.2 During the assessment

Quality in Careers assessors will collect further evidence from the learning provider's staff and from 'learner voice' relating to evidence of:

²⁸ [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) See also [Provider Access Legislation | The Careers and Enterprise Company](#)

- career-related learning outcomes for learners from careers activities
- meaningful engagement of parents and carers
- meaningful engagement of employers and the wider community
- embedding these activities and encounters into the curriculum.

5.2. **Resources:** Learning providers may find the following sources of further information about quality in CEIAG useful:

The Career Development Institute (CDI) - new 'Career Development Framework'
<https://www.thecdi.net/New-Career-Development-Framework>

The Careers & Enterprise Company (<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/>)

- Provider Access: <https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/promoting-all-pathways> and [Provider Access Legislation | The Careers and Enterprise Company](#)

The Careers & Enterprise Company Gatsby Benchmarks toolkits:

- Schools: https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/2020-08/1041_gatsby_toolkit_for_schools_final.pdf
- Young people with SEND: https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/2020-08/1051_send_gatsby_toolkit_refresh_digital.pdf
- Colleges: https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/2020-08/1073_gatsby_toolkit_for_colleges_final.pdf

Department for Education *Careers Guidance and Access for Education and Training Providers* January 2023 [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Gatsby Foundation 'Good Career Guidance' website
<https://www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk/>

Hanson, J., Moore, N., Clark, L. and Neary, S. (2021) *An evaluation of the North-East of England pilot of the Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance*. University of Derby
<https://derby.openrepository.com/handle/10545/625634>

matrix Standard <https://matrixstandard.com/>

Ofsted (2022) *School Inspection Handbook*
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook>

Quality in Careers "Case Studies" of schools and colleges: [Case Studies of Best Practice Around The Country \(qualityincareers.org.uk\)](#)

Welsh Government (2021) *Gatsby Benchmarking Pilot Interim Evaluation*
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-01/gatsby-Benchmarking-pilot-interim-evaluation.pdf>

5.3 An endnote about the ‘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 secondary 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)

Secondary 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](#). Secondary 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 secondary 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 their 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.