



The Quality in Careers Standard >>>>

GUIDANCE NOTE for Quality in Careers Assessors, Schools & Colleges in respect of preparing for Quality in Careers Standard assessments:

to be read alongside the Quality in Careers “Assessment Guide”¹

Approved by the Consortium Board, 8th April 2022

Gatsby Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces

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.

1. Some schools and colleges have raised some concerns over how to meet this Benchmark and its associated Quality in Careers criteria arising from the on-going impact of the pandemic and its aftermath. We appreciate the difficulty - and it is a complicated issue. Hence this guidance note in preparing for assessments.
2. Many schools and colleges are successfully using virtual alternatives, employer tasks and workplace visits. When Assessors are reviewing a school's or a college's evidence in a Quality in Careers assessment, the key is always to ensure that any workplace experience for students is

¹ [The Assessment Guide \(qualityincareers.org.uk\)](https://qualityincareers.org.uk)

‘meaningful’ irrespective of whether it’s virtual or in person. We would refer schools, colleges, and Quality in Careers Assessors to this most helpful Careers & Enterprise Company resource.²

3. Colleagues are also suggested to review BM6 guidance from “Can Do”³ to further the focus on what is ‘meaningful’ in person/virtually.

4. The key is that, to include any activity under Benchmark 6, it must meet the following minimum requirements:

- i. Learning outcomes are defined, based on the age, and needs of students;**
- ii. Students meet a range of people from the workplace;**
- iii. There is extensive two-way interaction between the student and employees;**
- iv. Students must perform a task or produce a piece of work relevant to that workplace and receive feedback on it from the employer.**

5. Having consulted, including with the Careers & Enterprise Company, the Board doesn’t propose to amend the Quality in Careers Standard’s national criteria at this time, as they are already flexible in terms of other alternatives that could be used. A blended approach, offering a range of potential experiences, should benefit all students. That said we will be reviewing the **Assessment Guide** soon and we’ll look at putting more emphasis on alternative ways of meeting the Benchmark and of securing career-related learning outcomes for students. Please also see this additional valuable advice from the Careers & Enterprise Company⁴.

6. In respect of part-time work and holiday jobs: whilst these clearly can have a valid contribution to make towards gaining workplace experience and can often have career-related learning outcomes, Assessors should be aware that these do not contribute towards achieving the Benchmark.

7. What is critical is that 'experience of work' is different from 'traditional work experience'. Valid and potentially meaningful 'experiences of work' (*as long as they meet the minimum requirements in paragraph 4 above*) could include:

- i. volunteering
- ii. work shadowing (e.g. of a family member - virtually or ‘real’)
- iii. vicarious work experience: i.e. observing someone else's work experience.

² [BM6: How to meet Gatsby Benchmark 6 more meaningfully and deliver positive student outcomes | CEC Resource Directory \(careersandenterprise.co.uk\)](#)

³ <https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/resources/careers-context-2020-can-do-guide-career-leaders>

⁴ [online engagement guidance option 2.pdf \(careersandenterprise.co.uk\)](#)

8. Whilst some schools and colleges may also use 'simulated' work experience (e.g. a business game or an enterprise activity), and this too has potential career-related learning value - *as long as it involves preparation/participation and review* - Assessors are advised that all experiences of the workplace need to be aligned with the minimum requirements set out paragraph 4 above (and please note that 'simulated' work experience is not in line with the guidance on 'meaningful practice' in meeting the Benchmark).
9. A Quality in Careers Assessor should, therefore, expect to see:
 - i. that an assessment of need has been carried out and there is clarity of intent in any experience: e.g. has a student been offered an experience that is in their best interests?
 - ii. the teacher's/tutor's records: e.g. to show that all students have participated in a relevant experience, and reviewed their career-related learning outcomes;
 - iii. examples of the learning assignments accompanying the experiences: e.g. to show that students have prepared for the experience prior to participation leading to their analysis and reflections on the experience(s) that they've had – providing evidence of career-related learning outcomes; and
 - iv. an impact assessment report: e.g. to show that no students have been unfairly disadvantaged by what they've been offered.
10. Work-related activities have always been "labour intensive" and we recognise that what we're saying still requires a lot of work.
11. Whilst COVID19 has undoubtedly had a real impact on potentially achieving this Gatsby Benchmark and the Quality in Careers Standard, the key remains that **Assessors will need to continue to seek evidence of career-related learning outcomes for students from any and all forms of 'experiences of workplaces' – as set out in paragraph 4 above.**
12. In the emerging post-COVID19 era we need to recognise innovative meaningful ways of meeting this Benchmark and its associated Quality in Careers criteria. We'll be taking account of this in our next revision to the **Assessment Guide** - this is likely to be after the latest two education bills become law, as DfE will also then be revising its Statutory Guidance to take account of the new laws.
13. We trust that this Guidance Note, meanwhile, is a helpful addition to the **Assessment Guide**.