



The ASSESSMENT GUIDE {May 2025}

Contents

1. Introduction	Page 2
2. The assessment framework for the Quality in Careers Standard	Page 2
3. Key characteristics of effective assessment	Page 4
4. The role of the assessor in a professional model of the assessment of quality	Page 5
5. Making judgements on the achievement of the Standard	Page 6

Appendices

<i>Glossary</i>	<i>Page 19</i>
<i>Required or suggested templates for Awarding Bodies and their assessors</i>	<i>Page 33</i>

1. Introduction

1.1 This *Assessment Guide*:

- is intended for Awarding Bodies and their **Quality in Careers** assessors appointed to assess secondary schools, special schools, colleges and independent training providers (“learning providers”¹) against the national assessment and accreditation criteria of the **Quality in Careers Standard** fully incorporating the updated Gatsby Benchmarks and statutory guidance.
- should be read in conjunction with *The Guide to the National Standard* (May 2025) 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, learning providers 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 holders of the national **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 updated Gatsby Benchmarks and performance indicators for learning providers. 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. The text of the summary and criteria (performance indicators) for each Benchmark are reproduced in the *Guide to the Standard* so that learning providers can see at a glance which

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

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools> (May 2025)

national criteria relate to each of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

2.5 The key requirements and expectations of the Standard include:

- evidence that learning providers are proactive in leading and managing continuous improvement in their careers programmes and not simply checking for compliance. The criteria in the Standard are designed to help learning providers build organisational capability to improve. This involves providing clear leadership, identifying key values and priorities, developing competent staff in their career roles, ensuring effective delivery, engaging collaboratively with stakeholders and partners and monitoring impact.
- emphasis on the importance of choosing careers teaching and learning approaches that are fit for purpose to ensure that careers programmes provide relevant experiences and information for learners on different courses and pathways and make a real difference to their career development with evidence of the achievement of career-related learning outcomes.
- the importance of providing differentiated and individualised careers support where appropriate.
- the expectation of strong collaborative engagement with partners and stakeholders. Partnership with parents/carers should go beyond informing them about the careers programme and useful resources to encompass building their capacity to support the career development of their children. Learning providers should be active partners in professional networks at local level to share good practice and participate in new developments. They should engage with employers and employer groups to better understand local skills needs and career opportunities for young people.
- the expectation that careers leaders and all staff will have access to professional learning and development opportunities that equip them for their careers guidance roles.
- 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 overall careers guidance provision.

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).

2.7 As explained 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

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

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 all the Benchmarks and 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 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” all the Benchmarks and 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 (*'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 Awarding Bodies. All 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***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.
- **Interim assessment** – Many Awarding Bodies include an interim assessment stage in their approach to the Standard. The interim assessment is carried out by the person who has been supporting and challenging the learning provider and it is a different person who carries out the final assessment. The interim assessment is a formative process as it allows scope for further development before the final or summative assessment. This process is a key factor in the management of continuous improvement and change.

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 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

⁴https://www.thecdi.net/CDI/media/Write/Framework/CDI_107-Framework_Handbook-web_Updated.pdf

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

⁶[Getting Started with the Standard - advice for schools, colleges and other learning providers - Quality in Careers](#)

provider is doing well and what they need to do to continue to improve

- providing feedback to the Awarding Body they are working for on the effectiveness of their own processes
- 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.

4.5 **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]

The **Quality in Careers** approach to assessment recognises that the provision of careers guidance is a complex and open-ended activity that does not lend itself to standardised tick-box, one-size fits all assessments. Therefore, for each section of the Standard, assessors should read the prose descriptors and choose the 'best fit' of the three possible outcomes. Rigorous assessments endeavour to combine accuracy and objectivity with reliability and validity. The Quality in Careers Consortium only licenses Awarding Bodies that:

- train their assessors and help them to gain appropriate qualifications
- develop the experience of their assessors so that they can make secure judgements, e.g. by being able to compare one school/college with another
- carry out moderation procedures, either internally or in collaboration with another Awarding Body.

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
i. The concept of a 'careers programme' is missing or difficult to discern. ii. Overall careers guidance provision 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. iii. The value of careers guidance is not fully recognised so provision is frequently squeezed by competing priorities. iv. It is difficult for learners, parents/carers, staff, employers and other agencies to find out about the careers guidance provision from the ways the learning provider communicates with them, e.g. the website is not up to date and/or 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 how the careers programme is tailored to the needs of learners and how parents/carers are engaged with the careers process. vii. Equality, diversity and inclusion issues relating to the careers programme are addressed by the learning provider	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. 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. iii. Elements of ring-fencing the careers programme are in place to protect it from competing priorities and other resource constraints. iv. Up to date information about careers guidance for learners, parents/carers, staff, employers and other agencies is relatively easy to access from the ways the learning provider communicates with them 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 is carried out. vii. Equality, diversity and inclusion issues relating to the careers programme are addressed by the learning provider more consistently viii. The learning provider meets or partially meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicators for this Benchmark.	i. The careers programme is strongly embedded in the work of the learning provider with proactive support and direction from the Governing Body and the senior leadership team. 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 of their roles in careers is consistent across all relevant staff. iii. The resourcing and prioritising of the careers programme is secure. iv. Up to date information about careers guidance for learners, parents/carers, staff, employers and other agencies is easy to access and well-used from the ways the learning provider communicates with them. 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

intermittently viii. The learning provider does not meet the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicators for this Benchmark.		learners and parents/carers, e.g. in relation to the needs of learners and how parents/carers are engaged with the careers process vii. Equality, diversity and inclusion issues relating to the careers programme are addressed by the learning provider systematically viii. The learning provider fully meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicators for this Benchmark.
--	--	---

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
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. Parents/ carers find the CLMI from the learning provider difficult to access and not very useful. iv. The learning provider does not meet the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicators for this Benchmark.	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 are encouraged and supported in their use of CLMI The information from the learning provider is easy to find and more useful. iv. The learning provider meets or partially meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicators for this Benchmark.	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 and parents/carers 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 creates opportunities for parents/carers to learn how to use CLMI by themselves and how to support their child's career thinking and planning, e.g. 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 young person

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
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, unsafe 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 has no clear strategy for collecting, maintaining and using learners' data to meet their needs and improve careers guidance. 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.	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 develop a clear strategy for collecting, maintaining and using learners' data to meet their needs and improve careers guidance. 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.	i. The learning provider has created leadership and guidance roles to identify and respond to the specific needs of targeted groups such as high potential and high performing 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 collects, maintains and uses selective data on learners' aspirations and destinations, intended and actual, to meet their needs and improve careers guidance. v. The learning provider assesses the impact of its strategies to challenge stereotyping and raise aspirations and acts on the findings.

		vi. The learning provider meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicators for this Benchmark.
--	--	---

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
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. ii. The learning provider does not make effective use of curriculum audit tools to map or record where embedded career learning is taking place. iii. Some 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. They have little or no opportunity to participate in professional learning related to their careers roles. iv. Learners feel that the links made to careers are a distraction from achieving high grades and have little impact on their career development. v. Staff do not draw on any of their	i. The learning provider has a clear plan to involve all departments and faculties in linking curriculum learning to careers. 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. iii. The careers leader is making progress in supporting and securing professional learning opportunities for those staff who are proactive in linking curriculum learning to careers. 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. iv. Learners recognise, value and enjoy the links to careers that subjects make. They can provide some evidence of the impact	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). ii. The learning provider makes effective use of curriculum audit tools to map or record where embedded career learning is taking place. iii. A programme is in place to meet the professional learning needs for all staff involved in careers guidance iv. The links made by staff are at a sophisticated level showing, for example, how the knowledge and skills learnt through a subject and 'subject clusters'

experience of careers and work before they came into teaching. vi. The learning provider does not meet the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator for this Benchmark.	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.	can be used in career pathways in and beyond that subject or cluster, e.g. learners from Year 7 onwards have the opportunity to learn 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. v. Staff make good use of any experience of careers and work before they came into teaching for the benefit of learners. vi. 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. vii. The learning provider meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator for this Benchmark.
---	--	---

5. Encounters with employers and employees

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
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' (q.v.). 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.	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 (q.v.). 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.	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' (q.v.) 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 school/college, the level of encounters with appropriate employers and voluntary services (q.v.) is comprehensive. 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.)
--	--	--

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
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. ii. Learners are given few opportunities to develop a range of career management and employability skills from their experiences of workplaces. Preparation and follow-up are limited. The learning provider makes little effort to link learners' experiences of workplaces to the subjects/courses they are studying. iii. The learning provider does not meet the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator(s) for this Benchmark.	i. Learners benefit from a range of virtual and/or actual experiences of workplaces pre-16 and post-16. 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 by organising structured preparation and follow-up and by making connections with their subject/course learning. iii. The learning provider meets or partially meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator(s) for this Benchmark.	i. Every learner, except in reasonable circumstances (e.g. learners with complex needs and specific conditions), 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.: • 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. ii. Learners engage in a reflective activity after each experience. The structured 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. iii. The learning provider meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator(s) for this Benchmark.

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
i. The learning provider does not meet the requirement on “provider access” (q.v.). 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.: 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. iii. 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. iv. The learning provider has not fully considered what is meant by ‘meaningful encounters’. v. The learning provider does not meet the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator(s) for this Benchmark.	i. The learning provider meets the requirement on “provider access” (q.v.). ii. The learning provider is aware that it may still have some unresolved issues relating to the way it supports learners applying for opportunities across the full range of pathways, e.g.: - 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. iii. 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. iv. The learning provider can explain how it promotes ‘meaningful encounters’, especially for disadvantaged learners. v. The learning provider meets or partially meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator(s) for this Benchmark.	i. The learning provider meets the requirement and expectations on “provider access” (q.v.). 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). iii. 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. iv. 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

		support for under-represented groups (e.g. the Uni Connect programme) and participates in local initiatives. v. The learning provider meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator(s) for this Benchmark.
--	--	---

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
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 meeting pre-16 and the opportunity of another one post-16 from a qualified careers adviser. A joined-up approach to guidance and support is missing. ii. meetings are seldom timely or of optimum duration, and their effectiveness is not evaluated. iii. Learners and their parents/carers have no clear understanding of the personal guidance provision and how it can be accessed iv. The learning provider does not meet the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator for this Benchmark.	i. The learning provider is well on the way towards becoming fully compliant with the requirement to provide every learner with opportunities to have guidance meetings with a qualified careers adviser. The expectation should be that learners have at least one personal guidance meeting by age 16 and the opportunity of a further meeting by age 18. The learning provider should be able to explain how they endeavour to fulfil this expectation using a variety of means as necessary. They also need to be able to demonstrate that the opportunities are well-advertised and are available at times to suit the needs of learners. ii. meetings are timely (e.g. before a decision point or to address a specific need) and of optimum duration. Their effectiveness is regularly evaluated. iii. Learners and their parents/carers have some understanding of the personal guidance provision and how it can be accessed iv. The learning provider meets or partially meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator for this Benchmark.	i. The learning provider is fully compliant with the DfE's requirement to provide every learner with opportunities to have guidance meetings with a qualified careers adviser. The expectation should be that learners have at least one personal guidance meeting by age 16 and the opportunity of a further meeting by age 18. The learning provider should be able to explain how they are fulfilling this expectation using a variety of means as necessary. They also need to be able to demonstrate that the opportunities are well-advertised and are available at times to suit the needs of learners. The learning provider demonstrates a joined-up approach to guidance and support (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).

	<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> <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 to be proactive in addressing social justice issues.</i>	ii. meetings 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. iii. Learners and their parents/carers have a clear understanding of the personal guidance provision and how it can be accessed iv. The careers leader works with the SENDCO and other appropriate staff (e.g. personal tutors) to embed personal guidance in the careers programme v. The learning provider meets the Gatsby Benchmark performance indicator for this Benchmark. <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> <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>
--	---	---

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Glossary

1.1 Access

The minimum requirement is that individuals should have at least one personal guidance meeting with a careers adviser by the age of 16 and a further meeting by the age of 18. Video and/or face-to-face meetings/interviews should be arranged at appropriate times and in convenient locations (especially in the case of organisations on split sites) to meet the needs of individuals. 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 which can be published on the learning provider's website*
- *Provision – identifying the delivery mechanisms, professional development activities 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, employers and other agencies) 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:

- *Supports a culture of continuous improvement in the careers programme*
- *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 users and beneficiaries of careers guidance, especially learners and their parents/carers*
- *can be integrated with other processes, e.g. embedded in the learning provider's development/improvement plan, considered as a factor in how the Pupil Premium grant will be used.*

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
- course providers and employers
- courses and how to access them
- lifestyle effects of chosen roles in learning and work
- present and future skill demands in sectors of the economy
- the value of 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, career concerns, 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 careers guidance 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 learner
- 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 (CEIAG) refers to the combination of education, information and advice and guidance-based activities provided by learning providers to promote the personal career agency 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 information primarily uses a range of techniques to promote information handling, the detection of bias and the use of information in decision making. 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).

CEIAG is now more commonly referred to as “careers guidance” and [Quality in Careers](#) assessments cover a school’s or a college’s overall “careers guidance provision”.

1.7 Career-related learning outcomes

Designing, delivering and evaluating careers programmes requires learning providers to identify the positive outcome measures that are most suitable and appropriate to apply to their learners. This is a complex and somewhat problematic undertaking given that individual learners have unique needs, the learning provider’s partners and stakeholders have different priorities, contextual factors are different for every learning provider and evidence can be difficult to collect and interpret. The career-related learning outcomes model developed by [Quality in Careers](#) recognises that outcome measures reflect policy making at many different levels, research-based evidence and careers practitioner experience and expertise. The key features of the model are:

- Intended outcomes should be in the best interests of learners. Outcomes should be a combination of ‘thinking and learning’ outcomes with ‘practical, economic and social’ ones. Thinking and learning outcomes are statements of the knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudes demonstrated by learners after completing a process of learning. Practical, economic and social outcomes are the results of learning expressed in terms of learners taking action, making moves, negotiating transitions and achieving ‘best next steps’.
- The priorities of stakeholder groups should be accommodated and balanced out providing the best interest of learners is upheld. Parents and carers, for example, may put a premium on the health and happiness of their children while employers may prioritise the development of employability and work skills and governments seek to increase participation in the labour market and the tackling of skills shortages. Collaborative engagement between learning providers and stakeholders is the key to building consensus and avoiding conflict over the desirable outcomes of careers programmes.

- *Intended outcomes should be related to the professional ethics and values of the career development sector. This includes respecting the autonomy of individuals, promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, maintaining impartiality and upholding good or decent work.*

The following questions should guide assessors in making judgements about the learning provider's approach to career-related learning outcomes:

- *Does the learning provider make use of one or more recognised frameworks for career-related learning in writing outcomes for the careers programme (e.g. The CDI Career Development Framework)?*
- *Is there evidence of collaborative engagement between learning providers and their stakeholders to show that they have a shared understanding of the desirable outcomes of the careers programme?*
- *Does the learning provider seek regular feedback from learners on what they have learned through the careers programme, e.g. by using assessment for learning approaches, career guidance tools and evaluation tools?*
- *Does the learning provider use records and data appropriately to monitor and review the outcomes of the careers programme, e.g. analysing destinations data to identify trends and issues?*

1.8 Career readiness

This term is used specifically by The Careers & Enterprise Company to refer to the skills and knowledge of learners at specific points of transition. Learners complete the Future Skills Questionnaire to assess their career readiness. A student's career readiness is calculated as the proportion of questions they respond positively to. These questions are evidence-based and age-appropriate covering careers knowledge (e.g., about local jobs), skills and confidence. There are five versions of the questionnaire and the tool is embedded in Compass+.

1.9 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 Sue Alder, Professional Training Manager.

1.10 . The Careers Impact System (see also: [The Careers Impact System and the Quality in Careers Standard - Quality in Careers](#))

The Careers Impact System 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 framework presents a maturity model for careers leadership in schools, special schools and colleges based on self-reviews, peer to peer reviews and expert reviews. There are six themes within the framework 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 System 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 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 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 System.

1.11 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.

Forward-looking and innovative (as opposed to 'routine') professionals in this role can make a real difference to the quality of the careers programme and should be able to put on their CVs that they enabled their organisation to achieve the [Quality in Careers Standard](#). The turnover of careers leaders is quite high which can jeopardise continuous improvement of the careers programme. Assessors should look for evidence that the learning provider has measures in place to counteract this, e.g. putting succession planning in place, ensuring skills training to develop the competence of all relevant staff in careers.

1.12 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 statutory requirements and expectations*
- *and the key features of the learning and employment systems that learners can access.*

The policy outlines learners' entitlement and aspects of provision, staff roles and responsibilities, the provision of 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.

1.13 Cornerstone Employers

The Careers & Enterprise Company defines cornerstone employers as employers in England that provide the employer voice and leadership within a Careers Hub and work nationally, with other Cornerstone Employers, on shared career-related priorities.

1.14 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.

1.15 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-16 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.*

1.16 Equality, diversity and inclusion

The learning provider's careers programme should embed equality, diversity and inclusiveness 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, diversity and inclusion and sign up to it.*

1.17 Gatsby Benchmarks

The Gatsby Benchmarks of ‘Good Career Guidance’, first published in 2014, are named after the Gatsby Foundation which funded their development. Ten years on (2024), they have been updated and revised to take into account feedback from users, the findings of new research and changes in careers guidance policy and support in England. The main changes are:

- *promotion of a common terminology, e.g. ‘careers guidance’ instead of CEIAG, ‘careers meetings’ instead of careers interviews*
- *explicit recognition of the role of the careers leader*
- *recognition of the role of the careers adviser across the framework*
- *recognition of the role of all staff and not just teachers in schools*
- *renaming Benchmark 3 ‘Addressing the needs of each young person’*
- *acknowledging the role of parents and carers; and embedding engagement with parents and carers across all benchmarks rather than creating a new benchmark for the purpose*
- *removing the statement in Benchmark 3 that ‘careers programmes should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout’ but reiterating the importance of meeting the needs of every young person across all benchmarks*
- *broadening the scope of Benchmark 4 to apply to all areas of the curriculum and not just the STEM subjects*
- *redefining ‘meaningful’ in Benchmarks 5, 6 and 7 to improve impact and promote varied encounters and experiences*
- *creating the expectation in Benchmark 8 that all young people should have a personal guidance meeting with a careers adviser by the age of 18, as well as by age 16, regardless of their setting*
- *focusing on the collection and use of a wider range of information and data to increase opportunities for young people and to inform their decision making.*

1.18 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.

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.

1.19 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.

1.20 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 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.

1.21 Interviews and meetings

Gatsby has adopted the term ‘meetings’ in place of ‘interviews’ as a result of feedback from learners. ‘Careers discussions’ and ‘careers conversations’ are terms also used by the career development sector. 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 careers 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 Awarding Body assessors, schools and colleges.

See also:

- *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers (DfE, May 2025)*
<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 1.18).

1.22 ‘Meaningful’ encounters and experiences

Gatsby has elaborated the definitions of ‘meaningful’ in relation to Benchmarks 5,6 and 7. For full details, see [‘Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years – Summary for Leaders’](#), p.6-7. These definitions highlight the range of activities appropriate to the encounter/experience that young people should have the opportunity to engage in. For an encounter/experience to be ‘meaningful’, it will:

- include preparing opportunity providers (e.g. employers) and young people well beforehand. Additional or different preparation and support may be needed for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people and those with special educational needs and disabilities
- have a clear purpose which is shared between the opportunity provider and the young person
- be underpinned by learning outcomes that are appropriate to the needs of the young person
- have opportunities for two-way interactions between the young person and the opportunity provider
- be followed by time for the young person to reflect on the encounter/experience.

1.23 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.

1.24 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.

Group work is any activity within a planned careers programme 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*.

1.25 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 May 2025, 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' (May 2025)

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

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

1.26 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.

1.27 Recording and record-keeping

Recording and record-keeping in careers guidance is not part of the pupil records system in maintained schools in England. Pupil records may, however, include additional information and data such as careers records that may only need to be retained for a shorter period. The same legal rights and responsibilities apply to careers records in relation to issues such as data protection, safeguarding, confidentiality, consent and right of access for both parents and pupils and safe disposal. Good practice in recording and record-keeping in careers guidance emphasises:

- *Clarity of purpose –Records should be created with specific purposes in mind, e.g. Interview/meeting discussion notes are an aide memoire to remind the young person of what was discussed and the action points to be followed up. Registers of participation and attendance provide evidence that a young person has accessed their entitlement to activities in the careers programme and, in case of absence, catch-up arrangements can be made. Destinations data can help a school to develop its alumni network and to evaluate trends in the youth labour market. Young people changing schools can take information with them about the careers education and support they have had.*
- *Personal agency – While recording and record-keeping in careers guidance can be used as an indicator of school performance, their primary purpose should be to facilitate a young person’s career development and career management skills. One of the most effective ways of doing this is to harness the power of portfolio learning. Careers portfolios enable young people to keep the careers information they have researched, the targets they have set themselves and the plans they have made in a safe place/space. They are an aid to decision-making, reflection and self-presentation. Typical careers portfolio recording tools include career action plans, the raw data and drafts for filling out CVs and application forms, copies of certificates, photos and video clips, diaries and logs of experiences and achievements, and the results of careers assessments. They may also include employers’ reports on the young person’s work experience.*

It is important to check that the school has guidelines for staff on the positive use of careers records and is alert to the dangers of misusing records, e.g. relying on the results of a careers interests questionnaire that are over 12 months old.

1.28 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.

1.29 Staff

The staffing of schools and colleges has become increasingly diversified with the creation of new leadership, teaching and support roles, e.g. SENDCo, Heads of Year/Phase, teaching assistants and HLTAs, pastoral, health and welfare staff. The careers leader role itself is a relatively recent creation which is still evolving. The [Quality in Careers Standard](#) seeks to enhance the role of the Careers Leader by assessing their contribution to curriculum, staff and organisational development. The Careers Leader is usually the key person who deserves credit for helping the school or college to achieve the Standard.

When assessing a school or college for the Standard, it is useful for the assessor to interview the Careers Leader about how they collaborate with and support a wide range of staff; and, where circumstances permit, talk to other staff directly about their roles in the careers programme.

1.30 Systems thinking

Systems thinking, in the context of careers guidance provision 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.

1.31 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.*

This advice applies also to how schools use young people's part-time work as a learning opportunity. Earning money is often the primary motivation for young people in seeking part-time work and, therefore, helping them to learn from their own and other young people's part-time work is important.

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>

1.32 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 as part of a work role*
- *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)

Name of learning provider: _____ Date: _____

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 young person			
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)

2.1 For Schools, special schools, alternative provision and sixth form colleges

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 senior leadership team develops and implements a high-quality careers programme linked to the whole school development plan and taking full account of current statutory duties				
1.2	Securing effective day-to-day leadership, management, and delivery of the careers programme including giving full support to a named individual in the role of Careers Leader and ensuring that the programme is known and understood by all staff, learners, parents and carers, governors, employers and other agencies.				
1.3	Ensuring that all staff involved in the careers programme are knowledgeable, skilled and confident in their roles (<i>see also 8.1</i>)				

1.4	Identifying sequenced and progressive career-related learning and development outcomes, appropriate to the needs of learners, which can be used to measure the impact of the careers programme (<i>see also 4.3</i>)				
1.5	Developing a communications strategy to explain the careers programme, provide point of contact details and build relations with parents and carers, employers/opportunity providers and other agencies				
1.6	Regularly monitoring, reviewing and evaluating 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 parents/carers, alumni, the Enterprise Adviser Network, link schools, further and higher education, independent training providers, employers, careers guidance services and children's services				
1.7	Evaluating the effectiveness of learners' participation in the planning, delivery and review of the careers programme				

1.8	Evaluating agreements and contracts for the provision of personal careers guidance to ensure that those services remain effective and are embedded in the school's overall careers programme				
1.9	Evaluating the impact of the school's participation in collaborative networks on the quality of the careers programme				
1.10	Enabling parents and carers to be co-partners with the school in supporting the career development of their children				
1.11	Actively demonstrating a commitment to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in careers guidance				

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 careers and labour market information about career pathways covering the full range of opportunities in education, training and employment relevant to their needs, and supporting them 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 also 1.10)				
2.3	Preparing young people to become critically aware consumers of careers information in all its forms, including AI-generated information				

3. Addressing the needs of each young person

Codes	Description	Insufficient progress	Making Good progress	Fully meeting	Key evidence
3.1	Actively challenging the barriers to personal career development and engagement in learning from causes such as low aspirations, absenteeism, misconceptions, stereotyping, and harassment and building the capabilities of learners and those who support them to overcome them				

3.2	Ensuring that learners and their parents/carers consent to and have access to careers records that are created as part of the careers programme, including records of advice given to learners by teachers, tutors and careers advisers 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 career planning and reflection and presenting themselves well to opportunity providers				
3.4	Analysing post-16 and post-18 student destinations data 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				

3.6	Securing effective partnerships 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	Raising learners' awareness of the career management, employability and enterprise skills they are developing and the wide range of careers that can be accessed through the core and optional subjects and courses they are studying (<i>See also 1.4</i>)				

4.2	Embedding career-related learning in the curriculum for all learners including through discrete provision, cross-curricular provision in subjects and courses, and co-curricular activities				
4.3	Implementing effective ways of teaching, learning and assessing career-related learning				

5. Encounters with employers and employees

Codes	Description	Insufficient progress	Making Good progress	Fully meeting	Key evidence
5.1	Securing meaningful encounters with employers and employees for every learner				

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				
5.3	Enabling employers and employees to contribute effectively to the careers programme as active partners and stakeholders				

6. Experiences of workplaces

Codes	Description	Insufficient progress	Making Good progress	Fully meeting	Key evidence
6.1	Securing meaningful experiences of workplaces for every learner by the age of 16 and at least one further meaningful experience by the age of 18				

6.2	Ensuring that experiences of workplaces are an integral part of a planned and progressive careers programme with effective preparation and follow-up				
-----	--	--	--	--	--

7. Encounters with further and higher education

Codes	Description	Insufficient progress	Making Good progress	Fully meeting	Key evidence
7.1	Ensuring that learners understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them, including academic, technical and vocational routes.				
7.2	Securing meaningful encounters with providers of the full range of learning opportunities for learners by the age of 16, and at least two visits to higher education providers to meet staff and learners by the age of 18 for those who are considering this choice				

8. Personal guidance

Codes	Description	Insufficient progress	Making Good progress	Fully meeting	Key evidence

8.1	Ensuring that all learners have access to personal careers guidance from teachers, tutors and other relevant staff who have been trained and prepared for their roles (<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 sources For schools, this means ensuring that all learners have at least one appropriate meeting by the age of 16 and the opportunity for a further meeting by the age of 18				

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				
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				

2.2 For mainstream and specialist Further Education Colleges and independent training providers

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 those in governance roles provide clear strategic advice and challenge to executive leaders on the development and implementation of high-quality careers guidance that is linked to the provider's development plan				
1.2	Securing effective day-to-day leadership, management, and delivery of the careers programme including giving full support to a named individual in the role of careers leader and ensuring that the programme is known and understood by all staff, learners, parents and carers, those in governance roles, employers and other agencies.				
1.3	Ensuring that all staff involved in the careers programme are knowledgeable, skilled and confident in their roles (<i>see also 8.1</i>)				

1.4	Identifying sequenced and progressive career-related learning and development outcomes, appropriate to the needs of learners, which can be used to measure the impact of the careers programme				
1.5	Developing a communications strategy, including information about the careers programme and contact details, to build relations with parents and carers, employers and other opportunity providers and agencies				
1.6	Regular monitoring, review and evaluation of the careers programme				
1.7	Evaluating the effectiveness of learners' participation in the planning, delivery and review of the careers programme				
1.8	Evaluating arrangements for personal careers guidance to ensure that provision remains effective				

1.9	Evaluating the impact on the quality of the careers programme on the provider's participation in collaborative networks				
1.10	Enabling parents and carers to be co-partners with the provider in supporting the career development of their children				
1.11	Actively demonstrating a commitment to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in careers guidance				

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 parents and carers about how to access, understand and use career and labour market information to benefit their child's career development (see also 1.10)				
2.3	Preparing young people to become critically aware consumers of careers information in all its forms, including AI-generated information				

3. Addressing the needs of each young person

Codes	Description	Insufficient progress	Making Good progress	Fully meeting	Key evidence
3.1	Actively challenging the obstacles to career development that individuals may face and building the capabilities of learners themselves and those who support them to tackle such barriers				
3.2	Shared record-keeping by the learner and the provider that has a positive impact on both learners' career development and on the effectiveness of the provider's careers programme				

3.3	Analysing post-18 destinations data and using the results of the analysis to make improvements to the careers programme				
3.4	Ensuring that advice given is effective in meeting the needs of all learners				
3.5	Securing effective partnerships with relevant services and agencies that provide additional support for vulnerable and disadvantaged learners				
3.6	Sharing learner information with 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	Raising learners' awareness of the career management, 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 (<i>See also 1.4</i>)				

4.2	Embedding career-related learning in the programmes of study for all learners				
4.3	Implementing effective ways of teaching, learning and assessing career-related learning				

5. Encounters with employers and employees

Codes	Description	Insufficient progress	Making Good progress	Fully meeting	Key evidence
5.1	Securing meaningful encounters for every learner with people who work				

5.2	Ensuring that encounters with people who work are an integral part of a planned and progressive careers programme with effective preparation and follow-up				
5.3	Enabling employers and employees to contribute effectively to the careers programme as active partners				

6. Experiences of workplaces

Codes	Description	Insufficient progress	Making Good progress	Fully meeting	Key evidence
6.1	Securing meaningful experiences of workplaces for every learner				

6.2	Ensuring that experiences of workplaces are an integral part of a planned and progressive careers programme with effective preparation and follow-up				
-----	--	--	--	--	--

7. Encounters with further and higher education

Codes	Description	Insufficient progress	Making Good progress	Fully meeting	Key evidence
7.1	Ensuring that learners understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them, including academic, technical and vocational routes.				
7.2	Ensuring that encounters with further and higher education are an integral part of a planned and progressive careers programme with effective preparation and follow-up				

8. Personal guidance

Codes	Description	Insufficient progress	Making Good progress	Fully meeting	Key evidence

8.1	Ensuring that all learners have access to personal careers guidance from professionals and staff who have been trained and prepared for their roles (<i>see also 1.3</i>)				
8.2	Ensuring that all learners have equity of access to independent, impartial, and timely personal careers guidance				



The ASSESSMENT GUIDE
for Licensed Awarding Bodies and Assessors
to be used for all [Quality in Careers Standard](#) assessments from
01.09.2025

May 2025 edition (first published 2018, revised May & October 2019)

© [The Quality in Careers Consortium](#)