

## Interpreting the Gatsby Benchmarks and Compass Completion Guidance (Updated 2021)

This guidance has been produced in response to questions from Careers Leaders, Headteachers and Enterprise Coordinators & Enterprise Advisers working with Middle Schools to address the issue of interpreting the Gatsby Benchmarks for their students. Its intended purpose is to give guidance to Careers Leaders in Middle Schools when completing Compass evaluation.

The Gatsby Benchmarks were not designed with a three-tier system in mind, and the resulting challenges in applying the Gatsby Benchmarks are recognised. We would encourage strong collaboration between Middle and Upper Schools to avoid duplication and ensure the student career journey is progressive. However, it is important that the Compass evaluations are completed based only on careers activity happening in your own school setting. It is possible, although not expected, for Middle Schools to achieve 100% in all eight benchmarks.

### Gatsby Benchmark 1 – A stable careers programme

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

#### Requirements

- Every school should have a stable, structured careers programme that has the explicit backing of the senior management team and has an identified and appropriately trained person responsible for it.
- The careers programme should be published on the school's website in a way that enables pupils, parents, teachers and employers to access and understand it. The programme should be regularly evaluated with feedback from pupils, parents, teachers and employers as part of the evaluation process.



### Interpretation of the Gatsby Benchmark 1 for Middle Schools

Benchmark 1 is applicable in its entirety for Middle Schools and should be implemented in line with the guidance set out in the statutory guidance. All questions and sub questions in Compass under Gatsby Benchmark 1 apply to Middle Schools.



## Gatsby Benchmark 2 - Learning from career and labour market information

Every student, and their parents, should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make best use of available information.

### Requirements

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



## Interpretation of the Gatsby Benchmark 2 for Middle Schools

Accessing Labour Market Information and ideas about possible future pathways is something that is valuable throughout education, so pupils should be accessing this information during their time at Middle School in an accessible, age appropriate format. Receiving this information by Year 8 could impact on a pupil's choice of Upper School for example, and can be incorporated into PSHE, form time or assemblies, as well as across the curriculum.

Consider cross over with other Benchmarks, for example, appropriate and accessible LMI can be shared as part of a Benchmark 5 encounter.

Benchmark 2 Compass results are based on the question regarding the lowest relevant age and so if you are fully achieving the benchmark for students by the time they leave your school, you will be achieving 100% at Benchmark 2.

### Guidance on Completion of Compass Evaluation Sub Question: 2.1: The age of 14

How to answer: Enter relevant proportion of students



## Gatsby Benchmark 3 – Addressing the needs of each pupil

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

### Requirements

- A school's careers programme should actively seek to challenge stereotypical thinking and raise aspirations.
- Schools should keep systematic records of the individual advice given to each pupil, and subsequent agreed decisions. All pupils should have access to these records to support their career development.
- Schools should collect and maintain accurate data for each pupil on their education, training or employment destinations for at least three years after they leave the school.



## Interpretation of the Gatsby Benchmark 3 for Middle Schools

Sub question 3.1 and the majority of 3.2 are applicable to Middle Schools and should be completed in line with Compass guidance. Middle schools are not usually required to liaise with the Local Authority on destinations and so you are able to respond yes to the two questions referring to Local Authority sharing.

Maintaining accurate data will support Middle Schools in building a network of alumni who could support future careers activity.

We would encourage the building of strong relationships between Middle and Upper Schools. It is recommended that Middle Schools either send a pack of transition information on their careers journey with students to Upper School or that a data sharing agreement is put in place to allow the sharing of this information directly.

**Guidance on Completion of Compass Evaluation**  
**Sub Question: 3.2: Collect and maintain accurate data for each pupil on their destinations for 3 years after they leave your school**

**How to answer: Pupils will generally progress to Upper School and this data can be tracked. If you maintain communications with relevant Upper Schools to track pupils through until Year 11 then you should answer 'YES' to this question.**

## Gatsby Benchmark 4 – Linking curriculum learning to careers

All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. For example, STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of career pathways.

### Requirements

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



## Interpretation of the Gatsby Benchmark 4 for Middle Schools

Benchmark 4 is applicable in its entirety for Middle Schools and should be completed in line with Compass guidance.

## Gatsby Benchmark 5 – Encounters with employers and employees

Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment opportunities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.

### Requirements

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

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



## Interpretation of Gatsby Benchmark 5 for Middle Schools

Benchmark 5 is applicable in its entirety for Middle Schools and meaningful employer encounters should take place a minimum of once per year for every student. This benchmark should be completed in line with Compass guidance for the relevant year groups.



## Gatsby Benchmark 6 – Experience of workplaces

Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and expand their networks.

### Requirements

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



## Interpretation of Gatsby Benchmark 6 for Middle Schools

Benchmark 6 should be completed based on the experiences of workplaces your pupils have whilst at Middle School, not what they may be involved in in Upper School. This is a requirement by 16, therefore not compulsory for Middle Schools but schools should consider providing the opportunity/encounter where possible for Year 7 or 8 pupils.

This workplace experience does not have to be a work experience placement but could be workplace visits, job shadowing or volunteering for example. The majority of existing curriculum trips and visits, already take place in workplaces and could incorporate a careers element. With appropriate planning, these minor changes, could help to achieve this benchmark.

**Guidance on Completion of Compass Evaluation Sub Question: 6.1: Approximately what proportion of students have had an experience of a workplace by the end of Y11?**

**How to answer: Enter proportion who experience workplaces before they leave your school in Year 8**

## Gatsby Benchmark 7 – Encounters with Further and Higher education

All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.

### Requirements

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

\* A 'meaningful encounter' is one in which the student has an opportunity to learn about what Further or Higher Education is like or what it takes to be successful in Colleges, universities and other FE and HE providers



## Interpretation of Gatsby Benchmark 7 for Middle Schools

Whilst recognising that it may be difficult to attract FE and HE providers to a Middle School, this benchmark is still applicable in its entirety and should be answered accordingly. This is a requirement by 16, but it is important that, even at this age, pupils are introduced to all possible routes, helping them to understand the meaning of terms such as college, training provider or apprenticeship. Sourcing speakers who can share their experience of going through a variety of routes could be a useful way to explain to pupils the potential opportunities open to them.

Then, during Upper School, it is expected that students would have the opportunity to hear directly from FE, HE and apprenticeship providers, building on their experience in Middle School.

If students are hearing from multiple sources and gaining a clear understanding of the possible pathways open to them in the future, then Middle Schools should consider they are meeting this Benchmark.

Again, we would encourage close links with Upper Schools, to ensure that the careers journey for your pupils is progressive and meaningful.

**Guidance on Completion of Compass Evaluation Sub Question: 7.1: By the time they leave school, approximately what proportion of students have had the following experiences?**

**How to answer: Ideally, pupils will have meaningful encounters directly with the full range of providers but you are able to meet the benchmark if students have had multiple meaningful encounters with employees/employers talking about their route into their work, what that experience was like and the alternative routes that are open to them. Enter the proportion of students who have experienced this by the time they leave you in Y8.**



## Gatsby Benchmark 8 – Personal Guidance

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

### Requirements

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



## Interpretation of Gatsby Benchmark 8 for Middle Schools

The statutory duty on schools to secure access to independent careers guidance for all those pupils in Years 8 to 13 who need it applies to Year 8 pupils in middle schools. This will be particularly important in areas where the local upper school starts its GCSE courses in Year 9. Middle school staff will work with the upper school staff to provide information and advice on option choices. For those pupils who wish to talk to a careers adviser at that point, the upper school could make their careers adviser available.

**Guidance on Completion of Compass Evaluation**  
**Sub Question: 8.1: What proportion of students have had an interview with a qualified careers adviser by the end of Y11?**

**How to answer: Enter proportion who have had an interview with a qualified careers adviser before they leave your school in Year 8**



## Contact us

If there are any further questions on interpreting the Gatsby Benchmarks or completion of Compass, please contact our Education team on [education@careersandenterprise.co.uk](mailto:education@careersandenterprise.co.uk)