Careers Leader Impact Evaluation Toolkit

What does this resource cover?

This is a resource for Careers Leaders, and their colleagues, in schools and colleges to evaluate the impact of career programmes. It guides Careers Leaders on how to approach evaluation and covers the different types of impact evidence, how to use this insight to identify successes and challenges, engage colleagues and improve quality as part of a cycle of planning, delivering and reflection. The resource signposts readers to practical off-the-shelf tools as well as to further guidance on gathering impact evidence for those with time and interest.

What is impact evaluation and why do it?

The vast majority of schools and colleges are now evaluating their careers programme using Compass. This process helps to identify progress and gaps in careers provision, which is valuable for engaging colleagues and making improvements to ensure every young person is able to find their best next step.

Impact evaluation goes a step further to find out what difference the careers programme makes to young people. Understanding the link between careers activities and outcomes for young people will help to ensure that careers programmes are high quality, effective and responsive. Often what makes a difference is not just what the activity is, but how it is delivered.
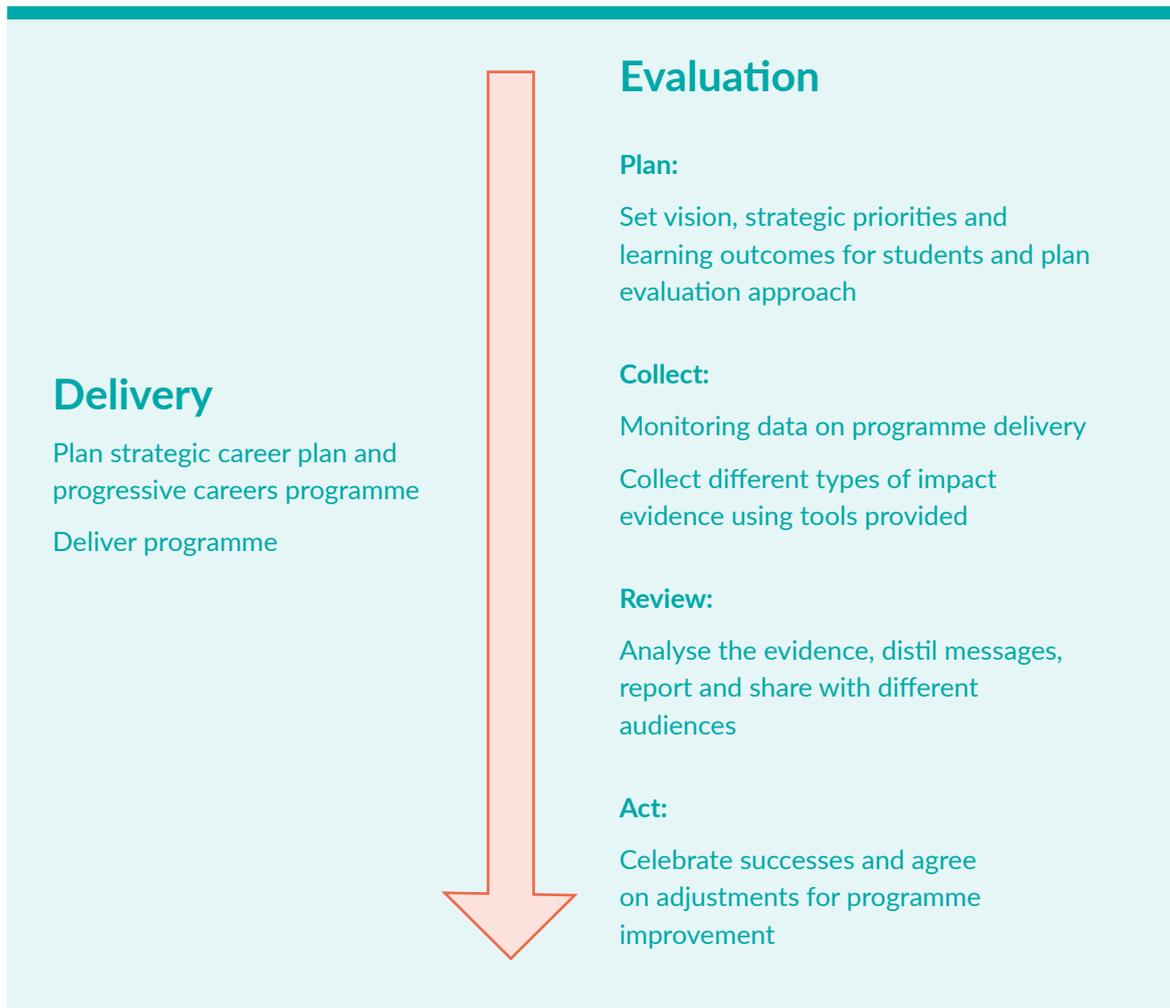
Why do it?

- To improve the effectiveness of career programmes

- To demonstrate the value of careers provision for student outcomes

- To inform continuous improvement of careers provision

Impact evaluation links directly to Gatsby Benchmark 1 requirements

Does your school/college evaluate the effectiveness of its careers programme at least every three years?

Does the evaluation of your careers programme take into account feedback from students/learners, teachers/college staff, employers, parents/carers?

How to approach impact evaluation

Delivery

Plan strategic career plan and progressive careers programme

Deliver programme

Evaluation

Plan:

Set vision, strategic priorities and learning outcomes for students and plan evaluation approach

Collect:

Monitoring data on programme delivery

Collect different types of impact evidence using tools provided

Review:

Analyse the evidence, distil messages, report and share with different audiences

Act:

Celebrate successes and agree on adjustments for programme improvement

Plan

Set vision, strategic priorities and learning outcomes for students and plan evaluation approach

The starting point for maximising impact is to 'plan with intent'. This means deciding on the outcomes you want young people to achieve through a progressive careers programme. You can use learning outcomes frameworks to help you pinpoint what is appropriate for each age and stage and how to help students to progress over time. In the resource and support on these pages we support Careers Leaders to set a vision and strategic priorities for careers to develop a robust theory of change.

A theory of change brief definition

A theory of change is a process of reflecting on our aims and plans. The output from a theory of change process describes how we believe our activities will lead to the outcomes and impacts we want to achieve. The output should give you a clear plan that will help you evaluate and communicate your work, both internally and externally.

A theory of change helps you to plan and share how your careers programme will be effective. It will allow you to show how change happens in the short, medium and long term to achieve the planned intent at student and at school, special school or college level. You can share this with stakeholders as a diagram or as a narrative.

You can choose where to start this process and which resources to consider first. You may wish to develop a theory of change to kick start a strategic careers plan or to share progress and evaluate existing careers provision.

It is helpful to involve a variety of stakeholders when you develop a theory of change – you could include students, staff, SLT, Governors and parents/carers and. The development process, and the thinking involved, is often as important as the final product.

This resource will take you through the following steps to develop a theory of change and planned intent and will support you to evaluate the impact or your careers provision:
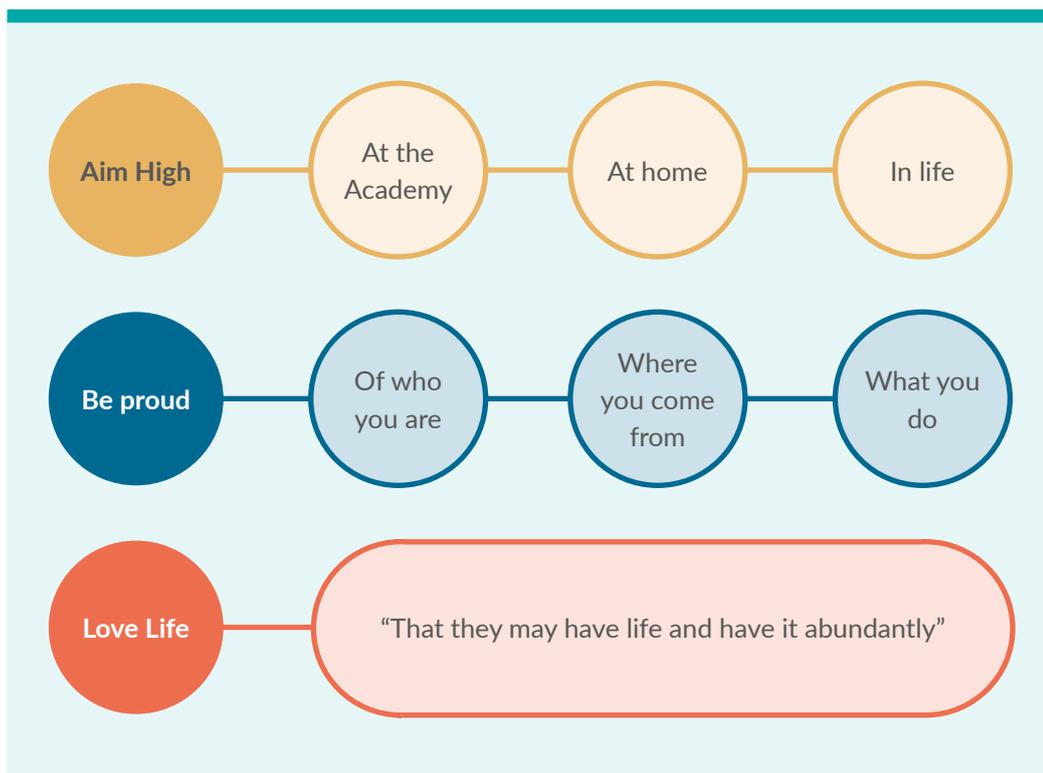
- **Plan**
- **Collect**
- **Review**
- **Act**

To support with developing a theory of change in the longer term, setting a vision can outline the impact and the change you want to see for your students.

Setting a VISION allows you to:

• be explicit about what you want to achieve

• scaffold your careers provision to deliver on what you want to achieve

• align your work to the strategic priorities of you school, special school or college

• plan to meet the needs of students

• establish a baseline for evaluation

For example, in this school's vision, the Careers Leader can align their work to **Aim High in Life:**

Reach Your Full Potential

Our vision is to support, engage and enable learners to build confidence, resilience, and motivation in order to achieve their full potential and to develop their talents so that they can fulfil their ambitions

Example Strategic Careers Plan: The Link School (AP) | CEC Resource Directory (careersandenterprise.co.uk)

Refer to Building a Strategic Plan <u>Guidance Document</u> for resource and support in setting a vision statement for your careers provision and to

To support with developing a theory of change in the shorter term, setting learning outcomes can outline the impact and the change you want to see for your students.

For example:

Experiences of the Workplace

Cohort: Year 7

Priority Aim: Raising aspiration

Key learning Outcome: To understand all options after Year 11, including apprenticeships, A-Levels, traineeships and T-Levels

Think: How do you support a young person to understand all options at 16 through an experience of the workplace?

How can the impact of this experience of the workplace be measured and reported?

Refer to Building a Progressive Careers Programme Guidance Document for resource and support in setting learning outcomes towards positive student outcomes and vision statements

Refer to our Guide: **How to meet Gatsby Benchmark 6 more meaningfully and deliver positive student outcomes** for support in setting learning outcomes and aligning experiences of the workplace to priority aims.

Collect

Monitoring data on programme delivery

Collect different types of impact evidence using tools provided

Type of Impact evidence	When to collect and use it	What it tells us	Tools
Feedback	Soon after the end of career activities. From students, parents, teachers, employers, activity providers. When activities are new, substantial or significant in cost/resource (as overuse can undermine engagement).	The initial reactions of participants about satisfaction, usefulness, enjoyment, perceived impact on next steps. Different perspectives.	Example questionnaires Creative ways to gather feedback
Career knowledge and skills	At targeted points and infrequently as these indicators improve slowly and as a result of many experiences. At transition points to inform choices and targeted support.	Progress towards learning outcomes. Preparedness for next steps. Gaps in knowledge and skills that can be addressed through further support. Changes for cohorts and individuals in relation to career programmes.	Future Skills Questionnaire Skills Builder Benchmark Tool Measures of personal development
Education engagement	As needed to check how careers learning informs curriculum engagement. More frequently for students at risk of disengagement or poor academic outcomes.	Progress in engaging students at risk of poor outcomes. Impact of career programme and targeted activities on engagement with learning.	End of unit / year tests Termly / annual effort grades Teacher reports Public exam results Bespoke survey using established questions
Destinations data	Collect intended destinations during final one or two years of school/college. Actual and sustained destinations for leavers. Maintain for 3 years after school. Access published destinations measures annually.	Pathways for students according to cohort, disadvantage, gender, attainment. Trends year on year in relation to the career programme and wider education. Suitability of pathways for groups of students.	Compass+ data on intended and actual destinations LA activity survey data Published DfE destinations measures for 1, 3 and 5 years after Key Stage 4 and for post-18

Gathering data that measures the intended outcomes and steps towards that is a core part of the evaluation process and can sometimes feel overwhelming. Here are some suggestions on how to get the best value from your efforts:

- Keep data collection proportionate to the activity. Save surveys for new, untested, high cost, large-scale activities, and use creative and informal methods for others.

- Make use of existing data. This includes published destinations data, school or college attendance data, attainment data.

- Collect different types of data covering feedback to activities and broader outcomes.

- Save time by using Compass+ for destinations and Future Skills Questionnaire.

- Keep notes of feedback and conversations.

As well as collecting data on outcomes, it is important to monitor the delivery of activities and levels of participation. This insight will help to explain the outcomes and to review the quality of delivery.

Refer to the Collecting and Reviewing Impact Evidence Guidance Document and the related Careers Leader Masterclass, Benchmark 1, Module 3 for support with identifying types of impact evidence to review, when to collect and use it, what it can tell you and links to useful tools

For support with survey/question creation access the 'How to write survey questions' resource and access the Example Questionnaires' to support both key event feedback and holistic programme feedback from a range of stakeholders including students, staff, parents/carers and employers

Review

Analyse the evidence, distil messages, report and share with different audiences and use to inform continuous improvement

Consider the learnings throughout the year but mark out a time towards the end of the year when you collate the evidence, analyse the results, pull out the messages and organise the information for sharing with others. Each section below on 'types of impact evidence' gives a steer on how to analyse and interpret the results. Quantitative data can tell you about prevalence and trends; qualitative/text data is more helpful for understand experiences in more detail – answering the why and how questions.

Organise the results for different audiences, which might include: senior leaders and governors, the wider staff body, Ofsted, quality accreditation such as Quality in Careers Standard or Matrix, the school/college website page on careers provision, and providers of careers activities including employers.

The review phase may be part of a retrospective review to enable reporting and to track progress. It also sits within building a strategic careers plan where provision is reviewed in order to set strategic priorities for careers going forward.

> **Refer to Building a Strategic Plan Guidance Document and related Masterclass (Benchmark 1, Module 1) for resource and support in reviewing your provision through a SOAR analysis.**
>
> **This model is an acronym of Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results. The SOAR analysis allows you to evaluate the effectiveness of your careers programme by helping you to focus on your future ambitions and planned intent of careers.**
>
> **Identify priority/action areas from SOAR as strategic priorities in a strategic careers plans and in impact/progress reporting to SLT/ Governors**

Refer to the Collecting and Reviewing Impact Evidence Guidance Document for support with identifying types of impact evidence to review, when to collect and use it, what it can tell you and links to useful tools

Act

Celebrate successes, report on impact and progress and review planned intent and implementation of your careers provision

The final step is to act on the evidence.

- Use your review of current provision to set strategic priorities and action plan within building a strategic careers plan

- Continuously improve programme by using evidence to consider what to keep, move or drop from the careers programme next year

- Use the outcomes data to think about which groups of students need more support and plan how to deliver to meet their needs

- Consider what all stakeholders, including education leaders and governors, need to know, understand and be able to do in relation to your careers provision

- Use impact evaluation evidence to share success, progress and impact of careers provision on students and at a school, special school or college level

Building a Strategic Plan Guidance Document and the related Careers Leader Masterclass (Benchmark 1, Module 1) for resource and support in setting strategic priorities and action planning