



Understanding how to embed careers in the curriculum

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Using this resource

This resource is part of a comprehensive set of guidance designed to help you:

- Establish a sustainable and strategic approach to careers leadership.
- Develop a progressive and responsive careers provision that meets the needs of all learners.
- Evaluate your careers provision and plan for impact.

Careers Impact: Full set of Guidance

Our guidance includes the following key documents:

- [Careers Leader Roadmap](#)
- [Understanding How to Create a Strategic Careers Plan](#)
- [Benchmark 1: Suggested universal career-related learning outcomes](#)
- [OnTrack+ Practice Guide](#)
- [Understanding How to Develop Progressive and Responsive Careers Provision \(Careers Learning Journeys\)](#)
- [Understanding How to Effectively Evaluate Your Careers Provision](#)
- [Understanding How to Embed Careers in the Curriculum](#)
- [Understanding How to Embed Progressive Employer Encounters](#)
- [Understanding How to Embed Progressive Work Experiences](#)
- [Understanding How to Embed Progressive Encounters with Further and Higher Education](#)

Alignment with The Careers Impact System

All resources in this suite are aligned with Themes 1 and 2 from the Careers Impact Maturity Model, which underpins a [Careers Impact internal leadership review](#).

- Careers Impact Maturity Model ([schools and special schools](#))
- Careers Impact Maturity Model ([colleges](#))
- Careers Impact Maturity Model ([Independent Training Providers](#))

The Maturity Model provides a shared language for positioning careers as a driver for improvement in schools, special schools, colleges, and ITPs. It defines all elements of sustainable and strategic careers leadership.

A Careers Impact internal leadership review supports the quality assurance of your careers provision and encourages continuous improvement aligned to your whole institution's priorities.

The resources in this set of guidance provide practical support in developing an impact led approach to careers in your institution.

Alignment to the Gatsby Benchmarks

Importance of Benchmark 4

Benchmark 4 recognises that important careers learning takes place in curriculum subjects and pathways. Learners should be helped to connect and apply the knowledge and skills they gain through the curriculum to real-world contexts and to the range of potential pathways or careers.

This resource helps Careers Leaders to embed careers in the curriculum by supporting teaching staff to:

- highlight the relevance of their subject and pathways to the world of work and careers.
- make links to careers from the curriculum.
- embed curriculum learning in the context of the world of work.

Benchmark 4 LINKING CURRICULUM LEARNING TO CAREERS: Summary

Schools

As part of the school's programme of careers education, all teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. Subject teachers should highlight the progression routes for their subject and the relevance of the knowledge and skills developed in their subject for a wide range of career pathways.

Colleges and ITPs

As part of the providers programme of careers education, all subject staff should link curriculum learning with careers, even on courses which are not specifically occupation led. Subject staff should highlight the progression routes for their subject and the relevance of knowledge and skills developed in their subject for a wide range of future career paths.

Introduction

This guide and the [My Learning My Future](#) resources aim to support Careers Leaders to support staff to embed careers across the curriculum.

Curriculum learning that highlights the relevance of subjects and programmes of study to the world of work, futures and careers, and regularly establishes links from the curriculum to careers, pathways and essential skills will inform, inspire, and engage learners.

This guidance supports Careers Leaders to create a shared understanding of what 'careers' is and to support staff to understand where it already features across all subject areas and all programmes of study.

The guidance also includes support on how to understand a baseline for what learner perception of their career readiness is across different groups.

The guidance then supports Careers Leaders to ensure that staff are supported to see the value of and understand how to highlight the relevance of their subject/programme of study consistently and regularly to the world of work futures and careers, and regularly make links from their curriculum to careers, pathways and essential skills. There is also an exploration of how to embed curriculum learning in the context of the world of work and how to support staff to create meaningful encounters and experiences linked to curriculum topics in partnership with employers.



Confidence Check: could you articulate this if asked?

“How do subject teachers incorporate labour-market information or employer links into everyday teaching?”

Could you evidence how careers learning is sequenced progressively across year groups within subjects and how staff are supported?

Getting Started

Achieving a shared understanding of 'careers' and auditing baseline provision

Before embedding an approach to careers in the curriculum Careers Leaders can work with curriculum staff to raise awareness of 'what careers is' and how much is already being covered through curriculum areas.

Within the Careers Impact System Maturity Model 'careers' is defined as supporting learners to:

- » Make aspirational and informed decisions.
- » Make effective and sustained transitions.
- » Develop career readiness.

The [CEC curriculum audit tool](#) enables a whole institution view of where, throughout the curriculum, knowledge is being delivered and evidence is being gathered against the Universal career related learning outcomes.

This allows Careers Leaders to raise the profile of what careers is and to share with staff how careers is already a part of all subject areas and provides a foundation for an approach to careers in the curriculum where staff can be supported to consistently and regularly highlight the relevance of their subject to the world of work and careers, and regularly make links from their curriculum to careers, pathways and essential skills.

Alternatively, you may wish to additionally audit each curriculum area based on [The CDI framework](#), using their audit template.

For more information on how to develop and implement a progressive and impactful careers programme and set specific careers related learning outcomes for your learners, access these resources: [Understanding how to develop progressive and responsive careers provision \(Careers Learning Journeys\)](#) and [Benchmark 1: Suggested universal career-related learning outcomes](#)

Establishing a baseline of learner perception of their career readiness

Establishing a baseline of learner perception of career readiness is important when planning your approach embedding careers into the curriculum.

This baseline provides valuable insights into learners' current understanding, attitudes, and confidence regarding their future decisions and transitions. By assessing these perceptions, educators can tailor provision and plan how careers embedded in the curriculum can address gaps, reinforce strengths, and align educational content with real-world expectations. It ensures that career-related learning in the curriculum is relevant and impactful, supporting increased learner engagement and motivation.

Compass+ users can use the [Future Skills Questionnaire](#) to give learners the opportunity to reflect on their career-related knowledge and skills.

You can use learners' **Future Skills Questionnaire (FSQ)** responses to understand where there are gaps in their understanding of careers and pathways and who might need targeted intervention or support. This data intelligence can then be used to help plan activities to address these gaps.

You can also use FSQ custom reporting to focus on specific questions, and the responses from particular year groups or form groups, cohorts of learners or individual learners to assess what targeted interventions they might need in their careers learning journey.

Find out more about Future Skills Questionnaire [here](#)

Supporting staff to access relevant careers CPD

Supporting all staff to access relevant CPD ensures that all staff are equipped with the latest knowledge, information and strategies to effectively embed careers into their subjects or programmes of study.

Through CPD, staff can stay updated on key labour market insight, understand what careers is and how they can support increased engagement and motivation of learners by embedding careers knowledge and skills development into their curriculum and programmes of study. This professional growth not only enhances the quality of careers in the curriculum but also boosts staff confidence in having effective careers conversations. Ultimately, CPD fosters a culture of continuous improvement, ensuring that the curriculum remains dynamic and responsive to the needs of learners preparing for their next steps.

Signpost your colleagues to the free online modules at [The Careers & Enterprise Academy](#).

By engaging with these modules, your colleagues will:

- » Identify where careers is already covered in the curriculum.
- » Enhance their support for the school, special school and college approach in highlighting the relevance of curriculum learning to the world of work and making links to careers from the curriculum.
- » Gain confidence in having effective careers conversations with learners.

“Careers should form part of the school’s ongoing staff development programme for teachers and all staff who support learners.”

Gatsby Benchmark 4

Approaches to embedding careers in the curriculum

Element 1:
Relevance of subjects/
programmes of study.

Element 2:
Making links to careers
from the curriculum.

Element 3 (Extension):
Embedding curriculum
learning in the context of
the world of work.

Element 4 (Extension):
Supporting staff to develop
meaningful employer
encounters and work
experiences linked to
curriculum topics.

Element 1: Relevance of subjects/programmes of study

Supporting learners, parents & carers to understand the relevance of all subjects/programmes of study

All staff highlight the relevance of their subject/programme of study to the world of work, futures and careers.

This element of embedding careers in the curriculum is your starting point and is relevant for all settings.

To begin embedding careers in the curriculum and to achieve Gatsby Benchmark 4, all subject areas and teaching staff should highlight how their subjects/programmes of study relate to the world of work, futures and careers.

This can be done through:

- Specific careers-related sessions, lessons, or events (e.g. during National Careers Week).
- Sessions designed to help learners and parents and carers with option choices at key transitions (e.g. "Why study MFL?" workshops).

Teaching staff should also help learners and parents and carers understand the progression routes for their subjects/programmes of study.

By doing so, the connection between current learning, future jobs, pathways and skills is clearly outlined, and learners are supported in understanding a wide range of potential career and learning pathways.

How to...support curriculum teaching staff to highlight the relevance of their subject or programme of study to the world of work, futures and careers:

Visit our Resource Directory to access the following resources:

My Learning My Future includes individual subject guides for over 25 subject areas that can be shared with curriculum staff and that are supported by readymade PowerPoint decks to highlight the relevance of the subject to the world of work and careers. One of the key aims of the resources is for learners to see the relevance and value of subjects and to be explicitly supported in making connections between subjects and pathways to positive transitions.

My Skills My Future includes lesson plans and resources to support young people with SEND in all settings to consider their next steps. The content aims to develop awareness of key sector areas and raise the aspirations of young people with SEND and showcase the different pathways available to them.

Element 2: Making links to careers from the curriculum

Supporting learners to understand how knowledge and skills developed in their curriculum learning helps gain entry to, and be more effective within, a wide range of pathways and occupations

Supporting learners to understand the relevance of their subjects and programmes of study prepares them for deeper knowledge and understanding of the skills developed in all subjects, programmes of study and curriculum areas.

To fully embed careers in the curriculum and meaningfully achieve Gatsby Benchmark 4, all learners should have opportunities to see how the knowledge and skills they develop in their subjects help them gain entry to, and be more effective within, a wide range of pathways and occupations.

To do this, staff should regularly make links from the curriculum to careers, pathways, and essential skills.

This can be done through:

- Making consistent and relevant links to careers and pathways as new topics or areas of learning are introduced.
- Regularly mapping and clearly highlighting key essential skills developed in each lesson.
- Using ‘bell tasks,’ plenaries, or home learning to explore skills, pathways, or roles related to specific lessons or topics.
- Including regular links within planning documents and schemes of work to show connections to roles or industries related to specific areas of learning.

“Integrating careers into the curriculum can help young people see the relevance of their learning and become familiar with a wider range of career pathways.

Like other aspects of a strong careers programme, it can be a great motivator and improve engagement, confidence and readiness for the future”.

[Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years](#)

If you use [Compass+](#): Share the [Activities Upload template](#) with staff, ask them to record careers activities that they deliver into this spreadsheet. Once complete, upload this into Compass+ and the activities will automatically be added to Your Activities. This will enable you to understand which subject areas are delivering activities that increase learners’ careers knowledge and skills. We also have two [handy checklists](#) that walk you through using this template.

Element 3 (Extension): Embedding curriculum learning in the context of the world of work

Embedding careers in the curriculum involves all staff consistently highlighting the relevance of their subjects and programme of study to the world of work and careers, and making regular connections between the curriculum and careers, pathways, and essential skills.

To further engage learners, staff can explore how curriculum learning can be embedded in the context of the world of work.

This can be achieved by:

- Developing high-quality curriculum resources embedded within the world of work in partnership with employers. This allows staff to engage learners, support their progress, and deliver curriculum outcomes effectively.

Inspiration: Careers in the Curriculum: KS3/4 Curriculum Resources produced by teachers from Academies Enterprise Trust, who worked with a range of employers to construct teaching & learning resources across different curriculum areas.

Examples of resources embedded in the context of the world of work can be accessed here:

- » [AET and Pinewood: Careers in Maths Resource | CEC Resource Directory](#)
- » [AET and Tesco: Careers in English resources | CEC Resource Directory](#)
- » [AET and EKFB: Careers in MFL \(French\) resource | CEC Resource Directory](#)
- » [AET and The National Trust: Careers in Geography resource | CEC Resource Directory](#)

Element 4 (Extension): Supporting staff to develop meaningful employer encounters and work experiences linked to curriculum topics

Supporting staff in developing employer encounters and work experiences linked to curriculum topics bridges the gap between academic learning and real-world application. It provides learners with practical insights and hands-on experiences, enhancing their understanding of subjects and study programs.

Collaboration between teaching staff and employers creates opportunities for learners to see how curriculum knowledge translates into workplace skills, fostering deeper engagement and motivation. These experiences also help learners build professional networks and gain clearer perspectives on potential pathways or occupations. This collaboration enriches teaching practices, making lessons more dynamic and relevant, and ultimately better preparing learners for future transitions.

- To support staff in developing meaningful employer encounters and work experiences aligned to the curriculum signpost them to this resource, which includes handy checklists aligned to the Gatsby meaningful definitions for employer encounters and work experiences: [Understanding How to Embed Progressive Employer Encounters and Work Experiences](#)



Confidence Check: could you articulate this if asked?

“How are meaningful encounters and work experience opportunities are mapped and planned across all key stages?”

How could you demonstrate the sequencing process and the impact of it?

Defining 'meaningful' in Benchmark 5: encounters with employers and employees

A meaningful encounter gives the young person the opportunity to explore what it is like to learn, develop and succeed in that environment.

This should include the opportunity to meet both staff and learners/trainees. Throughout a careers programme, encounters should be sequenced so that a young person can build up a clear picture of opportunities available to them.

Experiences or encounters could be in person or a combination of in person and virtual and could include providers delivering sessions in a school, college or ITP, as well as young people visiting the provider.

Young people and providers should be supported to prepare for the encounter. Additional or different support may be needed for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people and for young people with SEND.

A meaningful encounter gives the young person the opportunity to learn about what work is like, what skills are valued in the workplace, their recruitment processes and what it takes to be successful.

Throughout a careers programme, young people should encounter employers of different sizes and specialisms, including the self-employed, that reflect trends in the labour market, regionally and nationally. These encounters could be in person or a combination of in person and virtual, where appropriate. Both the young person and employers should be supported to prepare for the encounter. Additional or different support may be needed for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people and for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

A meaningful encounter will:

- have a clear purpose, which is shared with the employer 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 employer.
- be followed by time for the young person to reflect on the insights, knowledge or skills gained through the encounter.

Defining 'meaningful' in Benchmark 6: experiences of workplaces

A meaningful experience gives the young person the opportunity to explore what it is like to work in that environment, what skills are valued in the workplace, their recruitment processes and what it takes to be successful. This could be achieved through visits to workplaces, work shadowing and/or work experience. Throughout the careers programme these experiences could be in person or a combination of in person and virtual, where appropriate. Both the young person and employers should be supported to prepare for the experience. Additional or different support may be needed for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people and for young people with SEND. A meaningful experience will:

- have a clear purpose, which is shared with the employer and the young person.
- be underpinned by learning outcomes that are appropriate to the needs of the young person.
- involve extensive two-way interactions between the young person and employees.
- include opportunities for young people to meet a range of different people from the workplace.
- include opportunities for young people to perform a task set by the employer or to produce a piece of work relevant to that workplace.
- include the employer providing feedback to the young person about their work.
- be followed by opportunities for the young person to reflect on the insights, knowledge or skills gained through their experience.

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