

The Preparing for Work curriculum

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Overview of the curriculum

When students first start at Oakwood, they are assessed against our preparing for adulthood framework which is based upon the assessment made by our primary commissioning authority. The PFA assessment is designed to enable teachers, and learners, to understand what learners already now and can do and what areas they have yet to develop. Once the assessment is completed, each learner then follows an individualised curriculum designed to enable them to make progress in those areas that are underdeveloped. This is our Futures programme.

Teachers work with the learner to complete assessment questions which are taken from the preparing for adulthood framework. New learners will have this completed in most cases through the transition team before the learner starts. This will help us to understand what they already know and can do, either independently or with support. We find that many young people have what we refer to as “spiky profiles” meaning they have secured knowledge and skills in some areas, but they are not so secure in others. We also find that whilst students may know how or why they cannot always do. Therefore, the framework is separated in to two columns – so we can see whether they know the outcome, but also whether they can do it.

Once the assessment is completed, we review the proportion of outcomes that require significant work, those where development is needed and where outcomes are secure. This proportionality will determine whether the learner follows predominantly an independence or work focused programme.

Each learner’s study programme is individualised to meet their needs. We ensure this in a number of ways for example; access to therapies and specialist sessions; levels and type of qualifications as appropriate; but most significantly the focus of their Futures curriculum

Once the initial assessment has taken place against the PfA baseline, teachers work with their assistant SENCo to determine the weight of the programme. This means taking the 7 sessions dedicated to the Futures curriculum (in a full-time programme) and allocating the proportion of hours that will be dedicated to independence skills (PfA) and employability skills (preparing for work).

This model is about ensuring equity of opportunity and high aspirations for all learners. As such all student will be on a weighted programme – giving them all the opportunity to develop their independence and work skills.

Careers competency framework

The careers framework provides a range of competencies grouped in to 8 categories. The competencies increase in complexity as they progress and are sequenced so that learners can build on the knowledge and skills they gain. Not all learners will achieve all competencies.

The framework is not intended to be taught in a linear way, rather, the baseline assessment will show what learner already knows and can do. Learners should then be taught the existing competencies in the order of priority for them individually, gaining both the knowledge (know) and skills (can do) as appropriate against each competency.

Within each module, the competencies are ordered so that they build upon each other and increase in complexity. Not all learners will achieve all the competencies, but teachers will focus firstly on the highlighted priority competencies.

Developing performance at work experience

The careers competency framework that is used to underpin a learner’s Preparing for work curriculum contains four sections that detail the knowledge, skills, and behaviours they should have attained before they leave college and begin paid or unpaid employment.

Each section contains a number of I can/ I know statements that can be evidenced whilst a learner is on placement. It is the role of the support worker and the learner themselves to identify where they have put their knowledge, skills, and behaviours into practice. This will show their development over time and serve as evidence of what they can do.

For example, at college a learner may be learning about basic health and safety signs in the classroom. They may be able to identify on a worksheet the sign for “flammable” for example. At work, they could identify a material as flammable by recognising the sign and moving the material to a safe space. This would be evidence of them “doing” as well as “knowing”.

Applying for a job	Priority competency	1	High level of prompt or support.	2	lower level of prompt or support. Sometimes spontaneous.	3	Mostly independent with only occasional reminders.	4	Independent and unprompted.
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Competency		I know.... (knowledge)				I can do.... (skill/ behaviour)			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I know what is appropriate to wear at interview	P								
I know what I may need to bring to interview	P								
I understand what an interview is and why it is important	P								

Careers competency framework sample

Within a learners work experience folder they will have a tracking sheet that details each of the competencies that will be taught throughout the course of their programme.

At the start of each term, the class teacher will highlight the competencies that they will be focusing on during that term.

Examples of career activities on offer for students

Work experience	Work tasters	Short visits to meet with employers and employees
On campus career information	External local job fairs	Mock interviews
1:1 CEIAG meeting's	Spark Careers App	Building greater Exeter visit and talk.
Information sessions on Traineeships	Information sessions on internships	Information sessions on Apprenticeships
Information sessions on HE/FE and visits	Community services visits and information	Tours of businesses and information on route to employment

<p>Disability Rights UK information and support</p>	<p>Access to work and job coach information sessions</p>	<p>Volunteering</p>
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