

The Gatsby Benchmarks - Appendix 1

The Gatsby Benchmarks are a framework for providing high-quality careers guidance in secondary schools and colleges. They were developed by Sir John Holman for the Gatsby Charitable Foundation and first published in 2014. These benchmarks define eight key aspects of effective career guidance, ensuring young people are well-prepared for the world of work. The 2024 update to the Gatsby Benchmarks ensures they remain relevant and effective in a changing education and employment landscape. While the eight benchmarks remain unchanged, updates focus on clarifications, refinements, and new emphasis based on recent evidence and stakeholder feedback. Read the updated Gatsby Benchmarks and associated appendices can be found online at <https://www.gatsbybenchmarks.org.uk/>.

The Gatsby Benchmark	As Gatsby defines: The Benchmarks for Colleges listed here outline the important elements of a robust career guidance programme.	As the Career and enterprise company defines: There is a consensus that the Gatsby Benchmarks are appropriate for all learners, although we recognise that some flexibility should be applied when using the Gatsby Benchmarks with learners with PMLD/ Highly Complex Needs. Original source Link
<p>1. A stable careers programme</p>	<p>Every provider should have an embedded programme of careers education and guidance that is known and understood by learners, parents and carers, staff, those in governance roles, employers and other agencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every provider should have a stable, structured careers programme that has the explicit backing of those in governance roles, leadership and the senior management team, and has an identified and appropriately trained careers leader responsible for it. • The careers programme should be tailored to the needs of learners, sequenced appropriately, underpinned by learning outcomes and linked to the whole institution development plan. It should also set out how parents and carers will be engaged throughout. • The careers programme should be published on the provider’s website and communicated in ways that enable learners, parents and carers, staff and employers to access and understand it. • The programme should be regularly evaluated using feedback from learners, parents and carers, subject staff and other staff who support learners, careers advisers and employers to increase its impact. 	<p>The content of a holistic careers programme to reflect the core themes of the Preparation for Adulthood programme including employment health, independent living, education, housing options, relationships, community</p>
<p><u>Oakwood’s stance on Benchmark 1</u></p> <p>At Oakwood Specialist College, we deliver an individualized careers programme overseen by the Head of Careers and Futures, ensuring careers education is embedded across all curriculum areas. From the earliest stages, learners are supported to focus on preparing for work and adulthood, with tailored programmes based on their unique needs. Our approach blends career development with fostering independence, ensuring learners are well-equipped for success. We offer guest speakers, site visits, and personalized guidance to further enrich the experience. Additional details about our programme are available on our website.</p> <p>Please click HERE to find out more about this benchmark.</p>		
<p>2. Learning from career and labour market information</p>	<p>All learners, parents and carers, subject staff and other staff who support learners should have access to good-quality, up-to-date information about future pathways, study options and labour market opportunities. Young people with special educational needs and</p>	<p>The aim remains the same, but the content will reflect the relevant information that the cohort and their family needs</p>

	<p>disabilities (SEND) and their parents and carers may require different or additional information. All learners will need the support of an informed adviser to make the best use of available information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During their programme of study, all learners should access and use information about careers, pathways and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options or next steps. • Parents and carers should be encouraged and supported to access and use information about careers, pathways and the labour market to inform their support for the learners in their care. 	
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Oakwood's stance on Benchmark 2

At Oakwood, we collaborate closely with families, social care professionals, and allied health specialists to provide a holistic approach to learners' education and post-education success. Through the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) review process, we ensure families and learners are involved in discussing study programmes and future options. We encourage parents to explore resources on our website, including labour market information. Learners are individually supported in exploring a range of career pathways, including community integration, supported living, supported Internships, apprenticeships, or further education, with input from employers and training providers. Learners engage in a range of curriculum activities that allow for development of understanding in relation to the labour market.

Please click [HERE](#) to find out more about this benchmark.

<p>3.Addressing the needs of each learner</p>	<p>Learners have different careers guidance needs at different stages. Careers programmes should help learners navigate their concerns about any barriers to career progression. In addition, opportunities should be tailored to the needs of each learner, including any additional needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged learners, young people with SEND and those who are absent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A provider's careers programme should actively seek to challenge misconceptions and stereotypical thinking, showcase a diverse range of role models and raise aspirations. • Providers should keep systematic records of the participation of learners in all aspects of their careers programme, including the individual advice given to each learner, and any subsequent agreed decisions. • The records of participation and advice given should be integrated with those given at the previous stage of the learner's education (including their secondary school), where these are made available. Records should begin to be kept from the first point of contact or from the point of transition. • All learners should have access to these records and use them ahead of key transition points to support their next steps and career development. • Providers should collect, maintain and use accurate data for each learner on their aspirations, intended and immediate education, and training or employment destinations to inform personalised support. 	<p>The aim remains perfectly aligned and needs to refer to the multiple statutory planning processes and achieving participation of learners</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers should use sustained and longer-term destination data as part of their evaluation process and use alumni to support their careers programme 	
<p><u>Oakwood's stance on Benchmark 3</u></p> <p>At Oakwood, we deliver a comprehensive personal growth programme (PGP/PSHE) that equips learners with vital knowledge on staying healthy, safe, and prepared for life and work. Ensuring learners understand their rights, responsibilities, and the importance of equal opportunity in life and work. Our careers programme challenges stereotypes and educates learners about diverse career options. We work closely with internal and external professionals to support learners, offering 1:1 guidance interviews that inform next steps. We are committed to inspiring learners, raising aspirations, and fostering an understanding of the workplace; while providing the support they need to navigate their individual journeys confidently.</p> <p>Please click HERE to find out more about this benchmark.</p>		
<p>4. Linking curriculum learning to careers</p>	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throughout their programme of study (and by the end of their course) every learner should have opportunities to experience how knowledge and skills developed in their subjects help people gain entry to, and be more effective workers within, a wide range of occupations. Careers should form part of the provider's ongoing staff development programme for subject staff and all staff who support learners. 	<p>The language does need to reflect this group more strongly and the interpretation of the subjects English, Maths and Science must reflect a cross curricular approach as opposed to the hard-core subject matter</p>
<p><u>Oakwood's stance on Benchmark 4</u></p> <p>At Oakwood, we maintain high aspirations for all learners, with paid employment as the ultimate goal. Every lesson across the curriculum explicitly connects to learners' future aspirations, ensuring that all staff highlight the relevance of each subject to career pathways. Our flexible, specialist curriculum is tailored to individual needs, focusing on preparing learners for work, adulthood, and personal development. By linking classroom learning to work experience placements, we create a seamless learning environment where skills and knowledge are continually developed.</p> <p>Maths and English forms part of the mandatory curriculum and all learners will have lessons in these subjects, where all staff promote the importance of these subjects in relation to life and work.</p> <p>Please click HERE to find out more about this benchmark.</p>		
<p>5. Encounters with employers and employees</p>	<p>Every learner 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 activities, including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes, and could include learners' own part-time employment where it exists.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every year, alongside their programme of study, learners should participate in at least two meaningful encounters with an employer. At least one encounter should be delivered through their curriculum area. 	<p>The aim needs to be re-framed as a two-way learning for employers and the activities to reflect the types of destinations for this cohort</p>

Oakwood's stance on Benchmark 5

At Oakwood, learners have the opportunity to engage with employers both on-site and through off-site visits to live settings, gaining valuable insights from employers and industry partners. For some learners, this includes visits to social care and community services if it aligns with their future goals. All learners are actively encouraged to participate in work experience and work-related learning, ensuring they develop relevant skills in real-world environments. These activities help to connect classroom learning with practical career experiences.

Please click [HERE](#) to find out more about this benchmark.

6.Experiences of workplaces

Every learner should have first-hand experiences of workplaces to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks.

- By the end of their programme of study, every learner should have had at least one meaningful experience of a workplace, in addition to any part-time jobs they may have.

The recommendation is to follow the same approach as with Benchmark 5 with an enhanced focus on Enterprise

Benchmark 5 - The aim needs to be re-framed as a two-way learning for employers and the activities to reflect the types of destinations for this cohort

Oakwood's stance on Benchmark 6

At Oakwood, learners are actively encouraged to engage in work experience, including workplace visits, long-term placements, and volunteering. We strive to match placements with learners' aspirations, ensuring they are local and offer potential for long-term opportunities. For some learners, we also provide visits to community settings to help build relationships and develop a sense of belonging. Internal work experience opportunities are offered to build skills and confidence, preparing learners for external settings. We assess learners' progress using our careers framework, providing regular feedback to support their work readiness and inform future targets.

Please click [HERE](#) to find out more about this benchmark.

7.Encounters with further and higher education

All learners should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them, including academic, technical and vocational routes. This should incorporate learning in schools, colleges, independent training providers (ITPs), universities and in the workplace.

- By the end of their programme of study, every learner should have had a meaningful encounter with a range of providers of learning and training that may form the next stages of their career. This should include, as appropriate, further education colleges, universities and ITPs. This should include the opportunity to meet both staff and learners.

Universities / HE has already been removed and the inclusion of the wider range of destinations and young people's transition into them need to be highlighted

Oakwood's stance on Benchmark 7

At Oakwood, we encourage learners to explore the wide range of opportunities available to them, guiding them through discussions in lessons, visits to providers, and individual meetings with the careers team. We provide tailored support to help each learner achieve their personal goals and ensure a smooth transition for learners with SEND by starting transition discussions early. Our aim is to ensure learners are informed about their next steps and prepared for the broad possibilities ahead in their educational and career journeys.

Please click [HERE](#) to find out more about this benchmark.

8.Personal guidance

Every learner should have opportunities for guidance meetings with a careers adviser, who could be internal (a member of provider staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These meetings should be available for all learners whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all learners but should be scheduled to meet individual needs. The careers leader should work closely with the careers adviser, SEND coordinator (SENDCO) and other key staff to ensure personal guidance is effective and embedded in the careers programme.

The focus has been on generating internal qualified Careers Advisers and the advantages to their being in place for this cohort

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every learner should have at least one personal guidance meeting with a careers adviser. Meetings should be scheduled in the careers programme to meet the needs of learners. • Information about personal guidance support and how to access it should be communicated to learners, parents and carers, and other stakeholders, including through the provider website. 	
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Oakwood's stance on Benchmark 8

At Oakwood, learners receive regular coaching and support throughout their studies. Weekly tutorials with tutors are complemented by the opportunity for one-on-one meetings with a member of the careers team on request. We partner with Future Smart Careers, a company that provides career guidance through Level 6 qualified advisors. Each learner, where appropriate, has an annual careers guidance interview, ensuring they receive personalised support and action plans for their career development. Parents accompany these meetings where desired.

Please click [HERE](#) to find out more about this benchmark.

Date of Last Review	To be reviewed/updated	Owner
12/02/2025	12/02/2026	Dan Miliffe – Head of Careers and futures