

# SecEd

## Guide to...

# Meeting your careers duties

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- The statutory requirements for careers information, advice and guidance
- Implementing the government-backed Gatsby Foundation Benchmarks
- Vocational education, employability skills, and working with employers
- Sources of support and advice for careers guidance and employer engagement

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# GUIDE TO...

## Meeting your careers duties

YOUNG PEOPLE have big decisions to make when it comes to choosing their future careers – and schools have an important role to play too.

Schools have a responsibility to offer careers information, advice and guidance to their learners. But while parents and teachers have always had a good grasp of academic progression routes post-GCSE, vocational options have sometimes been seen as poor relations, with learners receiving less information about potential pathways.

Today, however, there is a wealth of careers guidance for young people. With that in mind, this guide aims to help schools ensure that their careers guidance provision caters for vocational routes as effectively as possible, from helping young people to learn about the skills and attributes needed by employers to offering advice on the different types of Apprenticeships and other opportunities available to them.

Education secretary Damian Hinds highlighted the importance of getting more people into skilled jobs in a speech at London's Battersea Power Station in December 2018.

He said: "Young people not on the A level route have two years of government-funded education when they turn 16 ... precious time, precious investment in the future. And all too often it's time and money used to train them to a low level in a skill the economy doesn't need.

"The answer is not just encouraging more and more people to go to university ... it is introducing clear, high-quality, technical paths to skilled jobs ... paths that are as respected and as easy to understand as the A level to degree route."

The government's Careers Strategy, published in December 2017, set out a long-term plan to build a world-class careers system to help young people and adults choose the career "that is right for them".

Statutory guidance was then updated in October 2018. Entitled *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers*, the updated

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document expanded on the Careers Strategy's aim to make sure that all secondary school learners have a programme of advice and guidance that is "stable, structured and delivered by individuals with the right skills and experience". It also specified that by September 2018 schools should have published the following:

- The name of the school's careers leader.
- A summary of the school's careers programme, including details of how learners, parents, teachers and employers can access this.
- How the school measures and assesses the impact of the careers programme on learners.

The Department for Education's (DfE) strategy document also stated that every school and academy providing secondary education should use the Gatsby Foundation's Good Career Guidance Benchmarks to develop and improve their careers provision.

While the eight Gatsby Benchmarks are not statutory, schools know that by adopting them they are fulfilling their legal duties.

The Gatsby Benchmarks were developed by Sir John Holman, emeritus professor of chemistry at the University of York, a senior education adviser and former principal of Watford Grammar School for Boys. They are as follows:

- 1 A stable careers programme.
- 2 Learning from career and labour market information.
- 3 Addressing the needs of each learner.
- 4 Linking curriculum learning to careers.
- 5 Encounters with employers and employees.
- 6 Experiences of workplaces.
- 7 Encounters with further and higher education.
- 8 Personal guidance.

Benchmarks five, six and seven are particularly relevant to vocational routes. So how can schools best meet these requirements?

The DfE's statutory guidance includes a range of advice. For instance, Jobcentre Plus can help to facilitate links between schools and employers through its Support for Schools programme.

When it comes to creating opportunities for learners to talk to employers and employees, the government guidance cites a 2017 study conducted by the charity Education and Employers. This found that higher levels of employer contacts – for example, in the form of careers talks by outside speakers – are linked to “higher returns to individuals in the labour market”.

Other suggestions for schools include:

- Focusing on the enterprise and employability skills, experience and qualifications needed by employers; this helps learners to prepare for the workplace.
- Helping learners to gain the confidence to compete in the jobs market by providing opportunities to gain the practical “know-how” and attributes needed for employment.
- Engaging with local employers, businesses and professional networks to ensure “real-world” connections with employers. Inviting junior employees and apprentices, particularly former learners, is effective and means that learners can readily identify with them.

The statutory guidance also states that schools should work with the Careers & Enterprise Company to appoint an enterprise adviser – an experienced business volunteer who can support individual schools to connect to the labour market.

Another requirement is that learners should take part in “at least one meaningful encounter with an employer” every year – from year 7 through to year 13. In other words, schools should offer learners at least seven opportunities to engage with employers. Crucially, schools are advised that at least one of the encounters that learners experience before year 11 should be with a STEM employer.

Employer encounters will vary from school to school

but they could include the following: alumni activity, business games and enterprise competitions, careers fairs, employer encounters with parents, employer involvement in the curriculum, employer mentoring, employer talks, mock interviews, CV workshops, mock assessment centres, and speed networking or careers carousels.

The sixth Gatsby Benchmark states that learners should get first-hand experience of the workplace. This is in addition to their school-based encounters with employers.

Schools should ensure that every learner has at least one experience by the age of 16 – and a further one by the age of 18. The DfE's statutory guidance notes, however, that while “high quality and meaningful” work experience is a required part of 16 to 19 study programmes, younger learners do not necessarily have to have a traditional work placement. Options for younger learners might include:

- Internships and holiday placements.
- Job-shadowing.
- Part-time work.
- Work experience in school.
- Volunteering.
- Work experience of less than a week, a one to two-week block, or a regular or weekly commitment.
- Workplace visits.

Understandably, the majority of learners see choosing the right post-16 and post-18 options as their most pressing decision. But, at the same time, it is important to appreciate that every education choice they make has implications for their career. All young people are now required to continue in education or training until their 18th birthday, but this does not mean that they must stay at school. Their choices are:

- Full-time study in a school, college or training provider.
- An Apprenticeship, Traineeship or supported internship.
- Full-time work or volunteering (20 hours or more), combined with part-time accredited study.

In January 2018, the government introduced a

Learners should take part in ‘at least one meaningful encounter with an employer’ every year – from year 7 through to year 13

new legal duty requiring that schools must open their doors to give providers of technical education and Apprenticeships the opportunity to talk to their learners.

As the government strategy explained: "This will allow learners to consider how the opportunity to study or train in different ways, and in different environments, might suit their skills, interests and aptitudes. By hearing directly from providers about alternatives to academic and school-based routes, every learner can build up a full picture of the options available to them at important transition points."

The Highcrest Academy in High Wycombe prides itself on doing all of these things, working hard to ensure its 1,000 learners are informed and educated about vocational routes and options as well as academic pathways.

Rob Evans, who became the school's learning resource centre manager and careers lead two years ago, after a 37-year career in corporate tax, has made it a priority to build good relationships with local employers. He has been supported in this by two enterprise advisers from the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership, who provide a link between the school and employers.

Highcrest regularly works with around 12 local businesses, including Johnson & Johnson and Eurovia. During the autumn term, two of their learners spent a week with Eurovia, working on a road development scheme in the centre of High Wycombe. The school is currently talking to a high-end furniture manufacturer and a multi-national double-glazing manufacturer about future careers collaborations.

"I've managed to build some good relationships with local employers," explained Mr Evans, who is a registered Apprenticeship champion and invites speakers into the school every year to talk about Apprenticeships.

He continued: "I've found that a lot of businesses are keen to engage with schools but they don't know how to do it. If someone rings I'll always go out and speak to them about how we might be able to work with them."

Highcrest has introduced a range of ways to deliver effective careers guidance. The school uses resources like the careers help section of the NCFE website, the Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge for Schools and Colleges programme (ASK), Barclays LifeSkills, and MyKindaFuture, which helps to give young people "critical employability skills while connecting them with work experience and employment opportunities". It is also looking at using the Skills Builder Partnership, which has created a toolkit to develop essential skills for the workplace.

Other initiatives include working with Adviza, a local charity that supports young people in making decisions about learning, careers and work. Each week a careers adviser from Adviza sees around 18 Highcrest learners on a one-to-one basis. The school also helps learners to find work placements and shadowing opportunities, funds access to online careers guidance programme Fast Tomato for its learners, and has developed a careers academy for year 12s whereby an enterprise adviser helps them to analyse their skills and incorporate them into their CVs and LinkedIn profiles.

## Some quick careers duty tips

- Appoint someone to be careers leader who is suitably qualified to write the school's careers programme.
- Ensure your school's careers programme takes labour market intelligence into consideration.
- Consider how to link in employers, Apprenticeship and training providers and further and higher education.
- Review good practice by other schools.
- Engage with your regional Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Be mindful of changes to the common inspection framework so you know how to evidence meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks during your school's Ofsted inspection.
- Consider using the Compass Careers Benchmark Tool (a free tool developed by the Careers & Enterprise Company & Gatsby Foundation) to assess how well your existing careers provision meets learners' needs.
- Consider gaining formal accreditation of your school's careers programme through the Quality in Careers Standard: [www.qualityincareers.org.uk](http://www.qualityincareers.org.uk)

## Clear progression routes and career pathways

V CERT Technical Awards (V Certs), first introduced by NCFE seven years ago, are technical alternative qualifications to GCSEs at key stage 4. Designed and created in response to the government's vocational education and league table reforms, they hold Department for Education (DfE) performance points and are recognised in the Progress 8 measure.

V Certs are appropriate for learners aged 14 to 16 who are keen on learning through hands-on experiences and prefer content which is concrete and directly related to those experiences. At the same time, the qualifications offer equivalent levels of rigour and challenge to GCSEs, with clear progression routes and career pathways.

NCFE qualifications development manager Chris Tubbrit explained: "Over the last three years we've had more than 85,000 registrations on our V Certs, which is testament to the popularity, quality and rigour of our qualifications.

"We've developed our V Certs so they focus on vocational subjects to develop technical skills and knowledge through applied learning. All of our V Certs are aligned to the new T level routes of study so schools can be confident they are running qualifications in line with new government proposals for further education."

Learners who choose V Certs have a number of subject areas to choose from, including art and design, business and enterprise, child development and early years, craft, engineering, food and cookery, graphic design, health and fitness, health and social care, interactive media, music technology and performance skills.

An additional benefit is that these qualifications are designed to fit seamlessly into school timetables alongside core subjects.

NCFE has also developed three ways in which V Certs can help schools to demonstrate compliance with their Careers Strategy obligations – particularly the second Gatsby Benchmark, whereby schools must support young people to learn from career and labour market information. These are:

- Factsheets for each V Cert qualification.
- Career cards for each V Cert qualification (these include possible careers, progression routes and

useful websites). An example (art and design) can be accessed via <http://bit.ly/2R0lau9>

- The in-depth V Certs Labour Market Intelligence Report: <http://bit.ly/2Mb9AxJ>

NCFE has also launched the annual Aspiration Awards, which recognise the achievements of learners who have used V Certs to help them attain goals and make positive improvements to their lives. Schools and teachers nominate learners and the first to win the prized Student of the Year award was Emma Owen, a learner at Everton Free School in Liverpool.

After a tough start in life, Emma re-engaged with education and showed qualities of resilience, determination, and personal growth and development to succeed in her studies.

Emma's teacher Maxine Spooner said: "Emma has achieved a place to study at Birkenhead Sixth Form College next year. She wishes to study PE, biology and English at A level with a view to studying radiography at university.

"She has achieved this with the help of the distinction grades she has achieved for her V Cert in health and fitness. This has helped her breadth of knowledge, time management and study skills, enabling her to understand topic areas by applying them to real-life vocational situations. It has given Emma strategies to complete work, helping her to focus and achieve grade 4 and above GCSE qualifications within the core subjects."

Farnborough Academy in Nottingham was highly commended in the awards for "going above and beyond" to help learners exceed their expectations.

The school, which offers NCFE qualifications in subjects including food and cookery, craft, health and fitness and performance skills, received high praise from external quality assurer Phillip Bell.

"On visiting Farnborough Academy I was blown away with the standard of delivery of V Cert craft by the school," he said. "The staff at the school were bubbling with enthusiasm around the delivery of V Certs, and the very high standard of work from learners showed equal enthusiasm for the subject".

*NCFE is a national awarding organisation that designs, develops and certifies diverse, nationally recognised qualifications and awards. To find out more about NCFE and V Certs, visit [www.ncfe.org.uk/schools](http://www.ncfe.org.uk/schools)*

# Supporting effective CEIAG

THERE IS a vast range of resources to help schools support effective careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) for their learners:

**Government guidance and advice:** *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers* is the statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) published in March 2015 (last updated October 2018). You can also download the government's *Careers Strategy* (DfE, December 2017).

- <http://bit.ly/2GuEvSl> (statutory guidance)
- <http://bit.ly/2EpJRh4> (Careers Strategy)

**Gatsby Benchmarks:** The Gatsby Foundation's Good Career Guidance Handbook details the eight CEIAG benchmarks and provides information on how schools can work towards them. The Gatsby Foundation also publishes research and resources.

- <http://bit.ly/2DioDF9>
- [www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk](http://www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk)

**Compass:** Compass is a free tool for schools and colleges in England that helps you to evaluate your careers activity against the eight Gatsby Benchmarks.

- <https://compass.careersandenterprise.co.uk>

**National Careers Service:** The National Careers Service offers information, advice and guidance across England to help with decisions on learning, training and work. The service offers confidential and impartial advice and is supported by qualified careers advisers.

- <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

**The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC):** The government-funded Careers & Enterprise Company was established in 2015 to link schools and colleges with employers. Among its initiatives, the CEC has launched 20 Careers Hubs across England. Each hub consists of up to 40 local schools and colleges that work with universities, training providers, employers and career professionals to improve careers education. The CEC offers resources, research and support.

- [www.careersandenterprise.co.uk](http://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk)

**National Apprenticeship Service (NAS):** Among its resources, the NAS offers a *Guide to Apprenticeships*, detailing what an Apprenticeship entails, the different levels of study, as well as entry requirements, how to apply and wages. Elsewhere, Amazing Apprenticeships was commissioned by the NAS to support the Apprenticeship Support & Knowledge for Schools and Colleges (ASK) project. Its website features a range of employer factfiles, outlining the types of Apprenticeship vacancies available, and it includes resources such as learner packs, teacher guides, postcards and broadcasts.

- <http://bit.ly/2FrBe9d> (the NAS guide)
- <https://amazingapprenticeships.com/>
- [www.apprenticeships.gov.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk) (the NAS website)

**Education and Employers:** This charity runs a variety of in-school programmes, including giving young people the opportunity to meet people working in a variety of careers to discuss their roles and the educational routes they followed. The charity publishes useful research and resources, in particular showing how Apprenticeships can be an alternative to traditional pathways.

- [www.educationandemployers.org](http://www.educationandemployers.org)

**T levels:** New T level qualifications will be available from 2020. The two-year courses have been designed with employers to give post-GCSE learners a technical alternative to A levels and help them to get a skilled job. They will offer technical knowledge and practical skills, an industry placement of at least 45 days, relevant maths and English, as well as digital and common workplace skills.

- <http://bit.ly/2srRZl2>

**NCFE:** National awarding organisation NCFE offers a range of qualifications – in 2017 more than 2,000 colleges, schools and training organisations across the country chose NCFE as the awarding organisation to help them move their careers forward. It has a dedicated careers help section on its website, giving information, advice and guidance to help young people identify their next steps.

- [www.ncfe.org.uk/learners/careers-help](http://www.ncfe.org.uk/learners/careers-help)