

GATSBY BENCHMARK 7

Encounters with Further and Higher Education

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

- **All students should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes academic and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and the workplace.**
- **By the age of 16, every pupil should have had a meaningful encounter with a provider of the full range of learning opportunities.**
- **By the age of 18, all students who are considering applying for university should have had at least two visits to universities to meet staff and students.**

Meaningful encounters with providers cover a wide range of ways young people can learn about their post-compulsory school options. They provide off-site visits and direct interactions with key roles, such as lecturers, current students of apprenticeships.

Providers include:

- apprenticeships and other work-based training
- further and higher education.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

- Enterprise Advisers and Enterprise Coordinators work closely with local institutions and agencies on a collaborative and strategic approach. All partners – schools, colleges, universities, local authorities, careers guidance providers, parents/carers, employers and the wider community – have a common understanding of local needs and solutions. Co-operative working makes it easier to organise big events, such as careers, skills and higher education fairs.
- Schools and colleges have a multi-pronged approach to ensure students are well-supported to choose pathways they value post-18. They start this work long before students reach the point of decision as evidence shows that raising aspirations and building resilience is effective from year 7 or earlier.
- The school acts in the best interests of students. It recognises and accepts that students post-14 have the possibility of going to a university technical college or a studio school, rather than simply choosing what subjects to take at GCSE and equivalent.
- The school makes maximum use of its flexibility to organise suspended timetable days for different year groups, such as careers and higher education preparation days for year 12s in the summer term.
- The school ensures encounters with further and higher education are part of an overall approach that encompasses:
 - personalised and small-group information, advice and guidance
 - carefully selected sources of information, including digital and print-based, which are promoted through the school's website, newsletter and social media
 - a planned programme of on-site and off-site encounters with further and higher education to strengthen accessibility, outreach and transition-preparedness for targeted groups, such as Pupil Premium, gifted and talented students and students with special educational needs and disabilities
 - close co-operation with parents, families and carers in recognition of their key influence on children's thinking and decision-making, specifically to develop their capacity to talk about careers with their children and encourage family learning.

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WHY THIS MATTERS

- The UK's future depends on educating all our young people to the full extent of their capabilities.
- Raising aspirations and attainment is a key challenge for the education system – even when students have high aspirations, some schools work very hard to develop the aspirational capabilities in their students, which will enable them to achieve personally valued outcomes.
- Less than 10% of young white males in receipt of free school meals are progressing to higher education.
- Graduates are more likely to report higher job satisfaction, be in work and earn more than non-graduates over a working lifetime.

TOP TIPS FOR SCHOOLS

1. For programmes of support to be successful, they need to start in key stage 3. A useful rule of thumb is to inspire students in years 7-9, reinforce key messages in years 10-11 and prepare students for making their choices in years 12-13.
2. Avoid making judgements about the prestige and status of different pathways and providers in case you unwittingly influence your students inappropriately.
3. School and college budgets are tight but engaging in Gatsby benchmark 7 activities are more people intensive than cash intensive. Make sure to look at what you can achieve with the resources you have.
4. Track destinations of leavers over 3 to 5 years using a combination of quantitative data (to pick up on trends) and qualitative data (to pick up on stories). This will allow you to plan for the future.
5. See how the [National Collaborative Outreach Programme \(NCOP\)](#) supports target wards in each catchment area to promote higher education to students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

TOP TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

1. Outreach activities cannot be left to higher education institutions alone – employers can help tackle the deep-seated cultural and social reasons why young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are in danger of being left behind.
2. Highlight the significance of advanced further and higher education qualifications, including higher and degree level apprenticeships in your industry or sector.
3. Check with your professional body and/or HR department to ensure that you are passing on accurate and up-to-date information about the qualifications that are recognised in your industry and the wide range of entry points and routes.
4. Recognise that many parents still have an outmoded view of apprenticeships and may not have been to university or know how they have changed. Use your knowledge to bring them up to date.
5. Draw on your experience of applying for courses and jobs to pass on valuable advice to young people about being enterprising, determined and resilient when searching for apprenticeships or choosing higher education.
6. Anticipate the kinds of questions students may ask you. Asking direct questions about salary is not unusual so you may want to come armed with generalised information about salary ranges!

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RESOURCES

Download a calendar template from Word and populate it with further and higher education activities and events for your students.

Annual careers-related celebrations can be showcased in school or students can go along to national and local events associated with them. Examples include:

- [the Skills Show](#)
- [the Big Bang Fair](#) (science and engineering)
- [National Careers Week](#)
- [National Apprenticeship Week](#)
- [British Science Week](#)
- [International Women's Day](#)
- [National Mentoring Day](#)

Publicise [the university and college open day directory](#)

The Higher Education Funding Council for England guide to the national collaborative outreach programme aims to increase the number of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in higher education by 2020. Find out about activities in your area, such as mentoring programmes, taster days, summer schools and careers training for staff in schools and colleges.

The Sutton Trust [organise summer schools for disadvantaged students](#).

Up-to-date information about apprenticeships for students, parents and staff can be found at:

- [Jobcentre Plus](#)
- [Amazing Apprenticeships](#)
- [Apprenticeships 4 England](#)
- [Not going to uni](#)
- [Get my first job](#)
- [The guide to apprenticeship frameworks for employers and training providers](#)
- [The guide to apprenticeships from the Education and Skills Funding Agency](#)
- The [parents' guide to apprenticeships](#) from the Education and Skills Funding Agency
- [Get In Go Far](#)

Up-to-date information about higher education for students, parents and staff can be found at:

- [UCAS](#)
- [Whatuni?](#)
- [Which? University](#)
- [Best course 4 me](#)
- [The complete university guide](#)
- [UK Course Finder](#)
- [Unistats](#) – the official website for comparing HE courses
- [The Student Room](#)
- [Student Finance England](#)

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AN EXAMPLE OF ENCOUNTERS WITH FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Example 1

An academy located on the south coast is working with several charities to establish a network of volunteers and alumni at university or in apprenticeships.

They will support current students in a number of ways as informants, tutors alongside teachers in the classroom, mentors and role models.

Eligible students in years 7 to 9 experience multi-subject taster days at their local university.

Year 8 and 9s take part in a welcome day and evening graduation linked to choosing their GCSE and other options.

Key stage 4 and post-16 students benefit from conferences, master classes, experience days and residential summer schools, all of which are well-promoted through the school.

