

# GATSBY BENCHMARK 8

## Personal guidance

### WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

- **Every student should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a career adviser.**
- **Every student should have at least one of these interviews by the age of 16, and the opportunity for a further interview by the age of 18.**

A careers adviser can be internal, such as a member of school staff or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level.

To be 'trained to an appropriate level', the careers adviser must hold a career guidance qualification at level 6 (degree level) or higher, according to the Career Development Institute. Careers advisers are usually graduates with a recognised postgraduate qualification, although it is also possible to attain a qualification equivalent to graduate level through work-based training. They are qualified in careers guidance practice and theory.

Careers guidance activities include:

- listening to students' initial ideas, qualifications, skills, experiences, circumstances and life aims
- helping students to identify and explore suitable options and to consider the career implications of subject and course choice that are in their best interests
- challenging pre-existing assumptions about what they are capable of
- demystifying learning and labour market systems and helping students understand progression pathways
- developing practical strategies on how to achieve their goals, including pointing students to information sources of most use to them
- building students' persistence, motivation and confidence and helping them to see how they could overcome any barriers preventing them from moving forwards
- referring students to other agencies that can support them.

These activities should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made and it should be expected for all students and timed to meet their individual needs.

### WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

- Career conversations are an ongoing part of a student's school experience and personal guidance is an integrated part of the overall careers programme.
- The school offers personalised support tailored to students' needs and abilities. The advice is impartial and always in the best interests of the young person. It has an observable impact on their career and progression.
- The personal guidance on careers is closely integrated with the wider pastoral and student support system in the school. Senior staff, including the headteacher, heads of year, personal tutors, form teachers and learning support staff, consider students' career development as an integral part of their overall personal, social and educational development. Communication between staff is good and underpinned by effective information-sharing and record-keeping. Specialist inputs by career advisers are valued and acted upon.
- Career advisers work closely with staff to deliver a range of individual support to students, including:
  - one-to-one guidance at crucial points of decision-making, including year 8 and 9 option choice and choosing pathways for post-16 and post-18 – this guidance offers students in-depth support to interpret information and apply it to their own situation
  - group work sessions on particular topics, such as apprenticeships, labour market trends or employability skills
  - advice to parents and students at careers fairs and parents' evenings
  - advertised drop-in sessions for students at lunchtimes and other times during the week
  - support on exam results days.

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### WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE CONT'D.

- Career advisers also assist the school on planning provision, training staff and evaluating the programme.
- Schools and colleges may commission external support from a specialist careers guidance provider or employ a careers adviser directly. In both arrangements, best practice involves careers advisers upholding professional standards and continuing their professional development. In England, the Career Development Institute maintains a professional register and members subscribe to a code of ethics, which covers issues like competence, confidentiality, impartiality and equality.
- Students and parents are clear how to access personal guidance and can refer themselves at appropriate times for individual advice and support. The school is proactive in reaching out to parents who find it difficult to support their child's career development. Staff are also proactive in supporting students with complex lives, for example, young carers. Their needs are recognised and resourced with more intensive, wrap-around support, including ongoing mentoring.

### TOP TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

1. Find out what arrangements the school has put in place for a student's personal guidance.
2. Assist the school in building coherence between the employer encounters and personal guidance.
3. Draw on the expertise of the careers adviser in getting to grips with the complex educational choices facing students and the destinations they choose. Help the careers adviser to work effectively with students by sharing information about employment trends in the organisation or sector you work in.
4. Ask the adviser for case studies and examples of students' aspirations to illustrate your talks or activities.
5. Work with the school to ensure students are prepared to benefit from employer encounters and experiences of work. Also ensure they have opportunities to reflect on what they have learned and how it relates to their career planning.
6. Encourage students to make best use of the personal guidance on offer.
7. If you receive feedback from students about access to or delivery of personal guidance, share it with the careers lead at the school.

### WHY THIS MATTERS

- Providing structured personal guidance time within the school enables students to focus on their future dreams and to set goals to achieve them.
- Research shows that students benefit from conversations with familiar and trusted adults who can challenge and support them.
- Access to independent and impartial professional career guidance is strongly valued by students and parents and is a recurring feature of good provision.
- Personal guidance helps students to consolidate and reflect upon their vocational identity, career decision making and self-efficacy. It is a focal point for making sense of the vital ingredients in the careers programme including encounters with employers and higher education, experiences of workplaces and career learning in subjects.
- Research evidence confirms that personal guidance has an observable impact on a student's career and progression.

8. Work with the school and the careers adviser to ensure personal guidance connects to other careers interventions and forms a meaningful whole.
9. Share information with schools and colleges about how you and your organisation support career development for new recruits and existing staff.

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### TOP TIPS FOR SCHOOLS

1. Ensure that you have a clear analysis of the guidance needs of your students and how professional careers advisers can support your careers and enterprise programme.
2. Check that your plans meet the DfE statutory requirement students from years 8 to 13 have access to independent and impartial careers guidance.
3. Ensure you have a sustainable approach to funding careers guidance and a clear ongoing accountability for management and review.
4. Compare approaches with other schools in your area and identify any opportunities for collaborative arrangements.
5. Make sure the organisation you are commissioning is high-quality and matrix accredited.
6. Choose careers advisers who hold a level 6 careers qualification, such as the Qualification in Careers Guidance (QCG) or the work-based Diploma in Career Guidance and Development, who subscribe to the CDI Code of Ethics and have a valid DBS check.
7. Monitor and review the services offered, including gathering feedback from parents and students.
8. With individual agreement, integrate records from careers interviews into student reporting systems so that tutors can support ongoing career planning.
9. Build intensive, wrap-around support for your more vulnerable students through mentoring and other programmes.

### RESOURCES

- Check out [the CDI's advice and good practice on commissioning careers guidance services](#).
- Consider how to support teachers and tutors to fulfil the careers informant role set out in the [TeachFirst Careers Education in the Classroom](#).
- The matrix Standard is the quality standard for the guidance sector. The Department for Education (DfE) recommends that schools secure careers guidance from an external provider with matrix accreditation. Check out [the Holders' Directory](#).
- Consider how [the National Careers Service phone, email and webchat service](#) can complement your local offer.
- Find a registered career development professional through [the CDI Register](#).
- Check out the professional behaviour and practice required of all CDI members in its [Code of Ethics](#).
- Support your careers adviser to maintain their continuing professional development through [CDI resources](#) and other partners.
- Explore how mentoring and other activities can provide the intensive, wrap-around support that some students need through [The Careers and Enterprise Company's grant recipients](#).

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### EXAMPLES OF PERSONAL GUIDANCE

#### Example 1

At its last inspection, a school in Wiltshire was graded outstanding in all categories. The school's mission statement is, "To promote an inspirational culture in which everyone feels valued and challenged to reach their potential".

All students have access to impartial careers advice from a qualified in-house careers adviser and outside agencies. The careers guidance provided is monitored by the careers lead and the careers adviser, who review action plans and interview statistics.

This tailored guidance builds on a programme of careers education, which is provided on a fortnightly basis for years 7 to 11 and a regular tutorial session for the sixth form. Strong efforts are made to gather feedback from students, parents and employers about the effectiveness of the careers guidance.

Going back as far as 2011, careers provision has continually been rated good to outstanding by all stakeholders. Parents are very happy with the level of careers advice on offer. The headteacher was delighted to be the first school in the county to receive the Quality in Careers Standard and to be rated Gold.

#### Example 2

A school in the West Midlands employs a qualified and experienced careers adviser. Part of his remit is to ensure the careers curriculum covers all pathways and is completely impartial.

He also works to ensure that, by the time students are ready for a formal interview at key points of transition, they are fully aware of all of their options. All students have access to one-to-one interviews with the adviser, with a particular focus on students in years 11 and 12.

An action plan is written by the careers adviser with each student and these are shared with parents and tutors. The school works hard to make sure that the careers adviser's time is well-used and that their expertise and insights contribute fully to the planning and evaluation of the careers and enterprise programme.

