



HOW DOES WESTON COLLEGE MEASURE UP AGAINST THE GATSBY BENCHMARKS?

The 2017 DfE Careers Strategy making the most of everyone's skills and talents, (DfE December 2017) sets out that every further education institution should use the Gatsby Charitable Foundation's Benchmarks to develop and improve their careers provision.

By adopting them, Weston College can be confident of not only meeting the actions set out in the national careers strategy, but can evidence how it brings dynamism into careers to allow students in the region to fully explore, test and immerse themselves to create their brighter future. The below outlines how the College matches itself against these benchmarks.

1	A STABLE CAREERS PROGRAMME	Weston College learners are provided with numerous opportunities to access information, advice and guidance and careers education throughout their time at the College. The College has also designed its own careers portal to ensure learners can explore and access careers information and resources. The College's Careers Leader is part of the leadership board who drives careers in consultation and collaboration with various stakeholders including the link college governor for careers. The careers provision has a dedicated section on the College website where you can also access the College's careers strategy 'Making careers everyone's business'.
2	LEARNING FROM CAREER AND LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION	It is essential that our curriculum respond to the needs of industry and aligns itself with both local and national priorities. In addition to the proactive partnership with the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership, each college faculty produces Curriculum Intent and Alignment Plans that use advanced LMI tools to make sure industry skills and knowledge are at the heart of all programmes, including Industry Advisory Boards to critically evaluate our provision, whilst reaffirming that it effectively meets the needs of local industry. The College also embeds into all full-time programmes an Individual Development (ID) programme that uses LMI to identify key hard and soft skills that are required within the relevant industry that are then delivered via this skills development programme. The use of LMI is used to not only design our curriculum but also provide comprehensive information to help inform careers resources and careers guidance.
3	ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF EACH STUDENT	Weston College learners build up a strong relationship with personal tutors and have regular contact sessions and tutorials, where they discuss and encourage learners to research and plan for their next steps. The careers programme considers the differing needs of learners and Careers Advisers are always able to provide informed and impartial advice and guidance, as well as having a link advisor for SEND provision. As part of their bridging programme, all new starters are asked to complete a careers exploration questionnaire, which is then reviewed as part of their first tutorial. This acts as a further tool to confirm that learners are on the right programme. Our curriculum is designed to build confidence and inform learners of the industry expectations and behaviours within their chosen field, as well as seeking improvements in English, maths and digital skills. Through differentiation this is designed to transition learners into their chosen entry point into the world of work, or for progression to further study to enter their profession at a higher level through a higher vocational and/or academic route.
4	LINKING CURRICULUM LEARNING TO CAREERS	Weston College's Career Excellence Hub model is designed to build on our impressive existing wider partnership/signposting work with employers, schools and stakeholders such as the West of England LEP Careers Hub. Collective aspiration has been achieved through the creation of the Career Excellence Hub which reflects our response to the FE White Paper to put employers at the heart of post-16 skills education and is designed to support the learner every step of the way, making sustainable positive careers a reality. The charter ensures that each faculty is committed to aligning its curriculum to the needs of employers as they endorse our curriculum by becoming Career Excellence Hub partners, which also sees them heavily involved in the delivery of curriculum and ensures learners are equipped with 21st Century employability skills to progress them onto their next career destination.
5	ENCOUNTERS WITH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES	Depending on the type of programme, whether it be full-time, apprenticeship etc. learners are regularly given the opportunity to engage employers. All college learners are timetabled to attend the College's CareersFest and all full-time programmes within each Career Excellence Hub are provided with an enhancement menu to add tailored and relevant employer encounters into a learner's programme, at the same time all Career Excellence Hub partner employers devote a significant amount of time to being an integral part of that area's curriculum offer to embed 'real world learning' using employer briefs and real-life case studies and scenarios to encourage up to the minute workplace problem solving, as well industry upskilling via masterclasses and industry insights.
6	EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACES	The Careers Excellence Hub model provides all full-time college learners with unrivalled exposure to employers, as well as understanding what it means to be truly inclusive in a modern workplace, whilst college apprentices gain vital workplace knowledge, skills and behaviour due to the 80% on-the-job training. All college learners on full-time programmes are given the opportunity to immerse themselves in industry via placements which requires learners to complete at least one week of placement, or in some cases a 300+ hour industry placement as a compulsory element of their programme. Many learners come to college already undertaking part-time or full-time employment and they are given the opportunity to relate learning to this and evaluate this experience. Weston College was also one of the pilot T Level providers and now offers several T Level pathways, which have industry placements at their core. For SEND learners, the supported internship programme 'Into Work' works collaboratively with employers to match job roles to the learner's skills.
7	ENCOUNTERS WITH FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION	Universities and training providers attend the College's own careers convention, CareersFest, where learners can gather information and ask questions about their provision. At the same time, the College dedicates a whole month to careers under the banner of My Futures Month where a large number of providers deliver talks and showcase their provision. The College's own university centre (UCW) and apprenticeships service support tutorials, parents' evenings and much more. The College has its own provider access agreement that can be found on the website.
8	PERSONAL GUIDANCE	All college learners have access to a highly qualified and experienced team of careers advisors including those at level 6 and above, as well as access to licenced programmes, such as EMSI Career Coach and the College's own online careers library. We actively encourage students to look critically at skills and experiences and how they relate to ambitions and regardless of where they are in their journey. To achieve this, we have also placed a great emphasis on trying to empower learners with the tools and confidence to explore careers, so when they work with our specialist careers advice team they are able to have an informed discussion about their career and the support they require. Weston College holds the Matrix standard for advice and guidance that recognises the quality and impact the provision has on learners.