



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills



Department
for Education

Securing Independent Careers Guidance

**Guidance for General Further Education
Colleges and Sixth Form Colleges**

June 2013

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A new careers guidance requirement for colleges

1. Following a public consultation in 2012 on extending access to careers guidance, all further education (FE) colleges and sixth form colleges will be subject to a new requirement to secure access to independent careers guidance from September 2013. This is being introduced alongside an extension of the age range of the existing careers duty on schools to years 8-13 and will form part of FE college and sixth form college funding agreements.
2. Independent careers guidance secured under the new requirement should:
 - Inspire young people about the full range of education, training and employment opportunities available to students;
 - Be provided in an impartial manner; and
 - Promote the best interests of the student to whom it is given.

The new requirement applies to:

- All students in colleges up to and including the age of 18; and
 - 19- to 25-year-olds with a current Learning Difficulty Assessment in place under section 139a of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.¹
3. This document offers guidance that your college may wish to draw on when interpreting the new requirement and deciding on the most appropriate forms of independent and impartial careers guidance and other kinds of careers support for your students.

The intended impact of the new requirement

4. The majority of respondents to the consultation on extending access to careers guidance favoured the extension of the existing careers duty to ensure that all young people in schools and colleges can access the support they need to participate. Inspiring, informing and supporting young people at this age is especially important as the Government raises the compulsory age of participation in education or training to age 17 in 2013 and to age 18 in 2015². Colleges will need to work with local authorities to ensure that 17 year old students have received a suitable offer under the [September Guarantee](#).

¹ Section 45 of the Education Act 1997 remains in force and should continue to apply to students of all ages, alongside the new requirement. This requires all college students to be provided with guidance materials and a wide range of up-to-date reference materials relating to careers education and career opportunities.

² [Statutory Guidance](#) on the participation of young people is available on the DfE website

5. Well informed decisions about education, training and work options are critical to young people realising their potential. Opening the eyes of young people to the wealth of opportunities available to them can raise their ambitions and encourage them to overcome barriers to success and to pursue the qualifications and skill development necessary to realise their highest potential.
6. The Government recognises that many FE institutions already have successful student support services – often holding the **matrix** Standard for their careers information, advice and guidance provision - this support should continue. The new requirement aims to ensure that all young people in FE have access to external perspectives beyond the college. The Government is **not prescribing** how each college fulfils the requirement and there is no compulsion to buy in specialist support. Making connections with a range of employers can be a very helpful way of fulfilling the new requirement. Students can benefit from the opportunity to hear from inspiring employers; from access to external mentors, meeting coaches or careers advisers; and from access to websites and helplines.
7. Colleges should review existing support³ and take steps to ensure this meets their students' needs. Governors, not least those from an employer background, have an important role to play.

Inspiration for students

8. To engage successfully with information about education, training and career choices and apply it to their ambitions, students need to be inspired and motivated to think about a broad and ambitious range of future career possibilities. Often the best way to find out about different jobs and careers is from the employers themselves.
9. Access to a network of employers from a range of sectors and professions can be highly motivating for students. It can open their eyes to possibilities they might never have considered or help to consolidate existing career thinking.

This could be achieved through:

- Mentoring and Coaching
- Employer career talks
- Workplace visits
- Work 'taster' events such as games and competitions
- Careers fairs and career networking events
- Access to open days at higher education (HE) institutions

³ Alongside matrix, a range of dedicated quality awards exists if your college wishes to demonstrate the quality of your overall careers education, information, advice and guidance programme. [The Quality in Careers Standard](#), the national validation supported by the Government, will assist you in determining an appropriate quality award to pursue

'Inspiring the Future', launched in July 2012 by the Education and Employers Taskforce, matches schools and colleges with inspiring employers who can give career insight talks. Further information is available at www.inspiringthefuture.org

To ensure your students get a real insight into apprenticeships and other vocational routes, you may wish to signpost the [National Apprenticeship Service](#) to students and parents, or invite employers and other local education and training providers to input to your overall careers programme. There is also a range of [resources](#) available for teachers on the National Apprenticeship Service website to assist them when offering advice on Apprenticeship routes.

Helping students access information

10. Many young people are highly motivated by work. Facilitating access to labour market intelligence can build on that interest, inspiring young people to get excited about a range of jobs. They can use this information to understand the structure of jobs in different sectors, and where there is demand for skills, including local opportunities. They may also need help in accessing information about the routes into different careers.
11. Colleges need to ensure that all their students have access to and are taking advantage of this information, exploring options from the full range of possibilities including:
 - Vocational and academic routes
 - Traineeships and apprenticeships
 - Further, higher and postgraduate study, including Higher Apprenticeships
 - Work experience
 - Work and study abroad
 - Volunteering
 - Supported internships and sustainable employment

Support for choices and progression

12. Some students will need little support to make good choices based on their aspirations and the information they can access. Others will need more help in thinking about their current position; their strengths; the opportunities and risks in different career paths and what it will take to get there. Students with disabilities,

learning difficulties or language needs may need specialist support. Colleges should ensure that the individual needs of all students are considered.

13. Face-to-face support can benefit students, and can be particularly crucial for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds or those with learning difficulties or disabilities. It can also be part of preventative support for students known to be at risk of dropping out – helping them remain in a form of learning that will benefit them. In-depth and personalised support can help students review their circumstances, skills, aptitudes, interests and aspirations as they make decisions about future education, training and work options. A range of external sources can provide this type of support including:

- Mentors and coaches
- HE advisers
- Independent careers advisers
- College alumni
- The National Careers Service

Training in preparing CVs, job hunting and interview techniques can also help young people prepare for the next step. Colleges can provide specific help for those who wish to progress to HE, for example with UCAS applications.

'The Skills Show' helps to inspire young people through highly interactive events across the UK. Teachers and students have the opportunity to get hands on experience of a wide variety of work-based skills, hear talks from real people doing real jobs and access impartial advice on different industries and careers. The Skills Show takes place in Birmingham, 14-16 November 2013 and is free to attend. Alongside this, a local programme places an emphasis on collaboration and providing inspiring, interactive opportunities underpinned by information and advice relevant to local need. Further information is available at www.theskillsshow.com.

The National Careers Service

14. The National Careers Service (NCS) offers information and high quality professional career guidance to people of all ages. The NCS is currently co-located in over 100 colleges and some colleges provide the NCS face-to-face service as sub-contractors. The Government is keen to see more extensive partnership working between colleges and the NCS, including extending this to working with schools, jobcentres and employers to provide a more integrated local careers guidance infrastructure underpinned by informed labour market intelligence. The Association of Colleges will

shortly be publishing a practical guide to closer working between the NCS and colleges.

15. The NCS also provides support online, by web chat and over the telephone – students can access this service on 0800 100 900 or at nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk. Colleges can choose to commission independent careers guidance from [providers delivering NCS services](#).
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Myths and facts

Myth: Initiatives like ‘Inspiring the Future’ will not be able to reach all regions, especially rural areas where there are few employers.

Fact: ‘Inspiring the Future’ is using local and regional media and creating a bank of local spokespeople over time. Colleges can also use stakeholder networks, large employers with branches, outlets or offices nationally and also gateway organisations, such as Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, Institute of Directors, British Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Trades Union Congress and Confederation of British Industry, who also have regional branches or chambers.

Myth: Online support is enough.

Fact: The new requirement is focussed on ensuring students have access to a range of external perspectives on future career options, including employer talks and mentoring, that can both inform and inspire students. Your college may already secure some external careers support but you should take the opportunity to review this.

Case Studies

Engaging employers to inspire and motivate students: Bishop Auckland College

Recognising how employer engagement helps to motivate their students to progress, Bishop Auckland College introduced an Employability, Enterprise and Careers framework in 2012. The framework focuses on employer engagement, employability skills training, career planning and developing entrepreneurial skills through the enterprise agenda. The college's Careers and Employability team are directly linked to curriculum areas and plan delivery of the framework with vocational tutors to ensure a sector based approach and employer input.

Stephanie Natrass, Head of Client Services: "The college is committed to the development of employer engagement, which motivates and inspires learners with the knowledge and opportunity to succeed in their chosen career path and realise their potential."

Technology and catering are two areas where direct exposure to a range of employers has inspired students to consider a broad range of career possibilities. Strengthening links with a large technology employer has supported the development of learners' employability skills and understanding of career opportunities. The employer provides an information session to learners on employment opportunities and career progression, followed by on-site visits and the opportunity for some to undertake work placements. Students have also benefitted from employer-led sessions offering first-hand insights into areas including hybrid technology and new building technology.

The college has established a strong partnership with the only Michelin starred restaurant in Durham and Northumberland to raise the ambitions of catering students. The chef leads an inspirational cooking demonstration at the college, followed up with visits and the opportunity to apply for a prestigious work placement in the restaurant.

By refocusing careers provision on working alongside employers, the college recognise they have a powerful tool to motivate students and help them understand different working situations.

Further information: Stephanie Natrass, Head of Client Services; Stephanie.Natrass@bacoll.ac.uk

Benefits of employers and educationalists working in partnership to raise aspirations: Career Academies UK

Career Academies UK helps raise young people's aspirations and bridge the gap between education and work by giving them access to real experience of the world of work.

Recognising that some young people benefit enormously from hands-on experience with employers, the charity developed a structured programme of paid internships, mentoring, motivational lectures and workshops to give 16-19 year olds work experience and skills.

This two-year programme is designed to complement students' studies and since it began in 2002, nearly 5000 students have graduated from the programme. The programme is currently delivered in 140 schools and colleges across the UK.

At the heart of the Career Academy experience is a six-week paid internship. Students get the chance to experience working in a real operating environment, doing a job that benefits the employer and putting into practice what they've learnt at school or college.

Additionally, each student is offered a Partner in Business – a mentor who acts as a role model, critical friend and advisor to them throughout the programme – as well as the opportunity to attend 'guru' lectures and workplace visits.

The Career Academy programme provides an awareness of business that broadens young people's horizons and helps them decide which route to take when they leave school or college. Over 85% of Career Academy graduates progress either to university – often the first in their family to do so - or directly into employment or work based learning such as apprenticeships or school leaver programmes.

Further information: David Walker, Director of Programme, Policy and Communications; d.walker@careeracademies.org.uk

Dayana, Career Academy student from Haverstock School, London: "Since starting the Career Academy programme, I have become much more professional and it has helped me to realise that endless possibilities are open to me. I have achieved so many things I did not think possible – my mum is very proud!"

Benefits of the use of Labour Market Information within the overall careers provision: Barnet and Southgate College

The college has a qualified careers team which works across four campuses in the London boroughs of Barnet and Enfield. They believe appropriate training and support, including the provision and use of Labour Market Information (LMI) for their staff is crucial to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge to work effectively. The college has partnerships and links with external organisations, some of which provide free training for its staff.

The college uses a range of LMI sources, including regular monthly updates from the Department for Work and Pensions on labour market trends and live vacancy information. Data from NOMIS (a service provided by the Office for National Statistics which provides free access to UK labour market statistics) is also used. The college also uses information provided by the local authority on LMI drawn from specific employer engagement activities.

LMI data is disseminated to guide all staff on a regular basis and deliver group and individual sessions to the students.

Events and visits are organised for students to support their progression, for example employer fairs, HE fairs and visiting speakers from universities. The college is keen to establish employer engagement. The college works with Reed NCFE who help to prepare students for the work place and provide access to a number of local job vacancies.

The college believes that LMI has a key role to play in their overall information, advice and guidance (IAG) package. The ultimate aim is to develop within individuals the skills and knowledge required to enable them to achieve their full potential for the future.

Further information: Tricia Curran, Careers Co-ordinator; Tricia.Curran@barnetsouthgate.ac.uk

Tricia Curran, Careers Co-ordinator: "It is crucial that students and prospective students are supported to access up-to-date labour market information to enable them to make informed choices about their future progression."

Collaborative approach to securing impartial careers advice: Winstanley and St John Rigby College, Wigan

The two sixth form colleges recognised that by working together they could offer a more independent and impartial careers guidance service to their students. A partnership was established and a Lead Careers Adviser appointed to review existing provision and develop the service.

Both colleges already had robust personal tutor systems in place. The Lead Careers Adviser has been able to identify key areas for support and development, for example in raising awareness of Apprenticeships. The Adviser plays a key role in developing links with employers and training providers and a single point of contact has allowed more time to cement these relationships and foster new links.

Tony Dann, the Lead Careers Adviser: “we have an invaluable opportunity to develop a new, more efficient and effective service that is flexible and adaptable to change.”

Peter McGhee, Principal of St John Rigby College: “Our vision is to work collaboratively with key partners and provide a good service that is value for money.”

Appointing a shared Lead Careers Adviser across both colleges is a cost effective way to share resources. In addition, local schools have also expressed an interest in procuring the service. A further two careers advisers were appointed, and four schools now procure a careers guidance service from the partnership. This has allowed the schools to buy in a bespoke service that is tailored to the needs of their pupils – giving them flexibility to decide how much of the careers advisers’ time they wish to buy and how to use that time. The careers adviser has a close relationship with the schools so they are highly responsive to the schools’ requirements.

Further information: Tony Dann, Lead careers adviser; Tony.Dann@winstanley.ac.uk and Tony.Dann@sjr.ac.uk

Benefits of buying in specialist advice where there are no in-house careers advisers: Hereward College and The Careers Guidance Company (CSWP)

Hereward College offers inclusive provision with specialist facilities for students with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It draws day students from across Coventry, Warwickshire, Solihull and Birmingham. It also has residential students from all over the UK and some privately funded overseas students.

To supplement the college's in-house student services, where there are no qualified careers advisers, the college commissions The Careers Guidance Company (CSWP) for a day and a half of a qualified adviser time per week during term time. The college understands that good career guidance will support their students to develop self-awareness and evaluate information to make sound decisions about future learning and work options.

Paying for a CSWP careers adviser to conduct individual careers IAG interviews with college students means they can offer all students access to up to date, high quality, impartial careers IAG. A main focus of the work is advising about post-college options and long term career goals, the funding available to support future plans, and liaising with organisations in a student's home area so the effective transition plans are in place when they leave college.

The college works alongside the specialist CSWP adviser to ensure the college remains responsive to the needs of their students and that the students benefit from impartial career guidance, helping them to be well prepared for the next stage.

Jon Clugston, Vice Principal Hereward College: "The service provided by CSWP at Hereward is an integral part of the extensive range of services available to all students. Now, more than ever, it is vital for all young people to get expert advice and guidance in the world of education and employment and I am confident that CSWP are providing an excellent service for our students."

Further information: Anne Kelly CSWP; Anne.Kelly@cswp.org.uk and Jon Clugston, Vice Principal, Student Independence and Progression; Jon.Clugston@hereward.ac.uk

Useful websites and contacts

- [157 Group](#) – Is a membership organisation that represents 27 large and regionally influential Further Education colleges in England.
- Association of School and College Leaders and Association of Colleges existing guidance: [putting young people first](#)
- [Bestcourse4me](#) Provides information for pupils on wage returns to particular degrees and universities.
- [Career Academies UK](#) Career Academies UK helps raise young people’s aspirations and bridge the gap between education and work by giving them access to real experience of the world of work.
- [Career Development Institute](#) is the new single UK-wide professional organisation for all working in all fields of career education; career information, advice and guidance; career coaching and career consultancy.
- [Careers Profession Alliance](#) Is the professional body that serves career development practitioners and membership is open to all.
- [Education and Employers Task Force](#) supports effective partnerships between schools, colleges and employers to inspire young people
- [icould](#) - Careers information website
- [Inspiring the Future](#) is a free service across England with volunteers from all sectors and professions going into state secondary schools and colleges to talk about their jobs and sectors.
- [Job Zoo](#) - CV and careers resources
- [matrix](#) is the unique quality standard for organisations to assess and measure their advice and support services, which ultimately supports individuals in their choice of career.
- [National Apprenticeship Service](#) (NAS) supports, funds and co-ordinates the delivery of Apprenticeships throughout England.
- National Careers Service – 0800 100 900 or at [the website](#)
- [plotr](#) is a new online service which allows young people to explore careers and brings together opportunities in one place.
- [Prospects](#) - A graduate careers website supporting students to find graduate jobs, postgraduate courses, work experience and careers advice
- [Quality in Careers Standard](#) provides key information about the Quality in Careers Standard (QiCS).
- [The Big Bang Fair](#) – is the largest celebration of science, technology, engineering and maths for young people in the UK.
- [The Skills Show](#) is responsible for the UK’s largest skills and careers event at the NEC Birmingham
- [Unistats](#) is the official website for comparing UK higher education course data



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