



Dudley
Sixth
for A levels

CAREERS STRATEGY (2026 - 2031)



STATEMENT OF INTENT

Dudley College of Technology incorporating Dudley Sixth is committed to providing high quality, impartial careers education, advice and guidance (CEAG), accessible to all students.

CEAG will be available during all stages of a student's journey, whether they be studying a full-time study programme, an apprenticeship, a HE programme or a part-time course. The aim is to encourage students to raise their aspirations and assist them to plan and manage their personal progression and career planning using appropriate labour market information.

The CEAG approach responds to:

- Section 45A of the Education Act (1997)
- Section 72 of the Education and Skills Act 2008
- Schedule 4 (15) of the School Information (England) Regulations 2008
- Learners aged 19 to 25 with a current education, health and care plan (EHCP) in place under section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

The guidance defines careers guidance as: "the full range of activity delivered under the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks."

government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools

- Skills for Jobs White Paper (January 2021)
- Careers guidance and access for education and training providers (July 2021)
- Matrix quality standard new framework (January 2026)
- Education Inspection Framework (Ofsted)
- Gatsby Benchmarks for Colleges (Revised November 2024, adopted by DfE May 2025)
- Young people and work (interim report – The Millburn Review) May 2026



THE GATSBY BENCHMARKS

The Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance have been amended since their original inception in 2014 and their national adoption in 2018, to reflect changing government priorities and to provide more detailed information on the descriptive and measurable elements of the 8 benchmarks.

The May 2025 updates were specifically designed to prepare for a guarantee of 2 weeks' worth of work experience for every young person. From September 2025, all institutions have been mandated to use the updated Gatsby Benchmarks.

The core of the benchmarks places careers at the heart of education and leadership so that careers guidance is both a whole-staff and a whole-institution endeavour.

Thereby.

- linking careers and the institution's vision and strategic plans
- acknowledging the importance of staff development
- including distinct responsibilities for leadership, governors, careers leaders and advisers
- inclusion and impact for every young person.

Updates to multiple benchmarks emphasise:

- tailoring to the needs of each young person
- paying particular attention to any additional or different support that may be needed by vulnerable or disadvantaged young people, or those with SEND
- meaningful and varied encounters and experiences.

Updates emphasise:

- the importance of offering a variety of encounters and experiences
- giving young people time to prepare and reflect
- using technology alongside, but not instead of, in-person activity
- all young people must be able to explore all future pathways equitably
- using information to inform decision-making
- refocusing data collection to include aspirations and intended destinations, to help tailor support
- keeping longer-term and sustained destinations data as part of the evaluation process
- embedding parent and carer engagement into planning, as parents and carers are one of the biggest influences on young people's career decision-making
- sharing information with parents and carers and supporting them in using it with their children

The Eight Gatsby Benchmarks (Updated):

1. A Stable Careers Programme:

A published, strategic, and evaluated programme.

2. Learning from Career and Labour Market Information (LMI):

Using current data to inform student choices.

3. Addressing the Needs of Each Learner:

Personalised support to reduce inequality and NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) rates.

4. Linking Curriculum Learning to Careers:

Teachers integrating career paths into their subject teaching.

5. Encounters with Employers and Employees:

Meaningful, varied, in-person, or virtual interactions.

6. Experiences of Workplaces:

Direct, practical experience (e.g., work experience, internships).

7. Encounters with Further and Higher Education

Experiences of technical training, apprenticeships and university.

8. Personal Guidance

Access to independent, qualified, and tailored career advice.

THE CAREERS & ENTERPRISE COMPANY (CEC)

The national careers system in England is overseen by the CEC, which delivers improvements in careers provision, in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Working through Careers Hubs, which are partnerships between the CEC and local authorities, the CEC is working directly with secondary schools, colleges, specialist institutions, apprenticeship providers and employers. Each Careers Hub is designed to improve careers performance through co-ordination, challenge and support. Dudley College of Technology is part of the Black Country Careers Hub.

Cornerstone employers form a national network of employers, of all sizes and from all sectors, to support the work of the by Careers Hubs through targeted intervention in disadvantaged areas. "Cornerstones" provide the employer voice and leadership on shared careers-related priorities.



DUDLEY COLLEGE'S APPROACH

Dudley College of Technology has successfully implemented careers progression programmes to date, with high levels of learners progressing to positive destinations, including further learning, higher level apprenticeships, university level programmes, or employment.

A Level destination data confirms 98% of our learners gain positive destinations with the majority progressing into higher education, and the destination data for full-time 16-18-year-olds demonstrates that 92% of learners continue in training, employment, or higher education.

In 2025/6 237 learners on full-time vocational programmes completed an Industrial placement as part of their T-Level programme of study, evidencing the importance the college places on learners developing transferable employability skills.



THE COLLEGE CAREERS ACTIVITY BROADLY FOLLOWS THIS RAFT OF ACTIVITY

Activity	Location	Pre-enrolment	Autumn term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Pre -College					
School liaison activity	Schools, Conferences, Job Centres	✓	✓	✓	✓
Open Events	Cross College	✓	✓	✓	✓
Welcome Events	Curriculum face-to-face & online	✓	✓	✓	✓
Results days (GCSE & A Level)	College & Schools Clearing Service	✓			
Enrolment	College		✓		
CEAG 1:1 face-to-face & online	Careers Team	✓	✓	✓	✓
Induction	Cross College Curriculum	✓	✓		
Work Experience (WEX) & Employability					
Work Placements			✓	✓	✓
Employer Encounters	In College & at employer premises		✓	✓	✓
CV Writing	Careers Team/ Tutorial		✓	✓	✓
Skills Competitions	Curriculum Lead national locations		✓	✓	✓
Careers Fair (Including next steps jobs & apprenticeships)	Cross-College			✓	
Supported Internships	In College & at employer premises		✓	✓	✓
Next Steps workshops	Careers Teams		✓	✓	✓

Activity	Location	Pre-enrolment	Autumn term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Preparation for Higher Education					
UCAS Research and Application	Careers Team		✓	✓	
Personal Statement Writing	Careers Team		✓	✓	
Student Finance Talks	Student Finance Team		✓	✓	✓
University Visits	Various HEI locations nationally		✓	✓	✓
UCAS Fairs	Curriculum Specific attendance nationally		✓	✓	✓
Level Results Guidance and Clearing	In College				✓
Routes to Progression – University & Higher Apprenticeships Talks delivered online	Cross College Curriculum			✓	



PRIORITIES FOR THE LIFE OF THIS PLAN

For the life of this plan Dudley College of Technology has identified the following areas of development:

Priority 1: Embedding Careers and WEX into programmes of study

- Curriculum and support teams have a clear focus and deliver courses that have a clear destination or career-related pathway.
- As a college, continue to link the Gatsby Benchmarks, and careers education, into all aspects of curriculum learning. This will ensure that learners are equipped with current, relevant knowledge, employability skills, and work-based experiences that they need to make informed choices in today's changing labour market.
- The aspiration is that all learners irrespective of level of study will have a work experience element to their study programme, this may be a block release element as in the T level programmes or a community project as in Entry to FE programmes.



Priority 2: Developing the use of online tools to support career choices and monitoring use

- The college provides access to a number of online tools including Pathways, Xello and Unifrog, these are embedded into the Tutorial programme.
- Our aim for the life of this plan is to ensure consistent and universal use of these tools.
- Improving reporting on usage and using those reports to provide oversight so we can ensure all students are in a position to make well informed career choices.



Priority 3: Monitoring the impact of CEAG on student experience

- All learners create an Individual Learning Plans (ILP), which includes them defining their career goal at the start of their studies then working towards that goal.
- We want to better understand the relationship between the goals they set and their destination on concluding their study programme.



Priority 4: Expanding links with employers in all curriculum areas

- We know there are numerous relationships with employers and employer representative bodies across our curriculum areas; both direct (we are training apprentices from those businesses) and indirect (employers are working with awarding bodies on curriculum design).
- Our ambition for the life of this plan is to ensure businesses of all sizes are working with us through our Employer Forums, to ensure students understand the changing labour market and fully understand what employers are looking for when recruiting their work force.

Priority 5: Ensuring Career Pathways are in place including Level 4 pathways

- The college has built a series of progression routes to facilitate onward progression to specific careers.
- Our goal is to further develop pathways at level 4 and beyond both with our own provision and through developing meaningful partnerships with Higher Education Institutions whose specialisms complement our own expertise.

Priority 6: Ensuring individual needs are met

- We will ensure we provide an inclusive careers programme that ensures learners with vulnerabilities and those who are at risk are appropriately supported and identified through close working relationships with the full range of educational and support agencies.
- We will make sure careers guidance for learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is adapted, where appropriate, based on a personalised approach. We will ensure that 1:1 personal guidance is delivered to every student with an EHCP plan.

CAREERS ACCESS POLICY

The College's arrangements for managing the access of other educational/training providers to learners at the College for the purpose of giving them information about the providers' training or education offer is set out in our Careers Access Policy. All 16-18 learners on full-time programmes of study are entitled to:

- find out about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships opportunities as part of a careers programme which provides information on the full range of education and training options available
- have access to local providers and employers to find out about the opportunities they offer, through careers events, talks and visits.
- understand how to make applications for the full range of academic and technical courses as well as employment

A number of events, integrated into the College's careers programme, offer providers access to college learners and/or their parents/carers. These can be face to face or are increasingly virtual via Microsoft Teams or similar software.

This is all part of our commitment to offer impartial carers guidance in the best interest of all learners.

The operational careers leader is Debbie Goode, Executive Director. Any provider wishing to request access should contact the Careers Leader by e-mail in the first instance on **Debbie.goode@dudleycol.ac.uk**.





Useful Careers Contacts at Dudley College of Technology and Dudley Sixth

If you are a **parent**, carer or potential student with any queries relating to Careers Planning please contact learnerservices@dudleycol.ac.uk

If you are an **employer** and would like to speak to someone regarding opportunities to engage in our Careers Programme by providing work experience, placements or speakers, please contact: employerservices@dudleycol.ac.uk

If you are a **school** and you would like to work with us on Careers Activities, please contact Marketing@dudleycol.ac.uk

If you are a **current student** and have any questions about Careers please speak to your tutor. To access impartial Careers support online please go to www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/



Call us - 01384 363 000



Visit us online - dudleycol.ac.uk