



Careers Strategy 2024 - 2026

Purpose of Policy/Document	This strategy sets out the Colleges key approaches, both internally and externally to continuously develop and improve Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance
Target Audience (staff/students/visitors/contractors)	Staff/students and stakeholders
Particular Legal Requirements/Issues outside of EDD	Statutory requirement to provide CIAG
Links with Other Policies/Documents	Personal Development Framework
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Communicated via/Location: (Policy Acceptance software/website/portal etc)	Portal
Equality Impact Assessment Statement	The Equality Act 2010 does not require public authorities to carry out EIAs by law. The College does, however, carefully consider the impact, when creating or amending its policies, on all concerned parties regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and records this at SLT meetings in order to demonstrate compliance with Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

1. Introduction

Heart of Worcestershire College (HoW) is fully committed to ensuring that all learners and apprentices acquire the skills, knowledge and behaviours to manage their learning and career progression in support of our vision to nurture the brilliance of every student, and to meet skills needs. One demonstration of this commitment being recognised is the whole College accreditation to the Matrix Quality Standard which includes ensuring high quality provision for all our learners and apprentices.

2. Personal Development Framework

Ensuring learners are **Career Ready** is a key strand of the College's new Personal Development Framework.



- 2.1 This strategy sets out the Colleges key approaches, both internally and externally to continuously develop and improve Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)
- 2.2 The core aim is to ensure that learners are prepared for and informed effectively about their next steps and can therefore aspire to achieve their full potential. We want to ensure that our students have both the aptitude, resilience and skills to make the transitions through their education journey and enabling them to enter the workplace or gain their independence.

- 2.3 High quality career guidance is a crucial part of improving social mobility. Students make choices based on what they know and what they think is available to them. If students are aware of the career options available to them, they will be more able to make informed choices about which qualifications and routes to take.
- 2.4 The College will collaborate with a range of external agencies to deliver these key outcomes in partnership. These will include The Careers Enterprise Company, Uniconnect, the LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership), Worcestershire County Council, Chamber of Commerce, the Careers Hub, local Schools, National Careers Service and other education providers.
- 2.5 The Careers Strategy includes measures to ensure that the college continues to meet the eight 'Gatsby Benchmarks' as required, the priorities set within the Ofsted Education Inspection framework and any funding requirements. This will involve co-ordinated external support in addition to appropriately skilled and experienced careers leadership within the college.

3. Current position

- 3.1 The College aligns its services to specific guidance from the Department of Education for college leaders and governing bodies: [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-and-access-for-education-and-training-providers)
- 3.2 There is an appointed member of ELT (Executive Leadership Team) designated as the Careers Lead - DSL & VP Student Experience.
- 3.3 There will be an appointed Lead Governor for Careers who will have oversight of the Careers strategy on behalf of the Corporation.
- 3.4 The following resource and services provide holistic, professional and impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance across the college:
- Careers Team
 - BLC Team
 - LSDOs / Personal Tutor Teams
 - Work Experience and Job Coach Team
 - School Liaison Team / Marketing
 - Customer Services and Admissions Team
 - Curriculum Teams
- 3.5 The College is responsive to the careers and skills agenda, demonstrating high level of initiative-taking dialogue with key stakeholders. One example of this is the collaborative partnership is the establishment of the Redditch Youth hub working with DWP, LA and Careers Worcestershire.

“Partnerships are well-developed, highly appropriate, nurtured and used effectively to make a difference to students’ experience achievements and progression. HoW is a trusted partner, considered transparent and effective in its collaborative work. Both strategic and operational partnerships are sought and maintained, resulting in a wide range of IAG (Information Advice and Guidance) development activities, including those which have become exemplars” (Matrix 2022).

- 3.6 The College has been proactive in supporting Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce in the development of the Local Skills Improvement plan (LSIP).
- 3.7 Effective collaboration with external partners leads to specific programmes targeting vulnerable learners or those at risk of NEET. The College has developed short courses for at-risk young people to re-engage them in learning.
- 3.8 Courses are designed and developed using LMI data and information from employers. The College prospectus has creatively used LMI data to ensure learners can access good quality information and an understanding of careers information before they join the college formally. The website contains course information and signposting links. In additions the College actively collects and reviews destination data to inform curriculum planning.
- 3.9 The College website uses Career Coach effectively to give learners and visitors to the site high quality careers and LMI data (Lightcast) data.
- 3.10 Before joining the College formally, learners have access to a range of pre-enrolment activities including 1:1 appointment, open days/evenings, school visits themed around careers, school taster days, and interviews with curriculum staff who are vocational specialists and Welcome Days.
- 3.11 Students benefit from a well-resourced careers title on the student portal where they can access a diverse range of resources to support them to achieve the next steps of their career path. The resources are differentiated so students can easily choose their level of study, for example: FE learner, HE learner, Apprentice, SEN learner or Access student.
- 3.12 Students can self-select subject matters that are targeted to their level of study such as higher education and UCAS, apprenticeships, employer engagement videos, local market information (LMI), student finance, employability skills, CV writing, Careers Coach, as well as requesting a 1:1 guidance session.
- 3.13 The College hosts and attends a wide range of external events and opportunities for both its own learners and prospective learners. Open events highlight College facilities and provision offer. For example, The Worcestershire Careers Road show in Redditch.
- 3.14 The College maximises engagement with employers where possible i.e., through maximising existing relationships, LSIF, Industry forums, Chamber of commerce and networks.
- 3.15 The Personal Development Framework and the Careers programme are published on the college's website so that students, parents, college staff and employers to access and understand it.
- 3.16 The Wellbeing, Specialist Learning Support and High Needs Teams organise transitional visits prior to learners starting College to support learners with additional needs and to ease their transition from school into college.
- 3.17 There is an effective Careers referral process, working links with Careers Team, all staff making appropriate and timely referrals for course advice, and progression and careers guidance when required.

- 3.18 All students have access to high quality, impartial careers information, advice, and guidance from qualified staff to help clarify their aspirations for work, to understand the options available to them and to take control of and make informed decisions in terms of job and career change, training and promotion.
- 3.19 National Careers Week activity is planned and organised each year to further develop students' knowledge and understanding of careers options. Students can participate in a range of sessions including industry guest speakers, university graduates and specialist careers guidance.
- 3.20 The Marketing Team attend a variety of events throughout the year including, mock interviews, careers fairs, assemblies, parent's evenings and options evenings. In addition, the team also actively offer a bespoke programme of events to schools to help them fulfil the Provider Access Legislation and Gatsby Benchmarks
- 3.21 Monthly newsletters to Career Advisers continue with general college updates, including open events and latest news. Posters and promotional literature for open events is issued to schools to display for learners and the Marketing teamwork in close collaboration with our local school network to fulfil any school liaison needs they may have.
- 3.22 In addition, the College is also represented at several county-wide events including the Worcestershire Skills Show and Careers and Apprenticeship Roadshow, providing information and guidance for students who are considering their post-16 options.
- 3.23 The College hosts an annual Career Advisor Conference that is open to Career Advisors, and those who have a responsibility for Careers in their role, to attend. This is done in collaboration with our curriculum teams to give advisors key information (including curriculum updates, tours of new facilities, etc.) to help students make informed decisions about their futures.
- 3.24 There is an established Mentoring Programme for care experience learners and those that live independently aged 16-18. Students are offered specialist support throughout their career journey. The support is designed to reduce barriers to opportunities and ensure those vulnerable learners are fully informed about their next step options. Vulnerable learners are identified from application, enrolment, staff, external agency referrals and student referrals.

4. Key Objectives 2024 –2026

- 4.1 The College has 5 key objectives designed to continue to deliver a collaborative, accessible, high quality, careers programme which is integrated into the curriculum and aligns to local skills needs:

The objectives are as follows:

- **Continue to cultivate a responsive and aspirational curriculum:**
To cultivate a curriculum that remains responsive to Labour Market Information (LMI), enhances students' employability skills in accordance with the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), elevates student aspirations, and empowers them to make well-informed decisions about their next steps.

- **Maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders:**
To maintain and strengthen relationships with educational institutions, employers, parents, and other external stakeholders, fostering an environment of effectiveness and continuous improvement in our careers programme.
- **Deliver a Quality-Assured Careers Programme:**
To deliver a robust careers program that undergoes stringent quality assurance processes, consistently meeting and exceeding the benchmarks set by the Gatsby framework.
- **Advance Blended Learning and Resource Development:**
To further advance the integration of blended learning methods and expand the availability of comprehensive careers resources, particularly in support of curriculum delivery and the THRIVE programme. Explore opportunities for the incorporation of Virtual Reality (VR) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance the careers learning experience.
- **Ensure Equitable Access to Careers Opportunities:**
To ensure access to careers guidance for all learners, regardless of their provision type. Ensure learner have an understanding of their potential pathways and progression routes.
- **Advance Industry-Aligned Expertise Among Staff:**
To ensure our staff maintain and enhance their industry knowledge, with a focus on continuous professional development in alignment with evolving industry trends. This includes staying current with advancements in green skills, automation, AI, and changing workforce needs. By doing so, we will foster an environment of effectiveness and continuous improvement in our careers programme, enhancing our ability to prepare students for the future workforce.

5. Impact measures

5.1 All CEIAG will be highly responsive, well resourced, accessible and engaging.

This will be evidenced by:

- Improved progression and destination outcomes
- Increased number and high-quality work encounters and work experience opportunities
- Increased in careers service delivery and careers related events engagement figures.
- Maintaining quality standards e.g., matrix
- High levels of student satisfaction
- Quality assurance processes e.g., corridor conversations, learning walks etc.
- Aspiration and intended destination capture.

Appendix 1

Background information

The Government's Careers Strategy, published on 4 December 2017, set out a long-term plan to build a world class careers system to help young people and adults choose the career that is right for them. In 2023 the Careers strategy was updated in to include a new duty 'provider access legislation'. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools>

The Government's reforms to technical education and skills have led to an increasing need for colleges to work in partnership with employers, careers advisers, local authorities and other education and training providers to support students to prepare for the workplace and to make informed choices about their next step in education or training.

A stable careers programme allows a college to meet legal and contractual careers requirements by offering a range of high-quality and inspiring, progressive careers activities that enable all students from the full range of provision types to make well-informed decisions about their future education, training, apprenticeship and employment opportunities. There should be an identified and appropriately trained person responsible for careers and is embedded in college structures through the development of a strategic careers plan.

Every college should ensure that those young people aged 16–18 or 19–25, or with an EHC (Education, Health and Care) Plan are provided with independent careers guidance that:

- is presented in an impartial manner, showing no bias or favouritism towards a particular institution, education or work option.
- includes information on the range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and technical education routes.
- guidance that the person giving it considers will promote the best interests of the students to whom it is given.

Colleges also have a legal requirement to provide all college learners with guidance materials and a wide range of up-to-date reference materials relating to careers education and career opportunities as per section 45 of the Education Act 1997 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/44/section/45>

Colleges should also collect and maintain accurate data for students on their education, training or employment destinations.

Appendix 2

The Gatsby Benchmarks

The eight Gatsby benchmarks were developed in 2014 by Professor Sir John Holman on behalf of the Gatsby Foundation and set out what good career guidance looks like. The benchmarks are non-statutory, but the Department of Education's guidance sets out that colleges are expected to use them to develop their careers programme. These Benchmarks develop a careers programme that increases opportunities for students to access everything from experiences of the workplace and personal guidance with a career's adviser, to engagement with training providers and universities.

