



Compass for special schools – guidance and questions

Introduction

Compass helps you understand how your school's careers education and guidance compares to best practice. You can identify strengths and discover areas for improvement.

To get the best results, you will need to know details of student numbers in your year groups, and it is a good idea to talk to colleagues involved in careers first before completing the evaluation.

This offline version of the Compass for special schools questions can help you to gather the information you need. The online tool allows you to save an evaluation and return to it later. At the end of the evaluation it will also show you a breakdown of your results by Gatsby Benchmark.

For students in special schools, the Careers Leader should consult with other careers staff to identify the cohort for whom the Gatsby Benchmarks are appropriate and report on that group. However, we believe that all students including those with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD), or highly complex needs should benefit from your school's careers programmes and transitions activities.

Mainstream schools with high SEND enrolment are encouraged to [contact us](#). We can help you decide if Compass for special schools is right for your institution.

The tool is free to use.

The questions and results are based on the [Gatsby Good Career Guidance Benchmarks](#).

There is a range of support available to you when looking to apply the Gatsby Benchmarks for students with SEND available on our [website](#).

How the evaluation questions will appear in the tool:

New evaluation

The evaluation questions will take around 30 minutes to complete.

Approach the completion of the Compass questions from a 'whole school all students' perspective.

You'll get results to help you understand how your institution compares to the best practice set out in the Gatsby Good Career Benchmark Guidance.

To get the best results, you will need to know details of student/learner numbers in your year groups, and it is a good idea to talk to colleagues involved in careers. You can also save your progress at key points and return later.

Introduction – Your school

0.1 Select your job title

Head teacher

Other senior leader

Careers leader (middle leader with responsibility for careers)

Other head of department or head of year

Individual employed as a careers coordinator or adviser for the school

Administrator

Other (please specify)

0.2 Which year groups attend your school?

If you are accessing Compass through Compass+ then we will populate this data via your MIS.

Below year 6 Enter pupil numbers

Year 6 Enter pupil numbers

Year 7 Enter pupil numbers

Year 8 Enter pupil numbers

Year 9 Enter pupil numbers

Year 10 Enter pupil numbers

Year 11 Enter pupil numbers

Year 12 Enter pupil numbers

Year 13 Enter pupil numbers

Above year 13 Enter pupil numbers

0.3 Do the majority of your students (more than 75%) typically take Level 2/GCSE qualifications?

Yes

No

IF 0.3 YES: questions 7.5 and 7.6 under Gatsby Benchmark 7 will display

IF 0.3 NO: skip questions 7.5 and 7.6 under Gatsby Benchmark 7 will not display

Benchmark 1 Stable careers programme

These questions are about the Gatsby benchmark for a 'stable careers programme'.

Schools and colleges should have an established programme of careers education and guidance that is known and understood by students, parents, teachers, governors and employers.

'Career' is defined as a purposeful destination on leaving school or college and does not necessarily mean paid employment.

1.1 Does your school have a careers programme that:

Is written down?

Yes | No | Don't know

Is approved by the board of governors?

Yes | No | Don't know

Has the explicit backing of senior leadership?

Yes | No | Don't know

Has resources/funding allocated to it? Yes | No | Don't know
Is regularly monitored?

Yes | No | Don't know

Has both strategic and operational elements?

Yes | No | Don't know

1.2 Does your school publish its careers programme on its website?

Yes

No

Don't know

IF 1.2 No/ Don't know: skip to 1.4

IF 1.2 YES: skip to 1.3

1.3 Is there information on your website about the careers programme aimed specifically at:

Students?

Yes | No | Don't know Teachers?

Yes | No | Don't know

Employers?

Yes | No | Don't know

Parents/carers?

Yes | No | Don't know

1.4 Does your school evaluate the effectiveness of its careers programme at least every three years?

Yes

No

Don't know

IF 1.4 No/ Don't know: skip to 1.6

IF 1.4 YES: skip to 1.5

1.5 Does the evaluation of your careers programme take into account feedback from:

Students?

Yes | No | Don't know Teachers?

Yes | No | Don't know

Employers?

Yes | No | Don't know

Parents/carers?

Yes | No | Don't know

1.6 Does your school have a lead person with strategic responsibility for overseeing your school's careers programme?

Yes

No

Don't know

Learning from career and labour market information

These questions are around the importance of 'Learning from career and labour market information'.

'LMI' is defined as information that is pertinent to the achievement of the optimum destination on leaving school /college and will be needed by the student or and their representatives.

Every student, and their parents/carers/families, should have access to good-quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need support to make best use of available information.

2.1 Approximately what proportion of students have been provided with or have been supported to use up-to-date information about appropriate career or progression paths and the labour market, (this may include awareness of 'the local offer'), by:

Benchmark guidance is from 14+ so this should be the default option shown. If no pupil numbers entered in Years 7-9, show 'age of 16' instead. If no pupil numbers entered in Years 7-11, show 'age of 18' instead. If pupil numbers only present in students aged from 19-25, show 'Above the age of 18'.

The age of 14	Enter proportion
The age of 16	Enter proportion
The age of 18	Enter proportion
Above the age of 18	Enter proportion

- None
- A few (1-25%)
- Some (26-50%)
- Most (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
- All
- Don't know

2.2 Does your school encourage and support parents and carers to access and use up-to-date information about the labour

market, future study options and career or transition pathways to inform the support they give to their children?

Yes

No

Don't know

Pupil needs

These questions are about the Gatsby Benchmark around 'addressing the needs of each student'.

Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each student. A school's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.

When questions ask about students directly, those questions can be interpreted as being asked of the students' representatives too if relevant.

3.1 How strongly do you agree or disagree that your school's career programme addresses the following issues?

It actively seeks to raise the aspirations of all students

Rates on scale of 1 (strongly disagree) – 5 (strongly agree)

It challenges stereotypical thinking (in terms of gender, SEND etc)

Rates on scale of 1 (strongly disagree) – 5 (strongly agree)

3.2 Does your school?

Keep systematic records on each pupil's experiences of career and enterprise activities and decisions on future pathways?

Yes | No | Don't know

Enable pupils and parents/carers/families to have access to accurate records about their own career and enterprise activities and decisions on future pathways?

Yes | No | Don't know

Collect and maintain accurate data for each pupil on their destinations for 3 years after they leave your school (whenever that may be)?

Yes | No | Don't know

Share accurate and timely data with the local authority on pupil transitions and destinations?

Yes | No | Don't know

Work proactively with the local authority and careers advisers around the careers guidance and progression of your students?

Yes | No | Don't know

Curriculum

These questions are about the Gatsby Benchmark recommending 'Linking curriculum learning to careers'.

All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers and transition. Where appropriate STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career and progression paths.

When considering the curriculum, the levels can include pre-formal learners and you can relate your answers to however you describe levels of learning.

4.1 By the time they leave school, approximately what proportion of students have experienced person-centred curriculum learning that highlights the relevance of subjects and programmes to future career or progression paths?

English (including functional English) Select an approximate percentage

- None
- A few (1-25%)
- Some (26-50%)
- Most (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
- All
- Don't know

Maths (including functional Maths) Select an approximate percentage

- None
- A few (1-25%)
- Some (26-50%)
- Most (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
- All
- Don't know

Science (accredited or non-accredited learning) Select an approximate percentage

- None
- A few (1-25%)
- Some (26-50%)
- Most (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
- All
- Don't know

PSHE (including for example Life skills, Soft Skills, Personal and/or Social Development, Independent Travel support) Select an approximate percentage

- None
- A few (1-25%)
- Some (26-50%)
- Most (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
- All
- Don't know

Benchmark 5 Employer encounters

These questions are about the Gatsby Benchmark recommending 'Encounters with employers and employees'.

Every student, for whom it is deemed appropriate, should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through activities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes, employer visits and experiences. These activities may be delivered in the school setting where students are unable to access settings outside of school. The school should also be considered an employer when planning these activities.

The term 'for whom it is deemed appropriate' should make us think about how to make the encounter and / or work experience relevant for everyone, not encourage excluded groups.

We know that it will not always be appropriate for all students to receive the following encounters with employers and employees. Therefore, rather than working out your answers to the following questions based on the total number of students in your institution, please work out the percentage range based on the number of students you think these types of encounters would be appropriate for. This will provide you with a more accurate score.

5.1 For whom it is deemed appropriate, select the years during which 76%-100% of students have at least one encounter with an employer or employee.

Below year 6

Year 6

Year 7

Year 8

Year 9

Year 10

Year 11

Year 12

Year 13

Above year 13

5.2 For whom it is deemed appropriate, what proportion of your students have at least one encounter with an employer every year they are at school?

- None
- A few (1-25%)
- Some (26-50%)
- Most (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
- All
- Don't know

5.3 For whom it is deemed appropriate, on average how many encounters with an employer will your students have had by the time they leave school?

Choose an average number from 0 to '10 or more'

5.4 How many employers will you involve in careers activity in the current academic year?

Choose a number from 0 to '10 or more'

Benchmark 6 Workplace experiences

These questions are about the Gatsby Benchmark recommending 'Experiences of workplaces'.

Every student, for whom it is deemed appropriate, should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience, employer visits and experiences in school as an employing organisation to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks. Workplace experiences may be delivered within the school setting especially when students are unable to access settings outside of school.

The term 'for whom it is deemed appropriate' should make us think about how to make the encounter and / or work experience relevant for everyone, not encourage excluded groups.

We know that it will not always be appropriate for all students to receive the following workplace experiences. Therefore, rather than working out your answers to the following questions based on the total number of students in your institution, please work out the percentage range based on the number of students you think these types of encounters would be appropriate for. This will provide you with a more accurate score.

IF 0 entered for Year 7-11 pupil numbers: skip 6.1

6.1 For whom it is deemed appropriate, approximately what proportion of students have had an experience of a workplace or community-based settings by the end of Year 11?

- None
- A few (1-25%)
- Some (26-50%)
- Most (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
- All
- Don't know

IF 0 pupil numbers entered for Year 12, 13 and Above year 13: skip 6.2

6.2 For whom it is deemed appropriate, during Years 12, 13 and for students still attending above year 13, what proportion of students have an experience of a workplace or community-based settings?

- None
- A few (1-25%)
- Some (26-50%)
- Most (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
- All
- Don't know

Benchmark 7 Educational encounters

These questions are about the Gatsby Benchmark recommending 'Encounters with further and higher education'.

Education encounters includes any and all destinations that all students will go onto from leaving school and college.

All students, for whom it is deemed appropriate, should have an awareness of the full range of learning and progression opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning.

We know that it will not always be appropriate for all students to receive the following encounters. Therefore, rather than working out your answers to the following questions based on the total number of students in your institution, please work out the percentage range based on the number of students you think these types of encounters would be appropriate for. This will provide you with a more accurate score.

By the time they leave school, approximately what proportion of students, for whom it is deemed appropriate, have been supported to have the following experiences:

7.1 For whom it is deemed appropriate, meaningful encounters with Sixth Form Colleges?

- None
- A few (1-25%)
- Some (26-50%)
- Most (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
- All
- Don't know

7.2 For whom it is deemed appropriate, information about the full range of supported internships, internships, traineeships and supported or inclusive apprenticeships, apprenticeships, including higher level apprenticeships?

- None
- A few (1-25%)
- Some (26-50%)

- Most (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
- All
- Don't know

7.3 For whom it is deemed appropriate, meaningful encounters with Further Education Colleges?

- None
- A few (1-25%)
- Some (26-50%)
- Most (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
- All
- Don't know

7.4 For whom it is deemed appropriate, meaningful encounters with Independent Training Providers or other progression providers?

- None
- A few (1-25%)
- Some (26-50%)
- Most (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
- All
- Don't know

IF 'No' entered for Introduction question 0.4: skip 7.5

IF 'Yes' entered for Introduction question 0.4 and pupil numbers present against Year 12, 13 or Above year 13: display 7.5

7.5 For whom it is deemed appropriate, meaningful encounters with Higher Education providers?

- None (of the students who can access HE)
- A few of the students who can access HE (1-25%)
- Some of the students who can access HE(26-50%)
- Most of the students who can access HE (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority of the students who can access HE (76-99%)

- All
- Don't know

IF 'No' entered for Introduction question 0.4: skip 7.6

IF 'Yes' entered for Introduction question 0.4 and pupil numbers present against Year 12, 13 or Above year 13: display 7.6

7.6 For whom it is deemed appropriate, at least two visits to a Higher Education provider?

- None (of students who can access HE)
- A few of the students who can access HE (1-25%)
- Some of the students who can access HE(26-50%)
- Most of the students who can access HE (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority of the students who can access HE (76-99%)
- All
- Don't know

Benchmark 8 – Personal guidance

These questions are about the Gatsby Benchmark around the need for 'personal guidance' for students.

Every student should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a careers adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all students but should be timed to meet their individual needs. Depending on the needs of the student the arrangements for Personal Guidance meetings for students with SEND should reflect their individual needs.

Personal Guidance can be any meeting where a L6 qualified Careers Guidance Adviser is present including annual reviews, Transition reviews as well as discreet Careers Guidance 'interviews'. The expectation is that students would attend with support and / or that decisions will be taken based on the ambitions of that student whether expressed by them or on their behalf personal guidance.

IF 0 entered for Year 7-11 pupil numbers: skip 8.1

8.1 What proportion of students have had an interview with a qualified careers adviser by the end of Year 11?

- None
- A few (1-25%)
- Some (26-50%)
- Most (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
- All
- Don't know

IF 0 pupil numbers entered for Year 12, 13 or Above year 13: skip 8.2

8.2 What proportion of students have had at least two interviews with a qualified careers adviser by the end of Year 13, or for those

students who stay on above year 13, by the end of their time at your school or college?

- None
- A few (1-25%)
- Some (26-50%)
- Most (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
- All
- Don't know