

Careers Strategy

2026-2029

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Approving Body: Executive Leadership Team	ELT contact: Executive of Strategic Communications & Stakeholders
Date Approved: 02/06/26	Author: Careers Manager

*This procedure may need to be reviewed before the review date stated, to reflect changes in government and other agencies' advice, guidance and legislation

Revision Log

Date	Version No.	Brief detail of change
Feb 26	2	This is a rewrite of the strategy to show the current situation for Careers in Education Advice & Guidance.

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1. Introduction

City College Plymouth (the 'College') is a leading provider of vocational, professional and technical training in the South West, that strives to provide a learning environment and organisational culture that impacts positively on the health, wellbeing and sustainability of our community, to enable all our students and staff to achieve their full potential.

The term 'College Community' includes all staff, governors, students, parents/carers, volunteers and visitors.

2. Purpose, Vision, Mission and Values



Purpose:

For all students to have access to inclusive, impartial careers advice and guidance and a comprehensive careers programme to enable them to have the best opportunities for their futures.

Vision:

To provide a service that supports the client from enquiry to completion and their next steps.

Mission:

To provide a 1st class careers programme giving students opportunity to explore careers to enable them to be a fully participating member of society on completion of their studies.



Values: Respect, Ownership & Integrity

- #we are our students
- #we are our staff
- #we are our partners

3. Strategic Goals

- We will ensure our students have access to a first class Careers service to support them with their transitions at key stages of their learning journeys during their time at City College Plymouth.
- We will provide a triage approach to support for individuals that includes support from lecturers, tutors and other support services within the college to ensure that all students receive support at a time that meets their needs.
- We will endeavour to support all groups with appropriate activities linked to Careers and progression options including 'Caerus on Campus' to enable individuals to be confident in making their own careers related decisions.
- We will enable interaction with industry experts relating to the sector that they are studying giving up to date labour market information on the opportunities within those sectors.
- We will provide support to individual students to access work experience including paid work or volunteering opportunities which also assists those individuals in making choices in the future relating to their career pathways.

4. Supporting Statement

City College Plymouth is committed to the delivery of high quality Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance to all students, potential students and parents / carers that is accessible and inclusive for everyone.

This strategy sets out to support applicants and students to make choices while they are still at college, at key transition points in their lives that have implications for their future progression opportunities. We need to assist them by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to deal with career decisions they will face both in and beyond college. Students need information, advice and guidance to help with the immediate choices, plus a set of career management, employability and independent learning skills to progress successfully through their lifelong careers.

The improvements to the provision of careers guidance and education over the last three years have been substantial and connect to a wider national government agenda. All careers staff are qualified in IAG to a level that is proportionate to their role. 'Career Point' is positioned on the ground floor corridor near Reception and the main entrance so easily accessible to all students and enquirers and has a full range of resources for students to access. The Careers Manager being part of Drivers for Change (senior management) at the college has embedded Careers throughout the college, it is the golden thread that runs through the institution creating a visible careers culture, the curriculum teams by linking their career learning to job opportunities and career routes and for corporate areas to help students build on their personal skills and career readiness with opportunity for substantial work experience.

As a College we work to 'establish a clear route map into education right through to meaningful employment and/or continuing education' Strategic Action -Transforming Futures. This also

goes toward ensuring that our courses meet the skills needs, supporting regional growth sectors, meet both current and future market demands, objectives for skills and jobs.

Looking ahead, we take a whole person approach to our students and recognise that enrichment activities support their health and wellbeing. These also add to the individual's skills and qualities that refine their skills for work and prepare them for their next steps. Alongside the vocational and technical skills they gain whilst completing their studies we work to prepare them for their future careers. This goes towards 'preparing a proficient pipeline of students to respond to the needs of stakeholders and to aid recovery and sustainability of the wider sector' Strategic action - Health & Active Wellbeing.

5. Context

Colleges have a legal requirement to provide all their learners with guidance materials and a wide range of up-to-date reference materials relating to careers education and career opportunities, as described in section 45 of the Education Act 1997.

Colleges need to provide impartial careers guidance to all learners aged 14-18 and to those aged 19-25 with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP). This duty is reinforced by funding agreements and the Skills and Post 16 Education Act 2022 and the Post 16 education and skills White paper 2025, which require colleges to ensure students have access to independent, impartial advice to help them make informed decisions about their future.



The Matrix Standard - We have achieved and maintained the required standard to hold the Matrix Standard. This is the Department of Education's standard for ensuring the delivery of high-quality information advice and guidance (IAG). This standard is achieved by undergoing a yearly assessment to assess, measure and improve the management and delivery of the IAG services to our

students, prospective students, parents and stakeholders. It includes the information, advice and guidance provided to prospective students, students, parents and carers and stakeholders through their time at college.

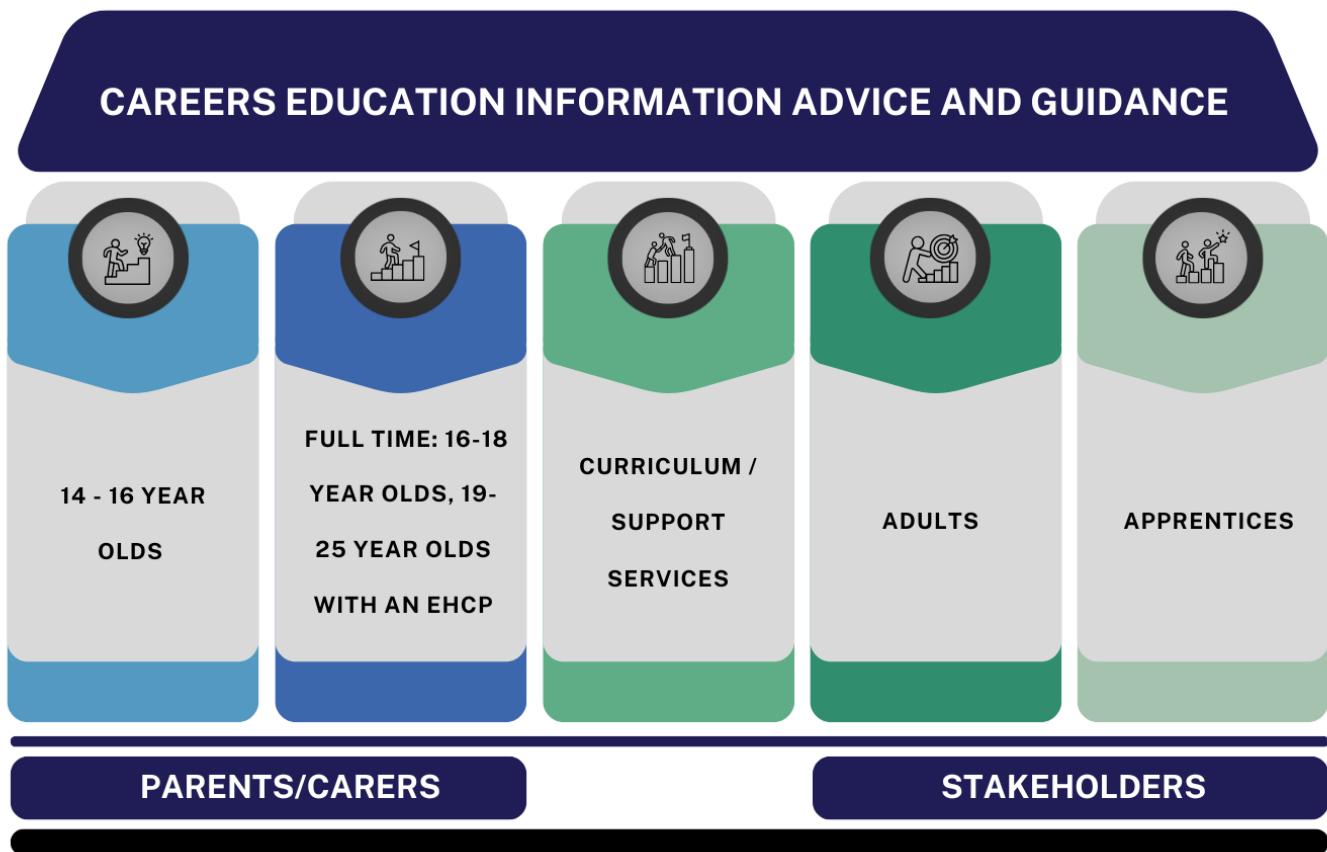
The Gatsby Benchmarks & CEC Compass Assessments - The updates to the benchmarks now provides a refined framework in which career services should operate with the aim of achieving 100% in all 8 benchmarks when undergoing the Careers and Enterprise Company's assessment process through the Compass assessment.



The Career Development Institute, CDI - The Careers team work within the code of ethics of the professional body, the CDI. This establishes a professional level that is recognised and respected. It also ensures impartiality in the information and advice being given to students, potential students, parents and carers.

Ofsted - Careers education and guidance has a higher profile in the new Ofsted framework with a strong focus on inclusion and an emphasis on linking curriculum learning with careers which align with the Gatsby Benchmarks.

6. City College Plymouth's Career Offer:



CEIAG - Careers Education Information Advice & Guidance

Careers Education, Information, Advice, and Guidance (CEIAG) a structured programme in schools and colleges designed to help students explore career options, develop skills, and make informed decisions about their future education, training, and employment pathways. It is a comprehensive service that includes personalized guidance, career assessments, labour market insights, CV building, work experience, and linking school subjects to real-world jobs, often measured against benchmarks such as the [Gatsby Benchmarks](#).

Key components of CEIAG:

- Education: Learning about different careers, industries, and skills needed for the modern world.
- Information: Access to unbiased facts about job roles, courses, qualifications, and labour market trends.
- Advice: Personalised support to understand personal strengths, interests, and how they align with career paths.
- Guidance: One-on-one meetings and structured programmes to help individuals create realistic and ambitious plans for their future. All advisers work to the CDI code of Ethics and are impartial in the information and advice they provide.

Service of provision:

- Identity and Self-discovery: Using quizzes and assessments to understand skills, interests, and values.
- Experience and Exposure: Encounters with employers, workplace experiences, and visits to universities/colleges.
- Skills Building and Readiness: Employability skills, Workplace behaviours, Professional identity, building confidence, communication, problem-solving, and interview skills.
- Belonging: Challenging stereotypes and ensuring inclusivity, opportunities for all.
- Planning and Progression: Creating CVs, applications, and strategies for transitioning into further education or work.
- Guidance and Navigation: 1-1 meetings, identifying and overcoming barriers, reframing and advocating for the young people or adults in our provision.

Why it is important:

Raises aspirations and improves life chances.

Helps manage transitions from education to adulthood and employment.

- Reduces skills shortages and unemployment by empowering individuals.
- Social mobility and equality - economic growth and life long learning
- Creates informed decision making
- Supports potential risk of not becoming NEET
- Supporting mental health and wellbeing
- Increases motivation - which can assist with improving attendance and achievement

14 -16 year olds

The college supports young people who are outside of the formal education system including those who are home educated. The study programme is based around the teaching of English and Maths and some will access vocational training enabling them to achieve qualifications in those sectors. Careers guidance is given to those on the study programmes where they have no other access to careers support through individual careers meetings.

For potential students who are not able to access careers support which can include 'looked after children', those leaving Youth Offender units, those under the hospital school etc are able to have individual guidance sessions to help them work out their next steps.

For all, they have access to information on the college courses via the college website as well as the opportunity to find out more about the course and the college and experience; the contents of a course by attending open days and taster sessions with the various teaching teams. The Careers Team offer a drop-in service during these events and engage with potential students, their parents and carers to ensure their questions are answered.

The Careers team are on hand to answer enquiries relating to the college application, the courses and the individual's future career aspirations throughout the time period this takes.

Caerus in Education is a College-developed initiative that partners with city schools to deliver free, high-quality careers education to young people across Plymouth, supporting social mobility and equitable access to opportunity. Through interactive workshops, reflective tools and real-world sector insight, students are supported to understand their strengths, explore pathways and make informed decisions about their next steps. This work strengthens consistency in careers provision across the city and supports progression into further education, training and employment.

Full Time Students: 16-18 year olds & 19-24 year olds with an EHCP

Students enrol on their courses having already received a level of IAG. Whilst on course they have access to individual guidance with a one to one meeting with a Careers Adviser. They are not limited to one meeting and can arrange follow up meetings as required. These are at a time that works for the student and not dictated to by the institution. This is as well as having access to the drop-in service at Career Point throughout the year. Contact can be made face to face, electronically or via phone calls. The team offers a range of meeting options to ensure we make it accessible to everyone including online meetings which can assist with parents / carers attending as well.

Swap Not Drop - The Careers Team are an integral part of the Swap Not Drop process and work closely with curriculum sectors and the Admin Team to assist those students who identify they want to swap courses in the early stage of the Autumn term. This helps those stay engaged with education and work towards their careers ambitions and fulfill their aspirations.

Wrap around service - The Careers Team offer a number of bespoke sessions to support students to have up to date information and knowledge about their progression options and how to make those next steps. This includes going onto higher levels of study, how to change direction, apprenticeships as well as identifying skills needed to gain employment and labour market information and intelligence. The structure of the team works well and is establishing strong relationships with the curriculum sectors across all levels. Curriculum plays an active role and has a collaborative approach in informing students about the progression options into apprenticeships and employment by having a range of industry speakers and visits throughout the year and supporting students with their work experience placements. For students with an EHCP there is structured exit review and interview with clear destinations and information on all next steps and progression options.

Adult Students

Whether they are taking a substantial course or a part time option there is a large volume of adult drop ins throughout the day highlighting the need for the service and the quality of Careers support that is available for them to access throughout their time at the college which includes full guidance meetings as well as access to resources.

Group work sessions are organised with curriculum areas to ensure students have the most up to date information relevant to their situation i.e. applying for university, funding and finance for higher education, progression options on completion of their courses into employment.

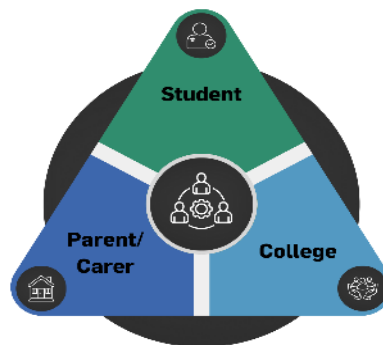
Apprentices

Those apprentices who are receiving their training at the college have access to the full support of the Careers team to help them develop their career management skills. Group sessions are organised with appropriate content for them. One to one meetings are also available for them so they can discuss their individual situations and career aims and ambitions assisting with their onward career progression and future career management.

Parents / Carers

Parents / carers are welcome to attend the individual careers meetings with their young people, information is shared with them from these meetings. The Careers Team can attend the student reviews which parents/carers are invited and are happy to have conversations relating to careers and progression options. A number of enquiries are made by parents/carers during college open days and at local and regional careers related events. Curriculum contact with the 'Meet the Team' event at the start of the academic year followed by student review evenings enable conversations on career opportunities and progression in those sectors.

The triangle reflects that effective CEIAG is a shared responsibility. The student is at the heart of decision-making, with the college and parents/carers working collaboratively to provide guidance, reassurance and opportunity. This ensures students receive consistent messages and support, both inside and outside of college.



Stakeholders

We work closely with a number of organisations, frequently attending events and supporting Skills Launchpad Plymouth. We have good relationships with Careers Plymouth who have the responsibility for contacting those young people who are NEETs - not engaged in education or training. The Careers and Enterprise Company complete the Compass assessments on a termly basis to review the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks, the redefined definitions of these were published in 2025 and we are working towards these. Curriculum sectors have strong links to their industries with frequent talks on site for students and visits to locations as well as work experience opportunities for students to work towards achieving the required amount of hours.

Accessibility to support out of normal hours is via the 24/7 digital services.

7. Quality, Monitoring, Evaluation & Review

The college's career provision is reviewed and monitored through the following external and internal systems:

- The College is committed to meeting Ofsted requirements for providing high quality careers guidance and recognises the importance of this for continual quality improvement.
- The College is committed to being a member of the CEC Careers Hub with the use of the Compass tool to assist with the monitoring of the current delivery against the Gatsby Benchmarks.
- The College undergoes tri-annual assessments for the Matrix quality standard.
- The College will use student data, UCAS data, student feedback via Student Council meetings, surveys and other feedback mechanisms to monitor the effectiveness of the Careers Strategy.
- The Careers education and guidance for students and potential students contributes to the college's self-assessment processes.

Leadership and Governance:

The Careers Leader, Pauline Hands, with the Careers Manager, Sarah Sinclair, has the responsibility for leading on this strategy. The governing body monitors progress through the internal reporting processes.

8. Related Documentation

HM Government: Post 16 Education and Skills white paper (October 2025)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68f518ee06e6515f7914c7ce/Post-16_Education_and_Skills_white_paper_Accessible_Version.pdf

DoE Statutory guidance: Careers guidance and access to education and training providers (May 2025)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools/careers-guidance-and-access-for-education-and-training-providers>

Gatsby: Good Career Guidance The next 10 years (published in late 2024 for implementation from September 2025)

<https://cdn.gatsbybenchmarks.org.uk/app/uploads/2024/11/good-career-guidance-the-next-10-years-report.pdf>

<https://cdn.gatsbybenchmarks.org.uk/app/uploads/2024/11/gatsby-summary-for-leaders-colleges.pdf>

<https://cdn.gatsbybenchmarks.org.uk/app/uploads/2025/05/j0716-gatsby-summary-of-changes-colleges-final-updated.pdf>

The CDI Code of Ethics - <https://www.thecdi.net/about-us/cdi-code-of-ethics>

The College is committed to ensuring that this Careers Strategy and all associated Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) services are accessible, inclusive and equitable for all members of the College community. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the College will not unlawfully discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. The College is committed to advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and removing barriers to participation so that all students, prospective students, parents/carers and stakeholders are able to access appropriate careers support, guidance and progression opportunities. Reasonable adjustments and flexible approaches will be implemented where required to ensure individuals can fully engage with the services and opportunities outlined within this strategy.

Annex 1 City College Plymouth's students journey



Annex 2 City College Plymouth's Careers Programme

This programme outlines the range of opportunities, events and guidance that is available to support students during their time as a student at City College Plymouth.

Careers Advice & Guidance	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
1-1 meetings or drop-ins												
Swap Not Drop assistance												
Careers Workshops												
Destination Support												
Employability	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Apprenticeship Advice sessions												
Work Ready Skills												
Job seeking skills												
CV Workshops												
CV Checks												
Interview Preparation												
Progression Support	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Continuing in FE												
Progressing to HE - Options												
UCAS - Applying to UCAS Support												
UCAS internal deadline												
UCAS external deadline												
HE Convention - Exeter												
Student Finance for HE Support												
Events	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Enrolment support												
Induction												
Careers Support for Parents												
National Apprenticeship Week												
National Careers Week												
Open Days												

Career Point

Careers Programme

Who can help you in your next steps?

Careers Team - Careers Advisers and Information Advisers

You can have a meeting with a member of the careers team, just call into Career Point and talk to them or email 'careers@cityplym.ac.uk' to set this up at a time that suits you.

Tutor & teaching teams

You will have regular meetings with your tutor and throughout the year they will have progress appraisals with you to discuss your progress and your aspirations for the future.

Work Experience & Placement Officers

The team is available to support you in achieving the required hours for work experience for your study programme.

Caerus on Campus

Sessions using the Caerus on Campus programme can be delivered to your groups, it assists with individuals getting to know themselves as well as looking at targeted pathways linked to their study programme.

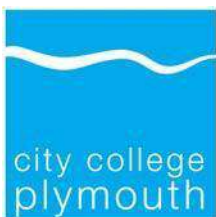
What programmes can you access to help you explore your career options?

Navigate

As a student you can complete the careers quiz on Navigate and record all your career and work experiences throughout your time at college.

Careers Coach

The quiz can be helpful for those who have yet to decide what you want to do in the future. It links to courses and jobs and enables them to explore further. You can also follow this up with a meeting with a Careers Adviser to discuss in more detail.



This has been developed and adapted following consultation with key stakeholders, both internal and external and linked to the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Annex 3 Gatsby Benchmarks

The 8 Gatsby Benchmarks are a framework for world-class careers education in college, focusing on ensuring students receive quality guidance through key experiences like stable programmes, learning from labour market data, linking learning to careers, workplace experiences, encounters with further education/employers, and personal guidance, all designed to help students make informed decisions about their future paths.

The 8 Benchmarks:

