

Exploring the Evidence Base for Career Mark (A Licensed Awarding Body for the Quality in Careers Standard)

Career Mark was first created in the mid 90s and is now a Licensed Awarding Body for the Quality in Careers Standard. Career Mark has an excellent reputation and receives outstanding feedback from learning providers about the value of undertaking and assessment, please see here for evaluation feedback - <http://www.complete-careers.com/analysis-evaluations-and-feedback/>.

The Quality in Careers Standard has recently been referenced in the statutory guidance as a vehicle to externally validate a learning provider's careers provision (see below for more information). The Quality in Careers Standard is currently revising the national criteria to ensure it aligns to the Gatsby Benchmarks and supports the 2018 statutory guidance. Career Mark has a reputation for its robust and rigorous approach to quality assurance. As such it exceeds the Quality in Careers Standard criteria and is mapped to the Gatsby benchmarks. In September 2018 Career Mark will introduce Career Mark 7 with appropriate amendments to ensure compliance with all statutory guidance elements, while retaining its unique features.

This document presents a review of the literature that contributes to an evidence base for careers education, information, advice and guidance and, in particular, the role of quality awards in quality assurance. It cites evidence and references to provide a rationale for achieving the Quality in Careers Standard; exploring the current national policy, research into careers quality awards, the link between careers quality awards and good careers provision and finally research that relates good careers provision to increased education outcomes such as GCSE data, NEET, attendance etc.

Current National Policy

Careers guidance and access for education and training providers: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff. (January 2018)

The current statutory guidance for schools aligns closely to the **The Gatsby Foundation's Gatsby Benchmarks**, although government recognises that the work needed to meet all eight benchmarks will vary for individual schools. The document presents an expectation that schools begin to work towards the benchmarks now and meet them all by the end of 2020. In Paragraph 20 of the statutory guidance the government 'strongly recommend that all schools work towards the updated Quality in Careers Standard, incorporating Compass, to support the development of their careers programme.'

For a summary of the current statutory guidance please see here: <http://www.complete-careers.com/statutory-guidance-january-2018/> or to access the full guidance please see here: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672418/Careers_guidance_and_access_for_education_and_training_providers.pdf

Address: BG Futures, Longdales Road, Lincoln, LN1 3DY

Email: contact@careermark.co.uk

Phone: 01522 543539 or 01522 883959

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Careers Strategy: Making the Most of Everyone's Skills and Talents (December 2017)

The government's Careers Strategy was published prior to the statutory guidance to announce an ambition to improve careers support and to reinforce skills and technical training following the launch of the Industrial Strategy earlier in the year. The strategy sets out an ambition for careers in schools to align to the Gatsby Benchmarks. It also introduces the Quality in Careers standard as an 'opportunity for providers to undergo an external evaluation of their careers programme and so is distinct from the Compass self-assessment.' For a summary of the Careers Strategy please see here:

<http://www.complete-careers.com/wp-content/uploads/strategy-summary.pdf> or for the full document please see here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-strategy-making-the-most-of-everyones-skills-and-talents>

Good Careers Guidance - The Gatsby Foundation

Although the Gatsby Benchmarks are not government policy as such, the government has adopted them as good practice and has set out an ambition for schools and academies to meet all eight Gatsby Benchmarks by 2020. The report explores international evidence for what works in career development and resulted in the production of the eight benchmarks. Careers Guidance activities are cited in the report as having an impact on improving social mobility – 'good career guidance is important for social mobility because it helps open pupils' eyes to careers they may not have considered'. The report also has considerable research about the economic benefits of good career development for the government to consider, along with a suggested funding model to support implementing the benchmarks. Although the government have introduced the benchmarks, they have fallen considerably short of the recommended funding. Although widely praised, the benchmarks also have their flaws. Most noticeably there is no reference to learning outcomes and no external assessment. For a summary of the benchmarks please see here: <http://www.complete-careers.com/gatsby-benchmarks/> and for the full report please see here: <http://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance>

Research into Careers Quality Awards

The Sutton Trust – Advancing Ambitions

This report explored the role of careers guidance in supporting social mobility in 2014. Pages 7-10 of the report explore the national and international evidence linking good careers guidance to social mobility. Within the report evidence to support careers quality awards states:

'At GCSE, Quality Awards are associated with an improvement in GCSE performance and a decrease in persistent unexplained absences.'

'At A-level, Quality Awards are associated with a decrease in persistent unexplained absences. For state schools and sixth-form colleges, Quality Awards are also associated with an increase in A-level performance. They are further associated with improved destinations, with a higher proportion of A-

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level students destined for top-third higher education institutions and a lower proportion of A-level students with NEET outcomes.’ These findings are consistent with previous research which has found that career guidance can impact on attainment at school, engagement, successful transition to further learning and work, and longer-term life success. (Sutton Trust – Advancing Ambitions 2014) <https://www.suttontrust.com/research-paper/advancing-ambitions/>

Andrews D (2005) CEG Quality Awards in England

This report identified 25 different CEG (Careers Guidance) quality awards in operation in England in 2005. It also sets out the range of providers of the quality awards, who the awards are available to, cost implications, success rates, contents of the awards and a brief description of arrangements in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Thomas C (2006) Quality Awards for Careers Education and Guidance in England – Current Practices and issues

This research follows on from David Andrew research (above) and was a more qualitative research of 9 of the 25 quality awards identified in David’s research. It therefore looks in more depth into aspects of management of the awards, award structure, stages, levels and focus, assessment arrangements, financial arrangements.

LSIS (2010) – Quality Awards for Career Learning Information Advice and Guidance

This report provided an update of David Andrew’s 2005 study into quality awards following the change from Connexions partnerships into local authority control. It identifies 18 quality awards in operation throughout England and investigates the structures, content and methods of assessment for them. The report is critical of the 2010 arrangements for local quality award provision and favoured the introduction of a “kite mark” to ensure consistency of robustness and rigor. This report had three recommendations, one of which was addressed by the introduction of the Qualification in Careers Standard.

DFEE (1996) – Better Choices – Quality in Careers Education and Guidance

This report was produced in the infancy stage of local CEG awards. It is a working document to help local careers companies to build and maintain their award. It is interesting to compare and contrast this document with the standards for the new Quality in Careers Standard. In the main the components outlined in the 1996 DFEE document are very similar to those of the 2011 Quality In Careers Standard.

Impact of CEIAG reports/research *Careers Scotland (2004) – Career Goals and educational attainment. What is the link?*

The research involved a sample of over 1500 young people in Scotland from schools with a variety of different geographical, social and size factors. It also focusses on learners from a variety of ability levels. The report outlines lots of facts and figures relating to learners’ effort in class, homework, exams, satisfaction at school, qualifications etc. In summary it reports that “there is clear and

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systematic evidence that school pupils with career goals have higher attainment levels than those without.”

DFEE (2000) – School Improvement – How Careers Work can help

This provides a background for school leaders on how learners benefit from effective CEG programmes. Benefits identified include self-awareness, motivation, achievement and potential.

ICG (2005) – The Case for Careers Education and Guidance

This report draws on significant factors from several UK and international studies on CEG in recent years. It presents useful findings such as:

- “The levels of young people’s career related skills seem to be an important factor in their transition at 16 with those with a high level of skill being less likely to modify choice or switch course”
- “Careers Education and the support of parents are both important in helping young people through the transition process.”
- “There is a direct correlation between the levels of career guidance and the interventions and the extent to which young people are able to prepare successfully for transition”.
- Really useful summaries of Morris 1999 and Careers Scotland 2003/4 on impact of careers education on attainment.

Conclusion

1. The evidence in this paper shows a clear connection between good careers provision and improved outcomes for learners. Such outcomes focus on ‘soft outcomes’ such as self-awareness, motivation and aspirational potential (e.g. ICG and DFEE) and ‘hard outcomes’ linked to attainment and achievement (e.g. Careers Scotland and Sutton Trust).
2. This paper also demonstrates evidence of the positive effect of a careers quality award i.e. the Quality in Careers Standard, on improving the provision of careers in an organisation (e.g. LSIS, David Andrews, Christine Thomas and Better Practice).
3. This paper provides a summary of international evidence highlighting careers guidance as an essential component to support social mobility.
4. This paper cites a clear and direct relationship between a careers quality award and impact on academic achievement at GCSE and A Level (Sutton Trust).

In conclusion, not only does the Department for Education ‘strongly recommend’ learning providers to achieve the Quality in Careers Standard, there is also evidence of the positive impact of achieving the award on soft and hard learner outcomes as well as outcomes for the organisation and the wider community/economy.

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