



Provided by the Licensed Awarded Body Complete-Careers



Reaccreditation Assessment
University Technical College
Reading
Report (number 3)

Valid from	18 th January 2023
Valid until	17 th January 2025
Assessed by	Janet Hutchinson
Verified by	Ron James

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“Congratulations on achieving the Quality In Careers Standard which fully incorporates the Gatsby Benchmarks. This is an excellent achievement and recognises the quality and breadth of your careers provision. As you are “making good progress” towards meeting the Benchmarks and all of the accreditation criteria, as we comment upon below in the detail of your report, we will continue to review your progress with the Benchmarks, and the additional career-related learning outcomes for students which the national Standard requires, through our annual reviews with you.”

Assessment Information

Assessor
Janet Hutchinson
Complete-Careers

Learning Organisation
UTC Reading Crescent Rd, Reading, RG1 5RQ

Contact including email address Stephanie.Mitchell@utcreading.org.uk
Stephanie Mitchell Career leader

Career Mark Support Adviser (if used or Trust/Project Organisation linked to)

Date of review of Assessment Portfolio (Part 1)
December 2022

Date of On-Site Assessment (Part 2)
18th January 2023 remote assessment using Teams

Summary of Award Process

1. **SUBMIT COMPASS:** If possible, organisation submits their latest Compass report at the beginning of their membership to receive a certificate of commitment.
2. **PREPARE EVIDENCE PORTFOLIO:** review Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance provision against the four components of Career Mark which incorporate the national criteria for the Quality in Careers Standard and Gatsby Benchmarks. Write a description and prepare evidence against the detailed criteria in each of these components (evidence can be submitted in a range of formats)
 - **Management** - measures the effectiveness of systems for planning, managing and integrating CEIAG.
 - **Information** - measures the accessibility, relevance, importance and effectiveness of information; and the acquisition of skills to research and evaluate information to be able to make well informed and realistic career decisions.
 - **Advice, Guidance and Support** - measures the effectiveness of an integrated programme of advice, guidance and support including provision by a qualified level 6 guidance practitioner.
 - **Career Learning** - measures how effectively the curriculum supports the development of learners' knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes.

The fifth component, **Learning Outcomes**, is assessed on the assessment day via learners.

3. ASSESSMENT UNDERTAKEN: The assessment process is undertaken in two stages:

- A. **Desktop assessment.** The assessor reviews the ‘description grids’ and supporting evidence against the national criteria. Once satisfied the assessor plans with the learning provider for the live assessment day.
- B. **Assessment day.** This is for discussions/interviews with learners on the organisations site. (Normally using virtual platforms though at an additional cost onsite assessment may be arranged). A first assessment takes a full day, but subsequent revalidation assessments are shorter. The live assessment day focusses mainly on the fifth component of the Career Mark approach, Learner Outcomes: evaluating learners’ knowledge, competence and attitudes towards career management and development.
- C. **ASSESSMENT OUTCOME:** The desktop assessment and live discussions enable the assessor to obtain a clear picture of provision and its impact. An informed professional judgement is then made regarding meeting the national Quality in Careers Standard using the Career Mark approach. A report is written including the assessor judgement and recommendations. The report is then shared with the organisation and once agreed verified by a Complete-Careers Complete Careers internal verifier.

4.AWARD: Once verified, learning providers receive their standard certificate, plaque, final verified report and use of both the Quality in Careers Standard and Career Mark logos. The report includes a choice of summary paragraph noting whether the provider meets all eight Gatsby benchmarks or is still making good progress towards them. Deferred providers will receive a comprehensive report outlining the areas for improvement before resubmission.

5. REVIEW AND REVALIDATION: A review of progress against the recommendations is offered by Complete Careers Career Mark staff after a year. This enables the organisation to review progress towards recommendation from their last assessment. After two years, the learning provider is required to seek revalidation of the award and to demonstrate continuous improvement.

6. LONG TERM COMMITMENT: Learning providers who successfully achieve second consecutive revalidation (third assessment) will be awarded with the Complete Careers Gold Award. The process for this is identical to a revalidation, but the Gold Award rewards long term commitment to a quality externally validated career programme. Continued long term commitment leads to the Platinum Award after a fifth successful revalidation (sixth successful assessment).

Introducing the Report Tables

There are two tables in the report to summarise judgements from the assessment process:

1. Quality in Careers Standard Assessment Summary Grid – based on Compass self-assessment.

This table focuses on the self-assessment data from the learning provider’s most recent Compass assessment against the eight Gatsby Benchmarks. The assessor does not alter

the information provided by the learning provider even if their judgement is not the same. The self assessment should be no more than three months old.

2. Quality in Careers Standard Assessor Summary Table – holistic summary of CEIAG provision

The assessment process requires an assessor to review all elements of a learning provider's CEIAG provision. This table allows the assessor to summarise the areas of strength and areas for development, listed in the Career Mark criteria. This may not be the same as the Compass self-assessment.

Ticks against criteria are used to indicate if the learning provider has met the criteria fully or if further developments are required. Further developments will either be recorded as a 'requirement' or 'recommendation' later in the report or will form part of the improvement plan if the assessment outcome is a deferral.

Abbreviations used in the report.

ALET	Activate Learning Education Trust
C	Career Learning (Description Grid component)
CEIAG	Career education, information advice and guidance
CM	Career Mark approach
EAL	English as an additional language
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
FE/HE	Further Education/Higher Education
FSM	Free school meals
G	Advice, Guidance and support (Description Grid component)
GB	Gatsby Benchmarks
I	Information (Description Grid component)
M	Management (Description Grid component)
MAT	Multi academy trust
PP	Pupil Premium
QiCs	Quality in Careers Standard (Criteria for the Standard)
R	Recommendations
SEN	Special educational needs
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SME	Small and medium employers.
UTC	University Technical College

Introduction to the Organisation

UTC Reading is a University Technical College for 14 – 19 Year olds with a specialism in Engineering and Computer Science. We are part of the Activate Learning Education Trust (ALET) alongside 5 other UTC's and schools. We currently have 499 students on roll across both KS4 and KS5 combined. UTC Reading is within the Reading Borough Council; we are designed to be sub-regional provisions so we welcome students from a wide catchment area including Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire, as well as South Oxfordshire, Maidenhead, Slough and Guildford.

At UTC Reading, we have 21.5% of SEN students made up of 2.4% EHCP and 19.1% SEN. We have 19.5% of EAL learners, 9.4% FSM and 11.6% PP for the academic year 2022 – 2023. Our vision is to Transform Lives through Learning with the intent to prepare our students for the world of work. Careers and employer engagement is embedded within the ethos of UTC Reading and has always been at the forefront of what we do. Our culture is built around students developing the skills, knowledge and attributes ready for the world of work and this is communicated through our three R's; ready, respectful, relentless and our attributes; confident, professional, aware, enterprising and resilient.

Careers education, information and guidance is at the heart of UTC Reading; it is led by the Assistant Head of School (SLT), who is responsible for Careers, Futures and Employer Engagement and is the careers lead. Supporting the Assistant Head of school is an Events Coordinator, due to start in February 2023. We have also recently recruited a new Director of Curriculum Innovation who will be responsible for Careers in the Curriculum starting January 2023, and we have a team of CAF (Careers and Futures leaders) who deliver careers related learning within the curriculum and are being trained for the Level 3 Careers Guidance training. We also have a project coordinator who works at ALET (our MAT), and more specifically with UTC Reading, aiming to get more SME's into the college. And finally, we outsource and pay for a Level 7 Careers Adviser to deliver independent and impartial careers advice to our students.

We have a huge array of support from industry, from the likes of BMW and Cisco to smaller SME's that support the UTCR careers programme in a number of ways from careers fairs, to project based learning within the curriculum, to one-off workshop talks, whole school drop-down days and employer mentoring. We review the website every two years and involve parents/guardians at key points throughout the academic year for example, when students need to make informed decisions about their next steps. All of the parental support contributes to positive destinations for UTC Reading students, with 54% of Year 13 leavers going off to university, 19% to apprenticeships, 13% into employment and the others taking a gap year or remaining in further education. 53% of our Year 11 leavers remain at UTC Reading for sixth form, and the majority of others (37%) attend an FE college.

UTC Reading was last inspected by Ofsted in 2015 and was rated 'outstanding' in all areas. More recently, UTC Reading was only one of 60 schools to receive the World Class Schools Status. UTC Reading previously achieved the Career Mark Quality in Careers Standard in 2017 and was revalidated in October 2020.

Quality in Careers Standard Assessment Summary Table

Learning Organisation Compass Self-Assessment

National criteria section headings for the Quality in Careers Standard	Insufficient progress towards fully meeting the Standard	Achieving the Standard, making good progress towards fully meeting the national criteria	Achieving the Standard, fully meeting the national criteria
1. A stable careers programme			✓
2. Learning from career and labour market information			✓
3. Addressing the needs of each student		✓	
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers			✓
5. Encounters with employers and employees			✓
6. Experiences of workplaces		✓	
7. Encounters with further and higher education			✓
8. Personal guidance			✓

Notes Achieving the Standard, making good progress towards fully meeting the national criteria = Evidence of good progress in this section of the Standard's national criteria and robust plans in place to fully meet this section of the national criteria within two-three years. Has met or partially met the expectations of the relevant Gatsby Benchmark indicators.

Assessment Schedule

Meeting conducted successfully over Teams learners in groups of 4-6

Time	Meeting
9.30	Career Leader/Assistant Head Stephanie Mitchell and line manager
10.15	Year 11 learners
11.00	Comfort Break
11.20	Year 12 learners
12.20	Year 13 learners
13.20	Lunch /reflection break
14.00	Feedback to Career Leader and line manager
14.30	Assessment concludes

Quality in Careers Standard Assessor Summary Table

Gatsby QiCs	Career Mark & Quality in Careers Standard Assessment Criteria	Met	Development identified
1.1 1.1i-iv	M1 – National requirements & good practice guidance M7 – CEIAG trained & competent staff	✓	
1.2 1.2i	M5 – Learner entitlement to CEIAG	✓	
1.3 1.1ii	M9 – Monitoring, review and evaluation for continuous development		✓ R4
2.1 2.1i,3.1i	C2 – Planned programme of careers education I2 – Accessibility of & competence to use resources	✓	
2.2 2.2i	M6 – Involving and supporting families and carers in CEIAG provision	✓	
3.1 3.2ii	C2 – Planned programme of careers education M4 – CEIAG provision based on learner needs G1 – Identification and referral systems		✓ R1, R3
3.2 3.3ii	G3 – Coordinating and tracking		✓ R1R3, R4
3.3 3.2i,3.3i	G4 – Career action planning and target setting	✓	
3.4 3.4iv	M2 – Measuring impact of CEIAG on progression	✓	
4.1 4.1i	C3 – Coordinating curriculum inputs – subject links to careers	✓	
5.1 1.2iv,3.2iii, iv 5.1i-iii,6.1i-ii	C4 – Coordinating curriculum inputs – employer engagement M8 Partnership arrangements		✓ R2
5.2 5.1i-iii,6.1i-ii	C4 – Coordinating curriculum inputs – employer engagement (encounters with employers)		✓ R2
6.1 5.1i-iii, 6.1i-ii	C4 – Coordinating curriculum inputs – employer engagement (experiences of workplace pre 16)		✓ R2
6.2 5.1i-iii, 6.1i-ii	C4 – Coordinating curriculum inputs – employer engagement (experiences of workplace pre 18)		✓ R2
7.1 1.2iv,3.2iii, iv 7.1i-ii, 7.2i-ii	C5 – Coordinating curriculum inputs encounters FE/HE M8 – Partnership arrangements	✓	
7.2 7.1i-ii,7.2i-ii	C5 – Coordinating curriculum inputs – encounters with FE/HE	✓	
8.1 8	G2 – Independent and impartial careers advice and guidance		✓ R3
CM + 1.1, 1.2	M3 – Structure and process for leading, managing and delivering CEIAG	✓	
CM + 2,3	C1 – Curriculum overview/model for CEIAG	✓	
CM + 1,3	I1 – Systems, content & processes	✓	
CM +	G5 - Facilities	✓	
CM + 4,5,6,7,8	O – Learner Outcomes		✓ R1, R2,R4

Recommendations later in this report are linked to the 'Dev. Required' column of this table using R1, R2 etc. they will not necessarily be statutory requirements.

Standard O – Learning Outcomes

General remarks about learners’ overall capacity to demonstrate skills, knowledge and attitudes to be effective career planners.

Learners at Reading UTC provided evidence to the assessor that they are gaining the knowledge skills and attitudes to be successful career planners. Learners are clear about their reasons for joining the UTC and that it provides a different type of education from a mainstream school/academy. Learners are particularly engaged in the vocational elements of the curriculum and a significant number are hoping to obtain apprenticeships in engineering and technology related areas. Post 16 learners are clear about the choices they have made and the pathways they can follow next. They have a good awareness and understating of academic pathways but also of vocational pathways including apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships. Learners can talk about their skills and relate them to employment though they need to remember obvious transferable skills such as attendance, punctuality and meeting deadlines. They have had the opportunity to gain experience from several employers and visits but it could be beneficial for them to have a broader understanding of local employment opportunities in education and health for example.

CDI Career Development Framework outcomes headings for 2020 version are shown in black, and for 2021 version in the corresponding colours of the chart below.



O.1 – Learners understand themselves and the influences on them (self-development)

Grow throughout life.

Most learners have joined the UTC because of their interest in engineering and computing, though it can also provide a new start in a different environment in year 10. Year 11 learners explained that the UTC provides a range of opportunities for them that other organisations do not, for example, the opportunity to gain a range of Microsoft professional qualifications.

Learners in Year 12 of the UTC told the assessor the reasons they had chosen that pathway but are also aware that there is a range of pathways they could have accessed. They are already thinking about how the subjects and pathways they have chosen can help them access the next step on their career journey. They told the assessor, *'The UTC provides us with a wide range of opportunities to help us prepare for work like professional qualifications.'* If practical, they would like even more opportunities to gain these. They may also benefit from having a more detailed understanding of the EPQ as this can provide the opportunity to illustrate their ability to carry out individual research. A skill an employer may be looking for.

The learners the assessor spoke to in Year13 had not been able to access work experience during the pandemic however they have grown in a range of ways understanding how the world of work is changing and all had high aspirations. *'I have a place at Oxford to study economics and management.'* *'I have an application in for a degree apprenticeship in Computer Science.'*

Balance life and work

Learners in Year 11 explained to the assessor how the learning environment they have is more like a work environment as they feel they are working more in partnership with staff as they can address them informally. They also meet employers regularly and learn about the workplace from them helping them to understand the need to balance life and work.

Some Year 12 learners told the assessor they not only study but also have part time jobs and some understand that an online presence can enhance their employability. *'Social media means we can be creative in how we present ourselves but need to be aware of the possible links between leisure and work'*

Year 13 learners are enthusiastic about the recent opportunities they have had to experience workplaces via SAGE, Spotify and other partners. This has helped them consider what they want as a work life balance. *'I am happy to continue studying fulltime for a degree.'* *'I want to get a degree apprenticeship so I can earn some money and work as well as learn.'*

O.2 – Learners can research opportunities for training, work and personal development (career exploration)

Explore possibilities.

Through their learning during the day as well as via visits from employers and to workplaces learners are finding out about a range of possible workplaces and roles they also use Unifrog to help them learn about occupations and learning pathways. One learner said, *'I like doing practical things and learning on the job so am hoping to do a degree apprenticeship.'*

Before committing to a course at the UTC year 12 had explored other possibilities including other schools and colleges and apprenticeships and explained to the assessor why they are there. *'The teachers here are really helpful and we get lots of opportunities and very good facilities.'* *'Unifrog helps us to explore different possibilities post 16.'*

Year 13 learners are using Unifrog and a range of other resources to help them explore possibilities for their futures. They are aware of matching these to their strengths and skills. *'I am adventurous and want to develop my teamwork skills so I've decided I'm going to follow in family footsteps and do National Service in Finland.'* *'I like maths and want to study accounting and finance at a high ranking university so I can work in the stock market.'* *'I got so involved in the work experience I did in Architecture that I lost track of time'* *'I have a passion for innovation so want to work for a company that constantly innovates.'*

Create opportunities.

'Meeting lots of employers and visiting workplaces allows us to explore a range of possibilities for employment. Using Unifrog helps us to do more research and find about careers and learning pathways as well.' Learners in all years told the assessor that they believe they have an advantage to learn about work and the importance of the range of particularly engineering and technology jobs that are available for them to access with a range of employers.

Year 12 are being supported to learn how to use technology to help them access the job market. *'We are encouraged to develop our CV's and use ICT skills to complete applications.'* One learner shared that he had had a Zoom interview to obtain a part time job. *'When we want a fulltime job, we might need to use an online platform to talk to possible employers.'* *Carrying out challenges set by employers can create opportunities.'*

Whilst Year 13's were significantly affected by the pandemic they have learnt to be resilient and have an awareness that there are a variety of ways of working now available. They are hoping to create opportunities for themselves as they move on from the UTC including using social media platforms such as LinkedIn.

O.3 – Learners can make and adjust plans to manage change and transition (career management)

Manage career

Year 11 learners are already planning their post 16 pathways with some wanting to continue at the UTC and focus on the specialisms it provides whilst others are keen to either return to a more traditional academic route, access apprenticeships or transfer to a local college where they can specialise in different areas of technology.

Year 12 have made a successful transition to post 16 learning at the UTC and are already beginning to consider and plan for their next steps. *'I chose traditional A levels as I want to go into medical research.'* *'I am in contact with a company in US and want to get a scholarship to study in Boston and be sponsored by a Software company.'* *'I hope to join the Navy and work with computers.'*

Learners in Year 13 are successfully managing their careers as they identify the next steps to take after this academic year. They can identify a range of transferable and employability skills. *'I am a critical thinker.'* *'I have good time management and can analyse things.'* *'I am very hardworking and motivated.'* *'I have good customer service and communication skills.'*

See the big picture.

Learners in year 11 have a range of knowledge about career opportunities and learning pathways they might access and the importance of technology for the 21st Century. It would be beneficial if they had a better understanding of local economic growth priorities and significant local employers.

Year 12 learners are more aware of potential local employment *'Microsoft and Cisco employ people locally.'* *'Energy company SSE has jobs locally.'* *'National Rail and Reading buses provide local jobs.'* However, they do not immediately identify Reading University, Local Hospitals and education providers as potential employers.

Year 13 learners told the assessor they have been well supported through Careers and Futures sessions, to see the big picture, to write CV's, personal statements and set up LinkedIn accounts. They appreciate the easy access to the support from Stephanie to help them make successful transitions and fulfil their potential.

Summary and Judgement

Following the pandemic Reading UTC continues to review their careers programme and have enhanced several elements of it. Learners in year 11 now have access to employer mentors and Unifrog is being used as a platform to provide information and ideally to record career related learning. (Recommendation 1) Learners are positively engaged with the learning pathway they have chosen and enthusiastic about what they are learning about themselves and the world of work. They are supported to make successful transitions within the college and to make their next steps into further learning or work including degree level apprenticeships.

The programme now uses a baseline assessment to help measure impact. It is important to monitor and review how Unifrog supports learners and to continue to review and evaluate changes to the career programme. The assessor recommends that as the programme continues to be developed the college includes a greater focus and emphasis on the range of uses of ICT that can support and enhance learners ability to successfully gain employment and to market their skills, knowledge and understanding of themselves, their community and the world of work. Examples may be more use of LinkedIn, using ICT for presentations, videos and interviews, following employers or learning providers on appropriate social media platforms and gaining the skills to create a range of online content to promote themselves. (Recommendation 4)

The opportunity for them to acquire a range of professional qualifications, including Microsoft ones, is much appreciated by the learners and illustrates the college's commitment to preparing their learners for working life. Learners are also very positive about the ethos of the environment and how it better resembles a workplace than other places they are familiar with.

The intent of the programme clearly aims to help learners understand themselves and skills that an employer will be looking for. It will be beneficial to ensure these are recorded from Y10 on Unifrog and include generic employability skills such as time management, attendance and punctuality so that learners maintain a greater awareness of all their employability skills. R2 Learners opportunities to interact with a growing range of employers and alumni and the college's growing involvement with the local career hub are beneficial for the career programme and learners. Learners know about a range of private sector employers. Understanding of local labour market opportunities and Thames Valley economic growth priorities can be further enhanced by additional experiences of the workplace and helping them identify a wider range of employers for example in health and education. (Recommendation 3)

It is very positive that learners have access to an external guidance professional however currently this is focussed mainly on year 11 and above. The assessor recommends that there is a greater focus on earlier needs analysis and that some one to one guidance interventions are targeted before year 11 meaning some year 11's may not require a formal guidance interview .(Recommendation 2)

University Technology College Reading retains the Quality in Careers Standard fully incorporating the Gatsby Benchmarks provided by the Licensed Awarding Body, Complete-Careers Career Mark, using the Career Mark approach.

This is an excellent achievement and recognises the quality and breadth of your careers provision. You are “making good progress” towards meeting the Benchmarks and the accreditation criteria, as detailed in this report. We will review your progress towards the Benchmarks, and the career-related learning outcomes for learners which the national Quality in Careers Standard requires, through annual reviews.

Recommendations

To maintain the good practice already in place and to support continuous improvement the assessor recommends the following:

1. By the summer term 2023 encourage all learners from year 10 to record their basic employability and transferable skills using Unifrog and link these to career action planning
2. By September 2023 review the use of the external guidance professional. Now several staff have received level three training this should contribute to a triage system and ensure the following. Learners in year 11 or above who feel they do not want/need a one to one interview with a level 6 guidance professional can opt out. A greater focus on using the level 6 guidance professional with younger learners potentially with the following groups. Disaffected/at risk of NEET learners to motivate/re-engage them. Learners with a high potential to achieve in a range of areas to support them to consider the full range of options and identify what they want from their future.
3. By July 2023 using information from the Thames Valley careers hub, LEP , [Berkshire Opportunities Homepage](#), trips and placements and information from other appropriate websites including [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](#) develop staff and learners knowledge and understanding of local labour market information.
4. Review the Careers and Futures programme, baseline assessment and skills and development programme by December 2023. By July 2024 look at adding value to the programme by greater use of ICT e.g., using video/social media for self-promotion/job applications and link this to learners online activity such as YouTube channels, LinkedIn and employers social media presence.