



The Quality in Careers Standard >>>>

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UTC Reading Re-accreditation - Gold (4th Assessment)

Valid from	27 th February 2025
Valid until	26 th February 2027
Assessed by	Sally Bryant
Verified by	Tracey Taylor

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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 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

<p>Assessor</p> <p>Sally Bryant</p>
<p>Learning Organisation</p> <p>UTC Reading Crescent Road Reading RG1 5RQ</p>
<p>Career leader including email address</p> <p>Stephanie Bolter Stephanie.bolter@alet.org.uk</p>
<p>Career Mark Support Adviser (if used or Trust/Project Organisation linked to)</p>
<p>Date of review of Assessment Portfolio (Part 1)</p> <p>February 2025</p>
<p>Date of On-Site Assessment (Part 2)</p> <p>27th February 2025 Assessment conducted via Microsoft Teams</p>

Summary of Process to Achieve the Standard using Career Mark

1. **SUBMIT COMPASS self assessment:** 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 components which incorporate the national criteria for the Quality in Careers Standard and Gatsby Benchmarks. Write a description and prepare evidence against the criteria detailed 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 career education, information, advice and guidance (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 and Guidance** - 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 helping them towards being 'work ready'.

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 organisation's site. (Normally using virtual platforms though at an additional cost onsite assessment may be arranged). A first assessment takes a full day, but subsequent reaccreditation 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 Career Mark 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 RECCREDITATION:** 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 recommendations from their last assessment. After two years, the learning provider is required to seek reaccreditation of the award and to demonstrate continuous improvement.
- 6. LONG TERM COMMITMENT:** Learning providers who successfully achieve a second consecutive revalidation (third assessment) will be awarded with the Complete Careers Career Mark 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)
CDI	Career Development Institute
CEC	Careers and Enterprise Company
CEIAG	Career education, information, advice and guidance
CL	Careers leader
CV	Curriculum Vitae
EDT	Engineering Development Trust
EHCP	Education, health and care plan
FE	Further education
FSM	Free school meals
G	Advice, Guidance and support (Description Grid component)
I	Information (Description Grid component)
KS	Key stage
M	Management (Description Grid component)
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
PSHE	Personal social and health education
QiCs	Quality in Careers Standard (Criteria for the Standard)
SME	Small or medium sized enterprise
UTC	University Technical College
UTCRC	University Technical College Reading

Introduction to the Organisation

UTC Reading is a University Technical College for 14 – 19-year-olds with a specialism in Engineering and Computer Science. They are part of the Activate Learning Education Trust (ALET) alongside 3 other UTC's and 2 other schools. They currently have just under 300 students on roll across both KS4 and KS5 combined, with 77% Male and 23% Female cohort. UTC Reading is within the Reading Borough Council however they welcome students from a wide catchment area including Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire, as well as South Oxfordshire, Maidenhead, Slough and Guildford.

The UTC has 13% SEND students, including 2 EHCP students. They have 11% FSM learners, and 9% Pupil Premium for the 2024 – 2025 academic year. The vision at UTC Reading is to 'Transform Lives through Learning' with the intent to prepare 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 they do. The UTC culture is built around students developing skills, knowledge and qualities ready for the world of work and this is communicated through the attributes of confident, professional, aware, enterprising and resilient.

Careers education, information, advice and guidance is at the heart of UTC Reading; it is led by Stephanie Bolter who is the head of employer engagement at ALET (Activate Learning Education Trust). Stephanie was previously the assistant head at UTC Reading, responsible for careers, futures, employer engagement and the sixth form and was the named careers leader. Stephanie remains as the named careers leader despite her role across the trust. Supporting her is the events and projects coordinator who works full time in the careers team at UTC Reading. The UTC outsource and pay for an external careers adviser from the EDT, who is currently undergoing a Level 6 careers guidance qualification. They deliver independent and impartial careers advice to students.

UTC Reading have a huge array of support from industry, from the likes of Thames Water and MiCiM to smaller SME's that support the careers programme in a number of ways from careers fairs, to project based learning within the curriculum, one-off workshop talks, whole school drop-down days and work experiences. New for this academic year, UTC Reading has introduced the digital futures programme, working alongside global employers in the data centre industry to deliver specialist workshops, challenge days and experiences of the workplace for their students, to raise the profile of and encourage students to consider careers in this ever-important, national infrastructure industry. They review the website, careers programmes and policies every two years and get parents and guardians involved at key points throughout the academic year, for example, when students need to make informed decisions about their next steps.

UTC Reading destinations are incredibly positive, and they pride themselves on this. Year 11 Summer 2024 leavers went to FE Colleges (47%), stayed at UTC Reading (27%), other Sixth Forms (19%) and apprenticeships (5%). 1% of learners moved abroad to study, and therefore they had no NEETS in Year 11. In Year 13, their students went onto university (65%), apprenticeships (14%), further education (8%), employment (8%), and around 5% of learners decided to take a gap year or move abroad.

UTC Reading was very recently inspected by Ofsted and judged to be “good” in all areas with careers being identified as a strength. UTC Reading previously achieved the Career Mark Quality in Careers Standard in 2017, revalidated in 2020 and again in 2023 receiving the Gold Award.

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			✓

Achieving the Standard, fully meeting the national criteria = Has met all the criteria in this section of the Standard's national criteria including the relevant Gatsby Benchmark indicators.

Assessment Schedule

Time	Meeting
8.30 am	Meet with Stephanie Bolter (CL) and Jennie Thomson (Headteacher)
9.00 am	Year 10 learners
9.30 am	13 Technical Route
10.00 am	Year 12 (Technical Route/A Level/Hybrid)
10.50 am	Break
11.20 am	Year 11 learners
11.50 am	Year 13 A level/Hybrid Route
12.20pm	Assessor reflection time
12.50pm	Feedback to Stephanie Bolter and Jennie Thomson

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	✓	R2, R3, 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	✓	
3.2 3.3ii	G3 – Coordinating and tracking	✓	
3.3 3.2i,3.3i	G4 – Career action planning and target setting	✓	R1
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	✓	
5.2 5.1i-iii,6.1i-ii	C4 – Coordinating curriculum inputs – employer engagement (encounters with employers)	✓	
6.1 5.1i-iii, 6.1i-ii	C4 – Coordinating curriculum inputs – employer engagement (experiences of workplace pre 16)	✓	
6.2 5.1i-iii, 6.1i-ii	C4 – Coordinating curriculum inputs – employer engagement (experiences of workplace pre 18)	✓	
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	✓	
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

Recommendations later in this report are linked to the 'Dev. Identified' 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.

This assessment was conducted using Microsoft Teams. The assessor was able to interact effectively with all of the learners using both camera and audio. The assessor spoke with a range of learners from Key Stage 4 and 5 representing all routes offered at UTCR including A level, technical and hybrid pathways.

Stephanie Bolter has a trust wide role as head of employer engagement for ALET and alongside this has retained her role as careers leader at UTCR working hard to ensure that the UTC has a comprehensive careers and futures programme in place that is well informed by statutory guidance and takes account of Gatsby benchmarks and the CDI framework learning outcomes. The careers leader is very well supported by a wider team of staff, including an EDT careers adviser, a link governor for careers, an events and projects coordinator, an enterprise adviser and two members of staff who are level 3 qualified in careers guidance. Collaboration within this team ensures that strength of provision for careers is maintained.

Learners present themselves professionally, they are highly articulate and engaged well with the assessor to describe their career learning and experiences at UTCR. They speak very positively about the careers programme provided by the UTC and in particular about the variety of employer interactions and work-related experiences that are made available to them. Learners aspire to a variety of destinations Post 16/18 and are clear about the pathways that are available to them when they leave UTCR, this is also reflected in the growing numbers of learners gaining apprenticeships post 18. It is clear from learner voice that they are gaining the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be successful career planners.

Careers is firmly embedded within the school strategic plan which provides an excellent platform for ongoing review and development. In particular, this has allowed for the strengthening of careers delivery across the curriculum and a growing enrichment offer through the implementation of a training and development programme. Learners understand that by taking part in wider enrichment activities they can develop a range of essential employability skills that will support them in navigating their next steps effectively.

CDI Career Development Framework for 2021 version are shown in the corresponding colours of the chart below:

The six learning areas



Grow throughout life

Students at UTCR can talk confidently about the subjects that they enjoy most and suggest a variety of career ideas that relate to their preferences, ***“I enjoy computer science and could become a cybersecurity analyst”***, ***“I enjoy art and design and could get a job as a graphic designer or a museum curator”***, ***“my favourite subject is engineering which relates to jobs like mechanical engineer or architect”*** (Year 10 learners). UTCR offer a variety of study pathways and technical route learners in Year 13 can explain the reasons for their choice of pathway, ***“I chose to study BTEC because I prefer assessment throughout the year and a more hands-on approach to learning”***, ***“I started doing A levels at a different school which didn’t go well so I moved to study BTEC at UTCR where I’m doing a lot better and the course suits me”*** (Year 13 learner). In addition, A level learners talk confidently about their choice of subjects, ***“I chose to study maths, further maths and computer science because I want to be a programmer in the future and these subjects support this”*** (Year 13 learner).

Learners at UTCR record their careers engagements using Unifrog, they are able to describe some opportunity to reflect in tutor time on the impact of their experiences, ***“we use Unifrog to record our work experience”***, ***“after we work with employers, we sometimes discuss in tutor time or assemblies what we have learned”*** (Year 12 learners). More time to reflect and consider the impact of their work with employers could be of benefit to individual learners as they consider next steps (R1). Learners at UTCR are encouraged to take part in a variety of enrichment activities offered through a planned training and development programme, ***“I go to coding and painting clubs”***, ***“I do professional qualifications as part of the training and development programme”*** (Year 11 learners), this programme supports the development of strong employability skills.

Balance life and work

Learners at UTCR understand the need for good work life balance and the benefits of this to physical and mental health, ***“in a recent drop down day we did an activity around work life balance”, “good work life balance will mean better mental health, improved sleep and increased happiness”, “if you can achieve your goals in life as well as work it makes you happier and more productive in the workplace”*** (Year 10 learners). They take part in a range of activities that help them to maintain their own work life balance, ***“I do volunteering working in local woodland”, “I play football”*** (Year 13 learners). Through the personal development programme and wider curriculum, the UTC ensure that learners understand how to manage their money in terms of spending, saving and budgeting, ***“we had to create a financial plan for a project that we were involved in”, “we had an employer day where we had to create a data centre, this needed us to do costings for energy and construction”*** (Year 12 learners). Learners can explain the meaning of equal opportunities in relation to the work place, ***“workplaces should be inclusive and promote diversity”, “it’s a legal requirement for a workplace to be accessible”*** (Year 11 learners). However, they are less confident talking about specific examples of equal opportunity and the UTC could check programmes delivered to ensure full coverage of this topic (R2). In Year 13 learners have considered the costs and benefits of the different pathways available to them and can articulate this, ***“I know that university is expensive especially as an international student”, “I think that an apprenticeship route will benefit me more than going to university because I want to go into project management, I have spoken to people about the pros and cons and want to gain experience”*** (Year 13 learners).

Explore possibilities

Learners at UTCR speak confidently about where they can go to find out information about careers, ***“we can access Unifrog through our laptops and this has lots of useful information”, “we have an on-site careers adviser who we can go to for help”, “most heads of department at UTCR have employer contacts and can put us in touch with someone who can help with questions”*** (Year 10 learners). They benefit from a wide range of employer encounters and workplace visits which help them to explore career possibilities and develop their networking skills, ***“In computer science we went to Digital Realty in London where we looked how to fit fibre optic cables”, “we have regular careers fairs at UTCR where we can speak to employers and universities”, I’m doing level 3 engineering and we have had lots of employer visits to support us with projects such as wiring and testing electrical equipment”*** (Year 13 learners). Learners are fully aware of the types of skills and qualities that employers will be looking for and Year 12 learners are able to make a variety of excellent suggestions listed below:

- Ability to work to timescales and deadlines
- Confidence and showing initiative
- Critical thinking and solving problems in a clear minded manner
- Teamwork and communication so that you can work effectively
- Being and looking professional so that you are the best version of yourself at work
- Leadership
- Creative thinking
- Hardworking and able to adapt to new environments and situations

The UTC ensures that learners understand the different pathways available to them at the end of Year 11 and Year 13, ***“in our weekly PSHE lessons we find out about the different pathways”, “if you do a T level you get a work placement”, “the benefits of an apprenticeship are continuous professional development of skills, access to pension schemes, getting a mentor and you can also go to university on a degree apprenticeship”*** (Year 11 learners). In addition, learners understand the differences between studying for a degree full time and doing a degree apprenticeship and can weigh up the pros and cons of these pathways, ***“in a degree apprenticeship you get first hand knowledge and experience of the workplace”, “going to university full time you can gain a degree faster and still get experience by working part time”, “you might get employed at the end of an apprenticeship”*** (Year 13 learners)

Create opportunities

UTCR provides good opportunities for learners to develop their leadership skills, ***“on drop down days we get to work on projects in teams and we take on roles including project manager”, “UTCR offers us a range of opportunities to work as leaders such as director of sports, student director, ambassador for events, director of careers and employment”*** (Year 10 learners). Furthermore, learners have multiple opportunities throughout the year to network and build relationships with employers both through the curriculum and via additional careers enrichment activities, ***“we have a careers fair where we get the chance to network with lots of different employers”, “we have mock interviews with employers”*** (Year 12 learners).

Learners understand and can reflect thoughtfully on any influences that might have impacted their career and pathway choices, ***“the units that I have enjoyed studying most in BTEC engineering are steering my career ideas”, “experiences that I have gained at UTCR have influenced the type of engineering that I want to do in the future”, “my brother gained an apprenticeship and his positive experience is influencing me”*** (Year 13 learners). The UTC ensures that learners understand the differences between self-employment, voluntary work and being an entrepreneur. Learners are able to describe key elements of each type of work, ***“an entrepreneur is willing to take risks”, “if you’re self employed you have more freedom of choice”, “being self employed can have tax benefits”, “voluntary work is offering your services and expecting nothing in return like money or reward”*** (Year 11 learners)

Manage career

A variety of staff at UTCR support learners to manage their career planning effectively, alongside this employers are involved in a range of supporting activities, ***“my tutor has provided information about different pathways and given me support for my Cambridge interview”, “teachers help us with our personal statements”, “we had a personal statement writing workshop that involved employers”*** (Year 13 learners). As a result, learners have clear ideas in terms of their career planning and are confident in taking their next steps, ***“I’ve gained a degree apprenticeship with a civil engineering company. I applied online, completed some video questions and had an interview, UTCR helped me to prepare for this”, “I have applied to universities to study mechanical engineering but have also applied to BMW, Thames Water, Bentley and Babcock for degree apprenticeships”, “employers came into the UTC to run a mock assessment centre”*** (Year 13 learners). In Year 12 learners are able to describe the types of job that they think would suit them best and provide well-reasoned explanations, ***“I’m interested in***

being an architect because this merges mathematical and design aspects together which I enjoy, ***“I want to work in a team because this is where I feel most comfortable”***, ***“I enjoy problem solving and want to be an engineer”***. ***“I’m interested in finance because I like problem solving, analysis and working with data”*** (Year 12 learners). Learners are encouraged to set aspirational goals and talk enthusiastically about future possibilities, ***“I want to go to university and study to become an architect”***, ***“I’d like to get all grade 8’s and 9’s in my GCSEs”***, ***“I’d like to study programming in the future and improve my skills in Python and Javascript”*** (Year 10 learners). They are able to describe challenges and barriers that might impact on their future and suggest ways to navigate these, ***“student debt can be a barrier that might stop you from going to university to gain a degree but you can overcome this by applying for degree apprenticeships”***, ***“the entry requirements for some universities are really challenging especially the Russell Group”*** (Year 11 learners)

See the big picture

Learners at UTCR are encouraged to understand the bigger picture of careers. For example, they are very aware of the changes that technology is making to the workplace and can also give examples of how they are being prepared for this, ***“more employees are working from home and using remote and virtual ways of working”***, ***“there is growing automation and less need for humans in some areas”***, ***“Boston Dynamics/Yondr donated a robot dog for us to programme in computer science”***, ***“we have Microsoft accounts and use Teams, we access revision online and our GCSE materials so we are getting used to using technology”***, ***“we spent a day gaining Microsoft qualifications”*** (Year 10 learners). In addition, they can suggest events that might affect their career that cannot be controlled, ***“developments such as AI have created jobs for computer scientists but taken away the need for some job roles”***, ***“we couldn’t control a global pandemic but we discovered remote ways of working”***, ***“you might apply for a really competitive job and not get it so you need to be resilient”*** (Year 12 learners). The UTC works hard to ensure that learners are fully aware of the benefits and drawbacks of social media. Learners are very well versed in the uses and benefits of LinkedIn and have received training in setting up accounts and how to use them for career networking and positive self-promotion, ***“school has regular sessions on how to use LinkedIn”***, ***“we have a big workshop in Year 12 on how to set up and use LinkedIn accounts”***, ***“we are taught how to format LinkedIn to attract employers”*** (Year 12 and 13 learners). They are also aware of the drawbacks of social media in relation to careers and employers and they understand digital footprint, ***“you need to be very careful with your comments and any posts, likes and reposts so that you don’t create a negative digital footprint that is visible to employers”*** (Year 13 learner)

Summary and Judgement

There is a range of excellent practice evident at UTCR and it is clear that learners feel very well supported by the careers team and wider staff members. Careers sits at the heart of the UTC being firmly embedded in the school improvement plan and supported by an extensive network of employer partnerships. Stephanie Bolter the CL has developed a comprehensive careers and futures programme ensuring that learners are well prepared to take their next steps beyond the UTC. In addition, cross curricular provision for careers is a strength and is closely monitored and maintained through learning walks and regular meetings with heads of department where planning for careers input is a fixed agenda item. In the summer term of 2024 UTCR carried out the CEC future skills questionnaire but sadly due to a technical error the results have so far not been available. It would certainly be of benefit to be able to evaluate the impact of careers provision over time and UTCR could continue to explore using this tool in the future (R3).

All learners benefit from one-to-one careers guidance with a qualified and CDI registered adviser. The UTC sensibly prioritises more vulnerable learners for additional time and early intervention and as a result learners at UTCR access a range of positive destinations. It is extremely encouraging to note that increasing numbers of learners Post 18 are pursuing and securing some excellent degree apprenticeships.

The UTC employs robust systems for the review and evaluation of the careers programme and is constantly striving to improve provision. A training and development programme has increased opportunities for learners to take part in enrichment activities specifically designed to develop their wider employability skills. A new digital futures programme is again serving to increase employer engagement bringing with it mock interviews, challenge days, CV writing and workplace visits. Furthermore, UTCR have this year launched the use of the Unifrog work experience placement tool with Year 10 and Year 12 as they strive to ensure that all learners have positive and relevant experiences of the workplace. It would be useful to review the new systems implemented for work experience with all stakeholders to measure the impact (R4). This is the fourth time that the UTC has undergone Career Mark assessment which further evidences their desire for continual improvement.

Overall, the provision for careers at UTCR is very strong and is testimony to the hard work of the CL, the wider careers team and the value being placed on careers by the UTC leadership. Learners are very well equipped and confident to move forward in the different stages of their life and career journey.

UTC 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 fully meet all Benchmarks and the accreditation criteria, as detailed in this report. We will review your progress in continuing to meet 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:

- R1. Consideration to be given by the careers leader to allowing learners more time and opportunity to review and reflect on any employer engagements (by July 2026).

- R2. During the next planned audit of the careers programme consider checking coverage of CDI learning outcomes specifically those around equal opportunities (by next assessment).

- R3. The careers leader could continue to explore use of the CEC future skills questionnaire as a means to assess impact of the careers programme over time (by next assessment).

- R4. The careers leader could carry out a review of work experience 2024/2025 with a specific focus on the use of the Unifrog placement tool. (by December 2025).