



Careers, Work Experience and Work Readiness Policy

Including Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance Framework
Academic Year: 2025–2026

We are a friendly, happy and welcoming environment where people feel safe and secure and are supported to thrive. We are firmly focused on providing outstanding support, guidance and opportunities for each learner to develop their interests, talents and friendships with a focus on individual talents, interests and potential.

Policy Owner: Hannah Harighi

Date: December 2025

Review Date: Annually

Table of Contents

1. Introduction & Commitment
2. Aims & Objectives
3. Student Entitlement (Post-16)
4. Work Readiness Development
5. Work Experience
6. Roles & Responsibilities
7. Stakeholder Engagement
8. Monitoring & Review
9. Gatsby Benchmarks & CDI Framework
10. Safeguarding & DBS
11. Compliance Statement

1. Introduction & Commitment

This policy outlines the comprehensive Careers Education, Information, Advice, and Guidance (CEIAG) and work experience programme at Azure. Our mission is to unlock our learners' potential through personalised learning, innovation, and opportunity, supporting growth and aspirations. The Careers Lead for Azure is Hannah Harighi.

Careers education and guidance programmes are vital in preparing young people for life's opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences. A planned, progressive programme supports students in choosing pathways aligned with their interests and abilities, helping them pursue a career path and sustain employability throughout their working lives.

The college is committed to providing an impartial and effective CEIAG programme for all students. We aim to support learner aspirations, ensuring they gain the understanding, skills, and experience necessary to progress and succeed in learning and work.

Equality and Diversity

Careers education is provided to all students. They are encouraged to follow career paths that suit their interests, skills, and strengths, free from stereotypes. All students are provided with the same opportunities, and diversity is celebrated. Having an on-site careers lead ensures excellent knowledge of student needs, allowing for a tailored approach in line with EHCP needs. The programme actively promotes equality of opportunity and challenges stereotypes, encouraging students to explore career paths that align with their interests and strengths, regardless of gender or background.

2. Aims & Objectives

The work experience policy at Azure aims to:

- Contribute strategies for raising achievement, particularly by increasing motivation and providing access to accreditation pathways.
- Support inclusion, challenge stereotyping, and promote equality of opportunity in the workplace.
- Encourage participation in continued learning, including higher and further education.
- Develop enterprise and employability skills.
- Reduce dropout from and course switching in education and training.
- Contribute to the economic prosperity of individuals and communities.
- Meet the needs of all students through appropriate resources.

- Focus students on their future aspirations.
- Involve parents and carers.
- Equip young people with the skills, knowledge, qualifications, and experience needed to enjoy a full adult life and contribute successfully to the local economy.
- Provide good careers education, information, advice, and guidance, encouraging learners to aspire to reach their full potential.

3.Student Entitlement (Post-16)

Careers Education and Guidance (CEG) is a crucial component of the Curriculum.

Students are entitled to:

- Access a group careers programme that allows them to explore different careers, qualifications, and learning routes.
- Direct careers meetings and the attendance of the CEG lead at EHC reviews.
- Knowledge, information, and skills to make informed choices about suitable courses at colleges, apprenticeships., volunteering or paid employment.
- Receive accurate and up-to-date information, advice, and guidance about available options and progression routes.
- Be treated equally with others and be treated with respect by visitors to the college involved in the careers programme.
- Assessment activities which enable them to and understand their strengths, interests and areas for improvement.
- Learning activities and work experiences with employers, which enable them to progress towards employment or other goals.
- The delivery of all careers-related activities are underpinned by Career Development Institute's 'Careers Guidance in Schools and Colleges Guidance, available here: https://www.thecdi.net/write/BP560-Career_Guidance_in_Schools_2018-Web.pdf

4.Work Readiness Development

4.1 The college assesses a learner's readiness via the completion of the Work Readiness Dashboard at the beginning of the year. Tutors' observations and professional judgement throughout the academic year are recorded on the dashboard, with a minimum of 3 reviews over the academic year. When a professional judgement has been made that the learner is ready for work experience a referral to the Careers Advisor will be made so they can begin to source work placement opportunities.

4.2 The college sets an expectation that all leavers will undertake a work placement (or will have had meaningful encounters with employers), as per Gatsby Benchmark 5.

4.3 Professional judgement and staff discussions will be used to ascertain whether work experience is appropriate for an individual, and the level of support that may be required.

Development of work readiness

4.4 Through the careers programme learners will develop employability skills. In addition, employability and work readiness are embedded throughout the curriculum.

4.5 Learners will complete a Vocational Profile with support from staff to assist with decision making and action planning.

4.6 Learners will receive tailored support to fill any gaps identified in the vocational profile, for example, financial awareness and independent travel training.

5. Work Experience

The value of work experience

5.1 Work experience is a key focus due to the vocational nature of Azure's programmes. Not all students will undertake work experience outside college due to their vulnerability and the increased risk this poses. All work experience placements are assessed for suitability and health and safety through a comprehensive risk assessment, in partnership with the Employment Services Department.

5.2 Work experience helps to develop;

- **Social Skills:** Experiencing working as part of a group, learning to work with new people and adults in a work situation.
- **Personal Development:** Understanding different roles, responding to routines, practicing decision-making, being responsible for actions, and developing communication skills. It plays an important role in developing self-image and maturity, enabling students to experience success and frustrations in completing projects.
- **Knowledge and Understanding:** Awareness of work disciplines, differences between school and work, and the effect of new technology.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The College

The College will carry out pre-placement checks and risk assessments and will report any safeguarding concerns to the college. The College has a responsibility to ensure that any staff involved in the management or administration of placements have appropriate training, and are

in turn aware of their responsibilities. Prior to commencing their placement, the learner will attend employability sessions in college, where they will be taught about expectations of behaviour in the workplace and about general health and safety legislation. The college will ensure that the placement provides the best opportunity for the student to apply and develop skills that are related to their occupational field of study.

6.2 Placement providers (Employers)

Employers must comply with Health and Safety Legislation, for example, having up-to-date Employer's Liability Insurance; assessing the risks of a learners on placement; providing training; instruction and supervision. These are particularly important aspects given the youth and inexperience of many of the students on placement. The primary responsibility for meeting statutory Health & Safety requirements within a placement remains with the employer (placement provider). The employer will provide a quality experience for the learner, relevant to the learner's course of study and will, as far as practicable possible, enable the learner to learn and develop and meet their agreed objectives/ learning aims.

6.3 Learners

Learner on placement have the same Health & Safety responsibilities as any other employees in the workplace. They must take reasonable care for their own Health & Safety and for the Health & Safety of other people around them. They must raise any concerns around safety or safeguarding whilst on placement with their college contact in a timely manner. They must also cooperate with the placement provider (the employer) by complying with existing legal duties. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks may have to be completed by some learners before placements can begin, e.g. Health and Social Care & Child Care students. Learners should be aware of their agreed objectives/learning aims whilst on placement. Each learner will be provided with a work placement booklet to record their experiences and therein the employer can provide feedback on the learner's performance and attitude.

7.Stakeholder Engagement

The college works with a range of stakeholders and partners to assist and support the delivery of CEIAG and ensure alignment with local labour market information (LMI). Partners and stakeholders include:

- The North East Combined Authority
- Local employers
- The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) and other professional bodies

- Other education and training providers
- Career Leads from other post-16 providers

The college's approach is always collaborative to build a strong and cohesive CEIAG programme, enabling learners to reach their full potential. Students will have sessions from DWP colleagues about understanding LMI.

Parental involvement is encouraged at all stages. Online resources have been specifically chosen to help parents become more involved. Parents / carers are kept up to date with careers related information through letters, emails, phone calls and newsletters relating to local events, including a copy of their child's career action plan.

8. Monitoring and Review

8.1 This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the College's SAR process.

8.2 The college has a process in place for gathering all employment encounters by learners and measuring the impact of these encounters.

8.3 A learner survey is carried out at the end of the year to assess learner satisfaction of the quality of the careers provision.

8.4 Learners and employers are encouraged to provide feedback to support the quality assurance process.

8.5 This policy is developed and reviewed every year by the Careers Lead and their Line Manager, based on current good practice guidelines from DfE/Ofsted and the CEG Framework. The programme is continually evolving, with regular policy reviews, monitoring through destination data, and ongoing feedback from students, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders. All decisions made are cascaded to staff through staff meetings.

9. Gatsby Benchmarks & CDI Framework

Gatsby Benchmarks:

- 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

This policy aligns with the CDI Career Development Framework (2021) and DfE statutory guidance.

10.Safeguarding & DBS

Azure is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all learners during work placements. Before any placement begins, safeguarding checks will be completed to confirm that the employer provides a safe environment. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are required for learners undertaking placements in sensitive sectors such as Health and Social Care or Child Care. Employers must comply with safeguarding requirements, including providing a named contact and ensuring learners are never left unsupervised in high-risk settings. Learners will receive guidance on safeguarding procedures and how to report concerns during their placement.

11.Compliance Statement

This policy complies with DfE guidance, Gatsby Benchmarks, and CDI Framework.

This policy confirms alignment with Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance, the eight Gatsby Benchmarks, and the Career Development Institute (CDI) Framework. It ensures that Azure provides a robust, impartial, and effective careers education and work experience programme for post-16 learners.