

Guidance on scoring online employer engagement in Compass

About this guidance

Online encounters and experiences that take place between students and employers are happening to a greater extent than ever before due to the Covid-19 pandemic, while face-to-face contact is not possible. Across the country, Careers Leaders and employers have responded creatively, adapting their careers programmes to the new environment so that young people can be inspired and prepared for the world of work.

The current focus on digital solutions has prompted questions about which online activities count as a meaningful encounter with employers (Gatsby Benchmark 5) and workplace experiences (Gatsby Benchmark 6). The Careers & Enterprise Company and the Gatsby Charitable Foundation have been listening carefully to the experiences of schools, colleges and others in the careers community during this period and have used this early learning to provide the initial guidance contained in this document. More detailed guidance will be available for the autumn term, taking on board the learning from this term.

This aim of this initial guidance is to support Careers Leaders, Enterprise Coordinators and Enterprise Advisers with the design of careers programmes for young people and specifically how to complete the Compass tool this term. As such, this document sets out the standard of meaningful encounters and experiences for the purpose of the Gatsby Benchmarks. There will be other online provision that doesn't meet the criteria but it still be beneficial to young people.

The benefits and challenges of online employer engagement

When delivered well, online experiences and encounters can provide valuable opportunities for young people both now and into the future. Through active participation online, young people can find out about industries and careers that may not otherwise be accessible due to geography, health and safety concerns, and other practical and accessibility barriers. Online experiences and encounters can also teach young people about digital skills, teamwork and communication in an online environment which has increasing relevance for workplaces.

However, young people are likely to learn most from interactive and hands-on experience which is harder to achieve in the online world. Online engagement with employers can complement but never completely substitute face-to-face experiences.



Completing Compass

Due to the challenging and evolving times we are currently in, we understand that progress against the benchmarks will very likely be affected. We are not anticipating the same level of benchmark achievement during this period.

As ever, Careers Leaders should use their professional judgment when assessing whether the quality of the encounters and experiences that students undertake contribute to the achievement of the benchmarks. The Gatsby Benchmarks hold the same level of relevance in an online world and continue to work as a framework for quality careers guidance. The Compass tool questions have not changed. The minimum criteria set out below should be used to support decisions about which encounters and experiences count under Benchmarks 5 and 6.

Careers Leaders should refer to the Meaningful Encounters Framework and [checklist](#) and the [Gatsby Benchmark Toolkits](#) to support them in their judgement.



To include an activity under Benchmark 5, it must meet the following minimum requirements:



Learning outcomes are defined, based on the age and needs of students.



Encounter involves two-way interaction between students and employers/employees.



There is evidence that the student actively participated.

To include an activity under Benchmark 6, it must meet the following minimum requirements:



Learning outcomes are defined, based on the age and needs of students.



Student meets a range of people from the workplace.



There is extensive two-way interaction between the student and employees.



Student must perform a task or produce a piece of work relevant to that workplace and receive feedback on it from the employer.