

West Thames College

Careers Strategic Plan 2025–26

Vision and Commitment

At West Thames College, we are committed to delivering a world-class Careers Education, Information, Advice, and Guidance (CEIAG) programme that empowers every student to progress successfully into further study, higher education, apprenticeships, or meaningful employment. Our strategy is built on the Gatsby Benchmarks and the Skills Builder Essential Skills Framework, ensuring students develop the knowledge, behaviours, and employability skills needed to thrive in a rapidly changing labour market.

Strategic Objectives (2025–26)

Structured Careers Programme (Gatsby 1, 3, 4, 7, 8)

Deliver a transparent, published careers programme accessible to students, parents, staff, governors, and employers. Integrate Skills Builder: Aiming High, Teamwork through goal setting and collaborative workshops.

Challenging Stereotypes & Promoting Equality (Gatsby 3, 4, 5)

Careers education will challenge gender, cultural, and socio-economic stereotypes. Embed Skills Builder: Speaking, Listening through debate and student-led panels.

Progression Options Awareness (Gatsby 3, 7, 8)

Ensure every student understands their routes: FE, HE, vocational pathways, apprenticeships, and employment. Use Skills Builder: Problem Solving, Creativity to explore progression scenarios.

Opportunities for 16–18-Year-Olds (Gatsby 2, 3, 7)

Expand transition support to next-level study, apprenticeships, or employment. Develop Skills Builder: Staying Positive, Aiming High in personal development sessions.

Curriculum Integration (Gatsby 4, 5, 7)

Careers learning embedded across subjects with employer and HE engagement. Develop Leadership and Teamwork through project-based learning.

Online Resources (Gatsby 2, 3, 8)

Maintain an updated portal with career guidance, labour market information, and employer profiles. Embed Listening and Problem Solving through virtual Q&A forums.

Career Guidance (Gatsby 8)

Provide impartial, high-quality one-to-one and group guidance with Level 6 qualified practitioners. Support Staying Positive and Aiming High through personalised action plans.

Workplace Experience (Gatsby 5, 6)

Deliver a structured programme of work placements, shadowing, and industry visits. Build Teamwork, Problem Solving, Creativity, Leadership through employer-set challenges.

Employer Engagement (Gatsby 5, 6)

Expand employer talks, mentoring, and enterprise challenges. Develop Speaking, Leadership, Aiming High via direct engagement with industry professionals.

SEND & Vulnerable Learner Support (Gatsby 3, 4, 8)

Provide tailored CEIAG through supported internships, employer visits, and EHCP-linked goals. Develop Staying Positive, Listening, Teamwork in supported contexts.

Promoting T Levels (Gatsby 2, 3, 7)

Increase visibility of T Level pathways through employer partnerships and parent engagement. Link to Problem Solving, Aiming High in progression planning.

Collaboration with CEC (Gatsby 1, 5, 6, 7, 8)

Leverage CEC support to improve careers delivery, employer links, and data analysis. Support Leadership and Teamwork through joint initiatives.

Programme Delivery (Key Events 2025–26)

- Careers Induction & Progression Sessions (All Gatsby; Skills Builder: Listening, Aiming High)
- Higher Education & Apprenticeship Fairs (Benchmark 7; Skills Builder: Speaking, Problem Solving)
- UCAS Personal Statement & Finance Workshops (Benchmark 7; Skills Builder: Creativity, Aiming High)
- CV and Employability Skills Workshops (Benchmark 8; Skills Builder: Teamwork, Staying Positive)
- Work Experience Preparation & Employer-Led Projects (Benchmarks 5, 6; Skills Builder: Leadership, Teamwork, Problem Solving)
- Subject Group Tutorials Linked to Careers (Benchmark 4; Skills Builder: Listening, Creativity)
- Parent Engagement Events (Benchmark 1; Skills Builder: Speaking, Listening)

Evaluation and Impact

- Destination Tracking: Monitor and analyse leaver outcomes.
- Student Voice: Surveys and focus groups to assess CEIAG impact.
- Employer Feedback: Evaluation of student readiness and employability skills.
- Benchmark Tracking: Annual Compass+ evaluation of Gatsby Benchmarks.
- Skills Builder Self-Assessment: Students measure progress in essential skills at key transition points.

Appendix: Mapping Matrix

Objective	Gatsby Benchmarks	Skills Builder Skills
Structured Programme	1, 3, 4, 7, 8	Aiming High, Teamwork
Equality & Stereotypes	3, 4, 5	Speaking, Listening
Progression Awareness	3, 7, 8	Problem Solving, Creativity
16–18 Opportunities	2, 3, 7	Staying Positive, Aiming High
Curriculum Integration	4, 5, 7	Leadership, Teamwork
Online Resources	2, 3, 8	Listening, Problem Solving
Career Guidance	8	Staying Positive, Aiming High
Workplace Experience	5, 6	Teamwork, Problem Solving, Creativity, Leadership
Employer Engagement	5, 6	Speaking, Leadership, Aiming High
SEND Support	3, 4, 8	Staying Positive, Listening, Teamwork
Promoting T Levels	2, 3, 7	Problem Solving, Aiming High
Collaboration with CEC	1, 5, 6, 7, 8	Leadership, Teamwork

CDI Audit Mapping Table – Careers & WEX Programme 2025–26

This document maps the Careers & WEX Programme 2025–26 to the CDI Career Development Framework, Gatsby Benchmarks, and Skills Builder competencies.

Activity	Gatsby Benchmark(s)	Skills Builder Focus	CDI Area(s)
Careers Induction	1, 3	Listening, Aiming High	Grow throughout life
Apprenticeships Explained	2, 7	Problem Solving, Listening	Explore possibilities
Exploring Alternatives to University	2, 3, 7	Aiming High, Problem Solving	Manage career / Explore possibilities
Portfolio & LinkedIn Clinics	4, 5	Digital Literacy, Writing, Creativity	Create opportunities / Manage career
Career Guidance Referral	1, 3, 8	Listening, Staying Positive, Aiming High	Grow throughout life / Manage career
Intro to Higher Education Options	7	Problem Solving, Aiming High	Explore possibilities
Writing Effective Personal Statements	7, 8, 3	Writing, Problem Solving, Staying Positive	Manage career
Personal Statement Surgeries	4, 7, 3	Writing, Creativity, Aiming High	Manage career
Applying for Student Finance	2, 7, 8	Problem Solving, Staying Positive	Balance life and work / Manage career
Budgeting Skills at University	4, 7, 3	Problem Solving, Creativity	Balance life and work
Apprenticeship HE Session	2, 5, 7	Aiming High, Teamwork, Speaking	Explore possibilities / Create opportunities

Activity	Gatsby Benchmark(s)	Skills Builder Focus	CDI Area(s)
Employability Skills Programme	4, 5, 8	Teamwork, Speaking, Staying Positive	Grow throughout life / Create opportunities
Work Experience & Placement Search	2, 5, 6	Problem Solving, Aiming High, Listening	Explore possibilities / Create opportunities
The Ultimate CV	4, 5	Writing, Speaking, Aiming High	Create opportunities
Effective Interview Skills	4, 5, 8	Speaking, Creativity, Staying Positive	Manage career / Create opportunities
AI & Digital Skills for the Workplace	2, 4, 5	Digital Literacy, Problem Solving, Creativity	Balance life and work / Create opportunities
Green Careers Spotlight	2, 4, 5	Creativity, Problem Solving, Aiming High	See the big picture / Explore possibilities
Resilience & Future-Proofing Careers	4, 8	Staying Positive, Teamwork	Balance life and work / Grow throughout life