

# Aquinas College Careers Service

## Statement of Service

### Introduction

Aquinas College sets out its own Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance policy in line with the College's Mission statement which aims to prepare students for their next steps.

### Overall Statement Aim:

Aquinas College is committed to delivering excellent careers education, information, advice and guidance together with meaningful employer encounters to provide support and inspiration to our students to make well-informed decisions and appropriate choices about their future plans when they leave Aquinas College. In short the aim of the Careers Service is:

*To inspire, encourage and support students so they understand where different choices could lead them in future.*

### Our Key Values

*Approachability* - we are accessible, welcoming, easy to talk to and friendly

*Collaboration* - we are connected, consultative and work in partnerships

*Impartiality* - we are inclusive, objective and fair

*Innovation* - we are progressive, developmental and adaptable

*Professionalism* - we are expert, skilled and reliable

### Quality Aims of the Careers Service

**ADVICE AND GUIDANCE:** To provide a professional, accessible and impartial advice and guidance service to students to help them take ownership of their own career path developing the skills for managing their career independently.

**ACCESSIBILITY:** To provide an accessible and welcoming service for students and staff so they feel able to approach the service for information, advice and guidance and therefore engage with the service.

**PROVISION OF INFORMATION:** To provide impartial, accurate and clear careers information in a style which appeals to students to assist their development of ideas for careers in order to motivate them to achieve.

**COLLABORATIVE WORKING WITH TEACHING STAFF:** To work with teaching staff and career ambassadors to raise the profile of embedding careers information within curriculum areas highlighting the relevance of subjects to future career paths and supporting employer encounters.

**COLLABORATIVE WORKING WITH PASTORAL TEAM:** To design a stable careers programme in consultation with the pastoral team. The programme will include the importance of Maths, English, employability skills, labour market information and challenging stereotypical thinking which will be delivered through the college tutorial programme.

**PARTNERSHIP WORKING WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS:** To foster stronger links with universities, colleges, employers, training providers and relevant agencies so that students are better informed and exposed to a wider range of information about future choices.

### **Responsibilities – who we are, what we do**

Our Careers Service staff are well qualified in Advice and Guidance and are committed to updating their skills and knowledge through Continuing Professional Development.

The appointed Careers Lead is Carol Mayall - who takes a strategic overview of the service working with the Careers Enterprise Co-ordinator and Karl Grimes from GM Hub on implementing the Gatsby benchmarks and is the link to the Senior Tutors contributing to the pastoral programme. John Morrison is the Careers Manager responsible for the management of the Careers Department as well as being a careers adviser. Marina Bowden and Louise Wilson are both careers advisers whose primary role is to enhance the students' knowledge of the full range of options available to them. Through workshops, group sessions, one-to-one interviews, employer and university visits and talks; the aim is to ensure each student has the resources and support available to them to make informed choices about their career and education.

Performance is monitored in a series of ways through peer to peer reviews, observation and student feedback.

### **Aim of the Statement of Service**

The aim of this Statement of Service is to clearly identify the services offered by the Aquinas Careers Service and how it can be accessed by students. It also sets out our expectations of students and partnership organisations with which we work.

### **Review of the Statement of Service**

A review will be carried out annually as part of the quality review cycle using feedback obtained from students, staff, parents and information from partners including apprenticeship training providers, employers and universities.

## **Services For Students**

Aquinas College believes the Gatsby benchmarks represent sector-wide best practice and is committed to embedding these into its provision so they form the basis of its offer to students.

### ***Gatsby Benchmark 1. A stable Careers Programme***

The department plans a relevant careers tutorial programme to be delivered to all daytime students via the 10:10 sessions and assemblies which actively seeks to raise the aspirations of all learners and embed British values. We will work with Senior Tutors to make sure the programme content is delivered accurately and at relevant times during the academic year. The careers programme is approved by the Board of Governors and the governor with responsibility for careers.

A series of careers workshops related to Induction, Careers Education, Higher Education, Alternatives to HE and Employability are delivered throughout the year which are advertised via the bulletin.

### ***Gatsby Benchmark 2: Learning from Career and Labour Market Information***

Awareness of Labour Market Information will be delivered through tutorial and assemblies. Access to LMI is on the Careers area of the College website and parents/carers will have the opportunity to attend an information session during our After Aquinas Evening. Employers will be encouraged to mention LMI when they deliver presentations to students at the college. Students have access to Unifrog which contains LMI information on all sectors and they are introduced to this through our Career induction sessions.

### ***Gatsby Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each pupil***

Students are supported through the pastoral system each having a Group Tutor and Senior Tutor. We have pastoral days through the year where students have the opportunity to speak on a one to one basis with their group tutor who are able to give initial information about progression and opportunities. Career advisers offer career appointments to all students and students are given an induction into the careers department at the start of the year. We ask students to complete an initial survey letting us know their previous experiences of careers support at school. At college we have designed our own career plan, where students are able to maintain their own records of career development. It contains information to support students at each stage of their decision making journey.

The careers manager works closely with GM Higher and we advertise and encourage students to apply for social mobility schemes including the Manchester Access Programme. The tutorial programme promotes equally progression opportunities for apprenticeships and university and challenges stereotypical thinking. We provide a range of enrichment activities to support students in developing their skills and helping them with progression interviews whether it be for employment or university. Each week a careers adviser from the local authority is at college supporting vulnerable and SEND students with careers guidance. We also offer specific support to our high achievers via the AQ Scholars programme.

*Gatsby Benchmark 4: Linking Curriculum Learning to Careers*

Each subject area embeds careers information within the teaching. This not only includes the importance of maths and English but also examples of the relevance of their subject in the world of work. As well as this we also plan to have specific sessions throughout the year that focuses on careers within the subject, whether it be related to the skills or specific subject content. To support this work teachers invite guest speakers from employment or universities to deliver sessions relating to course content but with a practical careers focus. The pastoral system including Ethics also contributes to the understanding of careers, stereotypical thinking and the importance of employability skills.

*Gatsby Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees*

All students have the opportunity to have a meaningful encounter with up to six employers on our careers day held in June each year. On this day we invite over 60 employers/employees from various sectors to speak to students. We work closely with the local Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Alliance group who support us in gaining interactions with employer's as well as our Careers Enterprise Adviser. Students also have the opportunity to engage with employers through tutorial activities, for example during National Apprenticeship and National Careers Week we have speakers each day. Subject areas also have guest speakers giving students the opportunity to interact and gain understanding of the world of work. Many departments invite ex-students to speak to their current cohort. Through our enrichment programme we also offer opportunities, for example, the Career Champion Programme involves mock interviews, workshops on different career aspects including CV writing, interview techniques and we have a networking sessions where students can ask questions of local employers. We also offer our Tomorrow's Teachers programme and Tomorrow's Engineers where students get the opportunity to talk to people working in these areas as well as a visit to the workplace.

*Gatsby Benchmark 6: Experiences of the workplace*

The College has a work experience week where we encourage students to gain their own work experience placement to support understanding of a career area to assist in making a well informed decision. However, we understand that our timetable does not always fit with an employer, so if a student gains a meaningful placement at an alternative time of the year, we encourage students to take the opportunity. They are also advised to complete work experience in holiday periods, where possible. Many students have the opportunity to experience the work place through the curriculum or specific career department related visits. A number of departments offer college trips, some compulsory, others voluntary to workplaces including visits to The Law Courts, Chester Zoo and then further afield to Macy's in New York, Google in San Francisco and schools in India.

### *Gatsby Benchmark 7: Encounters with Further and Higher Education*

The College runs its own progression research event each year called After Aquinas which gives students and parents/carers the opportunity to engage with universities, training providers, FE colleges and employers offering apprenticeship schemes. There are usually over 50 guests attending and a large proportion of students along with their parents/carers. A number of specific talks relating to students finance, UCAS application process, LMI, University Life, apprenticeships and medic applications are also delivered throughout the evening. We take students who are struggling with making progression decisions to the UK Research Event and encourage all students to attend university open days in the summer term. The Media, Art and Performing Arts Departments take students to the UCAS Design event in Manchester. Many departments also invite representatives from college and universities into the classrooms. The Careers Department regularly invites universities and training organisations into college to deliver sessions with our students or they are available for drop-in sessions.

### *Gatsby Benchmark 8: Personal Guidance*

Students are able to make an appointment with one of our three highly qualified career advisers who offer appointments from 8.30am to 4.30pm four days per week and 8.30am to 4pm on Friday. Each student will work with the adviser to produce a time bound, specific and achievable action plan. A copy of this will be emailed to the student which will help to give the student ownership of their future career path. A careers adviser from Stockport Council also works with the College to support potential NEETS and Pathways students. Students who are enrolled on adult education courses are able to make appointments with the career advisers. The career advisers offer drop-in sessions, employability training, information on vacancies and other opportunities. Mock interviews are available to all students: some being targeted to specific university courses.

We will provide a series of events, visits and guest speakers to help develop the students' knowledge of the opportunities after Aquinas. This will be facilitated in conjunction with employers, apprenticeship training providers and universities.

The Careers library has an array of information and resources and there are numerous on-line packages as well as our own careers website where students can gain information.

## What the Aquinas College Careers Service asks from

### *Students*

- To show respect and courtesy to all staff and be honest about their needs.
- To attend booked appointments, talks and workshops on time and to take an active part where appropriate.
- To inform us as soon as possible if unable to keep an appointment.
- To conduct themselves in a responsible manner when communicating with universities, employers and training providers. If appointments have been made with these organisations we would expect students to attend or cancel when appropriate.

- Give feedback on our service when requested to enable us to improve the service we offer.

### *Universities, Employers and Training Providers*

- To provide us with employment vacancy opportunities that conform to all equal opportunities legislation. The Aquinas College Careers Service reserves the right not to accept vacancy opportunities that contravene legislation or do not conform to best practice.
- For the universities to give advice on applying, personal statement writing and up-dated information on courses.
- For training providers to act in the best interests of the students, to make available to the College vacancy opportunities and to inform the College when a student has been successfully placed.

### *Parents/carers*

- To encourage your child to engage with all the career opportunities available so they are able to make an informed choice.

In return employers, universities and training providers can expect from the Aquinas College Careers Service the facilitating of access of all students to open days, employer and apprenticeship vacancies, events, recruitment information, support with UCAS applications as well as the organisation of an After Aquinas Event.

### **Service Availability**

The main hours of the service are Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.30pm. These hours may vary depending on the number of external career events that take place during the week. There are a range of ways that students can access the service. During opening hours there are drop in and booked appointments, tutorials and workshops. After hours the careers service can be accessed via email. When students e-mail the careers advisers they aim to reply within 24 hours. Adult education students can book an appointment in consultation with the careers advisers. The service uses Twitter and we have our own Careers Website containing a range of resources.

## **Monitoring success**

The careers service will take part in Aquinas Colleges Quality Review Process each year. The team will decide on the key performance indicators and targets which will be agreed by the Quality Review Panel in line with the overall quality aims and of the college.

The success of the careers service goes hand in hand with the success of the college. We will monitor the service by using:

- The COMPASS Tool and work closely with the College's Careers and Enterprise Adviser, Careers and Enterprise Co-ordinator to review the progress in meeting the Gatsby benchmarks.
- Internal Surveys from staff and students.
- Feedback from employers, training providers, universities, colleges and parents
- College MIS data reports providing information about student employer encounters, employer visits and skills development.
- Student destinations to measure the proportion of students achieving positive progression.
- Subject audits which identify areas of the curriculum that can be enhanced by an encounter with an employer, industry representative or experience of the workplace.
- Numbers of students using the service

## **Complaints**

We aim to offer a professional but welcoming and transparent service to all students and will try to ensure that all students are offered an independent, fair and equal service regardless of sex, ethnic origin, age, sexuality, religion or disability.

Feedback on the service will be collated and analysed on a regular basis. Complaints about the careers service will be dealt with independently of the careers service and should be sent to Danny Pearson, the Principal.

Carol Mayall

Careers Lead