

Job Description

Job Title:	College Careers Lead
Line Manager:	Assistant Principal for Partnerships and Progression
Direct Reports:	UCAS Administrators
Key Coordination:	Careers Advisors and Work Experience team members supporting College Students (via their respective WMAT Careers Service Team Leads)
Contract Type:	Full-time, Term-time only + 2 weeks. <i>Core term time, with the additional two weeks strategically scheduled to cover the GCSE/A-Level results days and student enrollment in Late August.</i>

Key Purpose of the Role

The Careers Lead is a strategic and operational middle leadership role. Working full-time during term time—with two critical weeks worked during the summer break—you will design, implement, and monitor a world-class careers education, information, advice, and guidance (CEIAG) program for over 4,000 post-16 students. You will ensure full compliance with the DfE's statutory careers guidance for colleges, drive progress against all 8 Gatsby Benchmarks, and ensure a seamless, expert transition service for students progressing from the College and joining the College during the high-stakes summer results and enrolment periods respectively.

While leading the strategic direction, you will remain an active practitioner within the team supporting College students, for example personally delivering 1:1 careers guidance interviews, facilitating interactive employability workshops, and presenting large-group College sessions.

You will also play a key role in our school liaison and outreach programme, engaging prospective students in local schools to help them link current studies to future college pathways and beyond.

Key Responsibilities

1. Strategic Leadership & Compliance

- Formulate, publish, lead and evaluate the College's annual Careers Strategy and Action Plan, ensuring alignment with the College Mission and Strategic Priorities, WMAT priorities and the DfE's statutory guidance for colleges.
- Act as the named "Careers Lead" for the College, maintaining high visibility among students, parents, staff, schools and external partners.
- Lead and continuously audit the College's performance against the Gatsby Benchmarks using the Compass+ tool, presenting regular progress reports to the College Senior Leadership Team, College Local Governing Body and WMAT central teams.
- Manage the careers budget allocated to the College, ensuring maximum impact and value for money.

2. Summer Results, Clearing & Enrolment Support

- Lead and deliver on-site specialist careers support during the August Level 3 and GCSE results periods, assisting students with UCAS Clearing, adjustment, appeals, and immediate post-18 destinations, whether higher education, apprenticeship, employment or elsewhere.
- Lead and deliver expert guidance during the College's main student enrolment period, helping incoming students align their course selections with their long-term career aspirations and technical pathways.

3. Curriculum Integration & Skills Development

- Work in close, strategic collaboration with the Director responsible for College vocational curriculum and skills to align the College's educational offerings with Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), and local, regional, national and international industrial strategies and labor market trends.
- Jointly design and implement robust frameworks that explicitly embed core careers, employability and professional skills directly into the vocational, academic and pastoral curriculums, building students' awareness of diverse pathways, including higher education, degree apprenticeships, technical routes, and direct employment.
- Collaborate with and support College curriculum leaders to lead the embedding of careers, employability and professional skills directly into the College's vocational and academic curriculum.
- Collaborate with and support College pastoral leaders to design and deliver careers, employability and professional skills and next-steps framework within the College's group tutorial/pastoral programme.
- Collaborate on initiatives that map curriculum outcomes against employer demand, ensuring our students develop the specific competencies sought after by modern industry.

4. UCAS and Higher & Degree Apprenticeships Leadership

- Lead the College's operational framework for supporting university applicants via UCAS; providing expert advice and guidance, delivering structured personal statement support, overseeing the administrative checking and submission of applications, directly managing the College's UCAS Administrators and working alongside academic teaching and pastoral staff in their guidance roles with applicants.
- Act as the College's strategic and operational lead for Higher and Degree Apprenticeships, as part of the Aspire+ programme, establishing the College as a center of excellence for technical and vocational pathways.
- Design and deliver staff CPD (Continuing Professional Development) sessions to raise awareness among pastoral teams, academic staff, and senior leaders regarding the landscape, value, and entry requirements of modern degree apprenticeships.
- Organise targeted student and parent awareness campaigns, myth-busting sessions, and promotional events to elevate the status of apprenticeships alongside traditional university routes.
- Establish a structured support programme for apprenticeship applicants, providing hands-on guidance on finding vacancies, navigating employer portals, writing competitive CVs, and mastering online tests.
- Coordinate intensive interview and assessment centre preparation, including mock interviews, presentation practice, and group task coaching

5. Events, Work Experience & Employer Engagement

- Support large-scale College events, including annual Careers Fairs, Higher Education days, and mock interview programs.
- In partnership with the WMAT Careers Service work experience team, oversee the College's work experience strategy, ensuring all students have access to high-quality, safe, and meaningful placements.
- Develop and maintain strategic partnerships with local and national employers, universities, and training providers.

6. College CEIAG service

- Act as the primary on-site coordinator for the provision of careers advice and work experience support for College students.
- Liaise closely with the WMAT Careers Service Team Leads (for careers advisors and work experience teams) to schedule, target, and optimize resource allocation across the College student body.
- Ensure accurate data tracking of student destinations, careers interventions, and encounters using the College's student record systems.

7. Direct Student Guidance & Delivery

Work alongside WMAT Careers Service careers advisors supporting College students, for example:

- Maintaining a caseload of students to deliver personal 1:1 careers guidance interviews in line with Gatsby Benchmark 8.
- Designing, facilitating, and delivering engaging group workshops and masterclasses on core employability skills, CV building, personal statements, interview techniques, and career pathway exploration.
- Leading and presenting large-scale College delivery sessions.
- Providing drop-in advice, initial guidance, and targeted support during high-demand student periods.

8. School Outreach, Liaison & Student Recruitment

- Collaborate with the College admissions and marketing teams to design and deliver careers-focused outreach activities as part of the school liaison programme for local feeder secondary schools.
- Actively contribute to college open evenings, taster days, and recruitment events, providing expert guidance to prospective students and parents to support recruitment and enrolment.
- Help prospective students visualize the "picture beyond college," showcasing career trajectories, higher education options, and degree apprenticeship opportunities accessible through the college's curriculum.

Person Specification

We are looking for an individual who is passionate about helping students reach their full potential. The ideal candidate will have:

Qualifications & Training

- **Essential:** Professional Qualification in Career Guidance & Development at Level 6 (or equivalent).
- **Essential:** Active registration on the CDI (Careers Development Institute) Register of Professionals (or eligibility and willingness to join).
- **Essential:** Possession of, or a clear commitment to undertake, a Level 6 Careers Leader certificate/qualification (which will be fully supported and funded for you).

Significant and proven experience in the following areas:

- **Essential:** Significant experience delivering high-quality careers guidance and education to young people aged 16–19.
- **Essential:** Experience supporting young people through high-stakes transition points, such as UCAS Clearing, post-results service, and College enrolment.
- **Essential:** Proven experience coordinating events, projects, or programs within an educational or training setting.
- **Desirable:** Experience working within a large-scale educational institution (such as a large school, sixth form college, FE College, or multi-academy trust).
- **Desirable:** Experience managing or supervising administrative staff.

Knowledge & Understanding

- **Essential:** Thorough understanding of the Gatsby Benchmarks, the DfE Statutory Guidance for Colleges, and CDI frameworks.
- **Essential:** In-depth, up-to-date knowledge of post-18 pathways, including UCAS, degree apprenticeships, technical qualifications, and the labour market.
- **Essential:** Understanding of how to use data tracking software (e.g., Compass+, local College MIS) to measure the impact of career interventions.

Skills & Abilities

- **Flexibility & Resilience:** Willingness and availability to work the required weeks in August to cover results days and enrolment.
- **Strategic Thinker:** Ability to design a long-term strategy while managing day-to-day operations.
- **Influencer & Collaborator:** Exceptional interpersonal skills; able to influence and collaborate with colleagues across different teams, even where no direct line management relationship exists (e.g., WMAT Careers Service and other central teams, academic staff, pastoral teams).
- **Highly Organized:** Able to manage a heavy workload and prioritize effectively within a fast-paced environment of over 4,000 students.
- **Practitioner & Presentation Skills:** Excellent 1:1 active listening and guidance skills, combined with the confidence to present engagingly to large groups of post-16 students.