



Higher Education Policy

September 2024

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1.0 Introduction

- 8.1 Cardiff Sixth Form College is the top independent school in the UK, and our A Level results has placed us top in the country for the last nine years. Our cohort predominately comes from overseas; around 80-85% of our learners come from approximately 20-30 different countries each year. The rest of our cohort is made up of high achieving local learners who are able to come to us on academic scholarships. Therefore, given this unique demographic, the vast majority of our learners wish to aspire to the highest quality of higher education at selective universities in large cities in the UK and around the world.
- 8.2 Therefore, we are committed to not only the academic rigour and excellent teaching, but also the continued development of the careers education, information, advice and guidance services we offer to each learner who has come to Cardiff Sixth Form College to study for a short yet key time in their educational development. In order to do this, we strive to fully comply with our legal responsibilities and increase the important role of Senior Management, Governing Body, teachers, parents and learners to shape our CEIAG programme.
- 8.3 Careers Education Information and Guidance (CEIAG) is a fully comprehensive onward destination programme.

9.0 Rationale

- 9.1 A well-designed and carefully planned CEIAG programme plays a pivotal role in supporting young people to best access future opportunities, both academic and professional, beyond and after Cardiff Sixth Form College. We wish to ensure that each learner is ready to embrace the challenges of adult and working life, and thus will focus on the refinement of their career management skills, now and in their future.
- 9.2 Access to CEIAG support can allow learners to acknowledge their own strengths, weaknesses, interests, values, motivations and abilities; self-cognisance and the drive for self-actualisation can therefore support learners to make their own informed and considered decisions about their future career plans, aspirations and trajectories.

10.0 Context

- 10.1 Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, all children and young people must be provided with an education which develops their personality and talents to the full. We at Cardiff Sixth Form College engage with this guidance, giving:
 - more choice and flexibility in relevant courses and qualifications, designed to help young people develop the essential skills they need for life and work;
 - learning pathways designed to meet each individual's needs;

- personal support, careers information and learning guidance for individuals to help them make the best possible choices and stay in learning as long as they need to;
- a better balance between skills, knowledge and experience.

10.2 The CEIAG programme in Cardiff Sixth Form College is based upon guidance from both the UK Government and Welsh Government, as we are in consistent search for updated best practice across both nations. In addition to the Curriculum for Wales (2022), we also refer to statutory guidance for maintained schools in England under:

- ‘Good Career Guidance’ (Gatsby Benchmarks, 2014);
- ‘Careers strategy: making the most of everyone’s skills and talents’ (UK Government, December 2017);
- ‘Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth’ (UK Government, January 2021);
- ‘Careers guidance and access for education and training providers’ (UK Government, July 2021);
- ‘Careers guidance in schools, colleges and universities (England)’ (House of Commons, July 2021);
- Education (Careers Guidance in Schools) Bill [draft] (UK Government, September 2021).

11.0 Commitment

11.1 We are committed in providing all learners at Cardiff Sixth Form College a person-centred and impartial careers education, information and guidance, based solely on the needs of the learner. This will help them to develop the knowledge and skills they need to make successful choices and move into further education and work.

11.2 Learners can access the following staff members for any careers support they may require:

- The Head of Careers and Higher Education is the designated person in charge of ensuring the quality of the Careers & HE Department, and oversees the CEIAG programme, including work observation opportunities. The Deputy Head Academic assumes this responsibility when there is no current Director of Careers and HE in post
- The Head of Careers and Higher Education is in charge of planning all preparations for UK & Europe applications, including personal statement, admissions tests, interviews in addition to supporting CEIAG development.
- The Work Observation Coordinator sources, assesses and plans valuable work observations for our learners, in addition to providing CV writing support.

- The Heads of House, whilst line managed by the Deputy Head (Pastoral), will also be directed by the Head of Careers and Higher Education for the university and career preparation aspects of their role.
- The Head of Careers and Higher Education is line-managed by the Deputy Head, Academic.

11.3 In order to ensure we provide the highest quality careers programme possible, we follow the Association for Careers Education and Guidance (ACEG) definition of CEIAG:

- Careers education as the provision of a planned, progressive programme of learning activities that helps young people to:
 - learn about the structures, systems and factors that guide, shape and influence people's careers prospects and career development;
 - explore how these could affect their future choices, why they need to consider them when making their own career decisions and plans and how they can do so;
 - develop and practise the skills they need to progress their own career plans and development, including making discerning use of careers information, advice and guidance.
- Careers information, advice and guidance are defined as the provision of:
 - information on opportunities, progression routes, choices, where to find help and advice, and how to access it;
 - advice that helps young people interpret information and apply it to their own situation;
 - help young people understand themselves and their needs, confront barriers, resolve conflicts, develop new perspectives and make progress.

11.4 In-house careers advice is combined with face-to-face support from a range of external sources including employers and representatives from other educational establishments, to help break down pre-conceived ideas about professions or degree options. Over the years our Careers Education Programme has been considerably enriched through the contributions made by a range of organisations, parents and alumni. We are very grateful to those who already offer an input to the programme and we are always delighted to hear from others who wish to be involved; we truly appreciate the involvement you have to inspire our learners to think beyond their immediate experiences and aspire to follow the steps of other successful business people and alumni.

11.5 As part of the Dukes Education Group, Cardiff Sixth Form College Cambridge learners will also benefit from the services of other companies within the group, including Oxbridge Applications, The Medic Portal, The Lawyer Portal, and A-List Education. Each year, we review our programme of events to ensure the best possible quality of

internally and externally-led support to best prepare learners for their UK and overseas university applications.

- 11.6 The role of the Governors is of increasing importance in Cardiff Sixth Form College, and their responsibilities in overseeing the Careers Department and its CEIAG programme are constantly growing. A strong working relationship with our governing body, specifically our Careers Governor, ensures that we have sustained and embedded contacts with employers, locally and nationally, who can inspire our learners through motivational speaker sessions, visits to enterprise, and work observations. The benefits that direct involvement with universities and employers can bring are boundless, as it will allow learners to opportunity of first-hand involvement and experience of higher education and the world of work.

12.0 Aims

- 12.1 At Cardiff Sixth Form College, we continuously strive for excellence both in our teaching and learning environment, and pastoral support. Therefore, in order to provide best CEIAG support to assist learners in planning the next stage of their lives, we seek to establish best practice in the UK. In order to meet such a vision, we aim to:

- Encourage learners to think about their longer term goals, not always focusing on the immediate next step, and develop their resilience to help them navigate transition and change;
- Maximise learners' academic, personal and all-rounded achievements, ensuring that they are ready for the challenges of adult life;
- Enable learners to be ready for an impermanent and unpredictable career and working life in today's automated, digitised and globalised world through a focus on gaining a repertoire of transferable skills;
- Raise learners' expectations and encourage them to aim high, whilst accommodating their needs, wishes and applicability;
- Foster confidence in our learners to choose the most appropriate option for them, free from coercion or perceived expectations;
- Broaden our learners' perspectives to think of a wide range of 'best fit' careers and higher education opportunities beyond their immediate experiences and expectations;
- Instil independence and autonomy of learners to be in charge of their own futures;
- Consciously work towards preventing and challenging stereotyping in the advice and guidance we provide, and thus encourage learners to strive to enter the broadest range of careers regardless of their background or protected characteristics;

13.0 Objectives

13.1 The Careers & HE Department's objectives are:

- To encourage learners to develop a positive self-image and self-confidence in preparation for higher education and job applications;
- Commitment shown to continuous professional development of our careers staff and advice provision;
- To enhance a learner's independence and skills in interpreting important careers information (e.g. Labour Market Information, Employability Trends) to encourage them to make informed and considered decisions about their future career and therefore degree choice;
- To provide learners opportunities to develop personal attributes such as maturity, resilience, creativity and initiative through careers and work-focused activities;
- To develop key skills as deemed useful by employers, including communication, team work, time management, organisation etc;
- To provide relevant and tailored CEIAG programme appropriate to learners' needs, desires and development plans;
- To continue to refine and develop our careers education on an annual basis in order to learn from our own experiences, in addition to reflecting governmental recommendations and expectations.

14.0 Expectations

- 14.1 In order for the Careers & Higher Education programme to be a success for all parties, we expect all learners to be open-minded, engaged, and committed to self-exploration and self-development.
- 14.2 We will run a series of Enrichment Workshops during term-time, to complement those held in Enrichment Weeks, and we will be monitoring all learners' attendance at these. We expect all learners to be in attendance to those workshops of direct relevance to them, and if we are noting absences, the Heads of House will enquire with the learner about their non-attendance.
- 14.3 Similarly, we expect learners to be punctual and organised, and expect learners to pre-book meetings (and ultimately attend) with individual Careers & HE Departmental advisers and counsellors. We set very high expectations on the students to emulate the professionalism and diligence required in their future workplace.
- 14.4 For all year groups, the Careers & HE Department will set homework research tasks – we expect all learners to interact in these activities so as to engage with their career development. For example:

- 14.5 Year 12 & Year 13: BridgeU set tasks, including psychometric assessments, including career and degree research, shortlisting of universities, strategy advisor, reference requests, and destinations updates.
- 14.6 These same expectations also translate to our optional programmes, for example, the UCAS Programme. For all learners, we set our expectations of a full personal statement draft upon induction, and full engagement and attendance in all sessions, from the very beginning. For any students who do not adhere to these expectations, the learners' Head of House will intervene.
- 14.7 We expect students to be open to a full exploration of their learner needs, expectations, and preferences to curate a list of universities / training options based upon the whole, holistic picture. Whilst we understand that learners may have universities they have always wanted to apply to, we emphasise the notion of 'best fit' in regard to subject speciality, tailoring of the degree and its module choices, and other personal factors.
- 14.8 This is also relevant in regard to our 'Oxbridge College Choice' procedures. Whilst we acknowledge that all learners have the freedom to choose their college based on a range of personal factors, we strive to enhance each learner's success by minimising the risk of clashing. Applying to the University of Oxford or University of Cambridge is a very competitive and selective process; by strategizing and having advisory discussions prior to application, we aim to assist the learner in increasing their chance of success.
- 14.9 Cardiff Sixth Form College's UCAS Deadline has been published to students. It is 27th September 2024. Whilst the final UCAS deadline is October 15th, we view this as a deadline for the college (centre) to submit on behalf of the student. With the majority of Cardiff Sixth Form College applicants choosing to submit to Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine, or Oxbridge options, we must strictly abide by this deadline to ensure that all supporting documentation is complete, enabling a learner's application to be sent. However, we do enable learners to continue to update their application, upon request to, change their university choices in light of predicted grade changes or pre-application admissions test results. All other components, including a fully completed application form and personal statement will be expected to be complete by September 15th.
- 14.10 Likewise, we view the January 26th deadline as a college (centre) deadline for us to submit applications on behalf of the learner. Therefore, all applications must be submitted to the college by January 12th at the very latest. We encourage all students to submit their applications prior to the Christmas break, unless:
- A learner needs time to continue developing an art portfolio as a compulsory component to an application;
 - A learner needs more time to consider their specific degree choice;
 - A significant number of international applications, which are preferred options, need be completed by an earlier deadline.

8.0 Learning Outcomes

- 8.1 Cardiff Sixth Form College's Careers & HE Department undergo a series of annual evaluations in regards to our performance and adherence to the Gatsby Benchmarks. These eight criteria aim to highlight what 'good careers work' look like, and provide a clear framework to schools about how to best organise, deliver, and evaluate career provision. The 8 Gatsby Benchmarks are:
- 8.1.1 A stable careers programme;
 - 8.1.2 Learning from careers and labour market information;
 - 8.1.3 Addressing the needs of each student;
 - 8.1.4 Linking curriculum learning to careers;
 - 8.1.5 Encounters with employers and employees;
 - 8.1.6 Experiences of workplaces;
 - 8.1.7 Encounters with further and higher education;
 - 8.1.8 Personal guidance.
- 8.2 The Director of Careers and Higher Education is also Cardiff Sixth Form College's nominated Careers Leader, and has been trained in delivering excellence across all areas. Again, this is not a statutory requirement across the independent school sector, but we adopt this as best practice as far as is reasonably practicable in our context and setting.
- 8.3 The Gatsby Benchmarks underlie any key development or refinement of our curriculum, and acts as the cornerstone for best practice in the career and higher education provision at Cardiff Sixth Form College. In regard to this Higher Education policy, the Benchmarks of specific importance are Benchmark 1, Benchmark 2, Benchmark 3, Benchmark 4, Benchmark 7, and Benchmark 8.

9.0 Entitlement

- 9.1 Every learner at Cardiff Sixth Form College is equally entitled to a thorough and tailored careers education. Every learner is made aware of this entitlement through our internal departmental website (www.sites.google.com/ccox.com/careersandhe) and the external college website (www.ccox.com), and informed upon enrolment at our college. We will guarantee that each and every learner, regardless of their individual needs, will receive a fully comprehensive CEIAG programme which is:
- Impartial;
 - Confidential;
 - Up-to-date;
 - Focused on the individual learner needs;
 - Fit for purpose;
 - Supportive of equal opportunities;
 - Provided by people with relevant training and expertise.

9.2 Learners at Cardiff Sixth Form College are entitled to access a holistic careers advisory service through our in-house team of Level 4/6 qualified Careers Advisers and Higher Education Counsellors who work within the guidelines of the CDI Code of Ethics and therefore the highest professional behaviour, namely:

- Accessibility;
- Accountability;
- Autonomy;
- Competence;
- Confidentiality;
- Continuous Professional Development;
- Duty of Care – to Clients, Colleagues, Organisations and Staff;
- Equality;
- Impartiality;
- Justice;
- Transparency;
- Trustworthiness.

9.3 Alongside pastoral meetings with the learner's Head of House, we are proud to be able to offer each learner at least one career guidance interview with a Careers Counsellor in each academic year, as opposed to the required one per Key Stage. Great emphasis is placed on the benefit of having a one-to-one interview to ensure that our learners are enjoying a bespoke service tailored to their needs, and with their interests at the heart of all conversations.

9.4 To guarantee that our learners gain access to external impartial careers information to support their own career management and planning, we have subscriptions with Morrisby (KS4) and BridgeU (KS5), an online platform to allow learners to explore their future career and/or university destinations. A learner's progress in utilising this tool will be a source for discussion and monitoring as part of the Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme and in individual meetings with their respective Head of House.

9.5 The CEIAG programme will be broad-based and will support learners in their understanding of different post-16 and post-18 progression opportunities, including further education, higher education, degree apprenticeships, entrepreneurship or employment. This programme has been jointly planned between the Head of Careers and Higher Education and the Deputy Head (Academic), delivered between the Careers & HE Department and the Heads of House. With interventions from a wide variety of key staff members, including subject teachers in a cross-curricular fashion to highlight the value of subject content to employability, learners will be able to meet all aforementioned learning outcomes in the Gatsby Benchmarks.

- 9.6 Parent, guardian and agent involvement is encouraged at all stages, and we welcome them to speak to their learner's Head of House if they have anything to raise about careers and higher education progress. If further support is needed, the Head of House will refer the issue to the Careers & HE Department for specialised support. We value parents' and guardians' input and acknowledge their impact and influence on a young person's decision making; as such, we strive to provide up-to-date information, help and guidance to support the Careers & HE Department and Head of House, in addition to keeping parents involved about careers consultation outcomes on a regular basis.
- 9.7 In accordance to recommendations and best practice under the new Curriculum for Wales and Gatsby Benchmarks, the Careers & HE department will strive to facilitate at least one work-related experience by the end of KS4, and a further observation by the end of KS5, within legal confines (e.g. Student Visa restrictions), college policy (e.g. COVID-19 policy), and health and safety protocols (e.g. COVID-19 personal hygiene and safety, DBS checks, etc). We will also endeavour to deliver further meaningful encounters with enterprise and universities throughout each academic year, pending the above restrictions. Please refer to the 'Work Observations Policy' for more information.
- 9.8 In addition to this, a wide range of extra-curricular and super-curricular activities are also on offer to our learners, jointly coordinated and managed by the careers and academic departments. Examples of this may include, but certainly not limited to, workshop activities, entrepreneurship activities, competitions, subject Olympiads, academic societies and clubs, and sports, music and drama clubs. All of these opportunities will allow learners to develop into an all-rounded young person with the skills and attributes required, for not just university but also future employers.

10.0 Implementation

- 10.1 Cardiff Sixth Form College is particularly proud of its careers provision to all learners, enabling each learner to become the best future professional they can be. Learners, no matter their academic abilities, are fully supported in accessing the next steps to suit their own needs. High attaining learners are fully supported to choose the very best fitting universities and training options around the world, which match their needs, abilities, and aspirations. Other learners who may need more guidance in coming to a final informed decision can access further specialist support from our Higher Education Counsellors.
- 10.2 Our learners have numerous learning opportunities for personal development, not solely through the Careers & HE Department but also through the curriculum in PSE with their Head of House. For more information on the PSE programme, please refer to the PSE & RSE policy.
- 10.3 Regardless of year group, the Careers & HE Department are eager to speak to prospective and new learners prior to their enrolment. We are particularly aware of the importance of choosing the most appropriate facilitating subjects for a learner's future career ambitions; therefore, we are happy to organise video conference calls or

face-to-face meetings with learners to discuss any issues with GCSE or A Level subject choices before the start of their first term. All subjects on offer at Cardiff Sixth Form College are 'preferred' subjects, and as such, we try to encourage a broad-based curriculum, emphasising the value of STEM subjects but also the balance of a humanities subject to enhance their skill-set and subsequent potential in their university and job applications around the world.

- 10.4 At the heart of our careers provision is to inspire for our learners, such as employer talks, careers fairs, work observations and work-focused opportunities, motivational speakers, and university visits. In addition to delivering in-house CEIAG, we place great importance on outsourcing further expertise from external consultants, including by not limited to, Oxbridge Applications, The Medic Portal, The Lawyer Portal, and A-List. Our Careers & HE Programme is updated on an annual basis, subject to changes and enhancements throughout the year.

10.5 Alumni support

10.5.1.1 Careers information, advice and guidance does not end once a learner has left Cardiff Sixth Form College. The Careers & HE Department is keen to remain in contact with our alumni, not only to learn more about their experiences after Further Education but also to provide continued support in the next stages of their university or career path.

10.5.1.2 A number of our learners each year choose to pursue a Gap Year, conduct National Service or reapply to university; learners who have already left college will still have access to the support of the Careers & HE Department to ensure that they are guided through each application process.

10.5.1.3 Prior to graduating, learners will have attended workshops and talks on developing the skills needed, ready to become a successful undergraduate and future young professional. In conjunction with the Alumni Coordinator, and through the use of our alumni social media pages, further careers information, advice and guidance will be shared with alumni from all graduating years to ensure that they are still supported from Cardiff Sixth Form College, their alma mater.

11.0 Careers Information and Resources

- 11.1 Careers information and resources can be found in our Careers & HE Department office, which contains a wide variety of up-to-date, impartial and useful resources to support learners interested in all career paths. The library is open during main college opening hours and can be accessed freely and equitably by learners from all year groups.
- 11.2 At present, the Careers & HE Department office contains the following sources of information and inspiration:

- Personal statement booklets;

- Interview guidance;
 - Guides in applying to universities in the UK and worldwide;
 - Guides in applying to specific careers and degrees;
 - University prospectuses, updated and purchased every year.
- 11.3 This content is reviewed and renewed on a regular basis, and new literature will be created or sourced by the Higher Education Counsellor and overseen by the Director of Careers and Higher Education. Visual display boards around the college are maintained and updated frequently, with particular themes at key points during the year. A full stock check of available books will be monitored, and a budget is set aside for the replenishment of careers information; a wide array of books of benefit to the learner in their career and/or university preparation will be purchased annually.
- 11.4 The Careers & HE Department are keen to facilitate and/or organise enriching trips to universities, open days, UCAS Exhibitions, university application conferences, enterprise workshops and more. For the vast majority, learners will be able to sign up for these events and in the case where the event has limited spaces, we may have to incorporate an application process, to include a mini personal statement about why they would like to attend. Currently, this has been cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns.
- 11.5 For certain enrichment trips, the Careers & HE Department reserve the right to place a small charge for trip expenses.
- 11.6 In September 2021, we launched the Careers & HE departmental website (sites.google.com/ccoex.com/careersandhe); available to all users with a ccoex.com email account, this resource has been carefully curated to provide our learners with relevant career information. Structured into two significant sections on 'Careers and Employability' and 'Higher Education', we strive to ensure that Cardiff Sixth Form College learners are well-informed at all stages of their study with us.
- 11.7 Throughout the academic year, prominent careers information is also shared with learners online through Google Classrooms, including year group specific and career-oriented forums such as Healthcare, Engineering, Law etc. Web links about 16+ and 18+ choices, relevant volunteering and work opportunities and interesting readings will be frequently posted on these websites by careers staff and other staff members where appropriate.
- 11.8 The Careers Information section of our college website (ccoex.com) is under continuous development and will be populated by comprehensive information for parents, guardians, agents, employers, and prospective students, parents about our careers programme. Other important career-related information for the benefit of our learners will be held on a secure Google website (sites.google.com/ccoex.com/careersandhe), limited to domain users with a ccoex.com email address, e.g. employment, higher education, study abroad schemes, gap year and links to recommended careers resources and information which are intended as a starting point for individual research.

- 11.9 In a commitment to our learners and their accessibility to impartial careers information, we have an annual subscription with Morrisby (Year 10-11) and BridgeU (Year 12-13), an interactive software programme to supplement the in-house support on offer. They believe that today, learners are faced with a more complex and fragmented landscape of post-secondary opportunities than ever before, and as such, this website enables learners and teachers to navigate this maze with relative ease. Through their smart university matching service, learners can find out their ‘best fit’ worldwide universities depending on subject interests, grades, social, professional and learning preferences. Moreover, their Careers tool enables learners to explore the career routes available to them, and provides important data including salary, vacancies, trends and future trajectory. The Careers & HE Department enthusiastically use this software package to optimise the support available to our learners, and a Scheme of Work will be put into place, setting work to be completed at home and as part of PSE lessons.
- 11.10 In conjunction with the Wellbeing Officer, the Careers & HE Department will provide advice and support on stress management, and also extra support for learners with protected characteristics who may be worried about ‘fitting in’ or discrimination, e.g. LGBTQ+, ethnicity, gender etc.
- 11.11 We appreciate that parents and guardians hope to be actively involved in their learner’s career development throughout their studies here in Cardiff Sixth Form College and as such, the Heads of House team will be able to provide individualised support to parents about a particular learner. We are keen to also ensure that all information and advice provided to a learner is accurate, up-to-date and impartial and as thus, the Careers & HE Department are happy to be a source of information to parents, guardians, and agents also – be this in open days or parents’ evenings, or in communication via a learner’s Head of House.

12.0 Recording and Reporting

- 12.1 The learners’ Head of House will record information about their career development, be it work observation, attendance at university open days, enterprise visits, lectures etc in order to write the best quality and most comprehensive university reference. Further details may also be stored in our pastoral database to monitor progress (careers and others) for the CREATE© portfolio. For more information, please refer to our PSE & RSE Policy.
- 12.2 A learner’s performance on work observation will be recorded through interactions had with the Careers & Employability Adviser, the report form sent to employers and the references which should be requested by the learner. These will be distributed to a learner’s Head of House and stored to be able to guide reference writing, be it for university or future employment.
- 12.3 Learners’ progress in terms of their career development is monitored and recorded by any staff member with whom they have gained CEIAG support. We utilise the ‘Notes’

tool on our MIS system, ISAMS, which allows us to record an event entitled ‘Careers Contact’. In this recording, staff members will include a detailed overview of a discussion with a learner, as is required and expected of a careers advice service. Not only will this information be accessed by appropriate and key staff members, but also the parents, guardians and learner through the parent portal. Transparency between all stakeholders is key and we are committed to involving the learner, parent and pastoral staff members throughout the entire process.

12.4 The reference writing process involves a multitude of staff to ensure a holistic and widely encompassing overview of the learner. Subject teachers will be responsible for providing comments specifically about a learner in their classes; these will then be collated by the Head of House who will include their pastoral perspectives, such as extra-curricular and super-curricular activities. Prior to submission to UCAS, the Careers & HE Department will proof-read the documents to ensure high quality letters of recommendation to best support the learner’s application, including the confirmation of predicted grades in light of recent AS Level results and updated teacher comments.

12.4.1 Cardiff Sixth Form College employs a ‘Confidential Reference’ procedure; we acknowledge the expectation from all university and/or enterprise partners that references should remain impartial and confidential. Therefore, learners will not be able to request a copy of their academic references for any university applications, be that in the UK (UCAS) or internationally. The Higher Education Counsellors will strive to make strong connections with Admissions faculties to enhance the strength, quality, and impact of the recommendation letter, and therefore, the whole student.

12.4.2 However, we also acknowledge the importance and value of learner contributions – we go above what other schools do by encouraging students to provide reference writers with their perspectives and achievements. This process will aid the reference writing process to be the most relevant, up-to-date, and accurate for each learners. Whilst learners will not be able to read the full final product, their input from the outset and throughout will greatly aid its creation.

12.4.3 For applications to the USA, we recommend that students ‘WAIVE’ their rights to FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act). Whilst this is ultimately the choice of the individual, we acknowledge the overwhelming consensus amongst university admissions faculties that a candidate whose rights have been waived will have the most significant, accurate, and honest appraisal.

12.4.4 For all applications overseas, the Director of Careers and Higher Education will be listed as the ‘School Counselor’ or equivalent title. In this capacity, they will liaise with the university to provide all necessary school documentation, including the reference letter from CSFC, transcripts of results to date, and predicted grade transcripts. In some circumstances (e.g. USA, Singapore, and others), supplementary reference letters will be required from different staff, for example, a Head of House or Academic Teachers. In these instances, the Director of

Careers and Higher Education will inform the learners about these extra requirements.

12.5 Before submitting references to universities by the learner's chosen deadline, the Director of Careers and Higher Education will liaise with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) about the known Extenuating Circumstances of Year 13 students which may have had an impact on their learning. Such circumstances will only be reported to universities if they are known to the college, and it is therefore important that the learner reports these to the Pastoral team, e.g. Head of House, Wellbeing Officer, or Designated Safeguarding Person.

12.6 Cardiff Sixth Form College prepares students for applications to world-leading universities. All UK universities and the majority of overseas universities, rely on predicted grades to inform their judgement, when making offers to prospective students. We seek to offer students a predicted grade in each subject which is an evidence-based, optimistic assessment of their potential.

12.6.1 International universities have various deadlines for submission of predicted grades and in almost all instances, the deadline is many months before the final examinations. UCAS predicted grades are submitted along with the applications by the following deadlines:

12.6.1.1 2nd October for Conservatoires;

12.6.1.2 15th October for Oxford, Cambridge and for certain universities' courses in Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science (Student Deadline: 15th September)

12.6.1.3 26th January for most other applications (Student Deadline: 12th January).

12.6.2 At Cardiff Sixth Form College, we believe that it is in the students' best interests to submit their applications to UCAS during the Autumn Term and therefore endeavour to ensure that predicted grades are communicated before 15 October. We acknowledge that this is a long time before the final exam and that any prediction of final outcome is made with integrity, reflecting an optimistic assessment of the student's future potential.

12.6.3 Candidates can see the likely grade (or points equivalent) requirements of different UK universities by looking at individual university websites or the UCAS website. Some universities occasionally make offers outside their publicised ranges, but this is very rare.

12.6.4 Students are reminded that predicted grades are only one element in the selection process and that different universities may place different weight on various criteria, including previous performance in public examinations; the quality and content of the Personal Statement; the College's Reference and, in some cases, relevant work experience. Some universities also require an additional Personal Statement; samples of written work; a pre-interview written assessment; an interview (sometimes including written assessment); University Admissions Tests.

- 12.6.5 Pupils are advised to apply for universities which best-suit their abilities and aspirations.
- 12.6.6 Predicted Grades are estimates, forecasted up to nine months before the final exam. They are evidence-based and optimistic, reflecting a sound judgement of the likelihood a candidate has of achieving a certain outcome if they were to work hard, follow all advice and guidance and perform well on the day.
- 12.6.7 Cardiff Sixth Form College places the students' best interests at the centre of our guidance and decision-making. We support all students to the very best of our ability and seek to ensure that they all achieve offers from Higher Education institutions to which they are best-suited. We have absolute confidence in the professional judgement of our staff, whose understanding of our students' potential in their subject areas is exceptional.
- 12.6.8 In offering a predicted grade that is evidence-based and optimistic, teachers start by considering the highest grade technically possible and consider that against the following evidence:
- Performance at AS Level;
 - Performance in other previous public examinations (such as GCSE);
 - Performance under test conditions in school (Exam Practice);
 - Performance in Mock Exams;
 - In-class tests and assessments;
 - Performance in lessons and engagement with the subject (inside and outside of lessons);
 - Performance against standards achieved by previous candidates on the same course;
 - The expectation that all students will work hard in preparation for their final exams, following all guidance given;
 - Factors which may have resulted in a temporary period of under-performance.
- 12.6.9 Heads of Department have oversight of the predicted grades given in their subject areas and ensure that they are both consistent and in line with our aim to offer an evidence-based, optimistic assessment.
- 12.6.10 A prediction is a determination of what a student may achieve, taking all factors into account, at the best in his or her range. For example, a candidate who is working at A-grade level but who demonstrates the potential to achieve an A* grade will be given the benefit of an A*-grade prediction unless there is clear evidence to the contrary. A candidate who achieved a B-grade at AS will not be predicted lower than a B-grade at A2, unless there is clear evidence to the contrary.

12.6.11 Students are notified of their predicted grades in September in the A2 year by their Head of House. A student may appeal to the respective Head of Department against a predicted grade, by having an informal conversation with their Head of House and then the relevant Head of Department, if they wish to proceed.

12.6.12 Appeals will be considered under the criteria if:

- The predicted grade is lower than the student's performance at AS Level;
- The student's performance in EP or Mock assessments suggests improvement or potential to achieve a higher grade;
- The student has experienced circumstances which may have led to a temporary under-performance. These may be confidential and known only to the student and a trusted member of staff, such as the Designated Safeguarding Person.

12.6.13 Departments will not ask students to sit additional assessments to demonstrate potential. An appeal, to be successful, would have to show that the criteria used in making the prediction should reasonably have resulted in a higher predicted grade. Appeals will not be considered simply on the grounds that:

- A student aspires to a higher grade or a particular course;
- A student offers a commitment to improve (as this is already taken into account).

12.6.14 If the grade is unchanged on appeal, the student may make a further appeal to the Director of Careers and Higher Education within three days of the original appeal decision. The Director of Careers and Higher Education will review the situation and may choose to discuss further with the Head of Department. Where both the Director of Careers and Higher Education and Head of Department cannot reach a judgement, the Head of College will arbitrate.

12.6.15 If the student remains dissatisfied, they can appeal directly to the Principal.

12.6.16 Students receive regular summative assessment feedback, including homework feedback, test results, EP and Mock exam grades etc. Parents receive written feedback in reports which includes a Working Grade, which indicates the grade standard that the student is currently working at and an Effort Grade. Both of these grades are given context in the body of the report.

12.6.17 Students and parents are advised to carefully consider the information contained within a report as it gives a clear and up-to-date assessment of the student's current potential and likelihood to succeed. In some circumstances, we may have offered an optimistic, evidence-based prediction in October which, some weeks later appears less likely to be the outcome. By informing students and parents, through the reporting process, we anticipate that they will have a realistic understanding of the most likely outcome in the final exam.

- 12.7 After applying to UCAS, the Careers & HE Department will record the progress on offers and decisions made by the universities, in addition to their UCAS application form and reference. The tracking of this data and information allows the department to analyse university decisions, in addition to ensuring that the highest quality of support can be offered in times of need, e.g. UCAS Extra and UCAS Clearing. We therefore encourage all students to confirm permissions on their UCAS application, allowing the school to view their offer progress – this will remain confidential to the Careers & HE department and the respective Head of House only.
- 12.8 All university and careers information will remain on record so as to allow for succinct and accurate retrieval of data in the case that an alumnus requests a university or professional reference once graduated. Moreover, information including Destinations will be shared with our Alumni Coordinator who will reach out to alumni for future events and celebrations. The act of keeping personal data of our current learners and alumni will be in full accordance with our Data Retention policy. Confidentiality of this information will be maintained, within legal and safeguarding confines.

13.0 Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

- 13.1 Our Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance provision is reviewed annually. With each academic cycle, we are able to reflect upon the processes throughout the year to discover whether our careers provision needs to be modified to reflect the needs of our learners. Feedback can range from:
- Reflections and ideas from Careers Department staff;
 - Learner voice (focus group, questionnaires);
 - UCAS Programme tutor feedback;
 - Governors' and/or Senior Management recommendations and feedback;
 - Parental/ guardian feedback.
- 13.2 The Careers Programme is a living document which is consistently updated with the key processes and events in place throughout the year. This feedback is instrumental in identifying priorities for development and for further future planning and modification to make our careers provision even more unique and specific to our learners.
- 13.3 The Careers & HE Department currently measures success in a number of ways:
- Number of learners progressing from GCSE to A Level in Cardiff Sixth Form College or elsewhere;
 - Number of learners being successful in their first choice destination;
 - Number of offers made per university and its success rate;
 - Proportion of learners attending G5, Russell Group, and QS World Top 100 universities;

- Proportion of learners going to university, versus Gap Year versus National Service;
 - Final university destinations.
- 13.4 In conjunction with our Alumni Coordinator, we will also track our alumni's success and progress after Year 1 in university to ensure the efficacy of our preparation for Higher Education programme.
- 13.5 The Director of Careers and Higher Education is seeking to establish links with other Heads of Careers/Oxbridge Coordinators from other independent and state schools in Cardiff and the surrounding areas in order to discuss issues relating to delivering careers education, information and guidance in the region, and to work together to organise events and activities; for example, hosting free university application workshops for local learners, and attending Oxford and/or Cambridge University talks from our link college.
- 13.6 This Higher Education policy is kept under regular review and updated in accordance with any statutory requirements and non-statutory recommendations, having full regard for the vision and ethos of the college.
- 13.7 As a department, we strive to be reflective and dynamically assess our programme throughout the year. A formal annual review will always be conducted ready for the next academic year, and will be evidenced as part of amendments to:
- Gatsby Benchmarks;
 - Cardiff Sixth Form College's Self Evaluation Form;
 - Dukes Education Group Reports;
 - Governors Meeting Reports;
 - Performance Management and staff appraisals.

14.0 Special Needs Provision

- 14.1 Cardiff Sixth Form College's Careers & HE programme is specifically geared towards the individual and is adaptable depending on the needs and wishes of the learner. The nature of a tailored CEIAG programme will inherently provide excellent specialist support to any learner who have additional needs. They will follow the same programme as their peers, but any adaptations or extra support will be provided by all Careers & HE Department staff, with support from the Additional Learning Needs Coordinator.
- 14.2 Any needs will be identified early through discussions between learner and support staff, and adaptations can be made as appropriate from an early stage to best support the learner; this may include prioritisation for a joint careers appointment with a careers counsellor and Head of House, alongside a meeting between Careers & Employability Adviser and Additional Learning Needs Coordinator to discuss how to best inform

work observation providers about the considerations that we will require to be put into place to optimise the learner's learning experience.

- 14.3 The Careers & HE Department acknowledges its duties in accommodating students with additional learning needs; as such, we deliver a person-centred approach to identifying needs early, putting into place effective support and monitoring, and adapting interventions to ensure they deliver desired outcomes. Early meetings are arranged with Heads of House or Additional Learning Needs Coordinator, and relevant Careers/ Higher Education Counsellors.

15.0 Safeguarding

- 15.1 We work with a number of external agencies who can help support any vulnerable young person, including those who may have additional learning needs, or if any learner may be at risk of disaffection or disengaging from education.
- 15.2 In accordance with our Data Protection policy, we reserve the right to disclose key safeguarding and/or medical information to universities in the form of an application for Extenuating Circumstances, and for the appropriate accommodations to be put in place for a learner on a trip or work-focused activity.

16.0 Staff Development

- 16.1 It is our ethos to develop ourselves personally and professionally in life-long learning and continuous professional development. Each staff member of the Careers Department will be encouraged to take the opportunity to undertake a Level 4 or 6 Diploma in Careers Guidance and Development, not only for own self-improvement but to also provide higher quality CEIAG. Staff are also encouraged to inform their line manager about any further CPD opportunities they may find beneficial in their specific role.
- 16.2 Heads of House will undergo a programme of training each year led by the Director of Careers and Higher Education and Higher Education Counsellor to ensure their knowledge is up-to-date and accurate. Further external training options will also be explored to optimise the quality of service we can offer to our learners, including, for example, Level 6 Certificate in Careers Guidance Theory.
- 16.3 Careers staff are encouraged to seek enrichment and certified avenues of development to strengthen our knowledge base. With increased accolades and expertise from the staff will come further enhanced careers support for all learners. These opportunities may arise from, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Attending university advisers' conferences on an annual basis for a refresher into the UK admissions process, including personal statement and reference writing;
 - Attending subject-specific admissions conferences;

- UCAS, USA and other international university conferences;
- National Skills and Employability roadshows;
- Being part of Dukes 'Careers & Higher Education' Committee to share best practice across our group of colleges and consultancies;
- Liaising with other local careers and higher education coordinators to share best practice.

- 16.4 In addition to personal excellence, we are also striving for departmental excellence and reputation through being a recognised careers advice provider of Careers Development Institute (CDI). The Director of Careers and Higher Education is a Level 6 qualified Careers Counsellor and a member of the UK Register of Career Development Professionals. As part of this agreement, professionals will need to achieve at least 25 hours per year of continuous professional development, in addition to adhering to the CDI Code of Ethics. Also, we are a member of International Association for College Admission Counselling (IACAC) and will soon seek membership of Council of International Schools (CIS).
- 16.5 To ensure that all appropriate staff members are trained to a high degree of excellence, the Careers & HE Department organise internally-led and externally-led training sessions covering topics such as how to write personal statements, teachers' references, UCAS references and USA recommendation letters.