



Ascent Autism Specialist College

Remarkable

Autism. Redefining what's possible.

Careers & Employability Policy

September 2025

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Reviewer:	Careers Lead and Employer Engagement Officer
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Committee:	Governing Body
Approved by the full Governing Body/Board of Trustees:	06.10.25

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

1.	Access Provider Policy
2.	Safeguarding Policy
3.	Diversity and Equality Policy
4.	Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy
5.	Work Experience and Trainees policy

Change History Record

Current Version	Previous Version	Summary of changes made	Section Heading & Page Number
Sept 2025	Sept 24	Wording change, School to college	Page 6 procedure
Sept 2025	Sept 24	Wording change from working towards to we have achieved quality in careers	Page 7 procedure
Sept 2025	Sept 24	Wording change, school to college	Page 7 programme
Sept 2025	Sept 24	Wording change covered by the college insurance. Wording change from Estates manager to; risk assessed by the EEO in liaison with the Careers Lead.	Page 8 programme

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Introduction

Ascent Autism Specialist College provides a relevant and engaging careers and employability curriculum which meets the differing needs and requirements of our students. Individual bespoke student pathways are developed collaboratively with each student to take into account their aspirations, skills and abilities.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe how Ascent Autism Specialist College provides a relevant and engaging careers and employability curriculum which meets the differing needs and requirements of our students.

This policy summarises the statutory guidance and recommendations. It also outlines the provision of employability education, work experience and provider access (this is dealt with in fully in the Provider Access Policy).

Aim (s)

- To prepare students for the transition to life after Ascent Autism Specialist College.
- To support students in making informed decisions which are appropriate for them.
- To provide students with well-rounded experiences.
- To develop personal characteristics such as social skills, communication, independence, flexibility and resilience.
- To inspire and motivate students to develop themselves as individuals and live as independently as is possible.
- To ensure that students develop the skills and attitudes necessary for success in adult and working life.
- To make students aware of the range of opportunities which are realistically available to them in continued education and training at 16+ and 18+.
- To equip students with the necessary decision-making skills to manage those same transitions.
- To develop in students an awareness of the wide variety of education, training and careers opportunities locally, nationally and internationally.
- To encourage students to make good use of the paper-based, virtual and staff resources available to them, in order that they can make informed and appropriate choices throughout their learning journey.
- To foster links between the college, local businesses and further/higher education establishments.

Invitations are issued to all local providers inviting them annually to appropriate events run by the college. If the provider cannot attend, then they are welcomed to deliver information in the form of leaflets to be handed out by an alternative body. This is recorded and monitored on college systems.

- Requests for access will be directed to the Careers Lead/Employer Engagement Officer and appropriate times agreed, where all students will be able to access the provider.
- To enable students to experience the world of work and develop transferable skills, for example; independence; resilience; personal learning and thinking skills.
- To ensure that wherever possible, all young people leave the college to enter employment, further education/Higher education or training
- To maintain a culture of high aspirations.
- To promote equality of opportunity, embrace diversity, challenge stereotypes and ensure all students who require any extra assistance and guidance to reach their potential, such as SEND students or students eligible for additional funding.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Head of Adult Services (and the Careers Lead and Employer Engagement Officer) are responsible for the delivery of the Careers and Employability Programme and any medium-term planning using the curriculum framework. The Careers Lead and Employer Engagement Officer also provide a list of resources that are available in college.

Teachers are responsible for agreeing the order in which activities will take place.

The Governor for Careers is responsible for meeting quarterly with the Careers Lead/Employer Engagement Officer/Head of Adult Services, for discussing strengths and areas for development, and for reporting these to the governing body.

Policy

Statutory requirements and recommendations

The careers provision at Ascent Autism Specialist College is in line with the statutory guidance developed by the Department for Education, which refers to Section 42A and 45A of the Education Act 1997.

This states that all schools/colleges should provide independent careers guidance from Years 12 -13 and that this guidance should:

- be impartial.
- include information on a range of pathways, including apprenticeships.
- be adapted to the needs of the student.

In addition, the college is compliant with the careers guidance that the government set out for delivery from 5 January 2018: 'Careers Guidance and Inspiration for young people in schools.' This states that all colleges must give education and training providers the opportunity to talk to students about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeships. Further information relating to this is set out later in a separate document, under Provider Access.

From September 2013, The Education Act of 2011 placed colleges under a duty to ensure that all registered pupils in Years 12-13 have access to independent, accurate and impartial information advice and guidance. Colleges are free to make arrangements for careers guidance which best suit the needs of their students, engaging where appropriate with independent providers.

Ascent Autism Specialist College has developed its own arrangements for providing impartial careers advice and guidance may continue to do so as long as it is ensured that students have access to a source of guidance which is independent and external to the college. This may include website or telephone helpline access and/or face to face support from a specialist provider where needed. MS Teams will also play a significant role in this careers advice.

Colleges are required to ensure that there is an opportunity for a range of education and training providers to access students (statutory in years 12 to 13) for the purposes of informing them about approved technical education, qualifications or apprenticeships (updated Provider Access Legislation 2023).

At each point where we deal with students leaving the college, we strive to ensure that they are purposefully provisioned in terms of advice and guidance. This includes information and support regarding apprenticeships, employment/internships or re-commencement of study with another provider.

Procedure

Ascent Autism Specialist College is committed to providing all students with a programme of careers and employability and related activities. The details of the programme are published on the college website and can be viewed by students, parents and carers as well as employers, partners and education/careers providers.

The programme is guided by the Gatsby Benchmarks for ensuring best practice. In addition, to ensure Ascent Autism Specialist College is delivering the best possible careers guidance. In 2025, we achieved Quality in Careers Standard. This is in accordance with the Government's recommendation that "all schools should work towards a quality award for careers education, information, advice and guidance as an effective means of carrying out a self-review and evaluation of the school's programme." And as advocated by the Department for Education in their 'Careers Guidance and Inspiration in Schools' policy issued in March 2015.

Careers & Employability Programme

The programme is delivered through a combination of methods including distinct employability sessions and work placements linked to accredited learning and RARPA.

Throughout college the programme is also supported through masterclasses, presentations, employer visits, independent work experience, seminars, workshops, careers fairs and 1:1 impartial and independent guidance.

Ascent Autism Specialist College hosts or attends events such as National Careers Week, Natspec conferences, and Regional Internship Conferences.

All students have access to the following:

- Employability and preparing for life after Ascent Autism Specialist College is a fundamental aspect of our curriculum.
- Visitors to college and offsite visits support students in developing their understanding of a range of different post 16 pathways.
- All students have access to advice and guidance from our Careers Connect Adviser.
- All students can access a meeting with Careers Connect Adviser and Careers Lead/Employer Engagement Officer to explore future pathways.
- STEM opportunities and careers talks and experiences are provided.

The overall organisation of work experience is coordinated by the Careers Lead and Employer Engagement Officer who liaise with the college team to ensure the most relevant and engaging opportunities are taken.

Families are informed and communicated with throughout the process and a work experience agreement form and work experience information form are completed.

All students on placement are covered by the college insurance and places of work are risk assessed by the EEO in liaison with the Careers Lead.

Independent Careers & Employability Service

Ascent Autism Specialist College guarantees impartial and independent advice via:

- An independent Careers Adviser who attends the organisation as agreed by a service level agreement. Appointments can be through student referral, teacher referral and parent referral where necessary.

Ascent Autism Specialist College provides independent careers advice as outlined in section 29 of the Education Act 2011. Independent Careers guidance must:

- Be presented in an impartial manner.
- Feature information on the range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and other vocational pathways.
- Promote the best interests of the students to whom it is given.
- Promote the National Careers Service Website and Helpline.
- Promote independent websites relevant to all career needs, from choosing a university or apprenticeship to pursuing a career.
- Access to relevant external speakers offering independent sources of information including local and national employers, representatives from professional bodies and organisations including, representatives of higher education establishments and former students, who are a valuable resource.

The Careers Lead and Employer Engagement Officer (both qualified careers leaders) hold responsibility for Careers and Employability education. All staff have a part to play in the implementation of this policy through their role as teachers/teaching support assistants and as subject specialists

Independent learning providers and local colleges, will be invited to attend Ascent Autism Specialist College, in order to have the opportunity to speak to students/parents/carers/staff. If the organisation cannot attend, then representation will be visible at events in order to advertise local

opportunities. Ascent Autism Specialist College has published a policy statement on provider access and this is published on the website.

Partnerships

The Careers and Employability access programme through the curriculum is greatly enhanced through links with several partners who ensure the students' learning is up to date and relevant. We strive constantly to expand and improve links with employers and other local groups, including the Career Connect.

Parental involvement is encouraged at all stages.

Links with the Local Authority

The Local Authority has a duty under section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 to encourage, enable and assist the participation of young people in education or training. In addition, the Education and Skills Act 2008 placed two new duties on local authorities from June 2013 for 16-18 year olds in relation to the raising of the participation age:

- To promote the effective participation in education and training of young people covered by the duty to participate
- To have in place arrangements to identify those who are not participating

Ascent Autism Specialist College works with Local Authorities, including sharing information, to support the above. In particular, in accordance with Section 13 of the above Act, the college will notify the Local Authority whenever a Post 16 or 17-year-old leaves an education or training programme before completion.

Policy Impact

We have a rolling programme for reviewing our Company policies. We regularly review the impact of our policies on the needs, entitlements and outcomes for students, service users, staff and parents.

References and Further Resources

All references to be listed using the Harvard format in alphabetical order:

Department for Education in their 'Careers Guidance and Inspiration in Schools' policy; 2015

Education Act 1997, Education Act 2011, Education and Skills Act 2008, Technical and Further Education Act 2017, Education Act 1997

Department for Education (2015) Post 16 work experience as a part of 16 to 19 study programmes and traineeships.

Department for Education (2023) Careers guidance and access for education and training providers Statutory guidance for schools and guidance for further education colleges and sixth form colleges.

Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 (incorporating the Provider Access Legislation introduced in 2023).