

I'm a... Get me out of here! links to the Gatsby Good Careers Guidance Benchmarks

Schools are challenged to create an effective careers programme with often limited resources. Careers Advisors are increasingly being measured against the Gatsby Good Careers Guidance Benchmarks¹. The *I'm a Scientist* family² of online student-led enrichment activities can help support a school's career programme.

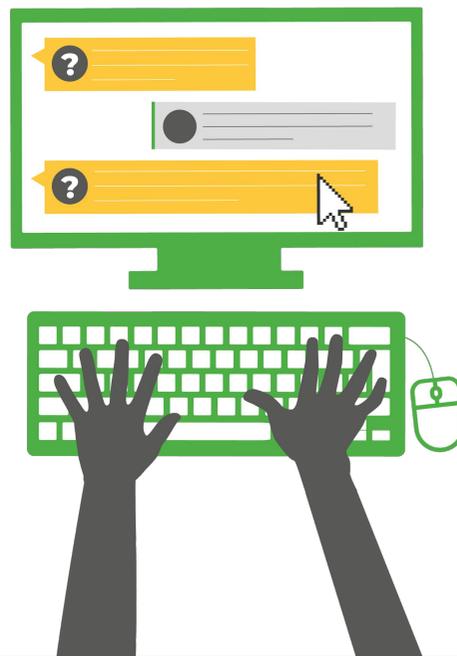
1. A stable careers programme

Every school and college should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by pupils, parents, teachers, governors and employers.

All of the *I'm a...* series of activities follow a clear pattern of activity that is **recognisable to teachers and easily understood by students** of all abilities and ages. The strong format and branding communicates to teachers the careers guidance opportunity regardless of subject.

The activity is run at **regular intervals**, making it easy for schools to schedule the activities into their annual careers programme. The programme is stable – *I'm a Scientist* has run in the same format since 2008.

In 2017, the *I'm a...* family expanded to include the Careers Zone, an online resource **available throughout the school year** where students have **unlimited access** to a range of working individuals across STEM subjects.



2. Learning from career and labour market information

Every pupil, and their parents, should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make best use of available information.

There are currently hundreds of professional profiles on the Careers Zone and hundreds more profiles added on the regular activities every year. Profiles contain Labour Market Information and Career Pathway links². **School careers advisors and parents can have access to these profiles.**

During the activities there are opportunities for **joint parent-student interaction** with the professionals, in the form of one-hour long evening live chats.

3. Addressing the needs of each pupil

Pupils have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each pupil. A school's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.

The activity is **student-led**, with pupils able to **pose the questions most important to them** as individuals, to the professionals most relevant to their personal interest.

The questions they ask reflect their current stage when thinking about careers – one Y9 may ask for GCSE advice, while another might want to know about work experiences, or the UCAS application process.

1. The benchmarks were established to improve career guidance in England and are part of the government's careers strategy, www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk

2. Currently includes *I'm a Scientist*, *Get me out of here*; *I'm an Engineer* and *I'm a Medic*

The activity's online platform allows **1,000's of students to have near-simultaneous conversations with 100's of professionals**, each tailored to their own needs.

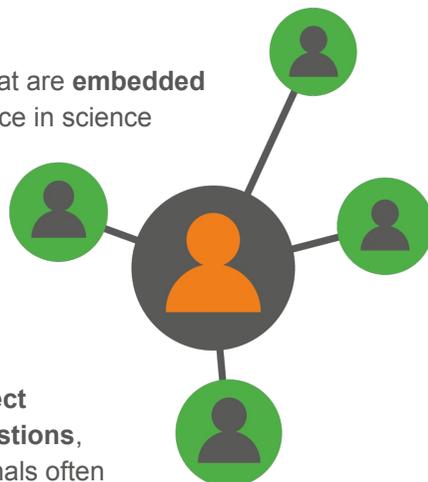
For a two-week activity such as *I'm a Scientist*, students are assigned to a zone with six professionals, with access to more zones if they wish. Each set of six professionals is **gender balanced**, and includes **at least one BAME professional**. A **variety of entry levels** to work is normally presented. In addition, professionals are able to talk about their personal lives on their profiles, allowing for **diverse representation** including LGBTQ+ individuals, disabled people and other minorities.

4. Linking curriculum learning to careers

All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths.

The *I'm a...* activities are careers interventions that are **embedded in curriculum studies** – *I'm a Scientist* takes place in science lessons, *I'm a Mathematician*³ in Maths, *I'm a Writer*³ in English and so on. Teachers often refer back to the activity and the professionals involved during later teaching of relevant parts of the curriculum.

The student-led nature of the activities mean that conversations revolve around a **mixture of subject specific questions and careers/education questions**, based on the interests of the students. Professionals often link subject-specific questions to their work and careers, and their varying careers **demonstrates the value of STEM subjects for a range of future professions**.



5. Encounters with employers and employees

Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment activities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.

Every student taking part in the activity has the chance to connect with at least six different professionals in different work environments. This includes those in the students' 'zone', and the opportunity to visit the profiles and work environments represented in other zones. The professionals involved are working for a range of employers, which is **especially useful to students from schools in areas where employer diversity is limited**.

Following the activity, funded students are given access to the Careers Zone, which has hundreds of professionals represented. This increases the chance for the student to **find an area and employer they are most interested in**.

The online, informal, pseudonymous nature of the activity provides students with **direct and authentic encounters** in a manner unmatched by more formal face-to-face meetings.

Through their conversations, professionals communicate to students the **skills that are valued in the workplace**, and **what it is like to work in their field** on a day-to-day basis – they're not just showcasing the best parts.

6. Experiences of workplaces

Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and expand their networks.

Some things don't work so well online.

3. Under development.

7. Encounters with further and higher education

All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.

The activity will normally include a **mixture of professionals**, some of whom have taken a vocational, others an academic route. Some are fairly recent graduates with current **experience of higher education and apprenticeships**, able to offer **relevant advice and insights** to students.

Profiles often include **links to employers and educational facilities**, and, where available, links to **more information about entry routes** to their profession.

8. Personal guidance

Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a careers adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all pupils but should be timed to meet their individual needs.

The Careers Zone is available throughout the school year, and is **accessible to careers advisors to keep their industry knowledge current** and offer students specific opportunities to connect with and **ask questions to relevant professionals**.

For more about the benchmarks:
goodcareerguidance.org.uk



Get in touch with us:

imascientist.org.uk

admin@imascientist.org.uk

01225 326 892

