

BOA Careers Programme 2026-27

Aims and Objectives

The BOA Careers Programme aims to:

- Equip students with a clear understanding of the world of work, including the various pathways to fulfilling and rewarding careers
- Support the development of essential self-awareness, decision-making and career management skills to help students achieve successful employment outcomes
- Empower students to make informed choices about their future, enhancing their life opportunities and enabling them to contribute positively to the economy.

The following overview sets out how the Academy delivers a stable careers-related learning programme in line with relevant statutory guidance and the eight Gatsby Benchmarks; it works in conjunction with the BOA Careers Policy and Provider Access Statement, published on the [Academy website](#). For any enquiries, please contact the BOA Careers & UCAS Lead: Dr S May (Assistant Principal): telephone: 0121 359 9300 / email: careers@boa-academy.co.uk.

Introduction

At BOA Creative, Digital and Performing Arts Academy (BOA), we are committed to providing our students with the guidance, skills and experiences they need to thrive in the arts industry and beyond. Our comprehensive careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) programme is designed to inspire, inform and prepare students for a wide range of career pathways.

1. Integrated Careers Curriculum

We believe in embedding careers education into every aspect of our students' learning journey, whether that be from their entry into the Academy in Year 10 or Year 12. Through dedicated lessons and projects in vocational pathways as well as careers-focused teaching in academic subjects, our students explore various opportunities within the arts and other sectors, as well as learning about and gaining the skills they need to succeed:

- **Industry Insights:** we regularly invite guest speakers from a wide range of professions who share their personal career journeys and offer practical advice
- **Workshops and Masterclasses:** our students engage in hands-on workshops, where industry professionals guide them through techniques, industry standards and current trends.

2. Real-World Experience

We know that nothing beats learning from experience, so we offer our students numerous and wide-ranging opportunities to get involved in real-world projects and gain industry experience:

- **Work Placements and Internships:** our students are supported and encouraged in securing high-quality placements to gain the benefit of direct exposure to the creative industries and to explore other employment sectors of interest
- **Live Performances:** from academy productions to collaborative performances with external partners, our students play an active role in public performances and other creative projects, gaining valuable insight into the behind-the-scenes process of professional-standard work
- **Industry Visits and Careers Fairs:** our students attend industry events, careers fairs (including our own BOA Careers Fair) and exhibitions, learn about different career roles through meaningful encounters, and connect with potential employers.

3. Tailored Careers Guidance

We understand that every student is unique and their aspirations are just as diverse. We work closely with students to provide personalised advice and guidance at every stage of their journey:

- **1:1 Careers Meetings:** we offer bespoke support to help students identify strengths, interests and the career paths that best suit their aspirations, with at least one meeting with a Level 6-qualified, independent careers adviser provided at each key stage
- **Additional Support:** we understand that some students, for a variety of reasons, may require additional information, advice and guidance, and for this reason further meetings are available on request and/or suggested to students who may particularly benefit.

4. Supporting Progression

We help our students to navigate their next steps beyond BOA – whether that be after Year 11 or Year 13, and whatever their chosen route – providing bespoke support for all progression routes, including higher/further education, technical qualifications, apprenticeships, and employment:

- **UCAS and Apprenticeships:** our dedicated team provides expert guidance through various application processes, including personal statements, audition/portfolio preparation and student finance; we also provide advice on apprenticeship and employment opportunities in the creative industries and beyond, with individualised support provided to every student
- **Instruction from Higher Education:** university representatives deliver sessions on key topics such as personal statements and student finance, and provide 1:1 personal statement reviews for students to receive informed, impartial guidance and feedback
- **Professional Development:** we prepare our students for the professional world by developing key skills such as networking, building a personal brand/portfolio, and preparing for auditions, interviews and job applications.

5. Employability and Transferable Skills

Beyond the technical and artistic skills needed for a creative career and developed directly through our vocational pathways, we focus on developing the core employability skills that will serve our students in any career:

- **Soft Skills Development:** communication, problem-solving, teamwork and time management are integral to every aspect of our students' education, preparing them for any career they choose to pursue
- **Subject-Specific Instruction:** all subjects – including our vocational qualifications, which are designed to give students the theoretical knowledge and practical experience they need to succeed in the competitive world of the creative, digital and performing arts – make direct links between curriculum learning and careers, highlighting and teaching the skills required to pursue further training/education and/or employment in related fields.

6. Partnerships with Creative Industries

We collaborate actively with external partners across the creative and cultural sectors, ensuring our students have access to the latest industry trends, professional development opportunities and high-profile events:

- **Industry Collaboration:** our partnerships with theatres, arts organisations and creative businesses open doors for our students to engage with the broader creative community and gain hands-on experience in professional environments.

Gatsby Benchmarks

We are passionate about empowering our students to pursue their dreams and build fulfilling careers. Our approach to CEIAG ensures that every student is equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence to take the next steps in their journey. The wide array of activities that we provide for each year group (included but not limited to those listed in the 'Schedule of Provision' below) are informed by, and designed to meet, the following eight Gatsby Benchmarks, as updated in 2024:

- Benchmark 1:** A stable careers programme
- Benchmark 2:** Learning from career and labour market information
- Benchmark 3:** Addressing the needs of each young person
- Benchmark 4:** Linking curriculum learning to careers
- Benchmark 5:** Encounters with employers and employees
- Benchmark 6:** Experiences of workplaces
- Benchmark 7:** Encounters with further and higher education
- Benchmark 8:** Personal guidance.

Communication and Record-Keeping (including Unifrog)

To help our students make informed choices, and to enable parents/carers to support those decisions as effectively as possible (e.g. by continuing conversations at home, encouraging participation in careers activities, etc.), we ensure that our careers programme is communicated and understood clearly by everyone involved, including students, parents/carers and staff:

- All **students** are provided with access to the Unifrog platform, which can be used to explore subjects and careers, with up-to-date labour market information (LMI), supplemented by information from the West Midlands Combined Authority reflecting local data and growth industries; Unifrog is also used as the primary means of logging activities and sharing information and updates for students to reference in one easy-to-access location
- Termly letters are sent to **parents/carers** via MCAS/email with updates on upcoming careers activities, opportunities and important milestones such as UCAS deadlines; parents/carers are also provided with login details for Unifrog so that they can explore the same material that is available to students, including subject/careers libraries with LMI
- The Academy maintains a Level 7-qualified Careers & UCAS Lead, with updates as well as training regularly provided to **BOA staff**, enabling consistent and effective support to be provided within lessons, at tutor time and beyond, e.g. extra-curricular opportunities, application and personal statement guidance, etc.

Feedback and Provider Access

We utilise data from Unifrog, the Compass+ evaluation tool, and other services to record, monitor and evaluate individual student participation in careers activities. To help us refine and improve our provision of CEIAG, we are also grateful to receive feedback from key stakeholders including students, parents/carers, employers and partners. Please contact the BOA Careers & UCAS Lead: Dr S May (Assistant Principal): telephone: 0121 359 9300 / email: careers@boa-academy.co.uk.

Note regarding provider access: please refer to the BOA Careers Policy and Provider Access Statement, found on the [Academy website](#), and use the 'Schedule of Provision' below to identify a suitable time for a proposed visit.

Schedule of Provision

Activity	Years	Timetable	Details	Benchmarks
Information Evening	10, 12	Pre-enrolment – April/May for Year 10 June for Year 12	At this presentation evening, we clarify the curriculum on offer at BOA and ensure students are aware of through-routes to post-16/post-18 options (academic and technical education, work, etc.)	3
A level Options Advice	12	Enrolment – August	Students are given the opportunity to attend enrolment on site to clarify the suitability of their options, especially if they wish to take subjects alongside their BTEC pathway	3
1:1 Careers Meetings	10, 11, 12, 13	Year-round – scheduled or by student request	Meetings are scheduled to allow at least one meeting per key stage with a Level 6-qualified, independent careers adviser (Learn2Work), with prep and reflection activities and targeted support as required	2, 3, 8
Meaningful Encounters with Employers/Employees, and with Further/Higher Education	10, 11, 12, 13	Year-round – across all lessons and extra-curricular	All subjects facilitate relevant, direct encounters, e.g. with industry practitioners, university lecturers, et al., combining trips (at least two by the end of KS5) with talks, workshops, etc. delivered on site	4, 5, 6, 7
Employer Engagement Week – Industry Practitioner Projects	10	Autumn Term 1 – collapsed timetable	All students work with industry practitioners to produce the Year 10 Industry Showcase; Q&A sessions are provided for students to learn from employers/employees about future careers	4, 5
Introduction to Post-16 Options and Work Experience	10	Autumn Term 1 – assembly	An introduction to post-16 options (A levels; technical/vocational qualifications; apprenticeships), the world of work and factors to consider when making choices, and how to find work experience	2, 3, 6
Introduction to Post-18 Options and Work Experience	12	Autumn Term 1 – assembly	An introduction to post-18 options (FE/HE; apprenticeships; gap years; employment), comparison between career pathways, using labour market information (LMI), and how to find work experience	2, 3, 6
Personal Statements – Guidance and 1:1 Meetings (involving HE Institutions)	13	Autumn Term 1 – off-timetable	Allocated Statement Advisers continue to provide feedback and approve students' personal statements. HE representatives deliver optional sessions and provide 1:1 meetings for statement support	3, 7, 8

Activity	Years	Timetable	Details	Benchmarks
Post-18 Application Support	13	Autumn Term 1 – off-timetable	Application processing, including for early deadlines; UCAS drop-in sessions and 1:1 appointments provided by Head of KS5; UCAS surgeries and audition/interview practice provided by departments	3, 8
Careers in Tutor Time	10, 11, 12, 13	Autumn Term 1 – tutor time	Year 10 (x1): work experience. Year 11 (x8): professional skills; challenge and ambition; post-16 choices. Year 12 (x2): networking. Year 13 (x4): personal branding; employer assessment days	2, 3
Post-16 Options at BOA	11	Autumn Term 2 - assembly	In this assembly, the Principal provides information to all students regarding post-16 options at BOA, including practical steps involved in the transfer process; parents/carers receive an online version	2, 3
Post-18 Application Support (continued)	13	Autumn Term 2 – off-timetable	Continued application processing to meet relevant deadlines, including UCAS; UCAS drop-in sessions; 1:1 appointments; support from pathway and A level teachers as relevant to post-18 choices	3, 8
Careers in Tutor Time	10, 11, 12, 13	Autumn Term 2 – tutor time	Year 10 (x12): interests; work-life balance; discrimination. Year 11 (x6): apprenticeships vs. HE; types of work; volunteering. Year 12 (x3): work-life balance. Year 13 (x4): types of work; interviews	2, 3
National Apprenticeship Week	11, 12, 13	Spring Term 1 – assembly (KS4); pathway lessons (KS5)	1x meaningful encounter with an apprenticeship provider to introduce and discuss post-16/post-18 apprenticeship routes, with Q&A – mandatory for Year 11; optional for KS5 students	2, 3, 7
Careers in Tutor Time	10, 11, 12, 13	Spring Term 1 – tutor time	Year 10 (x3): work experience. Year 11 (x3): artificial intelligence in the workplace. Year 12 (N/A): tutors meet with students to ask about their post-18 plans. Year 13 (x2): four-day week debate	2, 3, 8
Work Experience Week	10, 12	Spring Term 2 – collapsed timetable	Students attend meaningful placements (and, for Year 12, attend open days), completing reflection activities for subsequent review; all placements are risk assessed with consent from parents/carers	5, 6
Aptitude Workshops	11	Spring Term 2 – off-timetable	Year 11 students who wish to remain at BOA but change BTEC pathways for post-16 education attend aptitude workshops to check suitability	2, 3

Activity	Years	Timetable	Details	Benchmarks
National Careers Week	10, 11, 12, 13	Spring Term 2 – tutor time	Whole-academy focus: students complete activities using resources provided by nationalcareersweek.com and Unifrog, including exploration and comparison of suggested careers with LMI	2, 3, 5
Careers in Tutor Time	10, 11, 12, 13	Spring Term 2 – tutor time	Year 10 (x3): patterns of employment. Year 11 (N/A): tutors speak with students about their post-16 plans. Year 12 (x4): post-18 choices; employee rights. Year 13 (x4): payslips and budgeting	2, 3, 8
Post-18 Options / Introduction to the UCAS Process	12	Summer Term 1 - assembly	An overview of post-18 options, including technical qualifications and apprenticeships, with useful websites signposted; an outline of the UCAS process at BOA; parents/carers receive a written version	2, 3, 5, 7
Enterprise Challenge – Employability	10	Summer Term 1 – off-timetable	All Year 10 students take part in an enterprise challenge led by SIPS Education, incorporating a group project working to a brief and meaningful encounters, incl. Q&As, with employers/employees	3, 5
Personal Statements and References – Guidance and 1:1 Support	12	Summer Term 2 – tutor time and off-timetable meetings	8x tutor sessions introduce personal statements; every student is allocated a Statement Adviser to provide guidance and feedback; references are balanced to match students' post-18 intentions	3, 7, 8
Apprenticeship Assembly and Mini-Careers Fair	10	Summer Term 2 – assembly and off-timetable	1x meaningful encounter with an apprenticeship provider to introduce and discuss apprenticeship routes, with Q&A, followed by a mini-careers fair with FE, HE and vocational training institutions	2, 3, 5, 7
Industry Workshops, Futures Presentation, and Careers Fair	12	Summer Term 2 – off-timetable and evening	In school hours, workshops are led by industry practitioners; an evening presentation is given on post-18 choices; the careers fair hosts a wide range of FE, HE, and vocational training institutions	2, 3, 4, 5, 7
Progression Survey	10, 12	Summer Term 2 – pathway lessons	Students are surveyed in relation to their careers understanding and post-16/post-18 plans and preferences, to enable the provision of bespoke support ahead of key transition points	3
Alumni Destinations Survey	11, 13	1 and 3 years after leaving BOA	BOA alumni are contacted and asked to provide updates on their post-16/post-18 destinations, with information used to refine and improve careers education for future cohorts	3