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### Summary of Changes between previous and current version

#### 1. OfS and Matrix alignment

- Added a clear OfS- and Matrix-ready framing (Appendix D) that evidences whole-provider approach, lifecycle delivery, governance, evaluation and student entitlement.
- Strengthened the language around data-informed targeting, continuation, completion and progression outcomes to ensure continuous improvement.
- Ensured consistency with AGCAS/CDI expectations.

#### 2. Operational plan and KPIs

- Added a practical operational plan (Appendix A).
- KPIs focus on curriculum embedding, engagement, progression gaps and confidence, rather than crude activity counts.
- These KPIs can be lifted directly into annual quality reports, APP monitoring and SMT papers.

#### 3. Explicit APP mapping

- Added a clean, defensible mapping to IS3–IS5 (Appendix C) to clarify careers as a delivery mechanism for APP outcomes—particularly progression, attainment and continuation.

## 1. Purpose and Context

This Careers Strategy sets out the vision, principles, and delivery model for Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) at David Game Higher Education (DGHE) for the period 2026–2030. It replaces the 2023 Careers Strategy and aligns fully with the institutional Strategic Plan and the Access and Participation Plan (APP) 2026–27 to 2029–30.

The strategy reflects DGHE’s role as a specialist, career-focused higher education provider serving a predominantly mature, working and underrepresented student population. Careers provision is therefore designed to be inclusive, flexible, evidence-informed and embedded across the whole student lifecycle, from pre-entry to progression into employment or further study.

## 2. Strategic Alignment

This strategy supports:

- DGHE’s mission to empower students to realise their personal and professional potential through inclusive, industry-relevant education.
- The APP strategic aims to enhance employability outcomes, reduce continuation and attainment gaps, and support progression for mature, disabled, ethnic minority and IMD Q1 students.
- A whole-provider approach in which employability and careers development are shared responsibilities across academic, professional and support services.

## 3. Vision for Careers and Employability

DGHE’s Careers and Employability provision will:

- Enable all students to make informed, realistic and aspirational career decisions that support continued engagement, successful completion, and progression into employment or further study.
- Support students to develop the skills, confidence and social capital needed for sustainable employment or further study.
- Reduce structural and individual barriers to progression faced by underrepresented groups.
- Embed careers learning within the curriculum, not solely as an optional or extracurricular activity.

## 4. Guiding Principles

Careers provision at DGHE is underpinned by the following principles:

- **Equity and inclusion:** Services are designed to meet the needs of diverse learners, including mature students, disabled students, carers, and those from lower-income backgrounds.
- **Impartiality and ethics:** Guidance is confidential, student-centred and compliant with AGCAS and CDI professional standards.
- **Integration:** Careers education is embedded within teaching, assessment and academic support.
- **Flexibility:** Delivery models reflect the realities of working, commuting and caregiving students.
- **Evidence-informed practice:** Interventions are shaped by APP data, labour market intelligence (LMI) and student feedback.

## 5. Student Entitlement

All DGHE students are entitled to accurate, up-to-date careers information through our Careers Consultant via:

- the Student Hub, VLE and digital resources.
- One-to-one impartial careers guidance.
- Careers education embedded within their programme of study.
- Support with CVs, applications, interviews and progression planning.
- Opportunities to engage with employers, alumni and industry professionals.
- Targeted support for progression into employment, self-employment or further study.

## 6. Careers Across the Student Lifecycle

### 6.1 Pre-Entry and Transition

- Careers-informed outreach and marketing, highlighting continuation, completion and progression outcomes and flexible career pathways.
- Clear information about employability support during applicant engagement and induction.
- Early identification of career aspirations, skills gaps and support needs.

### 6.2 On-Course Careers Education

- Employability skills embedded within modules, including communication, teamwork, digital literacy and reflective practice.
- Career management learning integrated into assessment where appropriate, supporting student engagement, motivation and successful completion of programmes.
- Personal tutors and academic staff supported to reinforce careers messaging.

### **6.3 Targeted Careers Guidance**

- One-to-one careers appointments prioritised for students from APP target groups.
- Tailored support for career changers, mature students and those re-entering education.
- Accessible guidance formats for disabled students and those with English as an additional language.

### **6.4 Employer Engagement and Experiential Learning**

- Employer-led workshops, guest lectures and sector-specific events.
- Industry engagement aligned to DGHE's subject portfolio.
- Real-world projects, placements or simulated work-based learning where appropriate.

### **6.5 Progression and Graduate Outcomes**

- Support with transitions into employment, further study or professional training.
- Guidance on postgraduate options, professional accreditation and alternative career routes.
- Continued careers support for recent graduates, where feasible.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **7.1 Careers and Employability Service**

- Led by the Careers & Employability Consultant, working in partnership with academic and professional services.
- Responsible for strategic development, delivery, evaluation and quality assurance of CEIAG.

### **7.2 Academic Staff**

- Embed employability and career development within curricula.
- Reinforce progression conversations through teaching and personal tutoring.

### **7.3 Professional and Student Services**

- Collaborate to address barriers related to wellbeing, disability, finance and confidence that affect career readiness.
- Ensure coherent referral pathways between careers, wellbeing and academic support.

### **7.4 Senior Leadership and Governance**

- Oversight through SMT and alignment with APP governance structures.
- Strategic monitoring of employability and progression outcomes.

## 8. Contribution to Access and Participation Priorities

The Careers Strategy directly supports APP objectives by:

- Enhancing continuation, completion and progression outcomes for mature, disabled and IMD Q1 students.
- Embedding careers learning to improve confidence, attainment and continuation.
- Providing targeted employability interventions for students at greater risk of poor outcomes.
- Using careers data as part of a whole-provider approach to equity of opportunity.
- Supporting continuation by increasing students' sense of purpose, confidence and perceived value of study, particularly for mature, commuting and working students who may otherwise be at greater risk of withdrawal.

## 9. Quality Assurance, Monitoring and Evaluation

Impact will be monitored through:

- Student engagement data with careers activities.
- Student feedback and surveys on career confidence and readiness.
- Progression and graduate outcomes data, disaggregated by APP target groups.
- Contribution to institutional evaluation of APP intervention strategies.
- Continuous professional development and reflective practice within the Careers Service.

The service will continue to align with AGCAS, CDI and Matrix Quality Standard expectations. Progression, engagement and confidence data are reviewed annually through SMT and APP governance structures. Findings inform curriculum review, targeting of careers interventions, and resourcing decisions, with actions assigned to named academic and professional leads.

## 10. Review and Continuous Improvement

This strategy will be reviewed annually in line with APP monitoring cycles and formally updated every three years. Student voice, employer feedback and evaluation findings will inform ongoing development.

## Appendix A: Operational Plan and KPIs (2026–2030)

### A1. Strategic Objectives and Key Performance Indicators

#### Objective 1: Embed careers education across the curriculum

KPIs:

- 100% of programmes explicitly map employability and career learning outcomes by 2026–27.
- At least one assessed employability-related activity per programme per academic year.
- ≥75% of students report increased confidence in career planning (annual student survey).

#### Objective 2: Improve progression and employability outcomes for APP target groups

KPIs:

- Year-on-year improvement in progression to professional employment or further study for mature, disabled and IMD Q1 students, with outcomes monitored against institutional and sector benchmarks where appropriate.
- Reduction in progression gaps between APP target groups and overall cohort.
- ≥70% engagement rate with careers activities among APP target students.

#### Objective 3: Strengthen employer engagement and labour market relevance

KPIs:

- Minimum of 6 employer-led activities per academic year aligned to subject areas.
- Active employer input into curriculum review at least once per programme cycle.
- Positive employer feedback (≥80% satisfaction) on student preparedness.

#### Objective 4: Deliver accessible, high-quality guidance and support

KPIs:

- All students offered at least one careers interaction per academic year.
- Priority access to 1:1 guidance for students at risk of non-progression.
- Compliance with AGCAS, CDI and Matrix standards maintained.

## Appendix B: Roles, Responsibilities and Delivery Model

### B1. Careers & Employability Consultant

- Lead strategic delivery of this Careers Strategy.

- Provide impartial 1:1 guidance, workshops and employer engagement.
- Use APP and progression data to target interventions.
- Maintain labour market intelligence (LMI) and digital careers resources.
- Contribute evidence to APP monitoring and evaluation.

## **B2. Academic Programme Teams**

- Embed employability and careers learning within curricula and assessment.
- Reinforce progression discussions through teaching and personal tutoring.
- Collaborate with Careers Service on employer engagement.

## **B3. Student and Professional Services**

- Coordinate referrals between careers, wellbeing, disability and financial support.
- Support students whose personal circumstances affect career readiness.

## **B4. Senior Leadership and Governance**

- Oversight via SMT and APP governance structures.
- Review continuation, completion and progression outcomes annually to inform resourcing.

# **Appendix C: Mapping to APP Intervention Strategies**

## **C1. Alignment with APP IS3–IS5**

### **IS3 – Pre-entry and transition support**

- Careers-informed outreach and induction activities.
- Early identification of career aspirations and skills gaps.

### **IS4 – Flexible and inclusive academic environment**

- Employability embedded in curriculum and inclusive teaching practice.
- Flexible delivery of careers guidance for working and commuting students.

### **IS5 – Holistic student support provision**

- Targeted careers guidance for students facing financial, wellbeing or disability-related barriers.
- Progression support integrated with wellbeing and financial interventions.

This mapping ensures careers and employability act as a core mechanism for delivering APP outcomes, particularly progression, attainment and continuation.

## Appendix D: OfS and Matrix Readiness Statement

This strategy:

- Demonstrates a whole-provider approach to employability and progression.
- Uses disaggregated data and evaluation aligned to APP objectives.
- Embeds careers learning within teaching and assessment.
- Shows clear leadership accountability, student entitlement and continuous improvement.

This strategy is designed to mitigate institutional risk under Condition B3 by targeting support at cohorts with historically weaker outcomes and embedding progression activity within the curriculum.

## Appendix E: One-Page Careers Strategy Summary

### Careers Strategy 2026–2030: Summary

#### Purpose

To ensure all DGHE students are supported to progress into sustainable employment or further study through inclusive, embedded and high-quality Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG). This summary is intended as a starting point of conversation for staff in initial conversations with students and external stakeholders.

#### Context

DGHE serves a predominantly mature, working and underrepresented student population. Careers provision is therefore designed to be flexible, practical and embedded across the student lifecycle, aligned with the Access and Participation Plan (APP) and institutional strategy.

#### Strategic Aims

- Embed employability and career learning within all programmes.
- Improve continuation, completion and progression outcomes and reduce gaps for APP target groups.
- Strengthen employer engagement aligned to DGHE's subject portfolio.
- Provide accessible, impartial and professionally accredited careers guidance.

#### Student Entitlement

All students are entitled to:

- Embedded careers education within their programme.
- One-to-one impartial careers guidance.
- Support with applications, CVs, interviews and progression planning.
- Access to employer engagement and labour market insight.

### **Delivery Model**

- Careers education integrated into curriculum and assessment.
- Targeted 1:1 guidance for students from underrepresented groups.
- Employer-led workshops, projects and sector engagement.
- Close collaboration between academic staff, Careers Service and student support teams.

### **Alignment with APP**

The strategy directly supports APP objectives by:

- Improving progression and employability outcomes.
- Enhancing confidence, attainment and continuation through embedded careers learning.
- Targeting support for mature, disabled and IMD Q1 students.

### **Quality and Evaluation**

Impact is monitored through student engagement, progression data, confidence measures and APP evaluation. The service aligns with AGCAS, CDI and Matrix Quality Standard expectations.

## **Appendix F: Inspection Briefing Note (Careers and Employability)**

### **Purpose of Briefing**

To summarise DGHE's approach to careers and employability for inspection, review or regulatory discussion.

### **Strategic Positioning**

Careers and employability are embedded as a core institutional function and a key delivery mechanism for the Access and Participation Plan. Responsibility is shared across academic teams, professional services and senior leadership.

### **Whole-Provider Approach**

- Careers learning embedded in curriculum design and assessment.
- Academic staff, personal tutors and Careers Service work collaboratively.
- Careers provision is aligned with wellbeing, disability and financial support services.

### **Equity and Access**

Provision is designed for a predominantly mature and underrepresented student body. Targeted interventions support students facing structural barriers to progression, including disability, low income and limited prior exposure to higher education or professional careers.

### **Quality and Professional Standards**

- Impartial, confidential guidance delivered by professionally qualified staff.
- Alignment with AGCAS and CDI ethical frameworks.
- Commitment to Matrix Quality Standard principles.

### **Evidence and Evaluation**

- Engagement, confidence and progression data monitored annually.
- Outcomes disaggregated by APP target groups.
- Careers activity contributes