

Outreach to intake: the business case

Employer Standards 2023/24 show
Digital amongst key sectors leading
the way



CEC's Employer Standards are helping to improve the impact and efficiency of education outreach.

The [Employer Standards](#) were launched in 2023 with the aim of improving the quality and impact of employer engagement in careers. By the end of September 2024, 811 employers from a wide range of sectors and sizes had self-assessed against the Standards. Within the national sample, 46 were from the Digital sector

One year on, we see growing evidence that education outreach works: strengthening talent pipelines, closing disadvantage gaps and saving money. Sustained engagement and higher quality outreach lead to long-term benefits for employers, especially in key sectors.

“We have found the Employer Standards really useful in measuring ourselves against best practice and getting ideas for improvement. By using the tool for a second year we have seen our scores improve against several Standards, including Standard 4: Build essential skills and explain their relevance. It's great to know that our work in this area is continuing to deliver greater impact for young people and our talent pipeline.”

Sam Moylan-Heydt, CSR Programme Manager UK Cisco



1. School outreach works: strengthening talent pipelines, closing disadvantage gaps and saving money

- Providing meaningful opportunities, such as careers talks, mentoring and workplace visits, leads to more sector interest, applications and closing skills gaps
- Engaging with parents, teachers and underrepresented groups helps to improve the effectiveness of early career recruitment, improve workforce diversity and develop new talent pipelines
- Outreach leads to direct business benefits (particularly for Digital sector employers) and reduced costs, with Careers Hubs driving improvements



2. Sustained engagement and higher quality outreach lead to longer-term benefits, especially in key sectors

- Those providing meaningful opportunities over the long-term report the most significant business benefits
- Employers repeating Standards assessments take a more long-term approach, are more inclusive, provide more opportunities and see more business benefits
- Health sector employers score above the average across all nine Standards; Construction and Digital higher than average across eight



3. Employer Standards highlight common challenges and opportunities

- There is more to be done to prepare young people for application processes, evaluate activity and measure the value of careers engagement
- Greater engagement with parents benefits both businesses and students
- Employers who collaborate with Careers Hubs are leading the way

How did Employers in the Digital sector compare with the national sample?

The 46 Digital employers scored on average 2%pts higher than non-Digital employers across eight of the nine Standards.

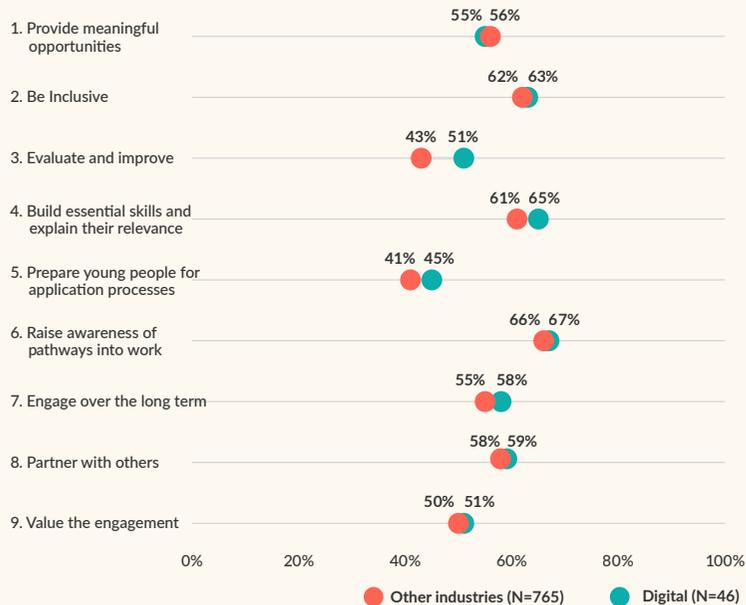
Following the trend of all employers, those in the Digital sector scored highly against **S6 (Raise awareness of pathways into work)** and **S4 (Build essential skills and explain their relevance)** compared to employers in other sectors.

On average, Digital employers scored **8% pts** higher on **S3 (Evaluate and improve)** and **4%pts** higher on **S4 (Build essential skills and explain their relevance)** compared to non-Digital employers.

Employers in the Digital sector said more frequently that careers support in schools is becoming more connected and responsive to sector skills and local economic needs (72%, **+7%pts** compared to non-Digital) and that **and that young people are becoming more career ready as a result of our engagement as a business** (70%, **+2%pts**). Fewer Digital employers said that there is a lack of connection to schools and colleges (24%, **-7%pts**)

Employers' overall scores against each of the 9 Employer Standards, by Digital status

Overall scores against each Standard (%)



Source: Employer Standards Self-Assessments, Apr 2023 - Sep 2024

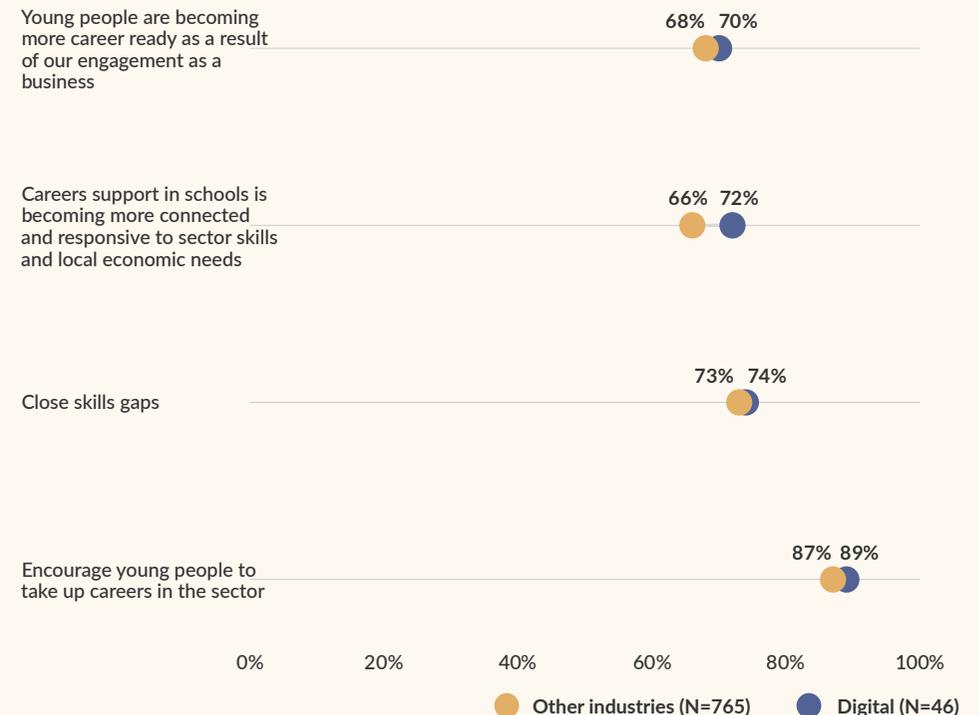
What business benefits did Digital employers see?

70% of Digital employers said that young people are becoming more career ready as a result of their engagement as a business (2%pts higher than other sectors)

72% of Digital employers say their outreach is increasing responsiveness to sector skills and local economic needs (6%pts higher than other sectors)

Digital employers report stronger business benefits

Proportion of employers responding positively



Source: Employer Standards Self-Assessments, Apr 2023 - Sep 2024



Spread the word

Two thirds of UK businesses are not confident that they will be able to access the digital skills needed in the next 3-5 years. And just one in six software developers are women. There are multiple barriers to overcome, and now is your chance to do something about it.

Share these insights with your network to promote Employer Standards and inspire, engage, and introduce young people from all backgrounds to the industry's wide range of careers. [Click](#) or scan the QR code here.

