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BOLTON COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN **2025-30**



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BOLTON COLLEGE, YOUR COLLEGE

Principal's Foreword

I am delighted to introduce Bolton College's Strategic Plan - our roadmap for the next five years. This plan sets out a bold and ambitious direction, one that reflects not only who we are as a college, but who we aspire to become in partnership with our learners, our town, our region and beyond.

At Bolton College, we are passionate about creating a sustainable future for everyone we serve - our learners, our communities, and the businesses that power our local and regional economy. We believe in the power of education to transform lives and to shape a more inclusive, innovative, and resilient society.

This Strategic Plan is the result of an extensive and meaningful consultation process. Over 1,000 stakeholders contributed valuable and insightful feedback - from learners and team members to employers, community groups and strategic partners. Their voices have helped shape a vision that is rooted in real needs, real opportunities, and real aspirations.

At the heart of this vision is our commitment to ensuring every learner is work-ready, world-ready, and future-ready. We are proud to champion high standards, strong values, and a learning experience that equips our learners with the skills, confidence, and mindset to thrive in a changing world.

We recognise the significant challenges facing our sector - from economic pressures to rapid technological and social change - but we are resolute and determined. With the valued support of our partners, we are ready to deliver something truly transformative. This plan is ambitious, but it is also responsive, resilient and built on strong foundations.

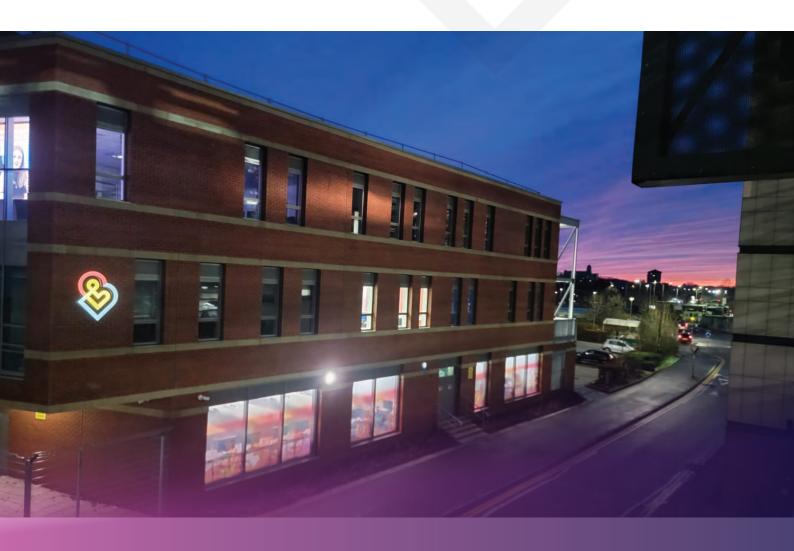
Bolton College is proud to be at the heart of Bolton - a place where innovation, inclusion and high aspirations meet. We are more than an education provider; we are a catalyst for change. Collectively, we can shape a brighter, fairer and more sustainable future.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Liam Sloan Principal & CEO



EMPOWERING FUTURES



RAISING ASPIRATIONS

Chair of Governors' Foreword

The Governors are proud to stand behind a vision that places Bolton College exactly where it belongs: at the centre of a bold, inclusive, and resilient future.

This Strategic Plan is more than a roadmap. It is a commitment - to our learners, our team members, and our borough. It embodies the values we hold dear: inclusivity, aspiration, collaboration and excellence. It also acknowledges the role the College plays in addressing some of Bolton's most pressing challenges - from skills shortages to economic disparity - and our responsibility to be part of the solution. This plan and our ambitions will ensure Bolton College's financial sustainability, securing its legacy for generations to come.

At Bolton College, we bring together ambition and action, underpinned by a strong sense of civic duty. We don't just prepare learners for jobs - we prepare them for life. Through strong governance and clear accountability, we will continue to ensure that every decision supports long-term growth, social mobility, and educational excellence.

We're proud to share this Strategy with you and look forward to working together to bring it to life.

Andrew RobertsChair of Governors



ENDORSEMENTS

Professor George E Holmes DL President & Vice Chancellor



'This plan sets out a clear and ambitious vision for education that serves all learners - whether their next step is employment, further study, or personal development. As part of our Group, Bolton College is central to delivering those outcomes across the borough.'

Sharon White Chief of Strategy & Partnerships



'Bolton College plays an important role in supporting our local health and care workforce, helping individuals develop the skills and confidence to enter the sector. This plan builds on that work, creating more opportunities to begin meaningful and rewarding careers in care.'

Sharon Weetman Principal, Education, Skills & Work



'The College plays a key role in our city-region's ambitions to connect people with good jobs, deliver a greener future, and drive innovation. Its commitment to aligning education, skills and training with the needs of Greater Manchester makes it a valued and forward-thinking partner.'

Warran Bolton Bolton President



'The College is an essential partner in developing the skilled, work-ready individuals that our members need. Its commitment to employer engagement and curriculum relevance helps local businesses grow and adapt in a fast-moving regional economy.'



Bolton Council

'Bolton College is central to the town's future - not just in delivering skills, but in helping to build a more inclusive and ambitious borough. Its work is integral to our wider regeneration efforts and supports our shared drive to improve outcomes and raise aspirations.'

Elan Raja Chief Executive Officer

SCAN®

TECH, HEART & SOU

'Scan is proud to support Bolton College as a beacon for technology-led learning and opportunity across Greater Manchester. This Strategic Plan sets a bold vision for advancing cutting-edge technologies into education, from AI and Robotics to Cyber Security and Esports, preparing learners with the skills, technologies, and future-facing mindsets needed to thrive in a rapidly-evolving digital world.'

Noel Sharpe Group Chief Executive Officer



'Education is a vital part of creating stable, thriving communities, and Bolton College plays a key role in this. Their work helps residents build confidence, gain skills and move towards brighter futures - outcomes that closely align with our mission.'

Dawn Yates-Obe Chief Executive Officer

bolton cvs

'Bolton College is a cornerstone of community learning and empowerment in Bolton, working closely with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to help residents gain new skills and confidence. The plan strengthens our shared commitment to inclusion and opportunity, ensuring that everyone in Bolton has the chance to learn, contribute, and thrive.'



OUR PLACE, OUR PARTNERSHIPS, OUR TEAM

Our Place

Situated in Bolton, Greater Manchester, Bolton College is at the heart of a thriving community rich in cultural diversity and historic significance. As part of the University of Greater Manchester Group, we benefit from having the University located right next to the College - offering learners convenient and direct progression routes for continuing their education while staying in Bolton. With our excellent connections to surrounding cities, such as Manchester, Blackburn, Wigan, Bury and Salford, our learners have easy access to a wide range of career opportunities, leisure activities and social networks.

While Bolton borough faces significant challenges, such as economic disparities, higher unemployment rates than the Northwest and Great Britain as a whole, and areas of high deprivation, these obstacles also present incredible opportunities for growth and positive change.

Bolton boasts a dynamic business environment, home to major companies like Warburtons and Greenhalghs, and hubs such as Logistics North which hosts multinational firms like Aldi and Lidl. The town has a strong presence in manufacturing, logistics, wholesale, retail, and business services. Bolton's business base is rapidly growing with high start-up and survival rates, and there is a noticeable shift from manufacturing to knowledge-based sectors, including professional services. Fast-growing companies in digital, retail, energy, and financial services, such as AO and Parcel2Go, are also emerging.

As a provider of skills and technical education, Bolton College is committed to addressing the challenges the borough faces. We put our learners first and are dedicated to developing future-ready individuals who are fully prepared to succeed in their chosen careers. By equipping our learners with the essential skills, knowledge, and behaviours, we aim to bridge the gap between education and employment.

Furthermore, we foster a nurturing and inclusive learning environment, helping our learners to overcome barriers and achieve their full potential. Our focus on continuous improvement and responsiveness to community needs positions us as a key contributor to Bolton's economic and social development, creating work-ready, world-ready, and future-ready citizens.

Our Partnerships

Partnerships are vital to the success and growth of Bolton College. Collaborating with stakeholders, including The University of Greater Manchester, we ensure our curriculum remains relevant and up to date with the evolving needs of industry. These partnerships offer our learners exceptional opportunities to gain practical experience and first-hand insights into higher education and working practices. By working closely with organisations like Department for Work and Pensions, Bolton NHS Trust, and Public Health. we address community-specific challenges and contribute to the broader socio-economic development for Bolton.

As a member of the Vision Partnership, the college will actively contribute towards achieving Bolton 2040, our shared vision for making Bolton a thriving borough, where people want to live, work, study, invest and visit.

Bolton College actively collaborates with local schools to raise awareness of technical education opportunities and the associated career paths. Through open events, campus tours, pre-induction workshops and informational sessions, we engage with prospective applicants and parents/carers, offering early exposure to technical subjects, practical skills, and real-world applications. This collaboration helps to bridge the gap between secondary and further education, ensuring a smooth transition for learners who choose to pursue technical courses. These efforts play a crucial role in building a pipeline of skilled and informed workers that meets the demands of industry.

In collaboration with our partner GM Colleges, we are addressing the sector shortages identified in the Local Skills Improvement Plan. Many successful projects such as the Further Education Innovation Programme (FEIP), Centre of Digital Innovation (CDI) and Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) have already been influential in enhancing the skills of our learners, driving innovation and shaping the skills landscape for Greater Manchester.

Working within devolution with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) having control over aspects of funding, we are proactive in working with GMCA to shape the devolved skills system, alongside our stakeholders and GM Colleges.

























































































Our Team

We work together as one team to ensure that everyone has a voice and can contribute to the College's direction. This collaborative approach promotes an inclusive culture where diverse perspectives are valued and innovation thrives. Together, we achieve our goals.

Attracting and retaining top talent, while nurturing the growth of our team members, is a key priority. Through targeted recruitment strategies, tailored

professional development programmes, and a supportive work environment, we empower our team members and ensure long-term success. This not only enhances our ability to deliver quality education but also reinforces our commitment to excellence. Additionally, by effectively managing workloads, we strive to create a balanced and fulfilling environment that makes the college a great place to work and study.

By continually challenging ourselves and others we set high standards. We celebrate each other's and our learners' successes and ensure that our college is a leading provider, shaping the future of skills and education and positively impacting the lives of those we serve.











OUR PURPOSE



To ensure our people are set up for strong, sustainable and promising futures.

OUR VISION



Our learners are valued for being work ready, world ready and future ready.

OUR VALUES

Our values (IACE) are the foundation of our culture, the principles that guide our actions and the standards by which we measure success. They shape how we work together, how we serve our community and how we build for the future.



INCLUSIVE

We create environments where everyone feels welcomed, respected, safe and empowered to achieve.



ASPIRATIONAL

We inspire our people to reimagine what is possible, fostering a culture of bold thinking and limitless potential.



COLLABORATIVE

We work together as one team, building strong external partnerships to deliver our promises.

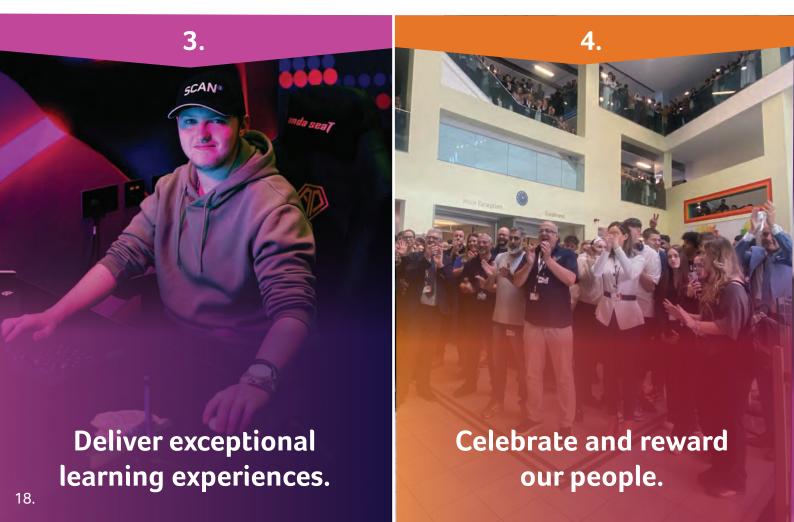


EXCELLENCE

We always put our learners first, striving for excellence in all that we do.



Our Strategic Priorities



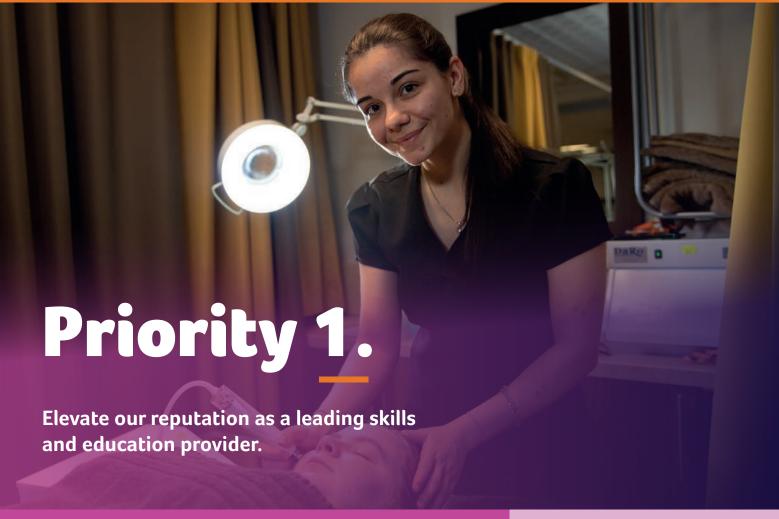








ELEVATE OUR REPUTATION



WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Acting as a key contributor to key decision-making bodies, for example, LSIP, DfE, Greater Manchester (GM) Colleges Group, Bolton Learning Partnership, Vision Executive Group.
- Continuing to build and strengthen stakeholder links, including governor, school, employer, civic and community partnerships to raise the profile of the College.
- Raising the profile of the college by working collaboratively within the University of Greater Manchester Group to enhance visibility, highlight its strengths, and promote its educational offerings.
- Enhancing awareness of the employer-driven integrated technical skills system in Greater Manchester (GM) to heighten credibility and highlight the direct opportunities for progression and career pathways available at Bolton College.

- Increasing participation in GM and World Skills competitions to position our learners as leading talent, elevating their profiles and proving their ability to thrive against the very best.
- Implementing a robust marketing and communications strategy that positions the college as a leader in skills and education, delivering a continuous flow of impactful narratives across diverse platforms to elevate reputation and build stakeholder trust.
- Expanding awareness of the brand of the college through targeted initiatives, including the launch of a new website, to make the range of services on offer explicit for internal and external stakeholders.

- Bolton College is recognised as a leading skills and education provider with 85% of stakeholders in agreement.
- Bolton College is acknowledged for positively contributing to social and economic development with 85% of stakeholders in agreement.
- 85% of external stakeholders endorse Bolton College to others.
- Bolton College is recommended as a place of study by 88% of our learners.
- Enrolments on Education Programmes for Young People (EPYP) increase by 6%.
- Commit to investing in adult skills education by delivering 103% of the GMCA funding allocation.
- Grow apprenticeship starts by 10%.

DEVELOP A RESPONSIVE CURRICULUM



WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Co-designing programmes with stakeholder partners to enhance relevance, secure endorsements, and support growth.
- Aligning pathways to directly support progression into further/ higher education, employment, and apprenticeships, securing positive destinations for all learners.
- Formalising industry advisory boards to align curricula with evolving sector needs, strengthening employability and partnerships.
- Proactively adapting to the needs of industry and the community, promoting innovation and forward-thinking approaches.
- Collaborating with local stakeholders to drive community-centred initiatives that align with the national skills agenda, prioritising inclusive pathways for upskilling, sustainable employment, and economic development.

- Embedding world-ready skills within curriculum outcomes to prepare learners for evolving industry demands and future challenges.
- Enhancing the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) offer by growing the number of supported internships and introducing transition days in vocational areas to help learners explore options, progress smoothly, and achieve successful destinations.
- Expanding the offer for young people not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) to contribute to the reduction in the number of NEETs across Bolton and Greater Manchester.

- 90% of learners on substantive programmes report a positive intended destination.
- Increase the number of courses endorsed by stakeholders from 15 to 40.
- Ofsted judge the college's contribution to meeting skills needs as strong.
- Co-design 15 new courses in collaboration with stakeholders.
- Increase the number of supported internships by 50% for learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- 90% satisfaction rate reported by supported internship participants.

DELIVER EXCEPTIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES



WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- High expectations being instilled and demonstrated amongst our people to ensure our learners are work ready, world ready, and future ready - empowering them to embrace opportunities, overcome challenges, and thrive in an ever-evolving world of possibilities.
- Building strong relationships to create a positive and engaging learning experience where learners are supported, happy, and motivated to succeed.
- Applying research-based pedagogy to empower our people to be creative and experimental.
- Inspiring our people to reimagine what is possible, fostering a culture of bold thinking and limitless potential.
- Strengthening the delivery of our offer by focusing on the recruitment of highly skilled and specialised teaching members.

- Investing in our environments so that they are inspiring, aspirational and reflect that of industry.
- Enhancing the enrichment and tutorial offer, providing diverse opportunities that support learners' personal growth, social development, and cultural awareness.
- Harnessing the power of the University of Greater Manchester Group to provide exceptional learning, wellbeing and enrichment opportunities for our learners.
- Expanding meaningful work experience opportunities to develop practical skills, enhancing learners' employability, and providing valuable insights into industry expectations.
- Investing in our learners' social spaces to create environments where learners can collaborate, build connections, and fully immerse themselves in the college experience.

- 90% overall college attendance.
- Exceed national rates for achievement.
- Ofsted grade the college as overall secure with strong features.
- Increase overall internal progression on Education Programmes for Young People (EPYP) from 52% to 65%.
- 90% of learners enjoy being a learner at Bolton College.
- 92% of learners agree that they are learning new skills that will help them in their future ambitions.
- 84% of learners agree that they feel prepared to take their next step (employment, another course, etc.)
- 88% of learners agree that they are inspired and motivated in their sessions.

CELEBRATE AND REWARD OUR PEOPLE



WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Implementing a comprehensive induction programme to support team members in smoothly transitioning into their roles, ensuring understanding of how their contributions directly enhance the learner experience and build a culture of excellence.
- Tailoring CPD (Continuing Professional Development) programmes to support the growth of all team members, enhancing professional skills, specialised expertise, and operational efficiency, ensuring every team member contributes to the college's success and learner outcomes.
- Collaborating within the University
 of Greater Manchester Group to
 enhance our team members'
 knowledge and skills through
 shared expertise, joint professional
 development opportunities and the
 completion of qualifications.
- Enabling curriculum team members to complete industry updating so that expertise aligns with evolving sector standards and demands.

- Facilitating opportunities for knowledge exchange, including collaborative visits to other providers, enabling the sharing of exemplary practices and driving continuous improvement.
- Establishing formal and informal means of recognising and celebrating the achievements of our people and ensuring that this happens routinely across the college.
- Actively engaging in local, regional and national awards to help celebrate achievements.
- Prioritising our existing wellbeing initiatives, enhancing support tailored to the specific needs of our people and building a culture of care and resilience.
- Ensuring pay is at least benchmarked to sector median of Greater Manchester Colleges.

- 85% of team members engage in the annual team survey.
- 85% of team member new starts valued the induction programme.
- Sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to collaborate with three other education providers outside of Greater Manchester.
- Organise an annual awards for excellence celebrating our people.
- Nominate our people for at least five local, regional or national awards.
- Team members (with a teaching commitment) will undertake a compulsory minimum of three days industry updating, maximum of five days (pro-rata for part-time team members).

BUILD A COMMUNITY OF SHARED PURPOSE



WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Empowering our people to shape the college's future and drive meaningful change by creating safe spaces for open dialogue, constructive feedback, and resolution of concerns, building trust and mutual respect.
- Integrating our vision, purpose, and values throughout the college to inform our actions and behaviours, building a culture of excellence.
- Working as one team to create environments where everyone feels welcomed, respected, safe and empowered to achieve.
- Ensuring strong leadership is in place to guide, support, and drive the successful delivery of our strategic plan.
- Setting and upholding high standards of performance by aligning our team members' targets with the college's vision and values, ensuring accountability to deliver measurable results that enhance the learner experience.

- Strengthening the support for underrepresented groups through targeted initiatives ensuring equity and access to opportunities.
- Enhancing our visibility of events where inclusivity is celebrated and the diverse range of cultures, identities, and experiences are recognised.
- Initiating cross-departmental teamwork to support innovation, shared goals, and the enhancement of community culture.
- Instilling a practice where the needs of our learners are central, and exceptional customer service is consistently delivered across all areas.
- Strengthening accountability through performance panels that rigorously uphold high standards to drive continuous improvement.

- 80% of our team members agree that they understand their role in achieving the college's purpose and vision.
- 80% of our team members are proud to work at Bolton College.
- 92% of learners agree that they feel cared for and respected at the college.
- 85% of our team members feel safe at the college.
- 85% of learners feel safe at the college.
- Hold three performance panels (one per term) where Heads of Department present to the executive team performance against key indicators.
- Staff turnover does not exceed 17%

DRIVE A GREENER FUTURE



WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Implementing a sustainability strategy and initiatives to measure and minimise the college's carbon footprint through practical, scalable approaches.
- Collaborating within the University
 of Greater Manchester Group
 on sustainability initiatives,
 including curriculum development,
 enrichment, promotion of sustainable
 procurement practices and
 maximising the usage of each
 other's space.
- Partnering with local stakeholders to support sustainability projects, providing learners with hands-on experiences in environmental initiatives, and developing programmes that drive the transition to a sustainable economy.
- Empowering learners to lead sustainability projects, promoting innovation and environmental responsibility on campus and in the community.

- Integrating green practices into all courses, ensuring our learners understand the importance and their role in achieving net-zero targets.
- Offering specialised training programmes aligned with industry standards and government initiatives for the green agenda, focusing on workforce development to advance sustainable practices and innovation.
- Contributing to the UK's net-zero emissions targets by serving as the lead college for delivering the Low Carbon Heating Technician Apprenticeship, supporting the development of a skilled workforce for sustainable housing solutions.
- Integrating green practices across all college operations including, for example, reducing printing and utilities bills.

- Report quarterly on sustainability metrics to track progress toward net-zero goals.
- Co-design three new programmes supporting green initiatives in collaboration with stakeholders.
- Empower learners to lead five sustainability projects.
- Host 10 sustainability workshops annually for local businesses and residents.
- Expand Low Carbon Heating Technician Apprenticeship enrolments by 60%.
- 80% of our team members agree that they understand their contribution to our green agenda.

MAXIMISE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY



- environments to strengthen learner engagement and support the consolidation and application of knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Enhancing online learning

- Increasing the adoption of digital e-portfolios, including Aptem, enabling learners to evidence progress and achievement for career progression.
- Harnessing artificial intelligence (AI) to:
 - reduce the workload for all of our team members, including teachers and trainers when planning and implementing curriculum delivery and assessment.
 - improve operational efficiency, streamlining processes and optimising resources.

- Investing in IT infrastructure, enabling smooth operations and efficient use of technology to support innovation, adaptability, and the evolving needs of our people.
- Developing and sourcing further interactive digital resources to improve accessibility, encourage collaboration, enhance engagement and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment materials.
- Utilising our immersive spaces effectively to stimulate engagement and broaden learning experiences.
- Streamlining college systems and processes so that they are easily accessible.
- Continuously linking with stakeholders to stay informed about emerging technologies and advancements, ensuring the College remains up to date with industry developments.

- Development and implementation of a college wide digital strategy.
- Maintain cyber essentials.
- 25% of the college's annual capital budget is invested in digital technologies.
- 80% of team members agree that improvements in technology have positively impacted their role.
- 87% of learners agree that they are confident to use digital learning materials to support their progress.
- 83% of learners agree that they can access the IT resources they need and they have supported their learning well.
- 80% of learners confirm that the technology they are using is industry relevant.

SECURE FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY



- Re-engineering and developing the estate to ensure the college responds
- to the projected demographic growth by 2030. Developing and implementing
- an estates strategy to forecast prioritised spend, identify efficiencies, and enable targeted investments in learner spaces.
- Collaborating within the University of Greater Manchester Group to explore opportunities for joint working on projects, marketing, resource allocation and procurements to maximise efficiencies and share good practice across the group.
- Implementing a resource model that empowers budget holders to set targets, ensuring efficient allocation and alignment with the college's strategic priorities.
- Building capability and confidence of budget holders across the college supporting, the drive for accountability.

- Reducing the reliance on agency team members.
- Growing commercial and exploring alternative funding sources beyond government support to deliver a surplus, enabling investment in people, spaces, and innovation.
- Collaborating with other providers to procure licences, equipment, and resources collectively, maximising efficiencies and achieving cost savings.
- Maintaining financial reserves at a sustainable level to ensure stability, support strategic priorities, and enabling long-term investment in educational excellence and growth.

- Good financial health.
- £1.6 million invested in building maintenance and condition.
- £1.75 million invested in additional capital works.
- Annual income exceeding £37 million.
- Surplus of more than £2.5 million.
- Cash reserves exceeding £2.2 million.
- Agency usage does not exceed 25% with all recruitment managed through Bolton Talent Solutions (BTS).
- Hold three Performance Panels (one per term), where managers evaluate their progress towards delivering financial and quality key performance indicators.
- Develop and implement a business planning cycle where managers build a robust and fit for purpose business plan for their areas of responsibility.



















Part of the University of Greater Manchester Group





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