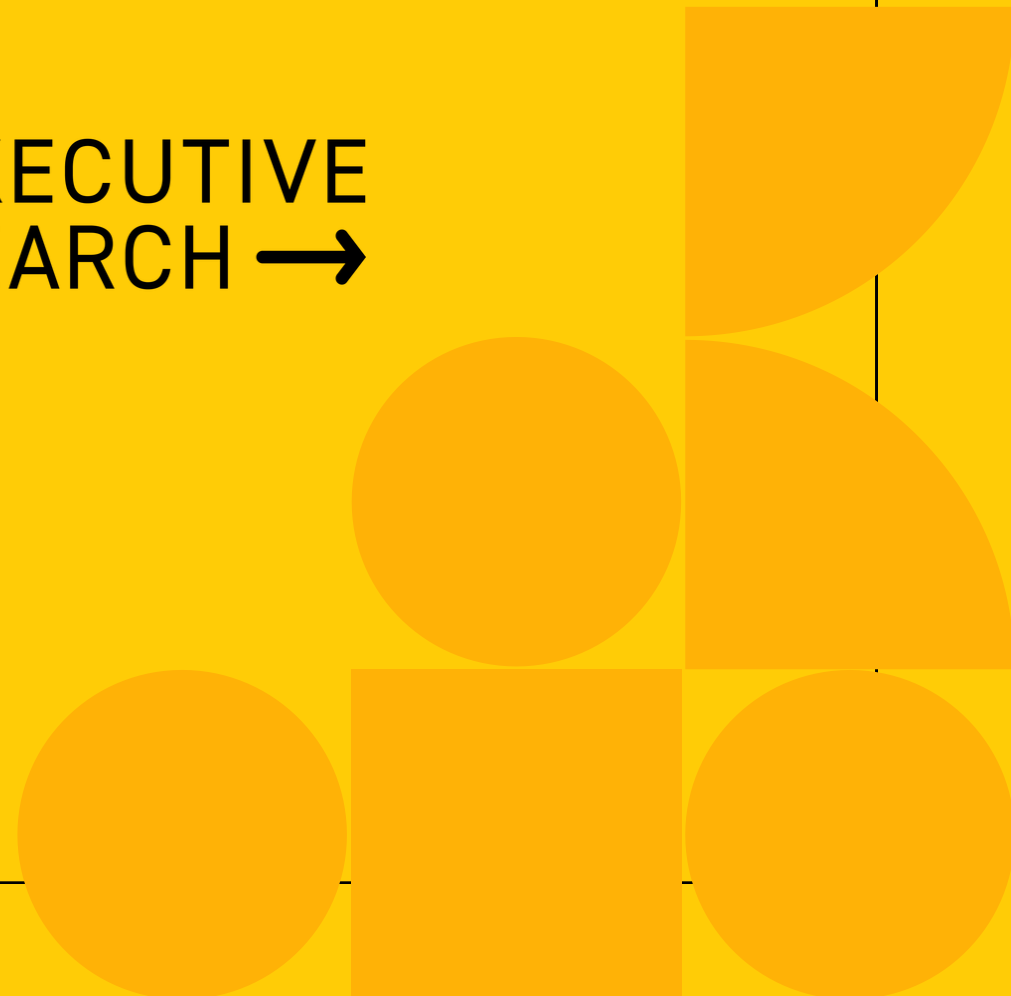


Executive Search and Recruitment Services

F E A EXECUTIVE
SEARCH →



About FEA Executive Search

We are the FE sector's most progressive and innovative provider of senior level search and recruitment services for executive, leadership and non-executive governance roles. With over 20 years of sector experience we provide insight, guidance and collaboration through our unrivalled network of leading experts.

Our deep experience in the sector means we understand the challenges and issues faced by further education and skills providers throughout the UK. Our executive search experts have a deep insight into the leadership skills required to drive FE organisations forward.

Our aim is always to be a trusted partner to the clients we work with and to add value throughout the search and recruitment process. Our search and recruitment services are always tailored to meet with your needs and backed up with our deep sector expertise and a focus on ensuring value for money and successful outcomes.



Our purpose, people and principles

Our purpose, people and principles are things that make us stand out and set us apart from others in the senior FE recruitment space.

Our purpose is simple – we care about building first class leadership teams through attracting great talent, caring for candidates and delivering excellent results for our clients.

Our people are what sets us apart – we are not just recruiters. Yes, we are experts in search and recruitment but we are so much more than this. We are experts with senior college leadership and governance experience. We are experts in FE strategy and policy, our team has senior level HR and curriculum expertise and we have a deep insight into the challenges and opportunities facing today's FE sector.

Our approach to working with you is based on our **core principles** of:

Partnership - Understanding - Fun - Challenge - Care



Our approach and methodology

We take a bespoke approach to each search campaign. Every client is unique and our processes are designed to build an in-depth understanding of organisational culture, ambitions and priorities. We pride ourselves on our ability to quickly diagnose your needs and we work tirelessly to deliver excellent levels of service.



Introducing FEA Intelligent Search



As well as being experts in senior-level FE search and recruitment, FE Associates are quickly gaining a reputation for being at the forefront of technology and data-led decision making. To harness this expertise, our recruitment approaches have evolved to combine our deep consultant expertise with cutting-edge technology, developed exclusively for FEA. This unique combination challenges bias, reduces blind spots and places robust, evidence-led information at the heart of every decision.

How FEA Intelligent Search Works

Step 1: Data-Enabled Discovery and Leadership Diagnosis - Alongside our personalised client engagement activities, we use data-driven analysis to quickly diagnose your leadership needs, mapping the organisational priorities and identifying the competencies your college requires now and for the future. Through this process of deep diagnosis we create your unique Leadership Success Profile – something far more powerful than traditional role and person specifications.

Step 2: Human-Led Engagement and Smarter Candidate Attraction - Our expert consultants engage deeply with your team, building relationships and understanding your unique culture. We design bespoke attraction strategies and deploy our cutting-edge technology to widen the pool without lowering the bar. Our research and intelligence-led approach ensures effective in-sector and adjacent sector candidate mapping and provides fields that are evidence-based, defensive and more diverse.

Step 3: Evidence-Led Assessment - Insights not Impressions - Combining data-driven insights with our sector expertise, post-shortlist we deliver comprehensive Candidate Insights Reports and Matching Reports which give stronger predictions of role success, organisational alignment and risk. Through rigorously designed data-enabled assessment processes and transparent insights we enable organisations to make decisions rooted in evidence to enable confident decision-making.

Our Key People

We have the most talented search and recruitment team in the FE sector today.

Leading the team is our Director of Recruitment, Jo Johnston, supported by our senior consultants Amanda Hart and Lucy Horne, and our specialist researcher Beth Jefferies. Our consultant team is supported by Alison Edwards and Rachael Collier who provide expert operational support. Strategic advice is provided to the team by FEA Managing Director Matt Atkinson.



Jo has an extensive background in search and recruitment. As the former Managing Director of AoC Create, she is one of the sector's best-known search and recruitment consultants and her skills, experience and contact book are real strengths to our recruitment team.

As well as leading the team, Jo provides expert search and headhunting support to our clients, designing and delivering assessment centres and selection events to secure the best talent on offer.

Jo is highly focused on representing clients with absolute professionalism and providing exceptionally high levels of support to clients and candidates.



Amanda Hart
Senior Recruitment Consultant

Senior Consultant Amanda Hart joined the FEA Executive Search team in 2021 from her previous role as Director of HR at the largest college group in the sector. Her strengths lie in her ability to build relationships and to quickly gain an insight into the needs of our client organisations. Her ability to work with candidates, building their confidence whilst rigorously assessing their skills and abilities, are second to none.



Lucy Horne
Senior Recruitment Consultant

Lucy is a Senior Consultant, who brings over 25 years' recruitment experience specialising in senior appointments across HR and corporate services. Throughout her career, she has partnered with organisations of all sizes to deliver permanent and interim recruitment solutions, building long-standing relationships through a consultative, people-focused approach. Lucy has extensive experience identifying and engaging high-calibre talent for leadership and specialist roles, taking the time to understand each organisation's culture and long-term objectives.



Beth Jefferies
Researcher

Beth has worked in a support role in the Executive Search team since February 2024 and prior to this she spent the majority of her career supporting operations in colleges and universities.

As the team's researcher Beth plays a crucial role in the search process by identifying, mapping and engaging potential candidates, supporting the work of the consultant team to deliver outstanding results for our clients.



Alison Edwards
Recruitment Operations Manager



Rachael Collier
Recruitment Operations Officer

Unlike other FE search teams, FE Associates prioritise operational effectiveness and campaign delivery to the highest standard. Alison and Rachael provide expert operational support to the consultant team and to clients, ensuring all aspects of our assignments are well organised, delivered in a timely manner and to the exacting standards we set ourselves.



Matt Atkinson
Managing Director & Strategic Advisor

FE Associates' Managing Director, Matt Atkinson provides strategic oversight of our executive recruitment services and supports our assignments with his expert knowledge of the candidate marketplace. Since 2016, Matt has led over 175 senior sector appointments, utilising the expertise and networks he built and maintained throughout an 11-year career as a college principal and chief executive.

He has extensive experience as a governor and trustee and is currently the Chair of South Gloucestershire and Stroud College Corporation. He views things through the eyes of the client and his personal experience and professional credibility are a significant strength to senior appointment processes.

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion

We are deeply committed to actively working to improve the diversity of senior leadership teams and boards, and we believe that there is a pressing need for senior leadership teams to be more reflective of the communities and student bodies they serve. We are developing our search and recruitment approaches to explicitly address under-representation of minority groups and to promote equality, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism.

As part of our commitment to addressing imbalances in the diversity of leadership in further education and skills organisations, we will seek to partner with the organisation to develop our search strategies and recruitment campaign to attract the broadest possible range of candidates and to provide additional support for candidates from under-represented groups in order to give them the best possible chance of success throughout the assessment and selection process.

The promotion of equality and diversity is of fundamental importance to us and we will want to work with you to ensure the organisation is doing everything it can to ensure the leadership team is more diverse and balanced. As well as following best practice in inclusive recruitment, we will ensure we are working within any processes and procedures you have in your organisation.

We are now officially an Affiliated Organisation to the Black Leadership Group. The goal of the Black Leadership Group (BLG) is to engender a truly anti-racist FE system and they have made remarkable progress in alerting the sector to the depth and extent of the challenge in eradicating all forms of racism in FE.



FEA is the number one choice for executive and non-executive recruitment in further education.

In 2025 we placed:

6

**CEOs &
Principals**



9

**Governors, Chairs &
Directors of
Governance**



8

**Deputy, Assistant,
Vice Principals**



10

**Chief Finance
Officers/Finance
Directors**



4

HR Directors



8

**Directors of
Curriculum/Learning**



3

**MIS/IT
Directors**



3

**Director of Estates/
Health & Safety**



2

**Marketing
Director/Commercial
Directors**



2

Chief Operating Officers



9

**Heads of Department/
Curriculum Managers**



Our Search Packages

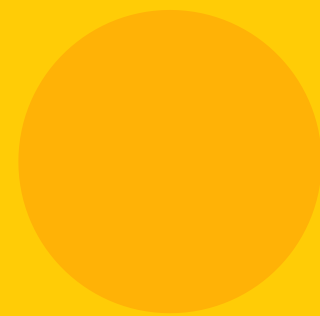
We support clients with two levels of service, executive search and full service.

Our Executive Search package includes:

- Client exploration meetings
- Job description and person specification development
- Application pack development
- Advertisement design
- Digital marketing campaign
- Research and market intelligence phase
- Candidate search, headhunting and discovery (including initial Teams meetings with candidates)
- Progress reporting
- FEA Intelligent Search tools
- Online advertising with FE Week, Guardian Jobs, LinkedIn and the FE Associates websites
- Application processing and management
- Provision of Teams videos of candidate longlisting meetings
- Shortlisting video conference
- Psychometric profiling for shortlisted candidates for executive and permanent leadership assignments.

Our Full Service package includes everything included in the Executive Search package plus:

- Final selection process design
- Selection process schedule design
- Provision of question banks
- Selection process documentation
- On-site support from the FE Associates team throughout the selection process, including running technical testing exercises
- Candidate management
- Remuneration and package negotiation.



What Our Clients Say

I wanted to reach out to thank you once again for your outstanding support throughout our recent recruitment process for the position of Principal.

The entire experience was extremely smooth from start to finish. Your meticulous organisation made all the difference, and we successfully recruited exactly the right candidate for the role. This marks the fourth time we have worked with FEA, and each experience has been fabulous - a testament to the consistently high standards you maintain.



Kelly Fountain
Chief Executive Officer
Gower College Swansea

FE Associates recently supported Calderdale College with the recruitment of our new Vice Principal for Adults, Apprenticeships and Higher Education.

Jo Johnston guided us expertly through the process, making it both efficient and highly effective. The support saved us a significant amount of time while ensuring a strong and high-quality field of candidates for the assessment day. It was a thoroughly positive experience and I would confidently recommend FE Associates to other colleges and providers. We will certainly use FEA again in the future.



David Malone
Principal and Chief Executive
Calderdale College

What Our Candidates Say

FEA provided exceptional support throughout the recruitment process for my appointment as Chief Operating Officer at York College. Having moved into the FE sector from a senior role in the academy sector, I was looking for an opportunity that would bring together this breadth of experience.

Amanda at FEA was instrumental in helping me recognise how my background and leadership experience throughout my career directly aligned with York College's priorities and the strategic requirements of the COO role.

Her communication throughout was clear, timely and highly supportive. Amanda offered thoughtful guidance at key points, helping me prepare effectively and articulate my strengths in a way that resonated with the needs of the College. Her professionalism, insight and personable approach made the whole process both rigorous and reassuring.

I am delighted to have taken up the role and am grateful to Amanda and the wider FEA team for their part in facilitating this next step in my leadership journey. I would not hesitate to recommend FEA to colleagues exploring senior opportunities within the further education sector.



Phil Curtis
Chief Operating Officer
York College & University Centre

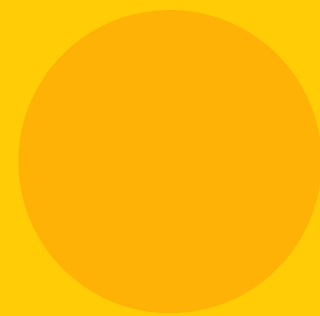
[Case Studies and Testimonials - Click here to read what our clients and candidates say about us](#)

Want to find out more?

Contact our Director of Recruitment, Jo Johnston, to discuss how FEA Executive Search can support you with your next leadership appointment.

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Registered in England and Wales No. 08747426

