

RUNSHAW COLLEGE



Candidate brief for the position of Principal and Chief Executive

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Welcome

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Principal and CEO at Runshaw College.

This is an exciting and significant moment in the life of our College. As we look ahead to the next stage of Runshaw's development, the Corporation Board is seeking an exceptional leader who will build on our strong foundations, uphold our values and lead the College with ambition, integrity and care.

Runshaw College has been at the heart of education and skills in Lancashire for more than 50 years. Established in 1974, we have grown from a small sixth-form college serving two local high schools into a strategically important tertiary institution with a strong local and national reputation for excellence. Today, we provide a broad and inclusive range of academic, vocational, adult learning and apprenticeship programmes, supporting learners to progress to higher education, skilled employment, apprenticeships and enriched lives. The College prides itself on its unique mix of a comprehensive cohort, coupled with very high achievement rates, with learners progressing to some of the most prestigious destinations. Runshaw College is the top GFE College for positive progression and the top GFE College for progression to the top third of UK universities, with nearly 9 in 10 learners studying at prestigious Russell Group universities graduating with a first-class or 2:1 degree.

Our mission is clear: we believe exceptional education changes lives. Teaching, learning and the needs of our learners sit at the heart of everything we do. That commitment is underpinned by our values of Dedication, Excellence, Respect and Fulfilment, and by our vision for Runshaw to be a great place to study, a great place to work and a great place for partnerships.

The College serves a wide and diverse community across South Ribble, Chorley and the wider region, including Preston, Bolton, Wigan, Sefton and West Lancashire. Our learners bring a richness of backgrounds, ambitions and experiences, and we are proud of the inclusive and supportive community they help to create. We are deeply committed to widening participation, reducing inequalities and enabling every learner, whatever their starting point, to achieve their potential.

Runshaw is also a College with a strong sense of place and purpose. We work closely with employers, schools, local authorities, higher education partners, community organisations and sector networks to ensure our curriculum is responsive to local, regional and national skills priorities. Our employer partnerships, Employer Partnership Boards and active engagement with the Lancashire Local Skills Improvement Plan help ensure that learners develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed in priority sectors.

The next Principal and CEO will join a College with strong foundations, a clear strategic direction and a dedicated staff team who care deeply about learners and their success. They will also join at a time of change and opportunity for the further education sector, as colleges respond to curriculum reform, evolving skills needs, advances in digital technology and artificial intelligence, sustainability priorities and the continuing importance of inclusion, personal development and social mobility.

Within this context, the Corporation Board is looking for an inspirational, visible and values-led leader who can work with governors, staff, learners and partners to shape the next chapter of Runshaw's success. We are seeking someone who will champion high-quality teaching and learning, sustain and improve outcomes for all learners, maintain our strong contribution to local and regional skills priorities, nurture an inclusive and ambitious culture, and ensure the College remains financially resilient and strategically forward-looking.

The successful candidate will be joining a committed and supportive Board who understand the scale and importance of this appointment, and we are determined to work in partnership with our next Principal and CEO to support their leadership, wellbeing and professional success, while providing appropriate challenge and assurance on behalf of our learners, staff and communities.

I hope this recruitment pack gives you a strong sense of Runshaw College, our values, our achievements and our ambitions for the future. If you share our belief in the power of exceptional education to change lives, and if you have the experience, energy and vision to lead a high-performing and inclusive further education college, I warmly encourage you to find out more and consider applying.

We have appointed FE Associates to support us with this crucial appointment. Interested parties should contact our lead consultant Jo.Johnston@fea.co.uk prior to submitting an application.

Thank you again for your interest in Runshaw College. I very much look forward to learning more about what you could bring to this important role.

Yours sincerely,

Alison Watson-Bird
Chair of Governors

What Makes Runshaw Distinctive?

The strength is in the combination:



Individually distinctive. Collectively, uniquely Runshaw.



Job Description

Job Purpose

The Principal and Chief Executive will provide visible, ambitious and values-led educational leadership for Runshaw College, ensuring that learners remain at the centre of every decision and that the College continues to deliver excellent outcomes, strong destinations and a distinctive student experience.

Working with the Corporation, staff and partners, the postholder will shape and deliver a successful multi-year strategy, raise performance through excellent curriculum and quality frameworks, sustain financial resilience and secure the College's position as a leading tertiary provider within a changing education and skills landscape.



Key Duties and Responsibilities

Moral Purpose and Values-Led Leadership

- Place learners at the centre of every decision, championing inclusion, equity and social mobility.
- Demonstrate integrity, transparency and ethical leadership that builds trust across staff, governors, learners and the wider community.
- Ensure safeguarding, wellbeing and equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in the culture and practice of the College, for staff and students alike.

Strategic Leadership and Direction

- Shape and deliver a compelling multi-year strategy, agreed with the Corporation and translated into clear priorities, milestones and measures of success.
- Align the College's curriculum, resources, partnerships and culture behind its strategic ambitions.
- Anticipate and respond to policy, funding, demographic and skills changes, positioning the College for long-term success.

Educational Leadership and Quality

- Lead the delivery of excellent education, training and support services that secure strong achievement, progression and destinations for learners.
- Ensure high-quality curriculum design, teaching, learning, assessment and learner support across all areas of provision.
- Ensure effective arrangements for learner attendance, behaviour, safeguarding and support, sustaining a safe, inclusive and high-expectation learning culture.
- Embed rigorous quality assurance and improvement frameworks, using data, learner voice, employer feedback and external benchmarks to raise standards.
- Promote professional learning, reflective practice and continuous improvement across the College.

People Leadership and Culture

- Build a positive, inclusive and high-performance culture in which staff feel valued, trusted, supported and fulfilled, with wellbeing, professional growth and accountability actively promoted.
- Lead with authenticity, emotional intelligence and clear communication, developing talent and succession across the organisation.
- Ensure effective arrangements for the appointment, development, performance management, remuneration and conduct of staff within the framework established by the Corporation.
- Empower senior leaders to lead confidently while maintaining clear accountability for outcomes.

External Engagement and Partnerships

- Build purposeful relationships with employers, schools, universities, local authorities, civic partners, regional skills bodies and other providers.
- Influence and manage senior stakeholders across local, regional and national networks to secure commitment, opportunity and impact.
- Strengthen the College's reputation, partnerships and contribution to economic development and social mobility.

Financial and Organisational Stewardship

- As Accounting Officer, be personally accountable for the regularity and propriety of the College's expenditure, value for money, compliance with funding requirements and the effective stewardship of public funds, including raising any material concerns formally with the Corporation.
- Secure the College's financial sustainability through effective planning, resource allocation, risk management and value for money.
- Ensure robust frameworks for internal control, assurance, procurement, delegation and business continuity.
- Make evidence-based decisions across estates, digital infrastructure and staffing, balancing ambition with prudent stewardship.
- Embed social and environmental responsibility in strategic and operational decision-making.

Operational Excellence, Resilience and Innovation

- Ensure systems, processes and structures are efficient, resilient and aligned to strategic priorities.
- Maintain a visible and engaged presence across the College, responding effectively to emerging issues.
- Champion innovation, digital transformation and emerging technologies where they improve teaching, learning or organisational effectiveness.

Governance and Accountability

- Ensure the College meets its statutory and regulatory responsibilities, including safeguarding, health and safety, equality and data protection.
- Work constructively with the Corporation, Chair, governors and governance professional, respecting the distinction between governance and executive leadership.
- Provide clear, timely and evidence-based reporting so governors can fulfil their strategic oversight and assurance responsibilities.
- Engage transparently with regulatory and funding bodies where required, including in relation to financial health and college oversight arrangements.

#FutureUnlocked@ Runshaw

**England's
#1**

Runshaw is the
top GFE College
for progression to
**Top Third of UK
Universities**





What Success Looks Like

Success will be demonstrated through sustained strategic progress, excellent learner outcomes, strong staff confidence, effective governance and a positive regional reputation.

For Learners

- Learners achieve well, progress successfully and benefit from a safe, inclusive and aspirational experience.

For Staff

- Staff are engaged, well led and confident in a culture of high expectations, support, accountability and innovation.

For the College

- The College is financially resilient, quality assured, well regarded and demonstrably improving against its strategic priorities.

For Governance

- Governors receive transparent, timely and meaningful assurance and work with the Principal through a constructive, strategically focused relationship.

RUNSHAW COLLEGE

#RunshawToAnywhere

Advanced Level Results Day **2026**

1154

A*-A grades (or equivalent) achieved by our amazing 2026 Advanced Level students!

4 out of 5

of our 2026 Advanced Level students achieved an **A*-B** grade! (or equivalent)

England's #1

Runshaw is the top GFE College for **positive progression** after college

England's #1

Runshaw is the top GFE College for progression to **Top Third of UK Universities**

Table Topping

Almost **9 in 10** Runshaw students studying at prestigious Russell Group universities graduate with a **First or 2:1**



The Runshaw Way

shapes how the College works

A collaborative, learner-centred approach that turns our values into practice.



Person Specification

Experience

Essential

- Significant senior leadership experience in education with a demonstrable record of improving organisational performance.
- Extensive experience of leading education, teaching and learning at a senior level within an organisation of similar scale and complexity.
- A sustained and demonstrable record of securing and maintaining excellent learner achievement, progress, retention and destinations, including for learners with different prior attainment, backgrounds and support needs.
- Proven ability to inspire, develop, communicate and deliver a successful multi-year strategy that turns ambition into measurable improvement.
- Deep experience of educational quality frameworks, curriculum design, performance management and improvement approaches that raise standards.
- Strong understanding of the distinctive role and operating context of a tertiary college, including leading comprehensive provision while sustaining consistently high performance across different learner groups and programme types.
- Proven ability to engage, influence and skilfully manage senior stakeholders locally, regionally and nationally.
- Experience of leading people, culture and change in a complex organisation, building trust, accountability and shared commitment.
- Experience of working effectively with governors, trustees or non-executives through clear, evidence-based reporting.
- Strong financial awareness and experience of resource planning, risk management and organisational stewardship in a regulated environment.

Desirable

- Direct experience of senior leadership within a tertiary or a large sixth form college, or a wider further education setting.
- Direct experience of significant capital, estates, digital or infrastructure planning linked to long-term strategic priorities.
- Experience of acting as Accounting Officer, or equivalent accountable officer, within education or the wider public sector.

Knowledge and Skills

Essential

- Strong strategic judgement, with the ability to prioritise, align resources and sustain momentum through complexity.
- Deep understanding of quality assurance, curriculum intent and implementation, self-assessment, improvement planning and performance monitoring.
- Ability to use data, evidence, learner voice, employer feedback and external benchmarks to drive timely improvement.
- Strong understanding of the current operating environment for colleges including post-16 policy, funding, accountability and inspection.
- Excellent communication, influencing, negotiation and stakeholder management skills across education, civic, employer and government sectors.
- Strong people leadership skills, with the ability to motivate, align and develop senior teams while maintaining accountability for outcomes.
- Sound financial and organisational judgement, including public accountability, value for money, risk and assurance.
- Commitment to safeguarding, wellbeing, inclusion, equality of opportunity and social mobility.

Desirable

- Understanding of the devolution agenda and its implications for skills, partnership working and regional influence.
- Familiarity with DfE college oversight, support and intervention arrangements and financial health methodology.
- Awareness of emerging technologies and digital innovation in teaching, learning, assessment and organisational effectiveness.

Personal Attributes

Essential

- Values-led, learner-centred and ambitious for every student.
- A credible leader of learning, who can inspire and motivate staff to deliver exceptional levels of education and training.
- Strategic, visible, credible and able to sustain progress through complexity.
- Collaborative, inclusive and emotionally intelligent, building confidence, trust and shared ownership.
- Resilient, calm and decisive under pressure.
- Acts with integrity, probity and sound judgement, consistent with the Seven Principles of Public Life.

Other Attributes/Additional Requirements

Essential

- Fit and proper to be appointed as the College's Accounting Officer, including not being subject to disqualification under the Charity Commission's automatic disqualification rules for charity trustees and senior managers.
- Commitment to the College's wider civic, social and environmental responsibilities.

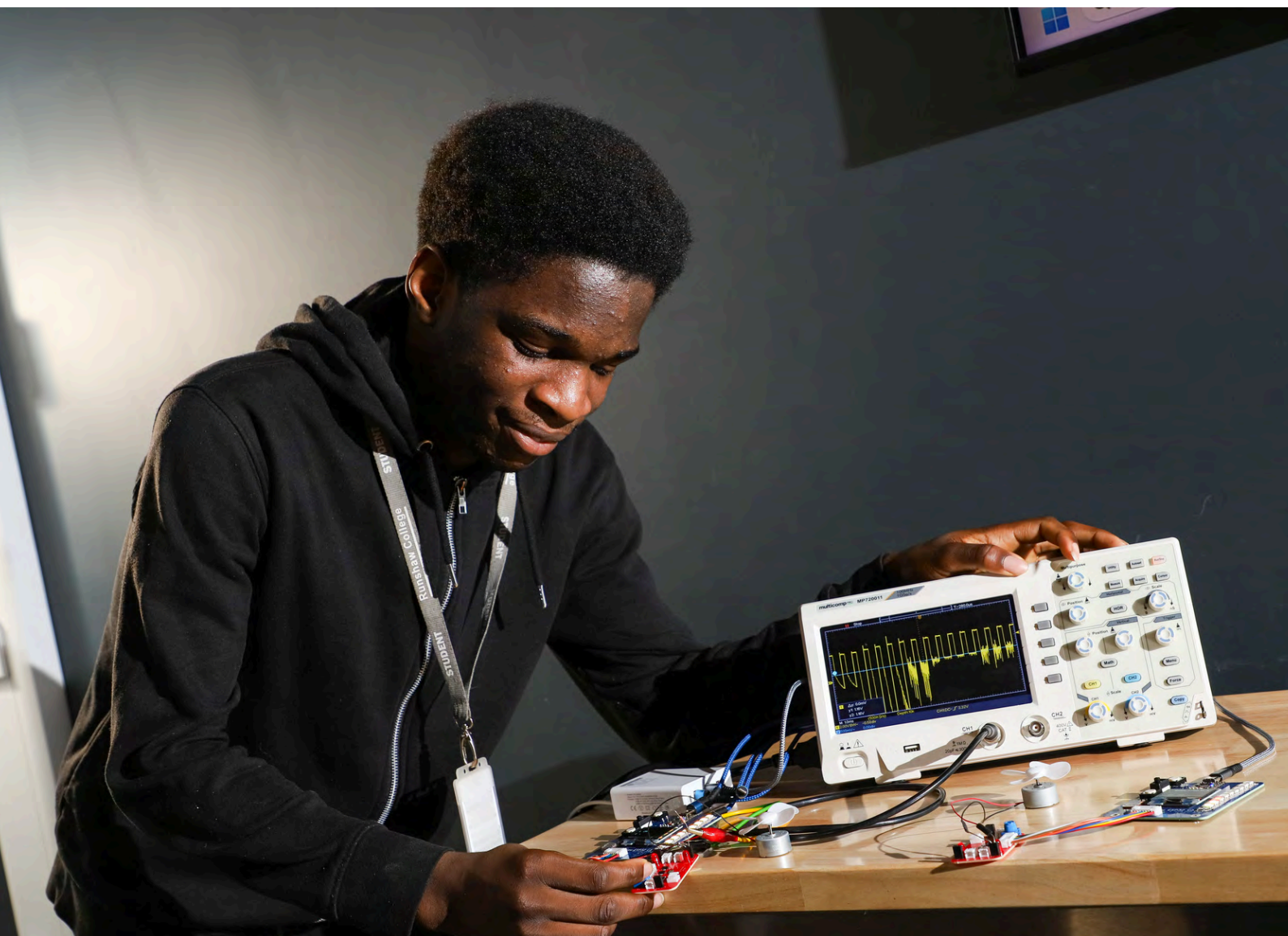
Qualifications

Essential

- Educated to degree level or equivalent.
- Evidence of formal leadership/management learning and development.
- Evidence of continuing professional development.

Desirable

- A recognised teaching qualification.
- Postgraduate, professional or higher-level leadership qualification.
- Relevant business, financial or accountancy qualification, or membership of a relevant professional body.



How to Apply

We have retained FE Associates to support us in finding an outstanding individual to inspire excellent practice across our organisation. The application process is outlined below.

Initial Discussion and Recorded First-Stage Teams Interview

Prior to submitting an application, interested parties should arrange an initial conversation with our FE Associates lead consultant, by emailing Jo.Johnston@fea.co.uk, to discuss the role before the closing date. *Once it is agreed for you to proceed with an application, the lead consultant will schedule a first-stage interview via Teams with you which will take place before the closing date and will be recorded.* Once this interview has been scheduled, you should submit your application.

Please visit www.fea.co.uk/job/runshaw-pceo and complete the registration form to access the online application form and the equality and diversity form. At Step 2: Submitting your application, click Apply now.

Shortlisting and Invitation to Interview

After the closing time/date, our lead consultant will send all applications and recorded first-stage discussions to the College for shortlisting. Once the shortlist has been agreed, candidates will be notified by the lead consultant and shortlisted candidates will be invited to a formal interview/selection process with the College.

Safer Recruitment and Due Diligence Checks

Applicants are advised that, as part of the statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education, colleges/training providers are advised to make arrangements for an online search as part of due diligence on shortlisted candidates. The searches are aimed to assist in identifying things said or done that may harm the organisation's reputation or make the candidate unsuitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Where a cause of concern arises from the online search, a risk assessment will determine whether the concern is of such a nature that it is appropriate to exclude a candidate from the process or whether a clarification discussion, before or during an interview, is needed.

Key Dates

Closing date for applications: 9am on Tuesday 10 November 2026.

Interviews to take place on Monday 30 November and Tuesday 1 December 2026.