



THE
BEDFORD
COLLEGE
GROUP

Candidate brief for the position of Group Director of Business Engagement and Apprenticeships



Welcome

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for your interest in joining The Bedford College Group as our new **Group Director of Business Engagement and Apprenticeships**.

This is a defining moment for our organisation. As one of the largest further education providers in England, we serve around 20,000 learners through a family of colleges and specialist institutions that are deeply connected to the communities and industries we support.

Education has always been about changing lives. Today, however, its influence extends far beyond the classroom. It shapes the prospects of individuals, supports economic growth and helps communities adapt to change. Our ambition is to be recognised as the leading further education provider in the South Midlands. That ambition is not simply about reputation; it is about the contribution we make to the future success of the region.

We work closely with employers and public sector partners to ensure that education and skills provision reflects a changing economy. As industries evolve and new opportunities emerge, our role is to help learners and businesses respond with confidence.

The context in which we operate makes this particularly exciting. Our colleges sit at the heart of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, one of the most dynamic parts of the country. Over the coming years, the region will experience substantial investment alongside major improvements to infrastructure. Population growth and new developments will bring further momentum. Projects such as East West Rail and the Universal United Kingdom Resort have the potential to reshape local economies for generations.

Further education has a critical role to play in this transformation. The Bedford College Group is uniquely positioned to help people access opportunities while supporting employers as they expand and develop. As one of the region's leading anchor institutions, we recognise our responsibility not only to respond to change, but to help shape it.



The Group Director of Business Engagement and Apprenticeships will play a pivotal role in that ambition. Through leadership of our employer engagement and apprenticeship growth, the successful candidate will help ensure that the Group remains responsive to the evolving needs of businesses while creating opportunities for learners to thrive in a rapidly changing economy.

The successful candidate will join us at a time when the Group has the opportunity to exert greater influence than ever before through stronger partnerships and a growing role in shaping the future of the region. This role offers the opportunity to contribute to that journey, helping us build stronger connections with employers and ensuring that our apprenticeship provision continues to meet future workforce needs.

Alongside our ambitions, we remain clear about who we are. We are a values-led organisation with an inclusive culture and a strong sense of purpose. Learners remain at the centre of every decision we make. We want colleagues to feel empowered to contribute, challenge established thinking and help us become even better at what we do.

We have appointed FE Associates to support us with this important appointment. Prior to submitting an application, interested parties are advised to arrange an initial conversation with our recruitment partner, by emailing Jo.Johnston@fea.co.uk, to discuss the role before the closing date.

I hope the information in this pack gives you a sense of both the scale of our ambition and the opportunities ahead. We look forward to hearing from candidates who share our commitment to transforming lives through education, skills and strong employer partnerships.

With best wishes

Yiannis Koursis OBE
Chief Executive Officer



About Us

The Bedford College Group is one of the largest and most influential further education groups in England. Through our colleges and specialist institutions across Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire, we educate thousands of learners each year while supporting employers of every size, from local businesses to nationally recognised organisations.

Our presence extends across Bedford, Biggleswade, Corby, Dunstable, Kettering, Leighton Buzzard, Silverstone and Wellingborough. This wide geographic reach gives us a deep understanding of the opportunities that exist across the South Midlands, as well as the barriers that can prevent people from fulfilling their potential.

Our vision is clear: To be recognised as the leading further education provider in the South Midlands. Achieving that position requires more than strong educational outcomes. It demands a willingness to evolve, an ability to respond quickly to changing needs and a genuine commitment to partnership. These qualities are increasingly important as employers look to education providers to help address workforce challenges and support economic growth.

As one of the region's anchor institutions, we recognise our responsibility not only to respond to change, but to help shape it. The communities we serve are entering a period of remarkable change. Significant infrastructure investment, housing growth and commercial development are creating new opportunities throughout the region. Sectors such as advanced manufacturing, life sciences and digital technology are expanding rapidly. Elsewhere, established industries are adapting to new technologies and changing workforce requirements.

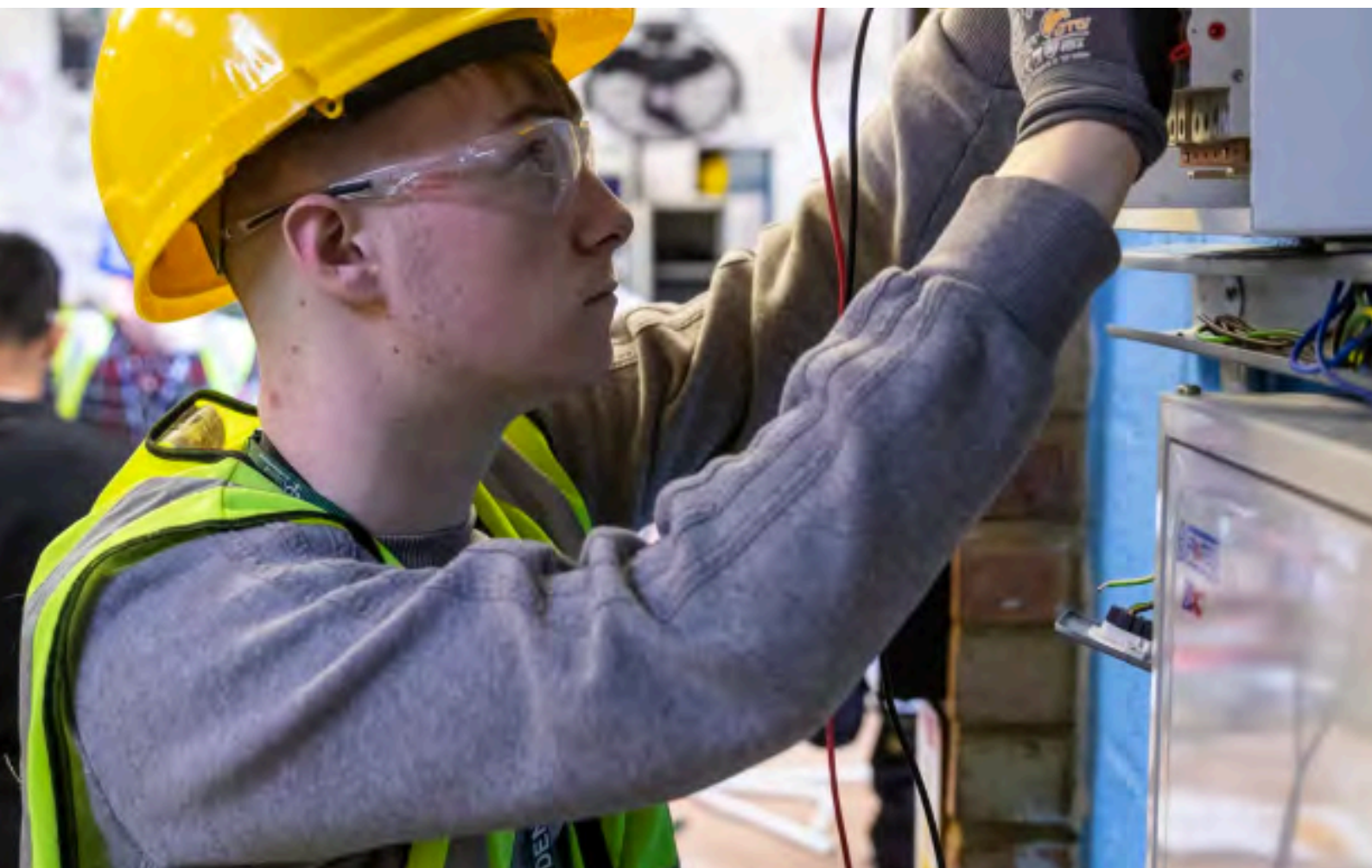


For further education, this presents a rare opportunity. Employers need access to people with the right knowledge and capabilities. Individuals need clear pathways into rewarding careers and opportunities to progress throughout their working lives. Our responsibility is to bring those interests together. Through technical education, apprenticeships and tailored workforce development, we help businesses grow while enabling people to achieve their ambitions.

Under the leadership of Yiannis Koursis OBE, The Bedford College Group is entering an exciting new phase. We are raising expectations of what a modern college group can achieve and broadening our contribution to the communities we serve. Investment in teaching, employer engagement and digital capability is helping us build an organisation equipped for the future.

What distinguishes us is not simply our scale. Nor is it our ambition. It is the belief that education can transform lives and create possibilities that might otherwise never exist. We see that impact every day in the achievements of our learners and in the success of the businesses and communities that work alongside us.

Joining The Bedford College Group is more than a career opportunity. It is an opportunity to help shape the future of a region that is changing rapidly and attracting national attention. The decisions made over the coming decade will influence how that growth is realised. As part of our team, you will have the chance to make a meaningful contribution to that future.



Job Description

Job title: Group Director of Business Engagement and Apprenticeships

Reports to: Executive Director of Strategy and External Affairs

Direct reports: Group Head of Apprenticeship Operations, Group Head of School: Business & Professional Services Apprenticeships, Group Head of School: Construction Apprenticeships, Group Head of School: Engineering Apprenticeships, Head of Business Engagement (Bedfordshire), Head of Business Engagement (Northamptonshire), Head of School: Logistics

Salary: Competitive

Job Purpose

The Group Director of Business Engagement and Apprenticeships will play a pivotal role in shaping and executing the strategic goal to grow our apprenticeship provision and business engagement activities and wider curriculum offer to meet the skills needs of businesses in the South Midlands. Operating with credibility, experience and confidence, you will work collaboratively across the Group to drive the business engagement and apprenticeship strategies, and provide leadership to the following teams: Apprenticeships and Business Development. You will be accountable for the quality of the Group's apprenticeship provision, the apprentice and employer experience and business development growth targets (both financial and learner number).



Main Duties

Specialist Area

- To lead on developing the Group's Business Engagement Plan and overseeing its delivery, ensuring it aligns with the Group's vision and strategic priorities and achieves set targets.
- To lead and direct the Group's apprenticeship provision, ensuring the plan delivers a high quality skills-based curriculum designed with employers to meet their needs.
- To have overall responsibility for the quality of the Group's apprenticeship provision, ensuring a high standard of teaching, learning and assessment, driving improvements in achievement and retention rates and apprentice and employer feedback.
- To ensure compliance is fully embedded in the apprenticeship journey to meet the requirements of funding and auditing bodies, etc.
- To act as the lead for apprenticeships in Ofsted Inspections.
- To lead on embedding new apprenticeship provision within the Group and ensuring that objectives relating to growth are achieved.
- To work closely with the Executive Director of Curriculum and Senior Leadership Team to ensure the Group's curriculum is responsive to local, regional and national skills needs and priorities.
- To work with the Group Director of People to oversee the Group's approach to fully utilising the Group's apprenticeship levy.
- To lead and direct the Group's business engagement team to ensure a high-quality service to businesses that is dynamic, highly responsive, meets/exceeds businesses' expectations and builds long-term collaborative relationships.
- To develop and maintain strong relationships with employers representative groups and key stakeholders to build the Group's positive profile and reputation.
- To maintain a thorough understanding of developments in the further education and apprenticeship sectors, and expertise in apprenticeships policy, regulations and funding guidance, providing advice and guidance on compliance and maximising opportunities for income.



Leadership and Management

- To lead, motivate and empower staff to operate as high-performing, ambitious teams.
- To ensure the effective performance of direct reports, through the setting of standards and targets, regular feedback and holding staff accountable when standards are not met.
- To champion a culture of transformation and celebration of differences, and lead staff in embedding behaviours and practices that incorporate equality, diversity and inclusion and the Group's values.
- To ensure effective strategies are in place to meet the current and future staffing needs of the Directorate, and that structures are effective both in terms of delivery and cost.
- To be visible and appropriately accessible to your teams and the wider College Group.
- To report to the Executive Director any relevant information regarding the Directorate or wider Group.
- To represent the Group at local, regional and national levels as required, maintaining good relations with external stakeholders and partners, and developing networks that support future partnerships.
- To lead on innovative projects and groups for the further development of the Group.
- To write and present reports to the Executive and Board of Governors as required.
- To collaborate closely with colleagues and work in partnership to achieve the vision and strategic objectives of the Group.

Group Wide Responsibilities

- To attend other Group campuses and external venues as required.
- To support and participate in weekly meet and greet ID checks and walk rounds.
- To support and participate in invigilation during exam periods.
- To support and participate in recruitment and stakeholder events.
- To demonstrate professional behaviour and appearance at all times.
- To work in a flexible manner and be willing to undertake other duties as reasonably requested.

Statutory Duties

- **SAFEGUARDING** – To be responsible for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and for raising any concerns in line with BCG policy and procedure.
- **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY** – To be responsible for promoting equality and diversity in line with BCG policy and procedure.
- **HEALTH & SAFETY** – To be responsible for following health and safety requirements in line with BCG policy and procedure.
- **TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT** – To participate proactively in training and development including any required qualification development.



Person Specification

Qualifications/Training

Essential

- Relevant degree or relevant professional qualification.
- Evidence of continuing professional development (CPD).

Desirable

- Relevant postgraduate qualification.
- Management qualification at Level 5 or above.

Knowledge/Experience

Essential

- Substantial, recent experience in a leadership role overseeing apprenticeships and employer engagement.
- Substantial experience in improving the quality of apprenticeship provision and apprentice outcomes.
- Experience of developing and implementing business engagement and apprenticeship strategies.
- Experience of working collaboratively across an organisation to deliver improvements/raise standards.
- Proven results in achieving growth in apprenticeship numbers and employer engagement activities.
- A thorough understanding of the government skills agenda and apprenticeship policy, guidance and funding regulations/audit.
- Experience of leading a high-performing team against clear objectives with measurable results.
- Experience of building successful relationships with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders.
- Experience of budgetary planning and management.
- A detailed understanding of delivering apprenticeships according to the Education Inspection Framework (EIF).

Desirable

- Experience of leading the successful introduction of a CRM platform.
- Experience of being the lead for the apprenticeship element of an Ofsted inspection.

Skills

Essential

- Effective networking, negotiation, influencing and communication skills.
- Ability to effectively manage resources.
- Ability to plan strategically.
- Ability to multi-task and manage competing and challenging deadlines.
- Strong leadership skills with the ability and confidence to motivate others and operate at a senior leadership level in managing change.
- Excellent project management skills with the ability to successfully manage cross-group projects.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.

Attributes

- A dynamic and proactive approach to work.
- Ability to work effectively and under pressure and to deadlines.
- A "can do" attitude that will inspire enthusiasm in others.
- A professional approach to dealing with staff relationships, customers and external agencies.
- Demonstrates a willingness to continuously develop knowledge and skills.

Additional Requirements

- Ability to travel to all campus locations.
- Ability to adapt working hours to changing needs in the business when these occur.
- A clear understanding of the appropriate professional boundaries and relationships that should be formed and maintained with children and young people.

Terms and Conditions

The appointed candidate will receive the following:

- a competitive salary
- 35 days annual leave plus bank holidays
- a pension through the local government pension scheme.



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/tbcg-gdbea 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 3 November 2026.

Interviews to take place on Thursday 19 November 2026.



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