

GET FUTURE READY

Our Strategy 2031



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Foreword

In a rapidly changing world, the role that Further Education Colleges play in supporting economic prosperity and social cohesion has never been more important. The impact of further education has been recognised by everyone from the Prime Minister to the Confederation of British Industry and the Social Mobility Commission. Central and devolved governments are launching strategies and coordinating bodies to ensure skills are at the heart of efforts to deliver growth.

Within this ecosystem we believe that it is Further Education Colleges who remain best placed to define and respond to local labour market demands and ensure people within our communities benefit from the prosperity that economic growth can bring. The challenge for SGS College over the next few years is to deliver on that promise.

Happily, SGS is well positioned to do so. We have a fantastic local reputation for the delivery of high-quality education, excellent financial health, strong industry relationships and world class facilities in our sporting, creative and media faculties. Our 2024 Ofsted inspection assessed our effectiveness

as “Good” with some “Outstanding” features, reflecting the great work undertaken by our team over many years.

The appointment of a new CEO and Principal in 2025, our first change of senior leadership in two decades, has focused attention on the future and our new strategy sets out how we intend to deliver a positive impact for our students, for our communities and for the College itself.

Delivering an overwhelmingly positive future won’t be straightforward. Workplaces and communities are experiencing an unprecedented level of technological change which in turn is driving social and economic challenges. The West of England and Gloucestershire have many competitive advantages, and are among the most productive regions of the UK. However, we know that local industries are facing pressures around cohesion, and that too many young people disengage from education, training and employment. We also know that too many people feel unable to develop the necessary new skills to help them advance their existing careers and that communities are struggling to maintain togetherness against a backdrop of social and economic pressures.



However, we are clear that SGS College can and will play a major role in addressing those challenges and that is what this strategy aims to do.

SGS is a really good college, but our ambitions stretch beyond that. We want SGS to be recognised as a place where lives are changed.

We want our students to leave fully equipped with the qualifications, skills and resilience needed to thrive in the workplace and life. And we want employers to recognise the kitemark of quality that SGS delivers for their current and future employees.

For the first time we have an SGS Strategy framed around the outcomes we are trying to achieve: Community, Achievement, Readiness and Enjoyment. These outcomes define our focus, and we will organise ourselves around their delivery, ensuring that everyone associated with SGS knows this is what we are here to do.

The strategy also sets out the behaviours and enablers that will help support delivery of those outcomes. While finances, technology and data are all critical, none of these are more important than our people – which account for more than two thirds of our expenditure.

We are fortunate to have a deeply committed and highly skilled workforce at SGS, and staff that care deeply about the communities and students we serve. It is no accident that both our outcomes and behaviours are framed around the concept of CARE. This is designed to reflect the passion that our colleagues have for delivering better outcomes and opportunities for the young people and adult students at the College.

In return, our commitment through this strategy is to maintain and develop further a college culture that is empowering, ambitious and rooted in trust. We want SGS to be a place of choice for our workforce as much as our students. A place where colleagues enjoy their work, see their impact and stretch their own careers with the same level of ambition that we apply to our students.

We hope that SGS 2031 provides a clear articulation of our priorities over the next five years. We look forward to working together with our partners to ensure that the West of England and Gloucestershire remain the best places in the country to live, work and learn.



David Withey
Chief Executive Officer & Principal



Matt Atkinson
Chair of the Corporation

Where Are We Now

10,000
Students
Aged Between
14 - 95

Ofsted 'Good'
with 'Outstanding'
Features
(February
2024)



1,700
Employers
Actively
Engaged

Outstanding
Financial Health
(DfE Rating
2025)

Strategy Development

Our strategy belongs to all of us – our students, their parents and carers, our people, our community partners and our employers. Because of that, we made a deliberate commitment to invest significant time and resources into deep engagement with each of those groups to co-create this strategy.

With our students and their parents/carers:

- We surveyed current and prospective students, and their parents and carers, to understand their priorities and what they wanted from a college.
- We held face-to-face 'Voice of the Student' sessions to better understand what it was that made SGS College a great place to learn, and what we could do to make it even better.
- We engaged with our Student Leadership Team to test emerging conclusions and get input to our key priorities.



With our people:

- We held focus groups with a cross-section of staff to brainstorm what we did well and where we wanted to improve.
- We set up working groups to develop the actions that form the core of this strategy.
- We dedicated our staff conference in October 2025 for in-depth discussion of our strategic outcomes and what we needed to do to achieve them.
- We asked teams to set out the key behaviours that would enable us to deliver this strategy.



With our community partners and employers:

- We held round table discussions with strategic partners including local government and key business forums.
- We used our employer conference in June 2025 to better understand the key priorities for employers in our communities.
- We tested our draft strategy with key partners.

The result of this extensive engagement is a strategy that we hope will be collectively owned by everyone in our college community, and will become the guiding framework for everything that happens at SGS College.



Our Strategic Framework

Our Outcomes

Our outcomes are the purpose of our strategy – they are the priorities we are seeking to achieve for our college, students, people and partners. These outcomes guide our focus, and we organise ourselves around them to ensure they are achieved.



C COMMUNITY



A ACHIEVEMENT



R READINESS



E ENJOYMENT

Our Behaviours

Our behaviours are at the heart of our approach – they are the expectations we place on ourselves, our people and our students, to act in a way that will ensure we deliver the promise of our strategy. We role model them daily and use them to guide our progress.



C CONSISTENCY



A AMBITION



R RESPECT



E EMPOWERMENT

Our Enablers

Our enablers are the mechanics of the strategy – these are the functions and foundations of our college, without which we will not be able to achieve our outcomes. Each enabler has its own plan which sets out how we will deliver the strong foundations on which our strategy is built.



Great data and insight



High quality and sustainable infrastructure



Strong financial health



Engaged and capable people



Strong partnerships

Community

Outcome 1

Our college campuses sit at the heart of the communities we serve in North Bristol, South Gloucestershire and Stroud. We play a significant role in supporting those communities to prosper, and in ensuring residents are equipped with the skills they need to support and benefit from economic growth across our region.

Our exceptional teaching and learning will help power the prosperity of the entire region by ensuring everyone in our community has the opportunity to gain the skills, qualifications and confidence to progress in life and work, irrespective of the barriers some may face.

The future of our communities depends on our students, who are the innovators and service providers who strengthen the local and regional economy. We work closely with local government, employers and civic partners to ensure that the educational offer at SGS serves our communities well, with innovative and employer-focused curriculum and high-quality teaching and learning that creates the workforce of tomorrow.

Alongside that, we have world-class facilities – from sports pitches used by international teams to professional-class creative and media spaces – which enhance our learning offer but can also boost our entire community by being accessible to all, including those with disabilities and additional needs.



What will we do to deliver this outcome?

- **Deliver high quality learning opportunities for local communities:** we will build on our existing strong reputation and ensure SGS is seen as the first-choice education provider for any student that wants to build new skills, gain a qualification or progress their career.
- **Break down barriers to learning and employment:** we will ensure our educational offer is accessible to all students across Bristol, South Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire through flexible teaching models, outreach education and improved transport connectivity. A particular focus will be on communities and groups with low engagement with education, including students with additional needs and those seeking a different learning environment.
- **Turn our campuses into vibrant community hubs:** we will invest in and provide year-round access to our spaces and facilities for local people, partners, employers, businesses and community groups to support social cohesion and drive local economic growth.
- **Forge powerful employer partnerships:** we will launch a new SGS Employer Partnership programme which further strengthens engagement with industry, local employers and other alumni, ensuring our curriculum offer supports local priority sectors and enhances employer involvement in career development activity.
- **Make the education system more cohesive and student-centred:** we will build stronger partnerships with schools, Further Education colleges, training providers and employers across the West of England and Gloucestershire to make it easier for students to navigate the system and find the right course or training opportunity for them.



What does this mean for...

Our students:

- Prospective students will clearly understand who we are, what we offer and will feel confident of a great experience at SGS.
- Current students will feel that their learning is centred in the communities that we serve and will benefit from strong employer engagement that enhances their learning and future opportunities.

Our people:

- Will experience a sense of belonging and purpose, knowing that everything they do will make a difference to the place they live or work.
- Will feel connected to local employers and partners.

Our community partners and employers:

- Will have a clear and simple route to engage with SGS and the wider skills system.
- Will see SGS as a proactive partner that helps them address their workforce challenges and create prosperity in the communities in which they are based.

Measures

How will we measure our success?



Enrolments

The number of students that enrol at SGS, demonstrating our reputation for quality learning in the communities we serve.



Regional economic growth

The economic prosperity of the regions we serve, showing how we contribute to overall growth within our communities.



NEET numbers

The number of young people not in employment, education or training, showing how we are contributing to the social and economic health of our communities.



Case Study

SGS WISE: Connecting Community Through Sport and Creativity

Located in South Gloucestershire, SGS WISE is more than a campus - it is a regional hub driving sport, culture, and community engagement. Our world-class facilities host elite teams such as Bristol Bears' U16 Academy, Bristol Flyers basketball, and Bristol City Women's Football Club, alongside grassroots initiatives like Stoke Gifford FC and the Festival of Youth Sport, which involves over 1,000 pupils.

WISE also strengthens SGS's cultural footprint. The Olympus Theatre sold 22,000 tickets in 2024/25, including a pantomime attended by 4,500 locals. Our Bristol Institute of Performing Arts (BIPA) summer schools inspire 260 young performers annually, while partnerships with Edge Associates deliver professional dance training. National broadcasts, including BBC Question Time, position WISE as a centre for creative excellence.



Achievement

Outcome 2

We inspire everyone to achieve their qualifications and surpass their own expectations to give every student the best possible start to their future careers.

The achievement of qualifications is at the core of our mission and represents the most tangible outcome for most of our students of their time at the college. The qualifications that students gain at SGS open doors to employment, higher or technical education as well as building confidence and resilience.

We set ambitious targets for ourselves at SGS – our aim is to be among the highest performing colleges in the country for achievement and progress, while leading the way in closing achievement gaps for disadvantaged groups.

For all our students, today's achievement will support tomorrow's success and our approach is rooted in inclusivity. We want every single student to achieve their very best, irrespective of any barriers to learning that may have previously existed. We aim high and always push for the best outcomes for any student.



What will we do to deliver this outcome?

- **Deliver exceptional teaching and learning:** with our excellent teachers and tutors well supported to focus their time on planning, teaching, assessing and providing clear and accessible feedback to students through strong support services and innovative use of technology.
- **Create the conditions for consistent learning:** through effective attendance management for students and support for our teaching staff to ensure continuity of learning at all times and ensure every student has the best possible opportunity to succeed.
- **Ensure every student is progressing throughout the year:** appropriate and effective use of digital and AI tools, student-level data and robust accountability processes that drive a continuous and personalised focus on performance and high achievement in every part of the curriculum.
- **Strong pastoral care and student support:** students thrive when they feel safe, supported and understood. We will ensure that every student has access to high-quality wellbeing services, mentoring and guidance throughout their time at SGS. We will create an environment where students can overcome challenges and build resilience to enable full engagement in their education.
- **A commitment to effective parental and carer engagement for 14-18 year olds:** which recognises the vital role parents and carers play in supporting students to achieve, through clear and proactive channels for communication and collaboration which enables families to feel informed, valued and connected to their child's learning.



What does this mean for...

Our students:

- Will have ambitious, personalised targets that stretch and challenge them to achieve their full potential.
- Will know what is expected of them and feel supported to deliver on those expectations.

Our people:

- Will be supported to focus on the key areas of their role that make the biggest impact.
- Will be supported and invested in to develop their own skills and progress their own careers.

Our community partners and employers:

- Will know that SGS alumni bear a quality kitemark that gives employers confidence that our students are technically proficient and high-achieving.



Measures

How will we measure our success?



Achievement rates

Our Qualification Achievement Rates, as measured by the Department for Education.



High grades

Demonstrating our focus on stretching students and ensuring high levels of achievement.



Progress rates

Measuring individual student progression to demonstrate the value added from our teaching and learning.



Case Study

Creating Achievement

At SGS College, our creative 16–18 provision delivers an ambitious, industry-focused curriculum that enables learners to achieve at a high level. Through a project-based approach, learning reflects the realities of the creative industries. Learners perform to live audiences, exhibit work in professional gallery-style shows, and produce media and production work for real clients. Creativity, collaboration, adaptability and curiosity are embedded throughout the curriculum, creating a professional learning environment where high expectations drive success.

Achievement across creative provision is strong and consistently above national benchmarks. Current achievement rates stand at 94.6% for the Bristol School of Art (BSOA), 95.2% for the Bristol Institute of Performing Arts (BIPA), and 92.3% for the Bristol Academy of Media (BAM). These outcomes reflect the quality of teaching, curriculum design and learner support across the faculty. More importantly, learners leave SGS with the knowledge, skills and professional behaviours required for higher education, employment and creative careers. Achievement at SGS College is measured not only in data, but in confident performers, emerging artists and industry-ready graduates prepared to succeed.



Readiness

Outcome 3

We are the springboard to the world of work, further study and life and we prepare our students by giving them the confidence, skills and resilience to thrive in their next stage and beyond.

Setting our students up to succeed in the workplace requires the development of good technical skills and academic achievements, but employers consistently tell us that these skills alone are not enough. What sets our students apart is their ability to collaborate, communicate effectively, creatively think about problems and maintain resilience.

At SGS these skills are not an optional extra, our Ofsted “Outstanding” personal development programme is at the core of our promise to

students and the communities we serve. We aim to ensure that all of our students are confident and adaptable, and equipped with the core employability skills and professional behaviours we know that employers demand.

The world of work is changing fast and we need to prepare our students for a range of possibilities – for jobs that do not yet exist, for technologies that are still emerging and for careers that are likely to evolve multiple times. We do so by supporting our students in building their skills through enrichment activities, relevant industry placements, informed careers advice, leadership roles and projects that provide the best chance of succeeding in the workplace now and in the future.



What will we do to deliver this outcome?

- **Deliver a transformative curriculum that anticipates the needs of tomorrow's society:** to ensure our students are maximising their future employment prospects by equipping them with the skills to lead and with a focus on sectors identified as a priority in the West of England Growth Strategy and the Gloucestershire Local Growth Plan, in particular those where we are already strong.
- **Expand our pathways for additional, specialist and high needs education:** to further enhance our reputation for providing a springboard for our whole community that prepares students for independence, active citizenship and meaningful employment.
- **Further enhance our reputation as a leading sports college:** by expanding our sector-leading sports academies programme which lets students combine study with up to 16 hours weekly of elite-level coaching and partnerships with professional clubs. Separately, we will widen access to our sports facilities and other resources to increase participation in sport and promote active lifestyles across our entire college population.
- **Deliver employability and digital skills accreditation for all students:** we will launch a new SGS Future Employability Accreditation as a core part of all 16-18 students' qualifications. This will build on the success of our existing SGS+ programme and build core skills such as problem solving, creative thinking, communication and collaboration, and digital & AI skills.
- **Build stronger relationships with schools to support enhanced readiness for students arriving at SGS:** we will continue to work with schools to ensure that transition processes between secondary and college education are improved, including through better provision of data and targeted work to support students in need of enhanced support during their first few months at SGS College.
- **Learning that goes beyond the classroom:** every student will have opportunities to develop and apply their skills in authentic or simulated work environments that reflect diverse industries and roles. These experiences are designed to build confidence, nurture professional behaviours, and provide meaningful insight into the world of work - supporting all students to thrive, whatever their starting point or future ambitions.



What does this mean for...

Our students:

- Every SGS student will have access to meaningful, high-quality industry placements aligned to their programme and future aspirations.
- Will leave college with an SGS Future Employability Accreditation demonstrating their practical employability, digital literacy and other essential skills for life and employment.
- Will spend time learning about key skills as part of their core timetable and outside of tutorial sessions.
- Will understand how to work productively alongside AI - knowing when to rely on technology, when to challenge it, and when human judgement matters most.

Our people:

- Will be invested in to support their readiness to lead the way in education, innovate in areas related to employability and harness emerging technologies such as AI.

Our community partners and employers:

- Will know that SGS alumni bear a quality kitemark that can give employers confidence that those students have been equipped with the skills, knowledge and standards to enable an immediate and meaningful contribution.

Measures

How will we measure our success?



Progression rates

Progression into further learning to support clear pathways for students.



Employment rates

How many of our students are moving into employment.



Employer feedback

Survey data from employers of SGS, students and alumni, measured annually.



Case Study

Readiness Through Language and Integration

In December 2025, SGS College's ESOL team was named Further Education Team of the Year at the Pearson National Teaching Awards, a national recognition of excellence in teaching and learning. The award reflects the team's impactful work supporting migrants and refugees to overcome language barriers, build confidence and integrate successfully into life in the UK. Through this work, the programme plays a vital role in strengthening local communities across the region, including Patchway, Filton, Southmead, Lockleaze, Henbury and Kingswood, to name but a few.

SGS's ESOL provision goes far beyond language acquisition. Through a trauma-informed, learner-centred approach, learners develop practical English for real-world situations such as healthcare appointments, employment and everyday communication, alongside support to navigate housing, healthcare and local services. Learners gain confidence, independence and a strong sense of belonging, with many progressing into employment, further study and active community participation. Over eight years, the programme has grown from four classes to twenty-eight, demonstrating sustained demand and impact, and reinforcing SGS College's commitment to inclusive education that changes lives while strengthening the communities it serves.



Enjoyment

Outcome 4

We provide brilliant experiences every day by creating an inspiring, inclusive and safe environment where students thrive, our people feel valued and stakeholders engage in genuine partnership.

We want students, our people and stakeholders to talk about the brilliant experiences they have had at SGS. Enjoyment isn't just an optional extra, it is a key driver of our progress - that's why we make SGS a place where people want to show up, try hard, and stay longer.

Our students and our people experience enjoyment in different ways - for some it is the experience inside the classroom that matters, for others it's the support infrastructure available to

them, for many it is the social infrastructure that drives enjoyment. So, across all of these areas we seek to provide excellent teaching, a modern learning environment, strong pastoral support and positive social interactions that enable everyone to belong, feel engaged, safe and empowered to enjoy their time at SGS.

Our students and our people are most likely to enjoy their time if they feel included and valued in the process of decision making so we are committed to celebrating people being their authentic self, diversity of background, learning styles and opinions. Our inclusive teaching practices, modern facilities and supportive culture will help to ensure that the time people spend at SGS will be some of the most memorable years of their life.



What will we do to deliver this outcome?

- **Make enjoyment a core part of SGS culture by embedding it in everything we do:** by embedding the behaviours, wellbeing activities and processes that ensure students, staff and partners experience a positive, safe and rewarding environment every day.
- **Teaching that creates a love of learning:** where risk-taking is embraced and stretch and challenge drive progress, creating a sense of fulfilment as students grow beyond what they thought possible.
- **Give our students and people a clearer role in determining the direction of the College:** we will create forums and processes that bring student and our peoples' voices into decision-making, including through the Student Voice strategy and Student Leadership Group. This will help us to understand the key drivers of enjoyment and take swift action to improve and enhance the student and staff experience.
- **Enhance the availability of college facilities for extra-curricular activities:** our Space for Students strategy aims to evaluate and improve the use of our facilities beyond core teaching hours, supporting clubs, wellbeing initiatives, and recreational activities.



What does this mean for...

Our students:

- Will have positive experiences every day at SGS, whether through quality teaching and learning, positive respectful social engagement with existing and new friends, or opportunities for personal growth that otherwise wouldn't be available to them.
- Will look forward to coming to college and leave having had a positive and fulfilling educational and social experience.

Our people:

- Will be supported within the college community to approach work with a sense of fun and curiosity in a way that builds a genuine sense of belonging which enables them to thrive at work.
- Will want to work at SGS and want to stay part of the team.

Our community partners and employers:

- Will have positive and enjoyable engagements with the college that enables them to progress their own priorities while feeling a genuine sense of partnership.

Measures

How will we measure our success?



High attendance

Demonstrating the desire of our students to come to college.



High retention

Students enjoying the experience of being at SGS and wanting to continue their learning here.



Positive feedback

From our students and our people in regular surveys and forums.



Case Study

Enjoyment With Purpose: Re-Engagement at SGS Create

SGS Create provides an alternative to mainstream education for Year 10 and 11 students who thrive with a different approach. The centre is purpose-built to foster acceptance and belonging, with calm spaces, clear routines, and staff who know every student. Small-group teaching allows for personalised support, making it easier for students to ask questions, learn from mistakes, and celebrate progress. Students follow a broad curriculum alongside creative and vocational pathways, engaging with practical experiences and trusted relationships. The day balances structure with flexibility, encouraging creativity and collaboration while helping students regain confidence in their studies.

Create values life skills and wellbeing as much as academic success, helping students build teamwork, punctuality, and communication for life beyond school. Effort is recognised through trips and celebrations like the Year 11 prom, reinforcing motivation and pride. Many of its 160+ students had struggled in mainstream settings but now re-engage and plan next steps with a renewed sense of purpose. The joy found at Create is strategic - reducing barriers, building positive habits, and fuelling self-belief as students move towards post-16 education. In every way, SGS Create is a springboard for voice, choice, challenge, and celebration each week.



Our Behaviours

#THESGSWAY



Consistent

- We create confidence in our decisions by communicating with clarity and transparency.
- We follow through on our commitments to students, colleagues and partners.
- We set high standards of performance and are fair and equitable in the way we measure and manage it.
- We use evidence and insight to guide our decisions and actions, ensuring judgements that are well informed and sustainable.



Ambitious

- We strive for excellence by challenging ourselves to aim high with resilience and courage.
- We aim to spark "wow" moments every day.
- We believe in what might be possible and we are bold and creative in the work we do to get there.
- We don't settle for average outcomes in anything we do.



Respectful

- We build good relationships and visibly role model kindness, empathy and openness.
- We create an environment where everyone feels safe, included and proud to be themselves.
- We celebrate diversity of thought and experience.
- We don't tolerate behaviours that undermine dignity, equality or fairness.



Empowered

- We are confident in contributing our ideas and best practices for the benefit of the College community.
- We encourage curiosity, embrace new ideas and support risk-takers who innovate to continuously improve outcomes.
- We take responsibility, recognise when something isn't working and take action to fix it.
- We take ownership of delivery and welcome accountability.

Our Enablers



Engaged and capable people

Engaged and capable people are the most important enabler of this strategy, turning ambition into reality. People are the foundations of the College's success. When our people feel supported and empowered, they enjoy their time at college, deliver exceptional outputs of teaching and create experiences that inspire students.

We will invest in the development, wellbeing and engagement of our people to build the skills, confidence and leadership capacity needed to deliver consistently high-quality outcomes for students and employers. In doing so, we will empower our people to innovate, adapt and lead change, ensuring that our teams thrive with a pay and benefits offer that ensures we attract and retain the very best.



Robust data and insight

Insight drives improvement. Accurate and timely data helps us understand our students, college and community. It supports confident decision making and continuous improvement. High-quality data and insight are critical to the delivery of this strategy as we look to measure the impact of our provision on our communities and achievement, tracking readiness and monitoring enjoyment.

We will strengthen how we collect, analyse and use data, to enable a better understanding of student needs and target resources where they make the greatest difference.



High-quality and sustainable infrastructure

Modern, well-designed learning environments and reliable digital platforms are the foundations of our success and a key driver of our outcomes.

Our exceptional creative and sporting facilities set the standard we aspire to achieve across our campuses. We will invest in inspiring, modern facilities and resilient, secure technology to improve access, enhance the student experience and increase operational efficiency and sustainability, enabling our people to focus on teaching, learning and relationships.

Our Enablers



Strong partnerships

Strong partnerships extend our impact beyond the organisation and strengthen our ability to meet the needs of students, employers and communities. We will work collaboratively with employers, other education providers and civic organisations to help us better serve our communities by ensuring a place-based approach to delivery of education and training.

We will build a new model for partnerships which enhances our existing strong reputation in our local communities and continue to play a lead role in driving skills collaboration across the West of England and Gloucestershire.



Strong financial health

Strong financial health provides the stability and flexibility needed to deliver our strategy. A sustainable financial position allows us to invest in facilities, technology, new curriculum and enrichment programmes that provide hubs for our communities, raise achievement, enhance readiness and make SGS a vibrant, enjoyable place to learn and work.

Our financial foundations are strong, and we will look to build on this with a financial strategy that supports the delivery of our outcomes whilst maintaining resilience against funding and policy change.



Our Strategic Partners

SGS College works with our strategic partners across the region to shape curriculum, create opportunities and strengthen outcomes for our students and the communities we serve.



SGS also collaborates with more than 1,700 employers, including major organisations and SMEs from across the West of England and Gloucestershire. These partnerships help shape and enhance our curriculum to align with regional workforce needs, while also providing valuable industry placements, careers support and apprenticeship opportunities that equip students with the skills and experience required to be ready for employment.



GET FUTURE READY

Our Strategy 2031

