



Wirral Met College

Wirral Met College Logo

APPRENTICESHIP STRATEGY 2020-2023



Pictures of Wirral Met campuses

Images of Ofsted, Disability Confident and Investors in People logos

WMC.AC.UK 0151 551 7777



Contents

1. Foreword.....	3
2. Message from the Principal.....	3
3. Background.....	4
3.1 The College’s Apprenticeship.....	4
3.2. Key aim of the College’s Apprenticeship Strategy.....	4
3.3 Strategic Context.....	5
4. Apprenticeship Programme Aims.....	6
4.1 Apprenticeship Strategy Objectives.....	6
5. Performance Monitoring.....	6

FOREWORD

The College's apprenticeship programme as an employer provider is an integral part of the College's approach to address current and future skills needs. Apprenticeships help us to attract and retain the very best talent and to benefit from a skilled, motivated and flexible workforce. We are committed to investing in the continued expansion and development of our apprenticeship programme.

Through increasing the range and extent of apprenticeship opportunities, we can help to improve the skills base of our workforce. This apprenticeship strategy identifies how we will utilise apprenticeships to attract new talent to the organisation as well as identifying opportunities for the development of our existing employees aligned to our strategic approach to workforce planning. This strategy emanates from, and is closely aligned to our People Strategy.

Message from the Principal:

Our vision, mission and strategic objectives provide life changing opportunities that lead to jobs and career development, through education and skills. It is therefore essential that we practise what we preach to both employers and students by embracing apprenticeships as one of the largest employers in the region.

Through our People Strategy we are committed to recruiting and retaining talented staff who will contribute to the delivery of our mission and, at the same time, develop their own potential as one of our employees. Apprenticeships are a key component of workforce development and one that we must fully engage in.

This strategy sets out the basis upon which we will pro-actively engage in apprenticeships as a means of developing opportunities for both the recruitment of new staff and by providing progression pathways for existing staff who wish to enhance their skills through an apprenticeship opportunity.

As Principal, the most rewarding part of leading our college is seeing the difference that we make through education and skills, to the life choices and chances that we can support for local people. I look forward to supporting the development and implementation of this strategy and, along with Governors and the senior team, we are all committed to Wirral Met being a 'learning organisation' in its truest sense, by embedding a culture of learning into our own organisation and therefore leading by example in affording the apprenticeship opportunities that will help us to achieve this.



Signature of Sue Higginson

Sue Higginson
Principal & Chief Executive



Photo of Sue Higginson

BACKGROUND:

1. THE COLLEGE'S APPRENTICESHIP STRATEGY OUTLINES what we want to achieve as an employer provider and the positive action we will take over the next three years to increase the number and range of apprenticeships within the College as part of our wider workforce development. The strategy embeds our values of Success, Integrity, Passion, Respect and Opportunity with a focus on the latter by investing in our employees' skills and development to equip them to deliver high quality services for our students and hence supporting our vision to be an inclusive outstanding college and our mission to enhance economic prosperity through high quality, work related education and skills.

This strategy is aligned to the People Strategy and its outcomes, through commitment to increase the number of people in employment and training, and to support people to progress and achieve in education, employment and training to achieve their potential. We will work with key stakeholders, to deliver and promote the benefits of apprenticeships, and link apprenticeships to workforce development and workforce planning for new and existing employees.

The strategy will be used to inform workforce development plans to help identify the actions that curricula areas and directorates will take in support of the strategy and in meeting the specific skills challenges that they face. The apprenticeship programme also supports and complements other workforce development initiatives to support entry to employment, including work experience, traineeships and the College's wider talent management approach.

2. THE KEY AIM OF THE COLLEGE'S APPRENTICESHIP STRATEGY

To increase apprenticeship opportunities for new and existing employees by offering high quality apprenticeship programmes across all areas of the College that support workforce development and workforce planning.

Apprenticeships provide the College with the opportunity to:

- Meet the priorities of the College; as they offer the opportunity to grow and develop the skills and the workforce needed for the future
- Influence suppliers and partners to employ and train local people by promoting apprenticeships via social value commitments during relevant projects
- Set an example to the wider community as both an exemplary employer and an educational establishment
- Grow talent and use strategic workforce planning to ensure the College has the skills needed to deliver short and long term objectives
- Be an inclusive employer and further develop our workforce diversity.

3. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.1 Meeting current and future skills needs

The College aspires to be an employer of choice, ensuring that it attracts, develops and retains the most diverse, creative and innovative individuals with the key skills and abilities required now and for the future. Apprenticeships can support this by offering a wide range of career opportunities for all ages.

As part of our workforce planning and recruitment processes a route to an apprenticeship standard will be given due consideration, where relevant, and will contribute towards the wider corporate workforce development. We also have an ageing workforce and so adopting a more strategic approach to 'growing our own' talent has become increasingly important. Apprenticeships that provide opportunities for young people who form a large core of unemployment in the Liverpool City Region (LCR) will form a key part of that strategy to enable us to meet our objectives both now and in the future by also proactively addressing local challenges at a borough or LCR level.

It is though important to note that apprenticeships are not restricted by age and so these opportunities will be equally valuable to someone who wishes to retrain in another career choice and/or progress to a higher level of responsibility within the career they are currently in, linked to employee progression.

The College's apprenticeship programme aims to support the College's wider strategic commitment to sustainability, improve the employment prospects and social mobility of local people, and to strengthen the skills base of our existing and future workforce by providing high quality jobs and learning opportunities with related qualifications which are embedded in career progression routes.

3.2 Through Government reforms, driven by an ambition to address the shortage in skills and invest in the UK's future workforce, the UK Government has made a commitment to an additional three million apprenticeship starts nationally by 2020. In order to support this commitment to apprenticeships, from 6 April 2017 an Apprenticeship Levy was introduced which is payable by all employers with a wage bill in excess of £3m per annum. This is paid as a 0.5% levy (tax) on the employer's payroll. The levy is a significant cost to the College, it is therefore imperative to ensure that it is utilised as effectively as possible. Following the Pandemic in March 2020, this has also been supported through the Government's Plan for Jobs 2020 Payments wherein employers who hire new apprentices will be awarded a new payment of £2,000 for each new apprentice hired aged under the age of 25, and a £1,500 payment for each new apprentice hired aged 25 and over, from 1st August 2020 to 31st January 2021.

3.3 Apprenticeships are integral to the wider regeneration approach for the region with education and skills being at the centre of that agenda. Apprenticeships support the regeneration and improvement priorities by helping to raise skills aspirations through high quality training, linked to employment.

3.4 Providing opportunities for existing employees to undertake apprenticeships and developing an apprenticeship culture at all levels within the College will help to raise skills within our own workforce. Apprenticeships can be an alternative option to university whereby people of any age can undertake structured training whilst earning money and working towards nationally recognised qualifications on which to build a future career. For young people, an apprenticeship route is a viable alternative to the A Level to university route, with many young people choosing this and completing their degree level qualification with no debt, in an established job and professional career.

4. APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME AIMS

It is important that the College is able to attract and retain apprentices and that we develop an apprenticeship programme that:

- Supports our workforce skills needs
- Supports the College's strategic ambitions and objectives
- Maximises the use of our apprenticeship levy
- Contributes to national and regional ambitions for apprenticeships

Our Apprenticeship Strategy objectives are:

1. Continue to develop the College's apprenticeship programme to increase the occupational range and number of high quality apprenticeship opportunities across the College
2. Work with College managers to identify existing and future skills gaps and ensure that priority is given to apprenticeships for new and current employees that are designed to meet these challenges and develop skill sets relevant to the current and future workforce.
3. Enable existing employees to use apprenticeships as a means of developing their skills and career path with the College, where a relevant apprenticeship standard can be applied to support talent management within the College.
4. Develop and apply robust systems to support apprentices and to monitor the quality of the apprenticeship experience as an employer, whilst complying with the College's apprenticeship systems and processes as a provider.
5. Ensure that apprentices receive high quality training and support and feel engaged with the College and the work it does.
6. Guarantee a high quality end point review with the apprentice which will guarantee access to a job within the College, subject to meeting all of the requirements of the apprenticeship framework and the key performance indicators that are required by the College, as an employer.
7. Work in partnership with our recognised trade unions and other key stakeholders, to promote and deliver apprenticeship opportunities.

5. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

This apprenticeship strategy is underpinned by an Apprenticeship Delivery Action Plan which sets out how the aims of the apprenticeship programme will be delivered. The delivery plan for all apprenticeships is monitored by the Assistant Principal-Quality and progress is reported to the Quality and Scrutiny Committee which, in turn, reports to the Board.

As an employer, the Executive Director of People and Culture, in partnership with HR, Quality and Employer Services will work closely with colleagues across the College to ensure that the College's strategic response to apprenticeships as an employer is closely aligned with the College's wider strategic priorities. The progress and impact apprenticeships have upon the People Strategy is also be routinely reported to the Board.