



STRATEGIC PLAN

2025/29

TRANSFORMING SKILLS

SHAPING THE ECONOMY





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Foreword from Chair

We are proud to present our new Strategic Plan, a roadmap that charts an ambitious course for the future of our college, our learners, and our communities. With over a century of service to Belfast and Northern Ireland, our 2025/26 – 2028/2029 Strategic Plan builds on our legacy of resilience, innovation, and dedication to excellence in education and skills development.

This plan arrives at a pivotal moment for the Further Education (FE) sector in Northern Ireland. While we face economic pressures, constrained public funding, and political uncertainties, these challenges also present unique opportunities for growth and innovation. The rapid pace of technological advancement, including the implications of Artificial Intelligence (AI), evolving employer demands, and the need to address regional skills shortages, call for a forward-looking and economically aligned approach to skills development. The College is uniquely positioned to make a significant impact delivering on these opportunities, thanks to our outstanding staff, innovative curriculum, and strong partnerships across the FE sector, industry and our community.

Over the past year, we have made notable strides in several key areas including curriculum innovation, expansion of our partnerships and continued learner and Apprenticeship success. The College has also continued to play an important role in a range of planning and delivery groups across the city, helping to ensure that our activities positively address both the economic and social challenges.

In terms of the College strategic vision, governance and leadership, the Governing Body have worked to ensure that the key priorities are aligned to the Minister's economic priorities. This Strategic Plan which sits alongside our annual College Development Plan represents our collective continued commitment to our core values of Collaboration, Ambition, Respect and Excellence. It is not only a statement of intent but a reflection of the hard work, creativity, and resilience that define our college

community. A key priority for the College in the lifetime of this new plan will be to move forward our Estates Strategy 2022 – 32 which includes our collective ambition to support the redevelopment of our Castlereagh Campus which will be key to the delivery of our ambitious curriculum plans moving forward.

On behalf of the Governing Body, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to this plan—from our staff and learners to our Governors and external partners. Your passion, insights, and commitment are the foundation of our success. Together, we will continue to transform lives, strengthen communities, and drive economic growth across the Belfast City Region.



Jacqueline Dixon MBE
Chair of the Governing Body,
Belfast Metropolitan College

Foreword from Principal & Chief Executive

Over the past four years of our previous Strategic Plan, the College has delivered outstanding results and demonstrated exceptional resilience, innovation, and impact. Our performance during this period reflects the strength and dedication of our entire college community. This period has also coincided with increasing pressures on public spending, and we have worked extremely hard to refine our operating model to deliver more efficient services.

During this period, our staff and learners have demonstrated exceptional commitment, creativity, and adaptability. We have strengthened our partnerships, embraced innovation, and remained focused on our mission to transform lives through learning, while maintaining our commitment to social inclusion and working with some of the most disadvantaged young people and adults across our city.

As we launch our 2025/26 – 2028/2029 Strategic Plan, which sits alongside our annual College Development Plan, we do so with confidence in our ability to take up the opportunities to transform skills and shape the economy. The College is at the forefront of equipping individuals with the skills needed for the jobs of today and tomorrow – from addressing the demand for digital skills and green technologies to reskilling those whose industries are undergoing transformation.

To achieve this, we must overcome barriers such as widening inequalities in access to education and the need to adapt to rapidly evolving industry requirements and technological advancements. The College must also consider changing demographics and ensure that our curriculum remains relevant to a diverse range of learners. We will work in partnership with other providers to broaden our relevance and reach, ensuring alignment with the economic and social challenges facing our City Region.

Our new Strategic Plan is not just a document – it is a commitment to action and provides the foundations for Belfast Met to build a new culture which is powered by people. Working in partnership, we will build a brighter future for all.

As we look to the future, I invite all our stakeholders to join us in shaping the next chapter of our journey. Together, let us build on our successes, embrace new opportunities, and ensure our college continues to lead in delivering inclusive, future-ready education and skills for all.



Damian Duffy
Principal and Chief Executive,
Belfast Metropolitan College

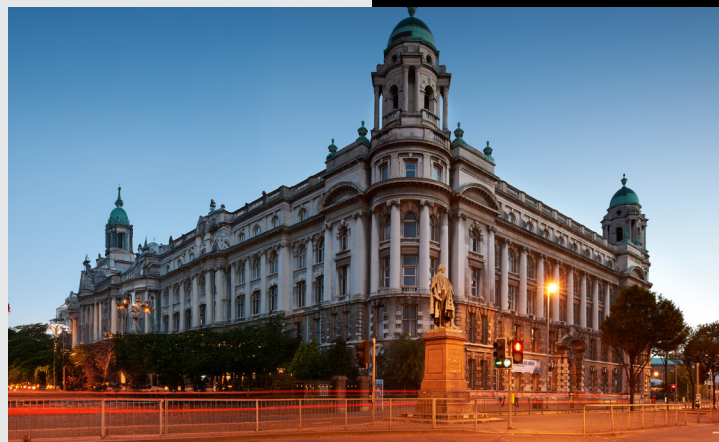


Our College

Our History

Belfast Met has been a distinguished centre of learning in our City Region for over 100 years. We were established in 1906 by the forward-thinking Belfast Corporation and have a rich history marked by resilience and relevance. Originally created to meet the City's industrial needs, we have played a vital role in fostering the innovation, creativity, and technical skills that have driven Belfast's prosperity.

As we prepare to move into 2026 and mark 120 years, we recognise that we have overcome challenges and celebrated achievements. With our enduring focus on relevance and adaptability, we continue to shape our legacy and embrace the potential of the future.



Our Role Today

We are Northern Ireland's largest Further and Higher Education college, serving over 12,000 learners annually. Located in the heart of Belfast, we offer a wide range of full-time and part-time academic and vocational programmes, from A-levels and Apprenticeships to degrees and professional development courses.

As Belfast continues to grow and change, we are seeing a notable shift in its demographic landscape, including a younger population with diverse educational and employment aspirations, and increasing ethnic diversity that enriches the cultural fabric of the city¹. These changes bring both opportunities and responsibilities for the College, as we adapt our curriculum, support services, and outreach to meet the needs of a more varied learner community.

With state-of-the-art campuses located across the city and a commitment to providing skills-focused education, our college plays a central role in preparing learners for the evolving demands of the workforce, supporting economic growth, and fostering innovation across industries.

Despite the breadth of provision in the College, we have also had to deal with constraints in recent years around the capacity in parts of our estate to support growth areas in the curriculum, with additional pressures on learner numbers given the wide range of provision across the city and with ongoing challenges in recruiting specialist staff.

Supporting Economic Vision

We play a key role in supporting the Department for the Economy (DfE) and the Minister's economic vision, which focuses on four key objectives: increasing good jobs, promoting regional balance, raising productivity, and reducing carbon emissions.

Our Strategic Plan and future College Development Plans will be aligned to contribute to the performance indicators that underpin delivery of this economic agenda. In doing so, we also recognise the importance of the Programme for Government, ensuring our work supports broader societal outcomes including improved educational attainment, reduced deprivation, and tackling economic inactivity. Together, these frameworks guide our efforts to deliver inclusive, impactful skills development across the region.

1. NISRA (2022). Census 2021: Main Statistics for Northern Ireland

Our Learners

Over the past five academic years, the College has experienced fluctuations in both enrolment volumes and individual learner numbers.

In 2019/20, there were 22,166 enrolments and 12,402 individual learners. This declined in 2020/21 to 20,012 enrolments and 11,535 learners, reflecting the initial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Encouragingly, the following two years demonstrated resilience, with enrolments rising to 21,255 in 2021/22 and peaking at 23,749 in 2022/23. Individual learner numbers also increased during this period, reaching 12,130 and 12,579 respectively. In 2023/24, enrolments fell to 20,554, with individual learners totalling 12,091².

Part of the drop in enrolments was attributed to budget pressures which impacted on the College and across the FE Sector and resulted in a reduction of additional enrichment programmes across a range of courses.

Belfast Met operates in an environment where a significant number of other providers including community provision support by Shared Prosperity provides a range of alternative provision across the city. Nonetheless, over the lifetime of this Strategic Plan the College is committed to achieving targeted growth up to an additional 10% on learner number trends, which will be delivered working in partnership across the city.

Alongside these trends, our learner profile has also become increasingly diverse in recent years, mirroring the evolving demographics of Belfast and reinforcing our identity as a modern, inclusive college.

In 2024/25:

37% of our learners were aged 26 & over³

13% were from Black, Asian or other minority ethnic groups

10% identified as LGBTQ

27% lived in the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland

14% self-reported having a disability



Our Campuses

Our diverse learner community reflects our role in offering accessible education and skills training to meet the needs of learners from all backgrounds and career stages. We have several campuses across Belfast, each serving different academic and vocational needs.

Titanic Quarter Campus:

Located in the iconic Titanic Quarter, this is our flagship campus. It offers cutting-edge facilities for courses in IT, media, science, hospitality, and tourism, and is known for its modern, eco-friendly design.

Millfield Campus:

Situated near Belfast city centre, Millfield Campus offers a wide variety of courses, including health and social care, engineering, and construction. It also houses excellent facilities for practical training, such as science labs and workshops. During this Strategic Plan, the College will complete the PFI agreement in place for this campus, after which it will revert to college ownership.

E3 Springvale Campus:

Our e3 campus on the Springfield Road focuses on enterprise, employability, and economic development. This campus is designed for collaboration with businesses and community organisations, offering courses in areas such as business, IT, and digital media.

Castlereagh Campus:

Located in East Belfast, the Castlereagh Campus offers courses in areas such as motor vehicle maintenance, aviation, and engineering, as well as IT and cyber. Parts of this campus date back over 75 years and are not of the same standard as other campuses in the College. During the lifetime of this Strategic Plan, we will take forward development of business cases to support the campus's redevelopment as part of a wider reconfiguration of our college estate.

Girdwood Community Hub:

This campus, located in North Belfast, provides community-focused courses and outreach programmes, helping make education accessible to local communities and supporting inclusive growth.

2. FE Published Statistics

3. College EBS Management System Data

Over the past 15 years, in response to declining learner numbers, we have progressively shifted away from duplicating curriculum provision across all campuses. Instead, we have gradually adopted a model in which each campus specialises in distinct curriculum areas.

Given financial pressures, this approach has helped ensure that learners have access to industry-standard facilities tailored to their fields of study, while also enabling the College to consolidate and strengthen its provision.

The College continues to work closely with the Department for the Economy's FE Capital Projects team to ensure that the College Estates Strategy⁴ remains up to date and delivers the best options going forward, aligned with needs of our Strategic Plan and College Development Plan (CDP). We will undertake a refresh of our current Estates Strategy early in 2026 to ensure that it is aligned with the curriculum and wider college development agenda set out in this Strategic Plan.



Looking ahead, and as part of this new Strategic Plan, we are committed to reversing the trend of declining learner numbers by growing our student population in a sustainable and inclusive way. This ambition will be supported by targeted curriculum development, enhanced learner pathways, campus specialisation and strategic engagement with regional priorities and emerging sectors.



4. Estates Strategy 2022-32

Our Operating Environment

Our operating environment outlines the external and internal factors shaping our college's environment and influencing our strategic direction. It highlights the socio-economic, educational, and policy landscape in which we operate, along with the opportunities and challenges we face.

This context underscores the critical role we play in responding to the evolving needs of learners, employers, and communities, while addressing broader regional, national, and global trends. Understanding this environment enables us to remain agile, relevant, and resilient as we work to deliver on our vision and purpose.



Increasing Diversity and Youthfulness

Over the past two decades, Belfast has seen a significant increase in its ethnic and cultural diversity, with 10% of its residents now born outside the UK and Ireland. This wave of diversity has enriched the city's cultural landscape, sparked creativity and innovation, and drawn global businesses and talent to Belfast. The city is becoming increasingly youthful, which, if effectively harnessed, offers promising potential for further economic growth⁵.

Northern Ireland is experiencing similar trends, with growing diversity and a youthful population contributing to a dynamic and evolving society. This demographic shift presents unique opportunities for economic and social development across the region.

For Belfast Met, this shift is reflected in the increasing diversity of our learner profile, and we are proud of our reputation as a modern and inclusive college serving individuals from a wide range of backgrounds. Equally the age profile of our learners is changing, and we need to reflect on how we create flexible opportunities for lifelong learning.

Economic Powerhouse and Digital Innovation

Belfast is the economic powerhouse of Northern Ireland, with a dynamic labour market shaped by rapid economic, technological, and policy changes.

The public sector – particularly health and social care – is one of the largest employers in the city. The city has earned an international reputation in several high-value sectors and has been identified as one of the world's top 10 Digital Economies of the Future, making it the only UK city other than London to achieve this recognition. This accolade highlights Belfast's significant strides in digital innovation and its growing reputation as a leading hub for technology.

Northern Ireland is benefiting from Belfast's economic leadership, with the region experiencing increased investment and development in technology and other high value sectors. This growth is fostering a vibrant business ecosystem and creating new opportunities for innovation and employment across Northern Ireland. Belfast Region City Deal is the first and largest of the City and Growth Deals.

5. NISRA (2022). Census 2021: Main Statistics for Northern Ireland

Emerging Industries and Skills Demands

Emerging industries such as green energy, advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity, and fintech are creating demand for new skill sets, while employers increasingly value transferable skills such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork⁶.

At Belfast Met, we will continue to be forward-thinking in our response to these advancements, and work with industry partners to adapt our curriculum. By doing so, we will ensure our learners acquire the skills and qualifications necessary to enter and thrive in the labour market, while continuing to position the College as a crucial contributor to economic development and workforce readiness within the city.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming the landscape of these emerging sectors. As part of our strategic response, we are actively engaging in sector-wide initiatives to explore the opportunities and challenges AI presents for curriculum development, governance and workforce training.

Northern Ireland is also experiencing these shifts, with a growing emphasis on developing a skilled workforce to support these emerging sectors. By aligning our educational offerings with regional economic priorities – and informed by evidence such as the Northern Ireland Skills Barometer – we aim to contribute to the broader goal of making Northern Ireland a leader in innovation and sustainable growth. The College continues to work with the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) and Innovation City Belfast to ensure that our curriculum delivery is closely aligned to emerging opportunities.

Socioeconomic Challenges

Whilst Belfast Met benefits from the city's growing diversity and its status as an economic hub, we are also faced with socioeconomic challenges present within the region. Significant deprivation remains, with 53% of Northern Ireland's most deprived areas situated in the city⁷.

This affects educational outcomes, with many school leavers falling below the NI average in attaining five GCSEs and facing higher unemployment rates after leaving school⁸. Furthermore, a large portion of Belfast's working-age population is economically inactive and lacks formal qualifications. This is particularly severe in West and North Belfast, where the number of individuals without qualifications exceeds that in the South and East of the city⁹.

Northern Ireland grapples with similar challenges, with pockets of deprivation and educational underachievement affecting various communities. Addressing these issues is crucial for the region's overall development and prosperity. By focusing on inclusive education and skills development, Belfast Met aims to play a pivotal role in bridging these gaps and fostering a more equitable society.

Need for Targeted Interventions

These existing disparities, coupled with the projections that 43% of Northern Ireland jobs will require degree-level qualifications by 2033, underscore the need for targeted interventions.

Such interventions will enhance the qualification profile and provide equitable opportunities for residents in the city, enabling them to effectively contribute to the city's dynamic labour market. For Belfast Met, bridging this gap through targeted education and upskilling programmes is crucial to boosting employability, attracting investment, and driving economic growth in the city.

Northern Ireland as a whole faces similar challenges, with many areas requiring focused efforts to improve educational attainment and workforce readiness. By implementing targeted interventions across the region, we can ensure that all residents can gain the skills and qualifications needed to thrive in an evolving job market, thereby supporting the overall economic development of Northern Ireland.

Optimism for the Future

At Belfast Met we remain optimistic about Belfast's future.

The city's history is one of resilience, and as it navigates its complex socioeconomic landscape, we will remain adaptable and innovative in our educational offering. In doing so, we will continue to meet the evolving needs of our city and its residents, ensuring that we remain a key contributor to the ongoing success of Belfast and the wider region.

6. Matrix (2024). Future Skills: Scenarios for the NI Economy

7. NISRA (2017). Northern Ireland Deprivation Measure

8. Department of Education (2024). Qualifications and Destinations of NI School Leavers 2022/23

9. DfE Research Bulletin (2024). Qualifications and Skills Overview



Our Vision

**Together, we will be the
College of Choice and
the Partner of Choice for
Communities and Learners,
driven by our passion and
Powered by Our People.**

Our Purpose

**To develop the skills,
knowledge and innovation
of learners, employers and
communities, aligned to
the NI economic and social
priorities.**

Our Values

Our values define who we are and guide every action we take, driving our commitment to creating a supportive, ambitious, and high-achieving environment for our learners, partners, and community.

Collaboration: We build strong partnerships through engagement to achieve shared goals and deliver clear results.

Ambition: We pursue bold goals to benefit our learners, partners, and communities, creating a lasting positive impact.

Respect: We value contributions, act with trust and integrity, and treat everyone with fairness and care.

Excellence: We strive for excellence daily, continuously improving and upholding the highest standards.

Our Strategic Objectives & Priorities

Our three strategic objectives set the foundation for achieving Belfast Met's vision of excellence in further and higher education across Northern Ireland.

These objectives are carefully crafted following an extensive engagement and consultation to address the needs of our learners, staff, and stakeholders, while aligning with regional and national priorities. They focus on enhancing the quality and accessibility of education, driving learner success, fostering innovation, strengthening community partnerships, and empowering our people - whose dedication, expertise, and passion are central to everything we do.

Objective 1 – College of Choice

To be the 'College of Choice', we will offer innovative, high-performing programmes that provide an outstanding development experience and meet the evolving needs of learners, employers, and society.

Objective 2 – Partner of Choice

To be a 'Partner of Choice', we will continue to develop and deliver excellent service, innovative solutions, and impactful outcomes in partnership with employers, industry, and other stakeholders.

Objective 3 – Powered by People

To be 'Powered by People', we will recruit talented people and invest in our existing staff, building a resilient and ambitious culture underpinned by a strong commitment to workforce learning and growth. This will help build a high-performing, inclusive, and future-ready College.

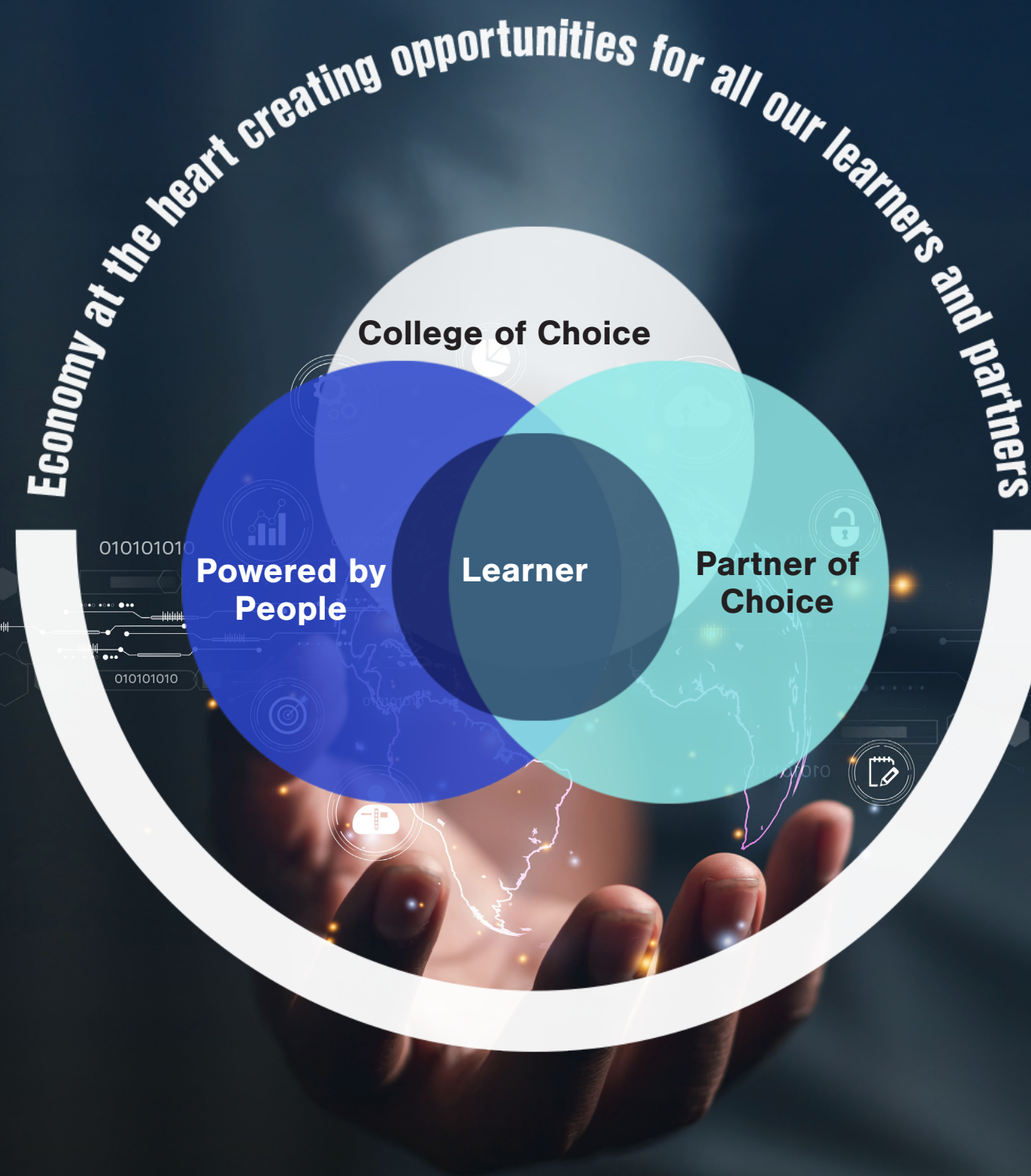


Placing the learner at the core of our efforts ensures that we are focused on delivering a range of activities and outcomes which will improve the quality of our learner experience and their opportunities for progression.

Our lecturing staff are central in shaping the learner experience, and their continued commitment is key to our success.

Through these objectives, we will deliver meaningful outcomes that support personal growth, social inclusion, and economic development, ensuring our college remains a leader in transforming lives and building brighter futures.

The accompanying priorities reflect our commitment to delivering exceptional learning experiences, fostering innovation, and addressing the evolving needs of our learners, staff, and the wider community. By focusing on these areas, we aim to build a strong, inclusive, and forward-thinking institution that empowers individuals, supports economic growth, and enhances the region's skills landscape. Together, these objectives will guide our journey toward long-term success and sustainability.



Objective 1 College of Choice

To be the ‘College of Choice’, offering innovative, high-performing programmes that provide an outstanding development experience and meet the evolving needs of learners, employers, and society.

At Belfast Met, we aspire to be the College of Choice – a trusted and valued institution dedicated to placing learners and economic contributions at the core of everything that we do. Central to this ambition is our Curriculum Framework, which underpins the design and delivery of all programmes. It ensures that our educational offer remains responsive, inclusive, and aligned with the evolving demands of industry and society.

Our objective is to provide high quality education and skills development, fostering opportunities for lifelong learning which help our learners’ progression in life and work.

The current educational landscape offers both opportunities and challenges. Employers are looking for individuals with the skills to meet the demands of priority sectors such as life and health sciences, advanced manufacturing, materials and engineering, fintech / financial services, software and cyber, screen industries, and low carbon / net zero.

The College will continue to work closely with Belfast Region City Deal to lead on developing skills and employability opportunities and feed this analysis back into the development of our curriculum. We also recognise the growing opportunities in the public sector and aim to address them through support for capacity building and apprenticeships. At the same time, learners need technical and transferable skills to innovate and thrive in an environment shaped by technological advancements, economic uncertainty, and societal changes.

As Northern Ireland continues to navigate the challenges which are a result of legacy issues, we must adapt to the increasing competition for learners and the pressing need to bridge skills gaps. By providing innovative, flexible, and high-performing programmes – shaped by our Curriculum Framework – we will ensure that Belfast Met continues to meet the needs of learners, employers, and communities while delivering on our commitment to inclusive growth and lifelong learning. We will also embed an effective system of self-evaluation and quality improvement leading to sustained improvement in teaching and learning and wider support services.

Our Strategic Priorities

We will deliver on this objective by:

- 1 Delivering an exceptional learner experience:**
Providing holistic, inclusive support services to empower learners to reach their potential, supporting the delivery of inclusive pathways.
- 2 Ensuring curriculum relevance and quality:**
Designing and delivering economically relevant programmes shaped by our Curriculum Framework, which is informed by employer and partner engagement, as well as labour market intelligence.
- 3 Delivering high quality learning, teaching and training:**
Fostering high quality, engaging, and innovative teaching and learning practices supported by skilled and motivated staff.
- 4 Driving digital innovation and flexibility:** Using technology to expand flexible learning options like blended, online, micro-credentials and part-time lifelong learning pathways, to meet the needs of our diverse learners and employers.

By staying agile and responsive to the needs of learners and stakeholders, Belfast Met will help everyone reach their full potential and make a significant impact. We take pride in our inclusivity and will continue to build on our past successes as the College of Choice being central to the success of the Belfast Learning City.

Objective 2 Partner of Choice

As a ‘Partner of Choice’, we will continue to develop and deliver excellent service, innovative solutions, and impactful outcomes through strong partnerships with employers, industry, the FE sector, and other key stakeholders.

We recognise that collaboration—particularly with the FE sector—is essential to extending our reach, supporting workforce development, and driving community and economic growth. By working closely with FE institutions, we can share expertise, align educational provision with regional needs, and create cohesive pathways for learners and professionals.

Our commitment to fostering meaningful, mutually beneficial partnerships remains central to our mission. Whether co-developing programmes with local businesses to build a highly skilled workforce, partnering with community organisations to widen access to education, or engaging with industry leaders to stimulate economic progress, we aim to be a trusted anchor institution that stakeholders rely on for expertise, responsiveness, and results.

Through innovative solutions, customised training, and collaborative projects, we will continue to build lasting relationships that strengthen our region and enhance opportunities for learners, educators, and organisations alike.

Our Strategic Priorities

We will deliver on this objective by:

- 1 Driving inclusive growth:**
Collaborating with key organisations to improve social mobility through programmes that support individuals in accessing further education, training or employment.
- 2 Building delivery partnerships:**
Working together with key stakeholders to co-design and deliver skills, training and employability solutions that address the evolving needs of the economy and society.
- 3 Partnering on Local Economic Development:**
Playing a pivotal role in actively shaping and influencing future local economic development opportunities for the City and region through our continuous engagement in various City partnerships and shaping our provision to meet need.
- 4 Building New Pathways for HE:**
Partnering with HE institutions and employers to expand the range of work-based learning solutions, including expanding higher education within further education.

Being a “Partner of Choice” underscores Belfast Met’s dedication to forging impactful and sustainable partnerships that empower individuals, strengthen communities, and drive economic and social progress in Northern Ireland.

Objective 3 Powered by People

To be ‘Powered by People’, we will recruit talented people and invest in our existing staff, building a resilient and ambitious culture underpinned by a strong commitment to workforce learning and growth. This will help build a high-performing, inclusive, and future-ready College.

At Belfast Met, we firmly believe that our greatest asset is our people. In the face of an evolving economic landscape, our commitment to transformation through our people remains steadfast. We want to build a culture which is people-oriented and collaborative in which our people are supported and enabled to reach their full potential. We understand that a motivated and empowered workforce is the key to achieving our strategic objectives, and we are dedicated to fostering an environment where every individual can thrive.

Through creating an outstanding employee experience, our people will be inspired, recognised and enabled to make our vision of excellence in further and higher education a reality.

We will focus on putting people at the heart of how we do business, and, through strategic people practice, create a high-performing, inclusive, and future-ready college. We will build a strong organisational culture underpinned by our core values and associated behaviours. We will enhance our employer brand to attract and retain top talent and we will meet evolving business and skills needs through strategic workforce planning.

Putting our ‘Powered by People’ objective into this Strategic Plan highlights that building on the collective skills, creativity, and dedication of our people is and will be key to the College’s future success and innovation.

By prioritising our people, Belfast Met will drive long-term resilience, success and sustainable growth. We are committed to creating an inclusive workplace where employees feel valued, engaged, and proud to be part of our community. Our People and Culture strategy will be central to this transformation, ensuring that we remain at the forefront of educational excellence.

Our Strategic Priorities

We will deliver on this objective by:

- 1 Building a people oriented, collaborative and inclusive college culture:** Establishing a fair, open, people-oriented environment where our employees feel valued, engaged and proud to be part of Belfast Met, underpinned by our values and behaviours.
- 2 Providing the conditions for our people to excel:** Delivering an outstanding employee experience that builds capability and drives high performance amongst our staff, where careers are meaningful, and employees feel a strong sense of purpose and commitment to our collective goals.

3 Attracting, retaining and developing top talent: Positioning Belfast Met as an employer of choice, attracting, retaining and nurturing top talent and leadership capabilities to enhance performance.

4 Promoting and enhancing employee wellbeing: Encouraging personal growth and prioritising wellbeing as a college community which cares for each other.

Delivering on these priorities, will enable Belfast Met to establish itself not only as a hub of educational excellence for learners, but also as a leading workplace that values, empowers, and invests in its employees. ‘Powered by People’ reflects our dedication to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone can thrive, contribute, and take pride in being part of the College and honouring the legacy of all the dedicated staff who have created the fantastic institution we are today.

Our Strategic Enablers

To support delivery of our Strategic Plan 2025/26 – 2028/29 and to build a sustainable college, we will continue to invest in our professional services, including financial services, data governance, digital infrastructure, estate and sustainability, and marketing and communications.

To make this happen, we will prioritise our resources and reduce the process complexity into simpler, more effective ways of working. Our Strategic Enablers set out how we will deliver this:



Strategic Enabler 1. Financial Sustainability Framework

Our Financial Sustainability Framework will articulate how we will meet our strategic and operational financial demand, with a strong focus on maintaining our long-term sustainability. The overall aim is to maximise our income and transform our costs to strengthen our financial resilience so that we can invest in our staff and students and our operating environment. The framework will also set out how we will deliver our strategic goal of financial sustainability.



Strategic Enabler: 2. Data Governance Framework

Our Data Governance Framework will set out our vision for how we will use data to achieve our strategic objectives within a data driven culture. We value our data as a key asset, providing the basis for insight that supports our decision-making and the delivery of our strategic objectives. In addition, good management of our data will play a critical role in helping us remain secure and compliant. This will underpin the delivery of data governance and insight and the mitigation of security and compliance risks which is a central component of our IT & Digital Framework.



Strategic Enabler 3. IT & Digital Services Framework

Our IT & Digital Services Framework outlines our vision to harness digital innovation to support teaching, learning and supporting processes. By leveraging the latest technology, including emerging tools such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), we aim to provide an inclusive, engaging and efficient teaching and learning environment that meets the needs of our diverse learners, colleagues, employers and partners. We will continue to deliver excellence in digital innovation and technology services, providing distinctive, specialised, and inclusive platforms for education and support services.



Strategic Enabler 4. Estate Strategy & Sustainability Framework

Our Estate Strategy & Sustainability Framework will ensure that the College has an appropriate estate to meet current and future business needs. Our estate must be appropriate in terms of size, location, quality and configuration. The Strategy and Framework will be underpinned by our commitment to an effective capital investment plan and a planned preventative maintenance programme. It will consider how the estate supports the achievement of the College's strategic objectives, setting out the priorities and actions required in managing our assets efficiently and effectively, whilst also addressing the Climate Change Agenda through our 2030 Sustainability & Climate Action Plan. Two of the key priorities in our Estates Strategy during this Strategic Plan will be to manage the transition of our Millfield Campus from a PFI Contract into college ownership and to assist in developing a business case to support the Estate Reconfiguration Programme, including the Castlereagh Campus.



Strategic Enabler 5. Marketing & Communications Framework

Our Marketing & Communications Framework will define how we engage with our stakeholders, promote our values, and articulate our strategic ambitions. It will ensure that our messaging is clear, consistent, and aligned with our organisational goals, enhancing our visibility and reputation across all audiences. This framework will support the delivery of our strategic objectives by strengthening internal and external communications, improving stakeholder engagement, and positioning the College as a trusted and forward-thinking institution. Through targeted campaigns, digital innovation, and inclusive storytelling, we will build stronger connections with learners, staff, partners, and the wider community.

Our Key Performance Indicators

As we embark on a new strategic journey, our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will play a pivotal role in measuring progress and ensuring accountability. Progress against the core enrolment and business KPIs in our College Development Plan (CDP) will be reviewed quarterly through Curriculum and Quality Engagement Committees, and annually through full Governing Body in relation to our Strategic Plan.

At year end we will produce and publish Annual Impact Reports which will set out progress against the key strategic impact indicators outlined in this section¹⁰, which are integral to the success of a college and also reflect on our wider enabling frameworks.

In addition to these strategic KPIs, individual Directorates will report back to Governing Body Committees on progress against other activities delivered through the enabling frameworks that support the College's operations.

These strategic indicators are designed to reflect our commitment to excellence in education, learner outcomes, and operational efficiency. They will enable us to track the impact of our programmes and initiatives, identify opportunities for improvement, and align our efforts with the needs of learners, staff, and stakeholders across the region.

The Strategic Plan will sit alongside our annual College Development Plan, which sets out our key performance targets in respect of learner enrolments, apprenticeships and business programmes. Work is ongoing to integrate the College's key planning and reporting obligations across all performance metrics, helping to provide a more holistic view of our performance, quality and sustainability.

By focusing on measurable goals, we will drive innovation, enhance learner success, and contribute to the regional economy through high quality further and higher education.

10. www.belfastmet.ac.uk/media/u4pdtlok/impactreport_2023.pdf
www.belfastmet.ac.uk/media/03lnvhyq/impact-report-2023_24.pdf

11. Annual DfE FE Sector Activity Publication

12. Annual DfE FE Sector Activity Publication

13. DfE Survey of FE College Leavers & HESA Graduate Outcomes Survey

14. Belfast Met Annual Learner Satisfaction Survey

15. Belfast Met Annual Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey

KPIs

The strategic KPIs we will track for this plan include:

1. **Achievement Rate:** More than 86% of learners successfully achieve their qualifications¹¹.
2. **Retention Rate:** More than 92% of learners continue in their studies from enrolment to completion¹².
3. **Progression Rate:** More than 80% of our learners' progress into further education, employment, or training¹³.
4. **Learner Satisfaction:** Consistently achieve over 90% satisfaction among learners¹⁴.
5. **Stakeholder Satisfaction:** Consistently achieve over 85% satisfaction among stakeholders¹⁵.
6. **People and Culture:** Demonstrable improvement in organisational cultural health and maturity, as measured through a composite Cultural Maturity Index (CMI), with baseline established in Year 1 and progress tracked annually across defined indicators.
7. **Financial Performance:** Consolidate our financial position and live within our budget, and maximise revenue streams to maintain a sustainable financial position.
8. **Corporate Governance:** Comply with all corporate governance obligations required as a non-departmental public body (NDPB).
9. **Sustainability:** Achieve a reduction in carbon footprint or energy usage as set out in our Sustainability & Climate Action Framework 2030.
10. **Digital:** Enhance digital infrastructure to increase user engagement, reduce operational costs, and streamline processes through the implementation of advanced analytics, automation, and cloud solutions.

Reporting Our Progress

How will we measure and monitor our success?

To ensure the effective delivery of this Strategic Plan, we have developed a robust and transparent approach to performance monitoring that supports accountability at all levels.

Annual Reporting: Progress against our 10 Key Performance Indicators will be reviewed and reported annually. These indicators provide a clear, measurable overview of how effectively we are achieving our objectives and priorities.

Four-Year Operational Plan: A comprehensive four-year Operational Plan will be developed and regularly reviewed with managers to ensure alignment with our strategic objectives and delivery of key activities.

Quarterly Tracking: We will systematically track progress against the supporting activities outlined under each of our strategic commitments. This enables us to remain on course and respond promptly to emerging challenges.

Governance Oversight: The Governing Body will play a central role in monitoring performance, receiving regular updates on progress against Strategic Plan and College Development Plan targets. This oversight ensures that strategic decisions are informed by real-time data and evidence.

Departmental Accountability: In parallel, the Department for the Economy will hold the College to account for delivery against agreed performance metrics, as part of its oversight and sponsorship responsibilities. This dual layer of monitoring reinforces transparency and ensures alignment with regional priorities.

Continuous Improvement: By embedding a cycle of evaluation and reflection, we will identify opportunities to refine our approach, ensuring that our Strategic Plan delivers meaningful and sustained impact for our learners, staff, and stakeholders.

This commitment to rigorous monitoring and reporting will ensure that Belfast Met remains accountable, responsive and focused on delivering the ambitions set out in this Strategic Plan.



STRATEGIC PLAN

2025/29

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