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Corporate Plan

Leading the City to Work



**Minister for the Economy
Simon Hamilton MLA**

An exemplar in promoting individual and collective excellence among staff and students alike, Belfast Met makes a huge contribution, both socially and economically, to Northern Ireland's future wellbeing and prosperity. The College is at the very forefront of the drive to equip our people with the skills and qualifications which not only enrich the lives of learners but are the foundation upon which a modern knowledge economy is built.

Foreword

Belfast Met's Corporate Plan 2016–2020 sets out our ambitions for the future, ambitions which are closely and inevitably intertwined with those of the city itself.

Our College was founded as the Belfast Municipal Technical Institute in 1906 at the height of the city's industrial might and in direct response to the demands of industry. It provided the knowledge, creativity and innovation that drove industry forward, equipping the workforce with the technical skills on which the city thrived. This proud heritage endures today in our increasingly agile, employer-led approach to meeting current and future skills demands, as Belfast Met plays its full part in 'Leading the City to Work'.

We will do this by championing our dual mandate of economic development and social inclusion that so epitomises the Belfast Met ethos. Through dedication, innovation and creativity we are determined to provide the range of skills necessary to help our learners get a job, or get a better job, and in doing so support employers in competing locally, nationally and internationally.

This new corporate plan sees Belfast Met drive forward equipped with a fresh vision and a clear mission. It embeds our core values of Collaboration, Ambition, Respect and Excellence into the very fabric of our College, shaping everything we do. At the heart of that plan is the total professionalism and commitment of our staff to the success of our learners in realising their potential, developing their self-esteem and securing jobs.

The strategic aims, objectives and key performance indicators contained in this plan are based on data, insights and analysis. These will all work collectively to underpin the delivery of our overarching mission and realise our vision of becoming a world-class college that nurtures the talent and ambition of the city of Belfast and beyond.

Belfast Met will make a full and effective contribution to achieving the strategic objectives of the Department

for the Economy and the Programme for Government. We will do this by providing the skills that will serve to broaden opportunity, narrow inequality and create an economy that works for everyone: an economy for the common good.

Frank Bryan
Chair of Governing Body

Marie-Thérèse McGivern
Principal and Chief Executive

About Belfast Met

Belfast Met is the largest and longest established further and higher education college in Northern Ireland. We offer a broad range of innovative, high quality, economically relevant provision.

Our modern, award-winning estate spans the length and breadth of the city of Belfast and comprises four main campuses – Titanic Quarter, Millfield, Springvale and Castlereagh – as well as a range of smaller outreach centres, including the new community hub at Girdwood.

We attract over 37,000 enrolments per year and continually adapt and develop our curriculum to keep pace with shifting economic and skills demands. In addition to equipping the city of Belfast and beyond with the skills for work, we are also a £60 million business in our own right. We provide employment to over 1,000 people and procure around £7 million of goods and services per year.



In Numbers

1. Annual turnover: £60 million
2. We serve 20,000 learners every year
3. 37,000 annual enrolments onto courses every year
4. We employ 1,010 staff
5. We engage with more than 500 employers and 100 community organisations
6. We inject £40 million into the economy in salaries and wages
7. We purchase £7 million of goods and services

**£60 million
annual
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“

Jackie Henry,
Senior Partner,
Deloitte

Implementing an ambitious growth strategy in Northern Ireland, requires a high level of confidence in our partners to develop the right level of talent to meet our international clients' complex demands and to successfully grow our business.

Our strategic partnership with Belfast Met provides us with that confidence. What strikes me most about that partnership is Belfast Met's flexibility, agility and their commitment to work with us in co-designing world-leading training programmes to help us build the right skills to meet our clients' demands.

Our Vision

To be a world-class college
that nurtures the talent
and ambition of the city of
Belfast and beyond.

Our Mission

Belfast Met's mission is to make a fundamental impact on the economic and social success of the city of Belfast and beyond by equipping its people, employers and communities with the education and skills for work.

For generations, the city has looked to Belfast Met as the source, place and mainstay of technical and professional training. The quality of our provision, together with our commitment to bringing the life-changing benefits of education and skills to every individual and every community, ensure we remain as relevant today as we did in 1906.

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Ian Pretty,
Chief Executive,
157 Group

We ought to take the work Belfast Met has been developing with employers and replicate it right across the UK. It is truly world class.





Our Values

Our values influence how we behave, and they shape everything we do. They help define and drive the culture of our College, supporting us as we work to achieve our ambition and plans.

Collaboration

Forging strong and creative partnerships based on shared goals and mutual respect, striving to bring out the best performance and delivering clear and tangible outcomes.

Ambition

Determined to accomplish great things for our learners, our College, our business and industry partners, the communities we serve, and the city of Belfast and beyond.

Respect

Valuing everyone's contribution, acting with courtesy and consideration, providing help and support when needed and always behaving in an honest, transparent and fair manner.

Excellence

Making excellence part of our day-to-day working lives, seeking continuous quality improvement and setting and achieving the highest possible standards for individuals and the College.

Our Ambition & Plans

Belfast Met has identified four strategic aims which will provide the foundation upon which we will strengthen our position as a key partner in the success of the city.

Each aim is supported by a set of strategic objectives.

The corporate plan's strategic aims and objectives will direct and focus our actions and priorities for the next four years.

The four Rs

Strategic aim: 1

Determined Relevance

Strategic aim: 2

Valued Reputation

Strategic aim: 3

Agile Response

Strategic aim: 4

Distinctive Reach



Strategic aim:

Determined Relevance

Relevancy sits at the heart of Belfast Met's ambition and plans. We were founded specifically to meet the skills needs of a thriving, twentieth-century city and it is the ability to keep pace with the changing and increasingly diverse skills demand that still sets us apart today.

Our achievements in pioneering new approaches to learning through, for example, our Academy-style collaborations with employers, demonstrate our commitment to offering flexible, responsive and relevant skills solutions. Our recent move to the newly created Department for the Economy provides exactly the right context for this contribution to flourish and grow.

Over the course of the next four years, we will pursue relevancy with commitment and determination.

Strategic objectives

1.1 Maximise student attainment and employability by enabling individuals to achieve their full potential.

1.2 Invest in our people and infrastructure, ensuring staff are equipped with the knowledge and expertise to deliver excellence in teaching and learning, and that we have the capacity and resources to succeed.

1.3 Ensure deep-rooted connections with local, national and international employers, working with them to define their needs and designing and delivering the most relevant and effective skills solutions.

1.4 Work with local communities to develop knowledge and skills, build confidence and self-esteem and provide opportunities that help put people on a pathway into further training or employment.

How this contributes to Vision and Mission

- Our curriculum and workforce development plans will be aligned to the current and future needs of the economy.
- The Northern Ireland economy will have access to a modern fit-for-purpose workforce.
- The city of Belfast will have access to the talent needed to fulfil its potential.

Strategic aim:

Valued Reputation

Belfast Met's reputation for providing economically relevant, good quality, employer-led provision has grown exponentially in recent years. All indicators not only point to consistently high levels of stakeholder satisfaction, they reflect the impact Belfast Met makes on people's lives.

It is this impact – whether in terms of enhancing employability, increasing business competitiveness, building community capacity, or working with city partners to identify and plan for future skills growth – that has positively shifted wider public perceptions as to the value of technical and vocational training.

Our awards of recent years – Times Educational Supplement (TES) UK Employer Engagement Award (2015), IoD UK Public Sector Director of the Year Award (2015), countless student and staff awards, and even recognition by President Obama (Waterfront Hall, June 2013) – are tangible examples of how Belfast Met's reputation is growing at both a local and, indeed, international level.

Over the course of the next four years, Belfast Met will work to enhance its reputation even further.

Strategic objectives

2.1 Deliver consistent high quality teaching and learning, provide inspired and inspirational leadership, achieve continuous improvement, empower our employees, and deeply embed Belfast Met's core values of Collaboration, Ambition, Respect and Excellence in everything we do.

2.2 Maximise opportunities for our learners by building relationships with key government, political, policy, business and community partners, most notably the Department for the Economy, its executive agencies Invest NI and Tourism NI, as well as with Belfast City Council.

2.3 Influence and inform public policy and decision-making across all relevant areas and unequivocally demonstrate the impact of our contribution to the economic and social success of the city of Belfast and beyond.

2.4 Ensure our teaching practices are cutting-edge by continuing to create a small but strong international network of partner organisations that shares insights and ideas, develops good practice and builds expertise.

How this contributes to Vision and Mission

- Learners will choose to study with us.
- Employers will want to do business with us.
- Communities will support us.
- Talented people will want to work for us.
- Funders will invest in us.

Strategic aim:

Agile Response

Much of Belfast Met's internal focus in the period leading up to the publication of this corporate plan has been to ensure that we have the right structure and the right capabilities in place to respond quickly and effectively to the city's increasingly varied and constantly changing skills demands.

Our new five-department academic structure, our new Youth Training Unit, the launch of the Belfast Business School and our ground-breaking Centre for Excellence, will come together to ensure a more tailored, high quality, faster and more agile response. In turn, we remain committed to a programme of continual organisational change.

This internal structure will support a refreshed and realigned curriculum. Furthermore, we will embed a process of continual scrutiny and review to ensure the curriculum remains finely tuned to the needs of the employers and the communities we serve.

All of this will ensure that we will achieve our dual mandate of building social inclusion by widening participation.

Strategic objectives

3.1 Fulfil our dual mandate by relentlessly supporting an agenda of economic inclusion for all.

3.2 Develop the skills and capabilities of our employees so we can respond effectively to the needs of all stakeholders and invest in technology to ensure more flexible and innovative delivery, and one that keeps pace with market demand.

3.3 Proactively engage with local, national and international employers to identify and respond to their specific skills needs.

3.4 Understand our policy landscape and proactively respond to the opportunities and challenges it presents.

How this contributes to Vision and Mission

- Every individual and community will be given the opportunity to realise their potential.
- There will be a fit-for-purpose workforce.
- Belfast Met employees will be highly trained, highly skilled and high performing.
- There will be greater access to skills training through the use of technology and more flexible delivery methods.
- Public policy will better reflect the needs and interests of the city of Belfast as the driver for wider economic success across the region.

Strategic aim:

Distinctive Reach

Belfast Met reaches out across the city, offering the potentially life-changing benefits of education and training to every individual and every community. We provide people with the skills to get a job or to get a better job, thus enabling employers to drive their business growth.

Reconnecting disconnected people, and especially young people, with education and training is crucial for future success. One of Belfast Met's unique strengths is that it provides opportunities at every level of the economy – whether it's offering Essential Skills classes at the city's new Girdwood Community Hub, working with the Northern Ireland Prison Service, or fulfilling high level priority skills demands via our Assured Skills programmes.

Belfast Met demonstrates every day that it is fully committed to its dual mandate – economic development and social inclusion – with one inextricably linked to the other. This commitment is reflected in our estate. Ours is a story of investing in the city and of reaching into those areas facing the highest levels of economic inactivity and deprivation. We attract learners from the most deprived communities, with approximately three out of 10 coming from the top 20% most deprived areas in Northern Ireland. We operate out of four main campuses – Titanic Quarter, Millfield, Springvale and Castlereagh – and our strategy is one of creating modern, thriving hubs where people of all ages can get the skills they need for work.

Belfast Met will strengthen its reach over the next four years and in doing so help widen participation, enhance social mobility, build community capacity and create a fairer society.

Strategic objectives

4.1 Work alongside government and community partners to provide access and progression opportunities for all.

4.2 Work with local, national and international employers of every size – from the largest companies to the smallest of micro-businesses – in designing courses that meet their current and specific skills demands, whilst planning for those of the future.

4.3 Consolidate our physical presence in the city, thereby continuing our strategy of creating modern, thriving hubs where people acquire work-ready skills and which help build social inclusion by providing opportunities for people of all abilities and backgrounds.

4.4 Take advantage of the benefits that technology brings to expand our reach beyond the city and region, and to provide learning opportunities at a time and in a way that suits today's ever-changing lifestyles.

How this contributes to Vision and Mission

- Opportunities and life chances for those facing the greater barriers to employment will improve.
- Businesses will be able to secure the skills they need to develop and grow.
- Young people will have an equally viable range of alternative career options – with a focus on apprenticeships – thereby bridging skills gaps and helping to prevent youth unemployment.
- Belfast Met's estate will offer learners across the city access to modern, thriving hubs where people of all ages, abilities and talents can get the skills they need for work.
- Belfast Met will maximise technology to offer learning opportunities in a way that meets the needs and expectations of learners.
- Belfast Met and the wider sector will benefit from an international perspective that fosters innovation and good practice.

Our Policy Linkages

1. Northern Ireland Programme for Government 2016–2021
2. Further Education Means Success – The Northern Ireland Strategy for Further Education (January 2016)
3. Securing Our Success – The Northern Ireland Apprenticeship Strategy (June 2014)
4. Generating Our Success – The Northern Ireland Strategy for Youth Training (June 2015)
5. Creating Higher Expectations – Belfast Metropolitan College Curriculum Strategy 2015–18
6. Belfast Metropolitan College Widening Access and Participation Plan 2016–17 and 2017–18
7. Enabling Success – A Strategy to Address Economic Inactivity in Northern Ireland (April 2015)
8. Northern Ireland Skills Barometer (November 2015)
9. Belfast City Council Corporate Plan 2016–17: Driving Growth, Improving Lives



Our Policy Alignment

Belfast Met will be integral to the delivery of the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme* for Government and will contribute to:

1. Improving support for looked after children
2. Improving educational inequality
3. Improving the quality of education
4. Improving the skills profile of the population
5. Increasing the proportion of people in work
6. Reducing economic inactivity
7. Increasing the proportion of people working in good jobs
8. Increasing the competitiveness of the economy
9. Increasing innovation in our economy
10. Increasing the confidence and capability of people and our communities
11. Increasing economic opportunities for our most deprived communities
12. Reducing underemployment
13. Reducing reoffending
14. Increasing the proportion of graduates moving into employment, or onto further study

*As per draft framework issued at time of print.

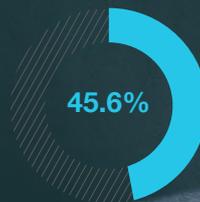
Our Key Achievements

Highlights over the period of our last Corporate Plan 2013-16 included:

1. Raising our success rate in all substantive qualifications to 74.6% from 72%.



2. Increasing the proportion of learners in employment six months after completing their qualification at Belfast Met by 5%, from 40.6% to 45.6%.



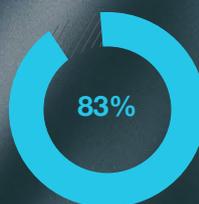
3. Improving our provision of a safe, secure, supportive learning environment by 4%, from 83% to 87%.



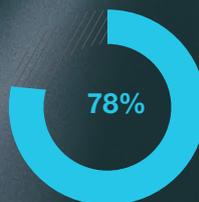
4. Growing the number of learners recommending Belfast Met to others from 90% to 92%.



5. Ensuring that 83% of stakeholders now confirm they have a favourable opinion of the College.



6. Increasing the number of staff who are proud to work for Belfast Met from 69% to 78%.



7. Securing more than £50 million in non-FLU (Funded Learning Unit) income.



8. Obtaining in excess of 70 Skills Awards and student and staff achievements.



Our Corporate Outcomes Framework

Our corporate outcomes framework translates Belfast Met's ambitions into a set of outcomes and supporting key performance indicators that can guide the work of the College over the lifetime of this plan.

The corporate outcomes framework embeds the principles of outcomes based accountability by setting out what we want to achieve for the College as a whole, and how we will understand progress. The outcomes reflect our aspiration for the people of Belfast and beyond, and guide our actions in the short, medium and long term.

The key performance indicators overleaf reflect our four strategic aims: Relevance, Reputation, Response and Reach. They quantify the key changes we would expect to see as our outcomes are achieved.

Our success outcomes will ensure we play an important part in:

- Promoting economic growth
- Creating a highly skilled workforce
- Generating job opportunities
- Widening economic participation



Our Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicator	Baseline 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-20
Learner achievement rates	86.3% (2014-15)	+1%	+0.5%	+0.5%	+0.5%
Learner retention rates	87.7% (2014-15)	+1%	+0.5%	+0.5%	+0.5%
Learner success rates	75.7% (2014-15)	75%	75.5%	76%	76.5%
% of learners employed or in further study after training upon completion of a course at Belfast Met	45.6% in employment and 33.7% in learning six months after completion (2013-14)	Baseline	+0.5%	+0.5%	+0.5%
% of teachers appraised as providing good or better teaching and learning experiences	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Students' overall satisfaction	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
Stakeholders' overall satisfaction	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%
Maintain levels of inclusion across Section 75 categories	30.4% (2014-15)	30%	30%	30%	30%
Live within our budget allocation	Breakeven	Breakeven	Breakeven	Breakeven	Breakeven
Growth in non-FLU (Funded Learning Unit) income.	Approx. £18 million per annum	+1.5%	+1.5%	+1.0%	+1.0%
Investment in IT/estate/staff development	Baseline	Increased level of student and staff satisfaction			



**Alastair Hamilton,
Chief Executive,
Invest Northern Ireland**

The availability of a highly skilled and educated workforce continues to be our biggest unique selling point when competing for inward investment. Time and again businesses cite this strength as the reason they chose to locate in Northern Ireland. Added to that, the ability for companies to work with our colleges to develop workplace based, higher level apprenticeships is another real strength. Belfast Met has met, and continues to meet this need to a very high standard.



Our Enablers

The aspirations and ambitions of our 'Leading the City to Work' plan for 2016–20 will only be realised if the College is appropriately supported and resourced to deliver the full range of ambitions outlined in the plan. We have identified four enablers, or areas of overarching operational activity, which cut across all or most of the components of our vision and mission.

1. People
2. Finance
3. Management and Governance
4. Estate and Infrastructure

People

The core strength of our college is its people – academics and professionals. We recognise the importance and value of attracting the best people to work at Belfast Met, and indeed see this as one of the most significant drivers of our future success.

Under the Belfast Met excellence agenda we aim to deliver the best possible outcomes for our learners, through our people and processes.

Underpinning this enabler are the following objectives:

- Attract, develop and retain the best talent in a competitive environment.
- Build exceptional leaders at all levels throughout the organisation.
- Develop and implement an integrated internal and external communications and engagement framework.
- Embed a robust performance management framework with quantifiable targets for all staff.
- Embed our corporate values to shape and define the culture of our college.
- Develop and implement key policies and plans to support positive cultural transformation.



Finance

The College has a strong track record of sound financial management that has positioned us strongly for the current operating environment. We will achieve a financially sustainable business model through co-ordination of budget setting and monitoring processes and provision of reports and analysis on financial performance and viability.

Underpinning this enabler are the following objectives:

- Meet the targets set by our funding Department and live within our budget allocation.
- Secure and protect recurrent grant income – recruit, retain and ensure success of FE and HE learners and seek to be funded at an appropriate level to deliver this provision.

- Increase income from non-recurrent grant sources, maximising the contribution to College overheads and using this to further the College’s strategic objectives and investment priorities.
- Operate with a strong budgetary control framework, understood by managers, and meet our contractual obligations in the Financial Memorandum.
- Promote innovation and entrepreneurship within an efficient and effective organisation.

Management & Governance

This enabler focuses on providing assurance that the College is well governed, well led and well managed. The College has a range of management and governance processes which facilitate its smooth running, encourage best practice, ensure compliance with legal requirements and achieve value for money. The Governing Body guides the strategic direction of the College and agrees and approves its corporate plan.

Underpinning this enabler are the following objectives:

- Maintain and strengthen the internal control environment and measures to prevent fraud.
- Fulfil all statutory and moral obligations regarding the health and safety of our learners, staff, visitors and the wider community.
- Maintain effective strategic and operational planning, performance measurement and risk management processes and documentation.

Estate & Infrastructure

This enabler is focused on ensuring that we are able to provide a high quality, accessible and sustainable infrastructure which meets the needs of all our learners, and that we can respond flexibly to market opportunities and changes in requirements.

It provides assurance regarding the ongoing investment and maintenance of the physical and technological infrastructure and reviews whether we are meeting the needs of future generations.

Underpinning this enabler are the following objectives:

- Consistently provide stimulating and highly functional spaces that meet the needs of our learners, staff and wider stakeholders.
- Unlock and maximise the value of the College estate through rationalising the estate and improving space utilisation.
- Manage the College assets to ensure compliance with legislative/statutory requirements and best practice.
- Assess, implement and maintain enabling technologies to ensure that the College is able to support future growth and take advantage of relevant innovations.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting

The delivery of the Belfast Met Corporate Plan is monitored by the Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body through quarterly management reports produced by the Executive Leadership Team. These reports provide updates on performance against our key performance indicators and assess whether outcomes have been improved for particular customers.

To supplement our corporate outcomes framework a number of accompanying business plan targets are agreed with academic and support departments annually, with performance reviewed at monthly meetings held with senior management.

Each year Belfast Met publishes an Annual Report of Activities and Accounts, as well as an Impact Statement.

Equality Considerations

Belfast Met is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations. The policies and programmes outlined in this corporate plan are subject to equality screening, and if appropriate, full equality impact assessments (EQIA) as outlined in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.



For additional copies of this publication, or to request alternative formats (large print, Braille, tape or in translation) please contact the College's Corporate Development Department on 028 9026 5047.

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