

Industry Focused Career Ready

INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2022-2024



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Our Industry Engagement Strategic Vision:

To provide an industry focused service and offer that enables industry collaboration, innovation and knowledge transfer, to meet skills gaps and support the creation of career opportunities, resulting in mutual business growth and success

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Introduction

As Reaseheath College celebrates our Centenary year, we also celebrate 100 years of partnership working with industry to address the emerging challenges of adapting, and innovating, to ensure the sectors we serve grow and increase in productivity. Industry partnerships have always been firmly rooted at the core of our mission and our provision, and this is even more so now.

The Skills for Jobs White Paper (January 2021) clearly identifies the current challenges faced by industry when it states:

'We are at a crossroads for our country. As we deal with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, meet our commitment for net-zero by 2050, and embrace the new opportunities that exiting the European Union brings, improving the skills of people across the country will be critical to our future success.'

With a strong commitment to:

'Putting employers at the heart of the system so that education and training leads to jobs that can improve productivity and fill skills gaps.'

The White Paper articulates that this will be achieved by:

'Using the national system of employer-led standards created for apprenticeships, we will ensure employers have a central role in designing and developing qualifications and training. Employers will also be put at the heart of identifying skills needs and helping to shape local provision through close working with colleges and other providers; we will make strategic development funding available to colleges to support this.'

Reaseheath College embraced the Apprenticeship Reforms and were an early

adopter of the Apprenticeship Standards. Through collaborative working with businesses, we established a model for developing the delivery of apprenticeships and managing business relationships that has successfully resulted in significant growth in the range, volume, and size of businesses we engage with, in line with our Strategic Plan. This approach enabled us to positively influence the process, funding decisions, and development of the Standards and Assessment Plans.

Furthermore, sustainability and the 'Green Agenda' is fast becoming a key priority for businesses, both large and small, across all sectors. Engagement in this agenda is vital to ensure they continue to compete in a local, regional, national and global market. Innovation, research, and investment in solutions to address decarbonisation and climate change offer a range of benefits, and our industry and sector partners are ideally positioned to engage and lead on this agenda. We will work with industry and key stakeholders to ensure that our sector is strongly represented, and more crucially, involved in finding the solutions to support the Governments targets.

We will use our experience, resources, technology and skills to support industry to find solutions to these challenges and address the current and emerging skills gaps. Through active involvement in opportunities including the Local Skills Improvement Plans, Skills Development Fund and Institute of Technology, we will support the Government vision for education, and build on our engagement and relationships with industry, key partners, and stakeholders to realise our vision for Industry Engagement.



Guiding Principles:

Our guiding principles will enable a whole College approach to engaging with industry, ensuring that we remain true to our mission and values. Our guiding principles will ensure that businesses experience a high-quality service, enabling them to influence the broader curriculum and service offer to meet their needs, address skills gaps, support innovation, growth, and productivity.

- **Mission Relevant** – we will focus engagement on businesses that are relevant to supporting our mission and values, particularly in relation to the Green Agenda. We recognise and value the diverse nature of the industry that we serve and aim to reflect this in the size and type of business that we engage with, and their geographical locations. Through this approach we will ensure that we develop our offer and services to address the skills and knowledge gaps within the industry, enable innovation, nurture new business entrants, and support the development of career opportunities and progression routes within the industry.
- **Financial Sustainability** – the financial viability of our offer and services is essential to continue our investment in new and emerging technologies, and our staffing and physical resources. Through this investment we are able to sustain the provision of a high quality, leading edge, industry standard service for our businesses, and outstanding teaching and learning experience for our students and apprentices.

- **Clear Communication** – our strategy is wholly reliant on developing strong, interdependent relationships with industry, and in particular key business partners. In order to do this, there must be trust and integrity in the partnership with clear shared goals and outcomes. Our approach to business relationship management will be based on honest, transparent, and open communication, with regular 'temperature checks' to measure the success of this approach.
- **Organic Growth** – with pressures on funding increasing more every year, and the additional pressures that this places on the existing staffing structure within the college, a key focus in our approach to financial and business growth will be to develop our offer to maximise the support and provision we provide for our existing business base, and their supply chain.
- **Excellence** – delivering excellence in relationship management and our services for business is vital in creating and sustaining our reputation within the land-based and education sector as the specialists in our field. This will support our vision to be at the leading edge of developments, innovation and teaching and learning within our sector.

Strategic Priorities

This strategy clearly sets out how we will develop and implement our approach to identify and collaborate with businesses/partners, industry and sector bodies, key stakeholders, and education partners. We will support and work with industry to adapt and take advantage of the opportunities that will emerge over the coming years, driving business growth, productivity, and sustainability within the land-based and associated sectors that we serve, and over time developing greater interdependency.

In sharing this vision, we will ensure that our curriculum offer, delivery models and staff are focused to achieving our key aims, and that our business partners, stakeholders, and the industry have a clear understanding of our commitment, the curriculum and service offer, and our approach to collaborating effectively to achieve this vision.

“Zero-emission engine technologies are evolving rapidly as First Bus invests in greener fleets to reduce carbon and improve air quality.”

Ian Warr
First Bus Engineering Director



Strategic Priority 1

Create a Business Hub to establish a cohesive, visible, and accessible employer offer and service, providing a conduit for industry and education collaboration.

- **Develop a physical Business Hub at CentrePoint** Providing a high tech, accessible collaboration zone that promotes and facilitates industry collaboration between businesses, industry stakeholders, students/apprentices, and education partners. The Business Hub will offer industry facilities for informal and formal face to face, and online, engagement as well as state of the art conferencing opportunities.
- **Refocus and strengthen the Business Development Team** Bring together all Business Development activities and roles across the college, including full cost, projects, research and innovation and apprenticeships, and restructure the team. By refocusing the new team this will provide a single point of access for industry, enable clarity in the promotion and cross selling of our offer, providing a whole business approach to employers. Furthermore, through bringing together all industry facing relationship management this supports the capture of industry needs.
- **Engage with industry to establish the service that they want from the Business Hub** Regularly meet with industry through Sectoral Working Groups, Business Forums, and quality assurance interventions to continuously expand, develop and improve our services.
- **Promote a clear curriculum and service offer** Externally facing staff able to effectively articulate our offer and services and signpost businesses to access the support they require.
- **Provide an informed, clear information, advice, and guidance service**, that signposts businesses to support they can access via the college or external partners, including access to apprenticeships, T Level Placements, grant schemes, business growth support, and research and innovation solutions.

- **Develop and implement a Business Targeted Communication Plan** to effectively promote our offer and services, highlighting opportunities for engagement, business and individual successes, collaborative business opportunities and events to share the outputs of scholarly activity. Through a Targeted Communications Plan, our approach will be to consider our audience, their identified preference for communicating, and the most effective channel of delivery. The Plan will include the development and usage of our social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and especially focused to the use of LinkedIn to promote our offer and services to business and industry, support Government initiatives and agenda, and endorse employers that we actively work with. Termly Business Hub Newsletters will be produced providing an update on curriculum developments, estate, and facility changes, promoting opportunities for engagement in webinars and Business Forums, and providing signposting to industry networks, when relevant, to support government changes to the industry.
- **Development of a Business Hub micro website** will provide employers with information, advice and guidance on our full curriculum offer and Business Hub services, including access to Business Hub Newsletters, recordings of webinars, press releases. There will be a facility for businesses to make direct enquiries and requests for support and information.
- **Key Performance Indicators** Established with partners to enable us to measure through a clear and transparent process the effectiveness of the services that we offer and identify areas for development and new services. We will closely align our KPI's to the emerging Government FE Accountability and Funding Reforms that will support us to capture and measure how well our curriculum offer meets the needs of the economy.



Strategic Priority 2

Provide an effective account management service that delivers a high-quality, valued experience for our business partners and key stakeholders, and enables us to have a targeted approach to the businesses that we engage with and the way in which we engage.

- **Develop and implement a Business Account Management Plan** to ensure a high quality and consistent approach to engaging with businesses and industry partners. How our Business Development Team engages and communicates with individual businesses, the level of information and frequency will be individualised and determined by a range of key factors that will be identified through discussion with them. This will ensure that our approach is in line with business needs and requirements, whilst also keeping them informed of opportunities and developments within the college and sector.
- **Staff Development** is vital to ensuring the quality and effectiveness of this service. Staff within the team will be responsible for specific sectors and a programme of regular team meetings and CPD will be established

to ensure they continue to maintain their knowledge and understanding of the sector, sectoral developments, and our offer and services. As part of the CPD programme industry placements and engagement in curriculum meetings and activities will be a key focus, as well as sector conferences and networking opportunities.

- **Develop a robust CRM system** to underpin, support, inform and analyse our engagement with business and industry. Through this mechanism we will ensure that all business activity is captured and reported upon, enabling a clear understanding of the relationship with the business, sector priorities and areas of opportunity, and preferred communication methods.
- **Key Performance Indicators established** with partners, specific to the services the team offer, to enable us to measure through a clear and transparent process the effectiveness of the team, identifying areas for team and individual development, as well as good practice.

JCB have 22 plants on four continents and more than 750 dealers around the world

Strategic Priority 3

Actively engage business partners and key stakeholders in the co-creation, design and delivery of our curriculum offer.

- **Implement a programme of Termly Sectoral Working Groups** aimed at engaging key leading industry businesses and partners in the review and development of our curriculum offer, to ensure that the actions and decisions of the college meet the needs of industry.
- **Implement a series of Termly Business Forums** to engage with the wider sector, to provide the opportunity for industry updates relevant to their sector, cross networking opportunities, presentations from guest speakers, and an update on college developments in curriculum and estate.
- **Identify key partners for each sector** to engage with and support the strategic direction of the college through shaping and informing bids, and their implementation. The Skills Development Fund and Institute of Technology will be used to shape how our partnership approach evolves and transforms the way in which our curriculum and estate offer develops.

- **Develop a series of Industry Masterclasses** incorporated into our curriculum delivery at all levels. By engaging industry in the delivery of our provision, we are exposing our students and apprentices to current 'industry standard' best practice, providing opportunities for industry/student joint working, developing employability skills, and showcasing our students and apprentices to industry.
- **Integrate strong industry test and challenge into our offer** through the engagement of industry partners in identifying, developing, and monitoring the quality standards that we use to measure success. By closely aligning our KPI's to the emerging Government FE Accountability and Funding Reforms we will capture and measure how well our curriculum offer meets the needs of the economy and use this with industry to inform our curriculum offer.

“ I have been particularly impressed at how Reaseheath College aligns its equine courses to match what employers want by interconnecting with the equestrian community in the north west, particularly with its employers and industry bodies. ”

James Hick
CEO of The British Horse Society

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Strategic Priority 4

To influence the local, regional, and national agenda for skills development on behalf of our businesses, partners and stakeholders.

- **Complete a mapping exercise to identify current engagement levels with Industry bodies, networks, strategic and operational meetings, and relevant groups.** These will include Landex, AHDB, TIAH, IAGRE, SDT, Cheshire & Warrington LEP, and the Cheshire Chambers of Commerce. We will ensure representation at key industry networks and meetings, to represent industry and the education sector, inform and influence policy and maximise opportunities to secure funding to address the skills gaps in the landbased sector.

- **Promote cross College awareness and understanding of Labour Market Intelligence** to inform and influence strategic discussions with external partners and sector bodies, and the long-term college business planning process ensuring facilities, technology and staff are developed to meet the ever-changing needs of the industry.
- **Share and discuss sector LMI data and trend analysis with industry and partners** to test strategic thinking, to support robust decision making and influence the direction of travel and development of college offer, facilities, and staff resource.
- **Establish transparent, inclusive, and relevant mechanisms for disseminating information** to the industry, advising on activities, and informing on policy change.

“ Reaseheath are an outstanding example of employer and training provider partnership which is enabling businesses to upskills and deliver innovation, productivity and business growth. ”

Rebecca Darch
SC Learning & Development Consultant UK



Strategic Priority 5

Promote our facilities and expertise as an active research facility providing innovative solutions to industry challenges, development of new products and enabling knowledge transfer

- **Promote the facilities, experience and skills through our Institute of Sustainability and Food Innovation (IoSFI)** as the vehicle to drive landbased innovation and research projects. IoSFI will provide opportunities for industry to access and engage with research funding to explore innovative solutions to the challenges facing the sector, to collaborate with partners and students to investigate and identify solutions and provide an active test bed for trials.
- **Establish a schedule of events, webinars, and open days** to provide mechanisms, opportunities, and events to share the outputs of scholarly activity, foster connections and collaborative opportunities with industry to develop scholarship and curriculum
- **Promote, through a Targeted Communications Plan,** scholarly activity and collaboration opportunities and successes, our facilities, and events.

The Lely Astronaut A5, is a high specification, leading-edge piece of equipment



Notes



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Industry Engagement

Strategy : 2022-2024

Built through Trust, Delivered in Partnership

This Industry Engagement Strategy aligns with existing College strategic and operational plans, including:

Strategic Plan 2022-2024

Curriculum Offer

People Strategy

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy

UCR Strategy

Environment and Estates Strategy