



BMet
HIGHER
EDUCATION
STRATEGY
2020-23



BMet
Inspiring futures, realising dreams.



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Foreword

Birmingham Metropolitan College is a Birmingham focused College group made up of three colleges and it provides a distinct place to study Higher Education (HE) with a specialist focus at each of the colleges.

James Watt: Electronic Engineering, Manufacturing Engineering and Media and Communication

Matthew Boulton: Computing, Art and Design, Law and Practice, Business, Dental Technology, Podiatry and Post Compulsory Education

Sutton Coldfield: Computing, Child and Youth Studies, Children and Young People, Public Services, Sport and Exercise Science, Football Business Management and Coaching

Our strategic plan provides a framework to enable progress in providing excellent learning opportunities within our specialist areas, promoting inclusivity and a long-lasting commitment to social mobility and an increased contribution to skills development through our close bonds at the heart of Birmingham to serve the needs of Birmingham and the City Region.

We have built our vision upon four core strategic goals. The first, to be a significant contributor to skills development in the City Region and align to the Strategic Economic Plan to build a skilled work force. We will respond to this by launching and developing 'Industry Centres of Excellence', building on our strength in the field of Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering and Rail, Creative and Digital, Medical and Life Sciences, Business Professional and Financial Services.

The second of our core goals is the provision of excellence in education and student experience as measured by the student satisfaction and the National Student Survey. We commit to increasing the number of students achieving higher level awards and the reduction of the overall non-completion rate and we aim to achieve a positive graduate destination rate.

Our third goal is widening access and participation to a diverse cohort of learners from all backgrounds to enable them to reach their potential. Inclusion is firmly embedded into our practice and we are committed to the agenda of social mobility.

Our fourth goal, to provide a dynamic and sustainable offer by developing and investing in a thriving higher level skills provision and creating an attractive course portfolio that provides value for money contributing to growth in market share and student numbers.

We will focus on areas of skill development, quality of teaching and learning, student experience and wellbeing, inclusion and growth showcasing innovative interdisciplinary work and great achievements.

Anna Jackson
Vice Principal, Sutton Coldfield College
Higher Education Lead

Vision and Values

Our vision

Be recognised as distinctive in our specialist fields by providing a high-quality learning environment designed to respond to industry-related skills demands and serve the needs of the local community and regional priorities.

We have built our vision and strategic plan on extensive consultation with colleagues, students and regional stakeholders. This approach has ensured a shared creation of ideas and allowed us to refine and develop the key strategic priorities that we have set out.

We are a college with strong values and our values underpin everything we do. We are committed to excellence, as measured by the industry and regulatory standards. We encourage resilience, independence, creativity, innovation and enterprise.

We will be ambitious, focused and distinctive, celebrated for our inclusivity. Our college is ideally positioned to help address many of the challenges faced by the region and this plan sets out our vision of how we will make this happen.

Our values

Academic Excellence

We foster an environment where our students achieve their full potential through raising aspirations.

Environment and Infrastructure

We provide a high-quality learning environment underpinned by industry related activity and delivered by highly qualified staff.

Inclusion and Social Mobility

We celebrate diversity and inclusion and achieving high levels of progression.

Innovation

We are conscious to explore new ideas to improve through evidence-based practice.

Research and Scholarship

We promote life-long learning to continually develop and evidence our research and professional practice.

Collaboration and Partnership

We are committed to long term collaborations of shared goals and to be a business partner of choice.

We are three colleges, one team



A photograph of a person wearing a black graduation cap with a blue tassel. Their hands are clasped together in front of them. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. The text "Strategic goals" is centered in white, bold font.

Strategic goals

Goal 1

Significant contributor to skills development in Birmingham and the City Region

Higher Level Skills courses at the College and its links with innovation play a crucial role in providing the highly skilled workforce that the region requires, to contribute to economic growth and prosperity.

Our future organisational success will be built upon mobilising even more effectively the creativity, skills and talents of all our students. We will achieve this by using our knowledge and understanding and skills to build economic strength and social harmony. We will be recognised in the region as setting a new benchmark for being a significant contributor to skilled workforce at the regional and city level.

Our new vision will bring enormous benefits to students, staff and industry partners. To deliver these benefits we will be developing 'Industry Centres of Excellence' at each College site as our single institution-wide focus over the next three years. Through the centres, our students will be able to work closely with our industry partners and staff on work-based learning opportunities, applying their learning and skills in real-world environments.

Five Key Sectors

1. Engineering, Rail and Built Environments
2. Advanced Manufacturing
3. Creative and Digital
4. Medical and Life Sciences
5. Business Professional and Financial Services

Over the next three years our **key priorities** will be:

1. **Extending collaboration with industry partners**
To engender a culture and model of co-creation with students and industry partners to co-deliver higher level skills and higher apprenticeship provision that maximises our students' potential and prepares them for employment.
2. **Creating career progression pathways**
To develop career progression pathways in the specialism key growth sector areas of higher level skills, building on the strength of the College to meet present and future employment needs. Developing new courses and investing in established courses.

3. Meeting future employer and skills needs

To grow the number of students who leave with the knowledge and skills that will contribute to the local economy and community to drive productivity and prosperity.

We will **focus on:**

- Enhancing strategic partnerships and collaboration with regional employers and the West Midlands Combined Authority to develop new opportunities for our students to progress to graduate level employment and take up highly skilled jobs.
- Accelerating the development of new provision aligned to skills demand of the region, reflecting the quality and breadth of our academic expertise.
- Defining and implementing integrated employability support for our students by expanding the industry work-placements and creating internship opportunities, equipping our students with entrepreneurial skills to optimise their employment prospects.



Goal 2

Excellence in Education and Student Experience

Our ambition is to provide an accessible and distinctive education by providing a welcoming, well maintained, equipped and inclusive environment where our students are able to succeed in their specialist course and to flourish as a community in a relaxing and social environment.

Our aim is to develop inspirational and stimulating teaching, learning and assessment practice to meet the needs of the diverse student population at the College.

An area of focus will be to continue to develop engaging and high quality teaching and for our talented academic staff to engage in scholarly activity, research and professional development that supports innovation in their specialist field.

Over the next three years our key priorities will be:

- 1. Increasing the number of students achieving and progressing**
To increase the number of students achieving higher level awards, improve in year progression and reduce the overall non-completion rate.
- 2. Enhancing the quality of our teaching**
To support innovative teaching methods through our revised teaching and learning strategy, contributing to the development of our student's graduate skills, attitudes, and personal competencies.
- 3. Increasing personalised support for our students**
To enhance the ways in which we provide student support and pastoral care to ensure the well-being of our students. As part of our learning experience, to provide the support, feedback, infrastructure and contact hours our students need to boost their success.
- 4. Transforming the student experience**
To embed an inclusive and professional approach in our practice, giving students a greater voice, enhancing their engagement and sense of belonging at the College and to create an attractive, accessible and vibrant environment.
- 5. Generating new opportunities for research and scholarship**
To further enhance the culture of scholarship and professional development in our institution, supporting areas of emerging research and innovation, collaboration and exchange of knowledge with our industry and select HEI partners.

We will focus on:

- Articulating a pedagogy that puts course design and student work at its heart and applying evidence-based teaching and learning practice that will drive student progress and achievement. Designing an effective interaction between student and staff to encourage, inform and propel student's work.
- Promoting supportive learning environments through the tutorial system ensuring ongoing academic support for all students to achieve their full potential. In addition, strengthening our pastoral support and focus on student well-being to provide the welfare care to promote independent and confident students who can flourish.
- Creating a welcoming student-centred higher education 'heart' to our institution. Carrying out refurbishment projects to create 'Higher Education Zones' at each college site to provide high-quality space for education and research, well maintained and fit for purpose.
- Supporting high-quality research and scholarship opportunities, focusing on career development and enhanced organisational performance through progressive education, training and development programmes for staff.
- Actively involving and engaging with students in their learning and responding positively to their voice.
- Ensuring teaching and learning is underpinned by excellent graduate and employability skills that support students to succeed.

Goal 3

Champion Social Mobility and Widening Participation

We value being a diverse organisation and are highly dedicated to enhancing widening participation and social mobility through higher education. We are committed to delivering a fairer society in which any student regardless of their background has the opportunity to transform their lives through accessing an outstanding learning experience at the College.

Our ambition and effort to narrow demographic gaps in student access, participation, retention and success, will make social mobility and inclusiveness a core strategic goal for our institution. We champion widening participation by shaping an inclusive environment through partnerships and innovative approaches.

We will build on our record of inclusion by breaking down barriers to higher education and boundaries to learning. We will engage students from all backgrounds in a life changing experience and education, irrespective of their background, to reach their potential with outstanding outcomes and employability.

Over the next three years our key priorities will be:

1. Widening access through active partnerships and innovative approaches

To widen access at BMet for all student groups with the ability and aspiration to engage with higher education, particularly, students from low participation neighbourhoods; mature students; and students from lower socio-economic groups.

2. Engagement and involvement in communities

To strengthen our social responsibility work in the community by raising aspirations and increase the recruitment of students from communities that do not traditionally attend a university and live in deprived postcode areas.

3. Embedding diversity and inclusion in our practice

To enable students to thrive and progress irrespective of their background, disability, faith, gender, race and sexual orientation.

We will focus on:

- Developing and implementing a college wide Access to Study scheme and work with schools, internal students and the community to ensure greater access to higher education for students from a diverse background who traditionally would not take up higher education.
- Enhancing our partnership with community groups and students from a diverse background to champion a range of initiatives that drives recruitment from deprived areas of our community into high quality academic courses at the College.
- Providing students, from all backgrounds, with access to learning opportunities outside their course, and supporting them in articulating their achievements and success through and beyond their life at the College.



Goal 4

Provide a dynamic and sustainable offer through developing a thriving higher level skills provision

Historically Birmingham has been known as the 'Workshop of the World', now the challenge is to create jobs, enhance skills, develop prosperity and drive economic growth. As a partner of Birmingham, we are a vital provider of skilled workforce, enterprise, graduate talent and cultural engagement.

We are perfectly placed and play a vital role in delivering inclusive growth by creating specialist education and training courses and accelerating the take up of higher level apprenticeships. We aim for students to have more choices to shape their lives by offering a vibrant and industry led portfolio of courses. This will enable us to build upon our influential role in the development and prosperity of our region.

Responding to identified skills gaps our investment in developing the 'Industry Centres of Excellence', offering different entry routes and introduction of new specialist subjects aligned to skills demand in the region, will attract a diverse student body and strengthen growth in overall student numbers. In turn this will support significant market share growth and subsequent financial sustainability of the College.

Over the next three years our **key priorities** will be:

- 1. Refreshing the academic portfolio on offer at BMet**
To increase our market share by providing an academic portfolio that is, relevant, current and delivered in ways that make it accessible to prospective students in collaboration with our industry partners.
- 2. Investing in developing the Industry Centres of Excellence**
To accelerate developing an attractive and diverse portfolio of higher level skills and higher apprenticeships specialist courses, responsive to the skills need of regional economy.
- 3. Increase in student numbers and share of the market**
To broaden our recruitment strategies and provide different entry routes that respond to local and regional needs.
- 4. Enhancing partnership and collaborative agreements**
To focus on growing and developing our areas of specialism set out in our strategy.

We will **focus on:**

- Creating greater industry and commercial collaborations with key business partners in the region to understand future workforce and graduate demands and maximise opportunities for accreditation by sector-recognised leading bodies.
- Introducing new subjects and employer sponsored courses to our curriculum portfolio where there is a clear sector need aligned to the areas of specialism supported by the Industry Centres of Excellence and that will prepare our students for the future.
- Offering different routes to study and accelerate our intake in higher level skills and apprenticeship courses to underpin and align to local and regional priorities equipping our students with the skills and knowledge that employers need.



Our measures of success at a glance

To gauge our progress towards our vision, we have identified following KPI's to measure our success. We aim to achieve these by 2023 and will monitor them annually and quarterly through more specific measures.

Strategy Area	Objective	KPI
Skills Development	Enhance strategic partnerships with regional employers and WMCA	Percentage increase in collaborative partnerships
	Implement the HE Employability strategy	Proportion of students achieving graduate level employment
Education & Student Experience	Implement the HE TLA strategy, Research and Scholarship Framework and Quality Improvement Plan	Student continuation
	Transform student experience	Proportion of Bmet students gaining their Award
		Percentage increase in staff taking up research and scholarly activity
		Successful TEF submission
		Performance in National Student Survey
Social Mobility & Widening Participation	Implement 'Access to Study' scheme	Percentage increase in access of underrepresented students
Dynamic & Sustainable Offer	Develop Industry Centres of Excellence	Percentage of courses aligned to Industry Centres of Excellence
	Broaden Recruitment strategy and increase market share	Total students registered on HE courses



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