



# Strategic Plan 2017-20

2-5 Stedham Place, London WC1A 1HU

T: 020 7034 9900 E: [enquiries@aac.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@aac.co.uk) [www.aac.co.uk](http://www.aac.co.uk)  @AoC\_info  Association-of-Colleges

## Introduction

The Association of Colleges (AoC) is the national voice for colleges and exists to promote and support their interests. Everything AoC does is aimed at helping colleges deliver their purpose and to make an impact.

AoC believes that every community should be supported by a strong and successful college, which develops students, delivers relevant skills, and supports stronger communities, social justice, employers and the economy.

Colleges are at the heart of their communities offering world-class education and training which:

- Transforms lives and communities;
- Equips students of all ages and abilities with the knowledge and skills to succeed and achieve their ambitions;
- Provides employers with the highly-skilled and productive workforces they need;
- Sustains strong local economies and vibrant, tolerant communities.

## AoC Vision & Mission

**AoC Vision:** Great colleges transforming lives and communities and meeting employer needs through teaching and learning for student success.

**AoC Mission:** To champion and support the sector by enhancing colleges' reputation, leading policy thinking, influencing decision-makers and advising colleges.

## AoC's Values

*These values will be reviewed by staff in December before being finalised.*

**Transparency** – we are clear about our aims and ambitions, about the work we are doing and about our impact.

**Engagement** – we utilise the breadth of skills and experience across our membership and working with external partners to deliver our work.

**Ambition** – we are ambitious for our members, for better investment in colleges, for students, to achieve our mission.

**Responsiveness** – we listen to what our members want and deliver the most effective and efficient services and support to meet their needs.

**Inclusivity** – we celebrate and value diversity and actively promote equality.

## How we will deliver

We will deliver efficient and effective services through:

**Strong leadership** – Ensuring that our Board and committees work in active partnership with college leaders and represent the diversity of voices of our members and work.

**Clear accountability** – Ensuring that our work is transparent and accountable to our members.

**Collaboration across the sector** – Ensuring that we use the skills and expertise of our members and partner with other organisations across the sector to achieve our aims.

**Clarity on services and opportunities** – Ensuring that our members are clear about the services and opportunities available across the whole AoC group, including paid-for services and those offered by AoC Sport and the Charitable Trust

**Professional and skilled people** – Ensuring we have a strong team of staff in place across the country with the skills and experience to achieve our aims; who are led, managed and developed effectively in line with our values.

## About this Plan

This Plan has four overarching aims, set out below with summary actions which will deliver to those aims. It will provide clarity and transparency to members about the work we do, and reports on achievements and progress will be made regularly to both the AoC Board and to members. Internally, the Plan will be supported by team plans and will inform individual objectives for all staff.

The Plan has a three year horizon, but it is expected that minor changes will be made annually when the Board reviews performance and the external context for our work.

## **Strategic aim 1:**

### **Set the agenda for positive policy changes**

#### **We will do this by:**

- Setting clear, long-term aims, through our policy groups, for improving the post-16 education and training sector.
- Developing long-term policy proposals and priorities across our core policy areas.
- Strengthening relationships with MPs, Peers, officials, councils, business organisations, trade unions, education groups and other relevant partners.
- Utilising the skills and experience of our members and others in the sector in policy development.
- Strengthening research capability, within the organisation and in collaboration with others.
- Working with the Department for Education as well as other Government departments and agencies and local influencers, including Metro Mayors and local enterprise partnerships.
- Developing long-term campaigns in partnership with our members, leveraging our national and local networks and supporters.

## **Strategic aim 2**

### **Develop a high profile and strong reputation for colleges**

#### **We will do this by:**

- Communicating clearly the key roles colleges have and the impact they make in all our messaging, for government, communities, employers and other stakeholders.
- Developing campaigns in collaboration with members which highlight how colleges change lives and communities and sustain inclusive economic growth.
- Maintaining high profile award schemes which celebrate the successes of colleges and students, both past and present, in partnership with the AoC Charitable Trust.
- Raising the awareness level of the work of colleges and their pivotal position in national life amongst stakeholders, media and other communication channels.
- Providing opportunities for members to engage in regional, national and international projects to promote the sector.

## Strategic aim 3

### Deliver expert support, advice and intelligence for members

#### We will do this by:

- Building and maintaining expertise on key sector areas through professional and skilled staff, networks, contacts and external partnerships.
- Supporting governing bodies and management teams with strategic foresight to help them plan and prepare.
- Providing timely and relevant expert advice and the latest intelligence through a range of communication methods.
- Promoting all of our support opportunities for members.
- Facilitating opportunities for members to be able to work together, learn from each other and share best practice with each other and AoC more widely.
- Advising colleges on new opportunities in the UK and overseas.

## Strategic aim 4

### Develop a strong, sustainable, ambitious and transparent representative body for members

#### We will do this by:

- Implementing and monitoring the 2017 [AoC Review recommendations](#) to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of our work.
- Completing follow-on reviews to improve the effectiveness of the work of the AoC Charitable Trust, AoC Create and AoC Sport.
- Providing member feedback opportunities and delivering what members want and need.
- Setting clear measures and targets and reporting on those to the Board regularly and to the members annually.
- Being a financially sustainable organisation through effective and efficient management and working practices.
- Being an employer of choice to recruit and retain high-quality and well-qualified staff who are motivated to succeed.
- Developing our internal intelligence processes and systems to be more efficient and effective.

## AoC's Priorities

The Government's policy agenda is broad and fast-moving. This has two key risks for AoC and for colleges. The first is that our resources are spread very thinly across too many areas of policy work. The second, and related, is that we end up reacting to policy announcements rather than informing and influencing the thinking, development and agreement of new policies.

To address this we have agreed seven policy areas which we will focus our resources on in the next few years. For each we have established a new policy group, consisting of senior leaders from across the college sector. The role of each group is to gather the evidence, carry out the analysis, engage with partners and develop approaches to policy makers which help colleges to influence policies in the future.

Each policy group meets for the first time in the autumn of 2017 and each will develop a statement of intent to frame and focus its work. As each of the statements is developed we will incorporate them into this Plan.



*(To be completed by National Policy Groups)*

Policy Group	Key Policy 'asks'
Accountability and inspection	
Apprenticeships	
Curriculum reform	
Devolution	
English and maths	
Mental health and well-being	
Securing a flourishing sector	

## Success measures – balanced scorecard

These measures will form the basis of the annual report to the AoC Board and members, alongside a narrative report on progress against the strategic aims.

Measure	Baseline measure
<b>External Policy</b>	
Monetary value of policy changes achieved	New measure
Policy and/or implementation changes achieved in each priority area	New measure
Perceptions of AoC and colleges with key stakeholders	New measure
<b>Membership</b>	
Market penetration achieved	Currently at or above 93%
Level of participation of members in AoC networks and services	New measure
Satisfaction of principals, chairs and overall membership	2017 – 70% rated AoC as at least 8 out of 10 on overall performance
<b>Finance</b>	
Achievement against annual budget	New measure
Contribution to the reserves each year	New measure
<b>People</b>	
Retention, turnover and absence of staff	Baseline to be supplied
Satisfaction rates of staff measured by staff stating they are proud to work for the organisation	2017 – 94%