Colleges & Employers

Working together to create a highly-skilled workforce
The following companies are featured in this publication:
Introduction

Further education (FE) colleges provide high-quality technical and professional education and training, designed to meet industry needs. They prepare over three million young people and adults with valuable skills for the workplace, helping to develop their career opportunities.

Colleges are inspirational places to learn, with expert teaching staff and industry-standard facilities. From basic skills to postgraduate degrees, colleges offer first-rate academic and vocational teaching in a range of professions, including engineering, hospitality, IT, construction and the creative arts.

A strong and growing economy is in all of our interests, and colleges play a central role in sustaining the recovery – they are the skills powerhouses that drive the local and national economy. Further education colleges across England make sure future workers have the skills employers require, and provide young people with the education and training they need to succeed.

Colleges have staff with teaching qualifications as well as first-hand experience to prepare students for the world of work. Not only are students more likely to get a job, they are more likely to get the right sort of job in the right sort of sector for the local economy.

Some of Britain’s most respected companies, such as Mulberry, BAE Systems and the Met Office, want their staff to have appropriate skills and work with colleges to make this happen. It is achieved in two ways – through designing qualifications specifically for the employer and through businesses working with colleges to inspire students. This relationship boosts aspirations, highlights the importance of employability skills and promotes the different roles available in a range of industries. This publication celebrates the successes of these partnerships and shows how colleges are at the heart of powering this country’s economy.
83% of colleges carry out their own labour market intelligence research.

Employers are more satisfied with...

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Colleges</th>
<th>Universities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>58%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timetabling</td>
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139,200 businesses in England use local colleges to train their staff.

Each college works with an average of 597 businesses to provide training for their staff.

86% of colleges get labour market intelligence from their local enterprise partnership.
Furness College, in Cumbria, is the only college in the country to have a full size nuclear submarine section included in the fabric of its main building. The Training Facility Superb has been developed through a close partnership with BAE Systems Maritime Submarines in response to the demand for skills required to deliver the Astute class hunter killer and the Trident successor ballistic missile submarine programmes.

Apprentices spend a year completing units of the Performing Engineering Operations qualification with a technical certificate, and ensuring that their English and maths skills make them ready for full integration into the submarine business. They return to the college in subsequent years to complete their technical certificates and to progress through Higher National Certificate (HNC) and degree programmes in Engineering.

Furness College has been working with BAE Systems since 1999. This collaborative partnership is outstanding and sets the benchmark for how colleges and employers can work together to ensure that the country has the high-level skills required for future economic prosperity.
From luxury leather goods to steel fixing, Bridgwater College in Somerset has a tradition of working closely with high-profile employers.

For over eight years, internationally-renowned brand Mulberry Group plc has worked in partnership with the college to create and deliver a unique apprenticeship in the manufacture of leather goods. The success of this has led to investment in a second UK factory, providing employment opportunities for local people, many of whom who have been out of work for years.

Beyond the luxury market, Bridgwater College is also working closely with international civil engineering giant Laing O’Rourke to create the UK’s first formal qualifications in steel fixing.

The college’s close proximity to Hinkley Point C, the first nuclear power station to be built in the UK for 25 years, has led to industry investment in a bespoke training facility at the college’s Construction Skills and Innovation Centre. Equipped with industry-standard plant and machinery, this facility enables training to be delivered in a real life working environment, providing a talent pool of work-ready candidates for major UK infrastructure projects.
Leeds College of Building has secured a contract with multinational construction and infrastructure group Balfour Beatty to deliver Level 5 Higher Apprenticeships in the Sustainable Built Environment. The bespoke course includes elements such as advanced measurement of construction, contractual procedures, law, economics, specification and documentation together with civil engineering construction. It has seen the quantity surveying apprentices working on major national projects including the conversion of the Olympic Stadium to a football ground, Crossrail in London and the M60, M25 and M3 motorway improvements.

Professional body recognition and progression to a Level 6 degree is an ongoing part of the process, with close links to the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors an intrinsic part of the plans for the apprentices and the employer.
Newcastle College’s Aviation Academy runs a range of further and higher education courses from Level 3 up to an honours degree. The Academy has a long standing partnership with Newcastle International Airport to ensure the best value and dynamic training for students. They gain experience from working with various agencies and employers to ensure their better understanding of the field of aircraft engineering and the complexities of the aviation environment. Many graduates progress to working at the airport, as well as most of the major airports throughout the UK and the rest of the world. The Academy is also approved by the Civil Aviation Authority to deliver aeronautical engineering basic training courses in accordance with European Aviation Safety Agency regulations.

The Academy is located next to the main runway and gives students a realistic experience of the aviation environment. This involves security awareness, and the team-working strategies they will need to succeed in the industry. These factors combined with the Academy facilities and ground instructional aircraft ensure that the educational package is the ultimate real working environment.
Since 2007, global defence, aerospace and security company BAE Systems has worked collaboratively with Blackpool and The Fylde College to ensure education and training solutions meet the exacting requirements of blue chip companies.

This has produced a multi-award winning Foundation Degree and BSc Honours programme in Project Management, providing BAE Systems and other employers, such as Rolls Royce, with an education programme that is both employer responsive and tuned to their ever demanding requirements.

More recently, this partnership has been extended to include BAE Systems Aerospace Engineering business functions, creating a unique Foundation Degree and BEng (Hons) programme that will provide a developmental path for the company’s aerospace engineers of the future.

These programmes pioneer new standards, embracing both a technical and vocational education.
For the Cheadle and Marple College Network in Stockport, relationships flourish when there are clear benefits for the employer and students. Therefore, they have developed links with some of the biggest finance companies in the UK. Both the college and the businesses understand that having broad and effective relationships can have a positive impact on students and contribute to their professional skills development.

For over five years, Royal Sun Alliance has worked with students particularly interested in finance, providing business mentors to help
students on a one-to-one basis and summer internships. The Royal Bank of Scotland offers similar support and recognises the internal benefits, as part of its own Management Development Programme. This support is mirrored by leading tax, assurance and advisory services firm KPMG who also provide insight days and CV writing masterclasses. ASE Global, a financial company specialising in the automotive industry also offer this. PwC and global financial institution ING (UK Ltd) provide insight days which have helped develop students’ understanding of different career paths that are available.
Strong relationships are key to success

*Bedford College*

Since 2011, Bedford College has worked closely with General Motors (Vauxhall) to deliver apprenticeships in engineering. This has created a strong relationship, which has put the college at the forefront of the engineering apprenticeship trailblazers. Progression from the Level 3 advanced apprenticeship on to the Higher National Certificate/Diploma programmes is actively encouraged by Vauxhall, with around 40% of all engineering apprentices making this step.

This collaborative approach has been based on flexible provision with strong communication between the college and the business being central to it. The work has gone so well that programmes outside the engineering department have been developed. General Motors now takes apprentices in information technology and business, and has recently undertaken Business Improvement Techniques training in the college for 200 new employees.

The digital revolution

*Hackney Community College*

Tech City in East London is known as Europe’s “Digital Capital” and includes thousands of companies, including multinationals such as Google and Amazon. Together, they employ over a quarter of a million skilled workers. However, local people are not accessing the jobs at the rate they should be, and youth unemployment figures are not decreasing in line with the jobs growth. The digital skills shortage is now recognised as the area’s most significant workforce challenge.

Hackney Community College has established a strong relationship with Poke, a digital company and part of the Publicis UK advertising agency, to create a Level 4 Tech City Apprenticeship for the industry.

Poke staff also mentor college students, and have supported other initiatives including the unique Millennial Mentoring pilot, which saw Hackney Community College students working on a live brief alongside counterparts at Austin Community College in Texas.
The Met Office works with Exeter College across a number of faculties and initiatives. Since 2011, they have worked with the college’s Business and IT faculty to deliver Business Administration NVQs and Certificate in Management and Leadership qualifications. These were developed as a result of a Met Office skills audit and mapping exercise, which demonstrated a need for staff with these qualifications.

Beyond developing its own workforce, the Met Office has collaborated with the college to develop the Reach Academy. This sees 65 talented students from across Devon, Somerset and Dorset (and this year Canada and Germany) provided with challenging activities aimed at enriching their academic studies so that they can compete for top university places.

The Met Office support, in terms of resource, time and experiences, gives the college students opportunities to engage in debating, research projects and masterclasses that drive their confidence and aspirations to compete in the sometimes gruelling race for top university places. The Academy aims to develop a mutually beneficial relationship that supports the Met Office in engaging with students across the south-west in a positive and inspiring way.
New College Durham has developed a strong strategic partnership with Beamish Museum, a world-renowned open air museum, telling the story of life in north-east England during the industrial revolution.

For three years, this relationship has developed to provide invaluable experiences. This has included students from the college’s business and management Foundation Degrees and BA Honours programmes working on a live marketing brief to develop a pitch to help the Museum attract more European visitors. Alongside this, carpentry and joinery students work extensively on the site including replacing and refurbishing traditional gates, stable doors and signage.

A commitment to preserving heritage and traditional craft skills through this investment has enabled the continuing restoration and development of Beamish Museum.

The latest collaboration between the college and Beamish Museum is the development of a new Foundation Degree in Cultural Tourism Management, creating a highly skilled workforce for the future who will ensure the continued growth of the heritage sector.
Amersham and Wycombe College has built strong relationships with the internationally renowned Pinewood Studios Group to provide the skills needed to work in the film industry. Together, they have developed a Level 3 Pinewood Diploma, which provides access to the breadth of knowledge and experience held by one of the world leaders in film and television studio facilities. The course covers units that give participants an insight into the far-reaching responsibilities that being a studio manager entails.

The college has worked closely with the studio to develop a qualification that provides the experience and expertise needed by the company, as well as the wider sector. The 14-month qualification covers topics such as managing relationships, business models, procurement and working with costs and budgets, thus providing transferable skills.
At a time of high youth unemployment, Boots UK believes that businesses have a crucial role to play in boosting the skills, aspirations and confidence of young people. They work closely with Central College Nottingham as part of its StepIn2Boots Apprenticeship programme, which supports young people aged 16 to 18 into a career in science, IT or engineering.

Currently at the college there are apprentices from Boots UK undertaking a two-year Level 3 BTEC course in Applied Science. They also have apprentices undertaking a four-year course, and they are awarded a Level 4 Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Electronic Engineering.

The relationship built with the science and engineering department allows the business to trust that its apprentices are in a great learning environment and that they will continue to succeed and develop during and beyond their apprenticeship at Boots UK.
Being the only college in Europe to offer degree courses in wine making in English, Plumpton College, works with a number of large businesses to build their students experiences. Based in Sussex, they have set up a strong relationship with Marks & Spencer, not only to distribute the wine produced from the college’s vineyard but also through sponsoring a student each year. Marks & Spencer offer unique development opportunities through this scheme. Along with paying for their fees, the student is responsible for developing a special wine, which is sold in flagship stores once prepared. Alongside producing the wine, the student works with different areas in the company to understand and develop the marketing, business plans and distribution channels.
Aviva Premiership rugby team, the Newcastle Falcons, developed a rugby academy in partnership with Hartlepool Sixth Form College three years ago. The strength of this relationship is the focus on the individual’s needs, providing opportunities for players to stay in their local area, rather than making them move away from home at such a young age. The college’s aim is to get the individuals to the destination they are capable of reaching. The relationship they have established with the Falcons is central to meeting this aim.
**References**

Key Facts 2014/15, Association of Colleges  
Catch 16-24, UK Commission for Employment and Skills  
Apprenticeship trailblazers – Groups of employers working together to design apprenticeship standards and assessment approaches to make them world class.