

Solihull College & University Centre
and Stratford-upon-Avon College

CURRICULUM STRATEGY

Shaping the Educational Landscape



Solihull College
& University Centre

Stratford-upon-Avon
College





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Foreword

As we embark on this journey of redefining our curriculum strategy, we find ourselves navigating through a landscape that is shrouded in uncertainty. In the past, our curriculum strategy has been a beacon of clarity, seamlessly integrated into our overarching strategic plan. However, the current state of the Further Education terrain is marked by a fog of reform – some changes have already unfolded, some are in progress, and others loom on the horizon. The political environment adds an extra layer of unpredictability, leaving us uncertain about the contours of future reforms.

In the midst of this complexity, we must also navigate the intricate web of stakeholders. From the West Midlands Combined Authority to the strategic plans of Stratford and Solihull Councils, and the demands and regional dynamics of Greater Birmingham and Solihull, and Coventry and Warwickshire – each exerts its influence on our institution. Our own strategic plan and accountability agreement statement further contribute to the tapestry of considerations that shape our path forward.

Yet, amidst this intricate web of influences, one constant remains – our learners. Seated at the very heart of our endeavours, they inspire us to distil this complexity into a clear strategy that resonates with their needs and aspirations. Our commitment is resolute: to focus on curriculum over qualifications, ensuring that learners not only attain at least the national standard of Level 2 in English and maths but also strive towards the government's imperative for as many adults as possible to hold at least a Level 3 qualification.

This strategy underscores our unwavering dedication to preparing learners with the essential skills required for success in life. Regardless of funding, age, or the qualification they pursue, whether developing low or high-priority skills, every learner can expect a commitment from us. This commitment is reflected in the core principles outlined in our strategy – a compass guiding our efforts to provide a robust and relevant educational experience.

In essence, this strategy embodies our pledge to learners. It serves as a testament to our adaptability in a shifting landscape, our responsiveness to stakeholder expectations, and, most importantly, our steadfast focus on the individuals whom we are here to serve. Our commitment to excellence and the holistic development of our learners remains unwavering. Together, let us forge ahead into this dynamic future, confident in our collective ability to shape the educational landscape and empower our learners to thrive in an ever-evolving world.



Dr Rebecca Gater
Principal & Chief Executive

Our student promise

At the heart of the Curriculum Strategy is a set of six promises to every learner. These promises underpin everything our curriculum does across all provision types.

We will:

- 1** Ensure that your programme is shaped by employers and stakeholders, and leads to a sustainable career
- 2** Equip you with the skills that are essential to work and life, ensuring you are prepared to adapt to a fast-changing world
- 3** Support you to achieve at least a Level 3 programme and develop your English and Maths skills throughout your programme (including achievements in both Level 2 English and Maths as required) to maximise your future earning potential
- 4** Support your personal development to become an engaged citizen
- 5** Enable you to master skills through participation in a wide-ranging programme of skills competitions
- 6** Provide you with the skills, knowledge, behaviours and support you need to achieve your further study and career ambitions.

Full Time Programmes (16-18 Year Olds)

Types of provision covered include **A-Levels, T Levels, Vocational Programmes** and **Supported Internships**.

To deliver on the promises, all Full Time Programmes for 16-18 year olds will be organised around five curriculum strands. Each strand lists the activities that learners will undertake during their programme. These activities will be sequenced differently from programme to programme.

Curriculum Strand	Learning and Support Activities Included
Citizenship and Personal Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Values and attributes (eg, resilience) • Promote Equality, Diversity, Inclusivity • Development of Social Action and Citizenship • Development of Financial Literacy • Development of Study Skills • Progress and Personal Development
Essential Skills for Work and Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maths (skills development and/or qualification) • English (skills development and/or qualification) • Digital Skills for a Digital World
Technical Skills that lead to a career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills • Knowledge • Attitudes and Behaviours (the key qualities that will make you employable) • Adaptable to Workplace Change and Multiple Careers
Experience of the Workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Placement • Employer Set Projects / Challenges
Support to progress to next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers Advice and Guidance throughout the programme • Support to next Further Study, including UCAS support if required.

Apprenticeships

This section covers all **Apprenticeship Standards**, across all Levels.

To deliver on the promises, all Apprenticeship Programmes will be organised around five curriculum strands. Each strand lists the key learning and support activities required to deliver the promises.

Curriculum Strand	Learning and Support Activities Included
Citizenship and Personal Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Values and attributes (eg, resilience) • Promote Equality, Diversity, Inclusivity • Development of Social Action and Citizenship • Development of Financial Literacy • Development of Study Skills • Progress and Personal Development
Essential Skills for Work and Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maths (skills development and/or qualification) • English (skills development and/or qualification) • Digital Skills for a Digital World
Technical Skills that lead to a career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills (the application of knowledge to your job) • Knowledge (the technical detail you need to know to carry out your role) • Attitudes and Behaviours (the key qualities that will progress you in your career) • Adaptable to Workplace Change and Multiple Careers
Experience of the Workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace experiences and training are clearly sequenced into a coherent programme • Support to succeed (joint working between you, your tutor, assessor and line manager)
Support to progress to next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers Advice and Guidance throughout the programme to achieve educational and career goals.

Adult Education Programmes

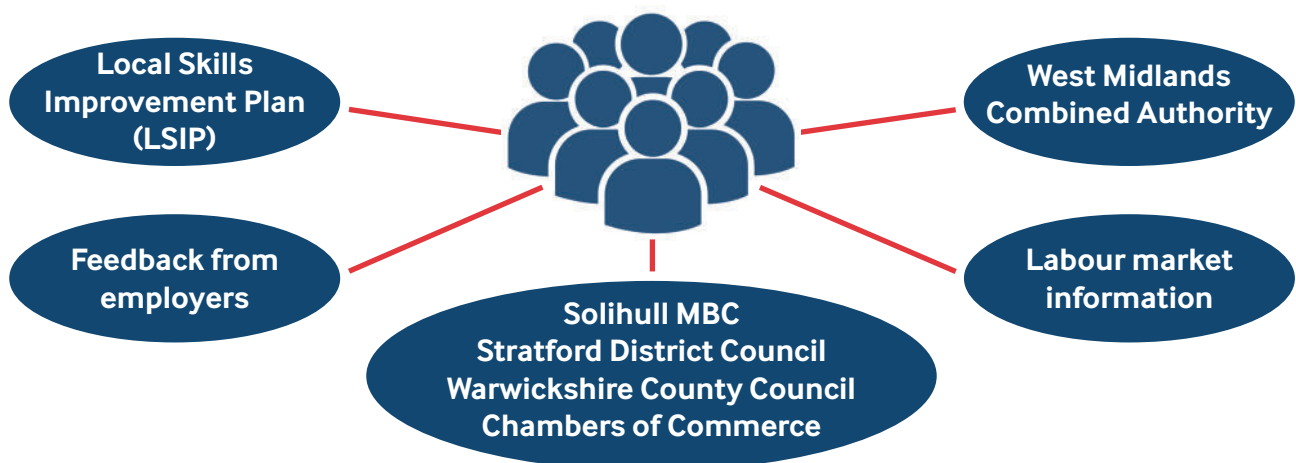
We appreciate that adult learners come to us with very different work and life experiences. To meet the varied needs of adult learners, we offer three types of adult education programmes: Into Work, Upskill and Reskill.

Type of Programme	Type of Adult Learner	Delivery Models
Into Work	Programmes for unemployed individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector Work Academy Programmes • Skills Bootcamps • Access to HE • Maths and English
Upskill	Programmes for under-employed individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional (eg AAT, CIPD) • Higher Technical Qualifications • Degrees and HE
Reskill	Programmes for individuals wishing to change career	

Responding to the Skills Agenda

The common thread throughout all adult education programmes is how each programme is designed to respond to skills needs and regional priorities.

We respond to the skills needs and priorities identified in the following:



Every adult education programme is built around the adult education strategy and vision, as follows:

Regional Economic Landscape	All adult programmes will align closely with the region’s workforce needs and emerging sectors. We will use our close working knowledge of the region to shape adult education programmes.
Local Skills Gaps	Every adult education programme will be designed to address the gaps identified by our employers and stakeholders. Specifically, we will focus on providing training in high-demand sectors.
Addressing Unemployment	Working closely with local job centres and employment agencies, we will design adult education programmes that provide training, support and guidance for adults seeking employment.
Engagement with Diverse Communities	We will ensure that the College’s adult learning programmes are available to all residents, regardless of background. We will work to engage and support learners from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds across the region.
Partnership with Local Authorities	We will collaborate with a range of civic partners to ensure the curriculum aligns with regional development plans, and attract new funding opportunities and resources to support our adult programmes.
Digital Skills and Technology	The College’s adult education programmes respond to the growing importance of digital skills in the job market. Our programmes will equip learners with the digital competency required in the future workforce.
Accessible Learning Opportunities	Flexible delivery of adult programmes will ensure that they are available to all. This will include delivery online and through a network of community locations. This approach will reduce the barriers to learning for adults (for example, poor transport links and shift working etc).
Collaboration with Local Organisations	The College’s adult education offer will be built on partnerships with local organisations. This approach will enable us to contribute to the ecosystem of support available to adult learners across the region, and learners can benefit from work placement opportunities, access to apprenticeships, and employer-sponsored training programmes.
Underemployment	Recognising that in-work adult learners have very different work experiences and qualifications, our programmes will unlock their career potential by providing flexible access to new qualifications and skills, vital for career change, progression or entrepreneurialism.
Continuous Engagement and Feedback	We will ensure that every adult education programme remains responsive to learner needs and the aspirations of the West Midlands community by gathering continuous feedback from learners, employers, community stakeholders and our civic partners.

Employer Engagement

This Curriculum Strategy places the employer in the driving seat of our curriculum design and delivery. Therefore, employer engagement is the key enabler for the success of the Curriculum Strategy.

The Curriculum Strategy works alongside the College's Employer Engagement Strategy, which is designed to establish and nurture strong partnerships with local businesses and industry leaders. By aligning our programs with industry needs, offering work-based learning opportunities, and facilitating professional development, we aim to create outstanding, employer-backed educational experiences for our students across all provision types.

The key aims of the Employer Engagement Strategy are to:

- Deliver on the employer focused elements of the College's Strategic Plan 2022-2025
- Meet the requirements of The Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022
- Deliver against the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for West Midlands (with Warwickshire) and align its adult education provision with the needs of the local communities
- Achieve a strong judgement in our Ofsted skills inspection.



Useful Publications

This Curriculum Strategy articulates how Solihull College & University Centre and Stratford-upon-Avon College will deliver the ambitious curriculum outlined in the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, “Inspire Success for All”.

- **Strategic Plan 2022-20225:**

<https://www.solihull.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/strategic-plan.pdf>

The Curriculum Strategy is designed to respond to the region’s skills needs and priorities, as described in our Skills Accountability Statement.

The evolving skills landscape is shaped by key civic stakeholders. Regionally, this is led by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and the Chamber of Commerce; Locally, this is led by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) and Warwickshire County Council (WCC). The curriculum responds directly to the skills priorities set out by these local and mayoral combined authorities, as set out in the following strategic documents:

- **West Midlands and Warwickshire Local Skills Improvement Plan:**

<https://www.cw-chamber.co.uk/media/13214/west-midlands-and-warwickshire-lsip-final-030823-amends-highlighted.pdf>

- **WMCA Employment and Skills Strategy 2024-2027:**

<https://www.wmca.org.uk/documents/productivity-skills/employment-and-skills-strategy-2024-2027/>

- **SMBC Solihull Economic Strategy 2023-32:**

<https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-07/Solihull-Economic-Strategy.pdf>

- **WCC Economic Growth Strategy 2020-2025:**

<https://api.warwickshire.gov.uk/documents/WCCC-359457248-38>

CURRICULUM STRATEGY

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