

# Cirencester College

## Partnership Strategy

Policy	Partnership Strategy
Owned by	Finance Director
Corporation approval	Audit Committee – 11 <sup>th</sup> March 2019 Corporation – 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2019
Last approval	March 2019
Next approval	March 2022

## Introduction

In November 2011 the report of an independent commission on colleges in their communities – ‘A Dynamic Nucleus’ – was published. It identifies the role that colleges currently play and their strategic potential for adding value by leading learning and working. The potential lies in colleges’ location and their instinct and ability to link with local organisations including local authorities, employers and the third sector.

The college aims to be outstanding in serving the needs of our community, our students and other stakeholders. Thus the College takes its role in the provision of education, skills and services to the community very seriously and this is a very important aspect of the ‘ethos’ and character of the organisation.

Key partners include:

- ESFA, Ofsted
- FE Colleges and Sixth Form Colleges (including Wessex Group, Maple Group, SW Tertiary Benchmarking Group)
- Sixth Form Colleges Association
- Universities
- Local schools
- GFirst LEP and SWLEP
- Sport England
- National Citizens Service
- Employers
- Career Ready Academy employer partners such as St. James’s Place Wealth Management, Nationwide Building Society, Capita, Outsource, ipipeline and Corin.
- Partner training providers such as Premier Training
- County and District Councils and other public service organisations.

Other partnerships include voluntary sector organisations and community groups, recreational and sporting groups.

The relationship with parents of young people under the age of 18 is very important, the partnership approach to learning includes holding parents evenings and maintaining a dedicated parent zone on the website. Keeping in touch about attendance and progress are built into the way we work together.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this strategy is to set out the underpinning principles and processes which apply to the development and maintenance of partnerships, in all their forms, with external organisations.

The Strategy aims to aid the development of meaningful and fruitful engagements with external partner(s) in accordance with the College Strategic Plan for 2017 – 2020. The strategy helps to ensure that the College continues to provide a high quality learning experience for all students.

## **Underpinning Principles**

Cirencester College will consider partnerships with any organisation where such an arrangement is considered to be, on balance, in the best interests of the learners and stakeholders of the college.

Such partnerships should support the strategic aims of the college

Such partnerships should be in accordance with all the regulations, policies and standing orders of the college.

Cirencester College will not form any kind of partnership with any organisation that is not considered legally and ethically compliant.

Cirencester College is responsible for the quality of learning, academic standards and student experience of the students it enrolls and cannot pass on this responsibility to any of its partner organisations

The academic standards of a programme of study (or part of a programme of study) involving an educational partnership should be equivalent to comparable programmes delivered by the college.

The approach taken to the approval of a partnership should be proportionate to the level of risk, nature and level of complexity involved in the project.

No formal contractual arrangement should be entered into on behalf of the college without appropriate authorisation.

## **Types of Partnership**

The college has a wide variety of arrangements with other organisations that could be categorised as partnerships. These fall into three main categories

### **Informal**

These are the most common and are not covered by any written agreement or contractual arrangement. Examples include:

- Collaboration with local schools over careers and progression information

- Working with other FE and Sixth Form colleges on benchmarking data and shared information.
- Working with our Career Ready Academy employer partners to provide an enhanced learner experience.

In these circumstances, though no formal arrangements are in place, the college will adhere to the underpinning principles as noted above.

## **College as lead partner**

These partnerships are formal arrangements where the college sub contracts some of its teaching & learning to a partner organisation.

Such partnerships must adhere to the college Supply Chain Fees & Charges Policy.

Any new formal partnership agreement to sub contract provision must be approved by SLT.

The level of subcontracted provision will be reported as a KPI or note in the monthly financial statements to the Corporation.

The selection of a new partner for a sub-contracting arrangement will, as required by College procurement regulations, ensure that best value for money is obtained. However, because the provision of teaching & learning directly to the college's learners is of critical importance to the college's success and overall reputation, great emphasis must be placed upon the quality of the proposed sub-contracted provision with level of funding passed on to the sub-contractor being weighted less heavily.

Critical factors to be considered when deciding upon a partner in such circumstances will always include:

- Strategic fit of the potential partner's provision with the overall College offer
- Success rates & other quality indicators of the potential partner
- Quality systems operated by the potential partner
- Willingness of potential partner to actively engage with the college to ensure that the college can be confident that high quality standards will be achieved and maintained

## **College as subsidiary partner**

In these partnerships the college provides teaching and learning and students working to a qualification awarded by a partner – generally a Higher Education Institution or delivers grant funded activity under contract.

When selecting such partnerships the College will have adhere to the underpinning principles as noted above.

Any Higher Education partnerships should also be in accordance with the College's Higher Education Position & Strategy.