

## South Bank Colleges Employer Engagement Strategy

### 1. Introduction

South Bank Colleges are committed to developing strong, mutually beneficial relationships with employers across South London and beyond. The aim of this *Employer Engagement Strategy* is to create a framework that supports the ongoing collaboration between the college and industry partners. This strategy ensures that the education and training we provide is inclusive and to a high quality, closely aligned with the needs of employers, helping students transition into meaningful employment and supporting the economic development of the region.

### 2. Purpose of the Strategy

The primary purpose of the *Employer Engagement Strategy* is to:

- Align South Bank Colleges' curriculum and programmes with the skills and workforce demands of employers.
- Enhance employment opportunities for students and graduates by creating pathways into the local and national labour markets.
- Support employers in developing a skilled and competent workforce through training, apprenticeships, and continuous professional development (CPD).
- Foster long-term partnerships with employers that contribute to the growth and innovation of local industries.

### 3. Key Objectives

#### 3.1 Curriculum Development and Co-Design

We will work closely with employers to ensure that our curriculum is industry-relevant and future-proof. By involving employers in the design of courses and apprenticeship programmes, we aim to:

- Ensure that students gain the practical skills, technical knowledge, and soft skills required by industry.
- Develop programmes that meet the evolving needs of key sectors, including STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics).

- Regularly review and update qualifications to reflect changes in technology, practices, and industry standards.

### **3.2 Apprenticeships and Work-Based Learning**

South Bank Colleges are committed to expanding apprenticeship and work-based learning opportunities by:

- Partnering with local and national employers to offer high-quality apprenticeship programmes that meet the needs of the workforce.
- Supporting employers in navigating the apprenticeship levy and ensuring that apprenticeships provide real value to their organisations.
- Developing work placements and internships that give students hands-on experience in real-world work environments, preparing them for full-time employment.

### **3.3 Employer Advisory Boards**

To ensure that employer engagement is consistent and impactful, we will establish **Employer Advisory Boards** across key subject areas. These boards will:

- Provide insight into current and future workforce trends.
- Advise on curriculum development and the skills that are in demand.
- Act as a bridge between the college and industry, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange.

### **3.4 Supporting Employer Skills Development**

We aim to support employers with their own workforce development by:

- Offering tailored CPD and training programmes that upskill current employees.
- Providing employers with access to the latest research and trends in technical and vocational education, helping them stay competitive.
- Supporting SMEs, large corporations, and public sector organisations by addressing specific training needs through bespoke courses and consultancy.

### 3.5 Graduate and Student Employment Opportunities

South Bank Colleges are focused on increasing the employability of our students and graduates by:

- Actively working with employers to offer graduate recruitment opportunities and student internships.
- Hosting employer networking events, career fairs, and employer-led workshops, where students can meet and engage directly with potential employers.
- Developing partnerships that facilitate job matching services, allowing employers to access our pool of skilled students and graduates.

### 3.6 Industry Projects and Innovation Hubs

We will foster innovation through collaboration by:

- Partnering with employers on real-world industry projects that allow students to apply their learning to solve practical problems.
- Establishing **Innovation Hubs** that encourage entrepreneurship, creative thinking, and the development of new technologies.
- Offering employers access to college facilities, expertise, and talent for research and development projects.

## 4. Employer Engagement Approach

South Bank Colleges will use a structured approach to employer engagement based on the following principles:

### 4.1 Proactive Engagement

We will take a proactive approach to engaging with employers by:

- Actively reaching out to employers across a range of industries to identify opportunities for collaboration.
- Engaging employers early in the development of new courses, ensuring that our programmes are aligned with their needs from the outset.
- Maintaining regular contact with employers to keep them informed of developments and opportunities for involvement.

## 4.2 Partnership Building

We will focus on building long-term partnerships with employers that are based on mutual benefit. This includes:

- Listening to employers' needs and providing solutions that add value to their businesses.
- Co-developing training and educational programmes that are tailored to their requirements.
- Offering employers access to college resources and talent for internships, research, and collaboration.

## 4.3 Regional and Sectoral Focus

South Bank Colleges will prioritise engagement with employers in sectors that are important to the South London economy, including:

- Healthcare, social care, and public services.
- Creative industries, media, and digital technologies.
- Engineering, construction, and the built environment.
- Science, technology, and green industries.

## 5. Measuring Success

To ensure that this strategy delivers measurable results, South Bank Colleges will track progress through:

- **Employer satisfaction surveys** to gather feedback on the value of partnerships and the impact of college graduates on the workforce.
- **Destination data** on student and graduate employment rates, including the percentage of students securing relevant work placements, internships, and apprenticeships.
- **Curriculum impact reports** measuring the extent to which employers are involved in course development and whether graduates possess the skills demanded by employers.
- **Employer engagement tracking**, ensuring that the number and quality of employer partnerships continue to grow year on year.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

### 6.1 Employer Engagement Team

The **Employer Engagement Team** at South Bank Colleges will be responsible for:

- Facilitating relationships between employers and college departments.
- Coordinating employer involvement in curriculum design, work-based learning, work experience and apprenticeships.
- Providing guidance and support to employers on workforce development and training opportunities.

### 6.2 Curriculum Managers

Curriculum managers and tutors will play a key role in employer engagement by:

- Actively seeking input from employers to ensure the curriculum remains relevant and up to date.
- Collaborating with employers on the delivery of work-based learning opportunities and industry projects.
- Encouraging students to engage with employers through placements, internships, and career events.

### 6.3 Senior Leadership Team

The **Senior Leadership Team** will:

- Support the development and implementation of the Employer Engagement Strategy.
- Promote the importance of employer partnerships across the college and ensure that resources are allocated to support engagement activities.

## 7. Conclusion

Through this *Employer Engagement Strategy*, South Bank Colleges aim to strengthen relationships with employers, enhance student employability, and contribute to the economic and social well-being of South London. By collaborating closely with

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employers, we will ensure that our curriculum and training programmes continue to meet the needs of a changing job market, while supporting the development of a skilled and innovative workforce.