

GROWTH AND SKILLS STRATEGY (2026–2029)

GROWTH AND SKILLS STRATEGY STATEMENT (2026–2029)

The Dudley College of Technology Growth and Skills Strategy 2026–2029 sets out a clear and ambitious approach to supporting economic growth, workforce development and social mobility across the Black Country; helping employers access the skills they need to grow, improve productivity and respond to rapid economic and technological change.

Developed in partnership with employers and regional stakeholders, the strategy responds to a rapidly changing skills landscape and places employer collaboration at its heart. It outlines how the College will deliver high-quality, flexible education and training that meets the evolving needs of industry while creating meaningful opportunities for learners of all ages.

Through a focus on priority sectors, the everyday economy, and crosscutting themes such as digital innovation, sustainability and inclusion, the College aims to build a future ready workforce and a stronger, more resilient regional economy over the next three years.



OUR VISION

Our vision is to create a dynamic, collaborative, and future focused skills ecosystem in which employers are genuine partners in shaping opportunity, driving innovation and securing long term regional prosperity.

We are committed to developing deep, trust-based partnerships with businesses of all sizes. Through this approach, employers will play a central role in shaping our curriculum and developing a skilled, adaptable workforce that meets the demands of a rapidly evolving economy.

By delivering flexible, high-quality provision and a seamless employer experience, we will support businesses to adopt new technologies, respond to green and digital transformation, and invest in their people at every stage of their careers. In doing so, we will open up opportunity for local residents and contribute to a thriving, inclusive, and resilient Black Country economy.



OUR PRIORITY AREAS

To support regional growth and respond to employer demand, we will focus on five priority sectors:

1. Advanced Manufacturing and Automotive

We will position machining as a core area of expertise for the college, strengthening collaboration with industry to help employers address critical skills gaps and enhance workforce productivity. Through this focus, we will support employers in advancing capabilities in precision engineering, automation, and electrification, while expanding flexible and modular training routes tailored to the needs of the sector.

2. Construction and Building Services

We will support regional housing and infrastructure growth by increasing the pipeline of skilled workers, supporting delivery of housing and retrofit target with a strong emphasis on green construction, retrofit, and modern methods of construction.



3. Health

We will expand provision aligned to NHS workforce priorities, embedding digital health and providing flexible training pathways addressing workforce shortages and service demand.

4. Professional Services

We will enhance skills in leadership, management, digital and data, supporting workforce development and improving productivity across business and public sector organisations.

5. Digital and Creative

We will grow skills in digital technologies, creative industries, and the wider service economy, supporting both high growth sectors and essential local employment routes.

Across all sectors, we will align provision to regional priorities and emerging labour market needs, ensuring clear progression pathways from entry to higher level skills.

The 'Everyday Economy'

In addition to the five priority areas, we will continue to strengthen the everyday economy by supporting both new entrants and existing workers to develop the skills needed for long-term career success.

The everyday economy underpins the social and economic fabric of the Black Country, accounting for the majority of jobs across sectors such as health and care, education, retail, hospitality, construction trades and community services, and we will continue our work with local employers to ensure that this critical part of our regional economy becomes more productive, inclusive and sustainable.

Across these areas, our focus is on helping employers fill skills gaps, improve productivity, and build future-ready workforces.

ENABLING PRIORITIES ACROSS ALL PROVISION

Our strategy is driven by a set of core priorities that cut across all areas of delivery. These reflect the skills, behaviours and capabilities needed to succeed in a rapidly changing economy and ensure a consistent, high-quality experience for learners and employers.

Together, they shape how we design our curriculum, work with employers and support progression, ensuring that every programme contributes to building a future ready, inclusive, and resilient workforce.

- Digital and technological skills – equipping learners and employers with capabilities in AI, automation, and digital innovation.
- Sustainability and the green transition – supporting the development of green skills and contributing to net zero ambitions.
- Employability and work readiness skills – strengthening core capabilities such as communication, problem solving and resilience.
- Inclusion, equity, and social mobility – widening participation and supporting underrepresented groups into good jobs.
- Health and wellbeing – promoting healthier workplaces and improving outcomes for individuals and communities.
- Lifelong learning, upskilling, and retraining – expanding flexible opportunities for adult learners and those in work.
- Innovation and future focus – embedding emerging technologies and supporting businesses to adapt and grow.



Through these themes, we will ensure that all learners are prepared not only for today's jobs, but for the future world of work.



EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT PRIORITIES (2026–2029)

Delivering this strategy depends on strong, purposeful engagement with employers. Over the lifetime of the plan, we will:

1. Build strategic partnerships

- Transition to long term, strategic employer relationships
- Work closely with anchor employers to shape skills solutions and sector development
- Strengthen employer advisory boards and sector based collaboration

2. Deliver a seamless employer experience

- Provide a single point of contact and clear account management
- Simplify systems, processes, and communication to reduce barriers to engagement
- Enhance our employer value proposition and sector focused marketing

3. Align skills provision to employer need

- Co-design flexible, modular training programmes including green skills, AI and workforce development
- Strengthen work readiness, placements, and pathways into apprenticeships
- Use labour market intelligence and employer insight to shape curriculum planning and delivery

4. Enhance employer onboarding and support

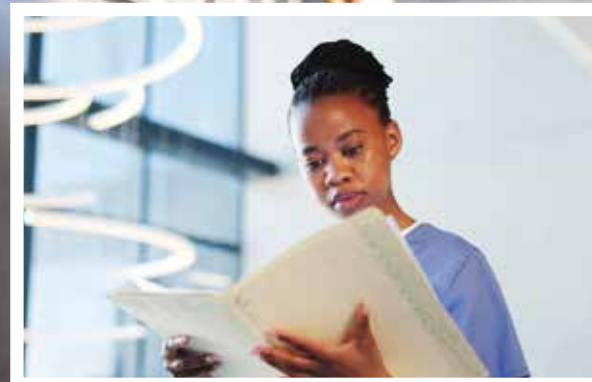
- Improve digital systems and processes for apprenticeships and placements
- Develop a streamlined onboarding journey and explore managed service models
- Strengthen use of data and CRM systems to improve coordination

5. Strengthen insight and impact

- Develop robust labour market intelligence and strategic analysis
- Produce clear impact reporting on jobs, skills, and outcomes
- Share success and best practice across sectors

6. Build organisational capability

- Embed a whole college culture of employer engagement
- Invest in staff development and partnership working
- Ensure joined up working across curriculum, employer engagement, and support services



LOOKING AHEAD

This 2026–2029 Strategy sets out our commitment to driving economic growth, improving social mobility, and supporting business success across the Black Country.

By working in partnership with employers, stakeholders, and communities, we will create a responsive, high quality skills system that delivers real impact, supporting individuals into meaningful careers and enabling businesses to innovate, grow and thrive.



WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

We invite employers, partners, and stakeholders to work with us to shape the future of skills across the Black Country.

Whether you are looking to develop your workforce, co-design training, offer placements or support new talent into your sector, Dudley College of Technology is ready to collaborate. Together, we can unlock opportunity, drive innovation, and build a stronger, more inclusive local economy for the years ahead.

Get involved – partner with us to develop the skills that power growth

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