

Edinburgh College

PEOPLE STRATEGY

2023 - 2026



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Scotland's Capital College, Edinburgh College's responsibility, reach and impact is significant. We deliver life-changing education and training to people across the city, the region and beyond. We will build on the strong foundations already in place, to ensure we continue to be the right shape and right size to deliver for our people, our region and our partners.

This People Strategy outlines how we will support and invest in our people to help drive our ambition of fundamentally improving the educational, social, economic and environmental wellbeing of our students and communities. This ambition can only be achieved through our people being given opportunities to thrive and reach their full potential.

We aspire to be an employer of choice, committed to enabling employee growth, responding to workforce needs, establishing a feedback culture, nurturing respectful communication and fostering diversity, equality and inclusion.

This strategy, along with the College's other four strategic pillars (Commercial, Curriculum, Digital and Finance), will support successful achievement of our goals and sets out a roadmap for cultivating a diverse and empowered workforce, dedicated to advancing education and enriching the lives of our students and community.

We will only achieve our ambitions by enabling our people to reach their full potential and strengthening the relationship between our College and our staff. This People Strategy

will drive the framework to enable everyone to exceed our ambitions and goals. We want staff to be at the forefront of our vision, to be a place where staff feel empowered and driven, are engaged and loyal, and are happy and proud to work at our College. This will include seeking regular feedback from staff and further developing various initiatives including EC Perks, EC Cares, EC Learns, our Workforce Plan and reward strategies.

Our dedicated teams are at the heart of our College and are advocates of the College brand.

This People Strategy aims to nurture respectful communication and enable individuals to contribute to the vision of our College.

We will provide opportunities for staff to flourish and thrive by ensuring they have the tools, resources and initiatives needed to support their health and wellbeing.

Our People Strategy will be regularly reviewed to ensure its continued alignment to, and support of the delivery of, the College's Strategic Plan 'Our Strategy, Our Future'.



2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1. Where are we now? – National Context

Scotland's college sector is adapting to evolving policies, such as the Scottish Government's commitment to widening access to education, and ensuring a skilled workforce aligned with emerging industry needs, and growing economic sectors.

There is also an increasing emphasis on sustainability, and equality and inclusion in further and higher education. National economic policies and educational reforms are influencing funding, regulatory frameworks, and collaborative opportunities.

It is essential that our College adapts to this policy landscape and supports staff, through this People Strategy, to have the necessary skills and knowledge.

We also need to manage the impacts of decreasing college sector financial resources, ongoing national bargaining (and any consequent industrial action), national job evaluation, and the subsequent cumulative impacts on our people.

In September 2022, the College Development Network (CDN) published the College Workforce Survey Analysis Report, which explored four issues (experiences of professional learning, digital capability, equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), and learning for sustainability). Headline findings included:

- 80% of staff feel that they get the training they need and the average time spent per annum on learning was 23 hours
- 45% of staff strongly agreed they had the necessary digital skills to fulfil their role. However, around 80% said they could benefit from more digital skills training
- 55% of staff said they had the skills, knowledge and experience to promote EDI in the workplace, 46% said they would appreciate more training on mental health and wellbeing
- Only 27% of staff stated that they had the necessary understanding to deliver sustainable education and learning

This People Strategy also responds to these national survey findings.

2.2. Where are we now? – Regional Context

Situated in Scotland's capital, our College operates within a dynamic landscape with competition from the surrounding universities in terms of attracting and retaining talent.

Edinburgh also has high cost of living rates, including property costs, as well as high employment rates, which can make it difficult to attract employees to the area, and to work for the College.

The city serves as the economic and cultural heart of Scotland, offering a wide range of employment opportunities across various sectors.

Edinburgh is a hub for innovation, technology, and the arts, attracting a diverse population and growing workforce, providing opportunities for the College to employ versatile, flexible and highly skilled people.

Total employment in Edinburgh, East and Midlothian (measured by people) was estimated to be 407,700 in 2021, 15.7% of Scottish employment, according to the Annual Population Survey, between October 2020 and September 2021. The employment rate for the working age population (aged 16-64) in the region was 76.9%, which was above the rate for Scotland (72.9%).

It is therefore crucial that we establish the College as an employer of choice, where staff are given opportunities to develop and progress and are empowered to support their colleagues and our students.

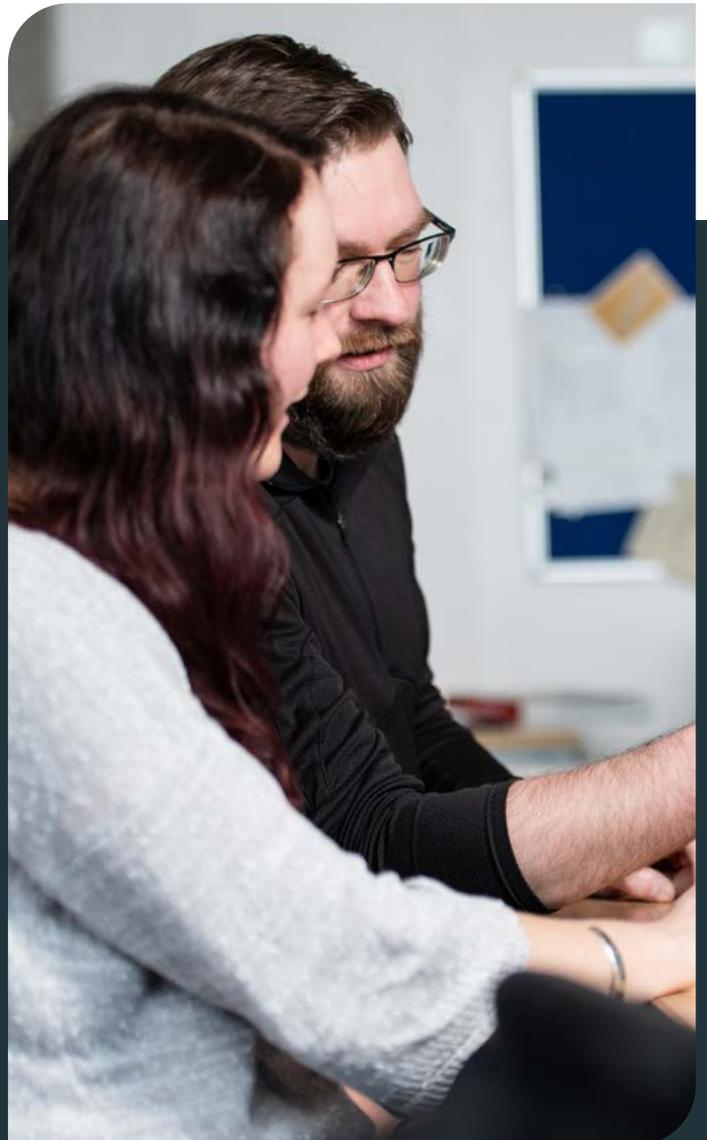
2.3. Where are we now? – College Context

As of the beginning of session 2023/24, we currently employ around 1,050 Full-time equivalents (FTEs), around 550 of which are teaching staff and 500 are professional services staff. This number has reduced over recent years (1,392 FTE in 2014/15) due to a number of financial challenges facing the College, and the consequent voluntary severance schemes.

We continue to deliver a wide range of wellbeing, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and mandatory training opportunities for our staff, including staff wellbeing days, Institute of Leadership Management (ILM) training, Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training, General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) registration, the Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE) qualification and employee benefits schemes.

Our annual turn-over rates for people leaving the organisation voluntarily remain between 7% and 9%, and sickness absence rates remain around 3% to 4% per annum over recent years with mental health (specifically anxiety, stress and depression) being the main reason for sickness absence.

We are currently experiencing a transformative period within the College landscape.



We also adhere to the [Fair-Work-Convention-Framework](#), which affirms commitment to the Scottish Government's fair work guidance, ensuring that employees have an effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect, and that organisations balance the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees, in order to generate benefits for individuals, organisations and society.

We are committed to a new programme of staff engagement, with our partner Hive HR, embarking on a process of co-producing engagement approaches with our staff across the College. This work will provide us with enhanced insight into our workforce and a range of new actions to strengthen our people approach.

We are currently experiencing a transformative period within the College landscape. The ongoing digital revolution, global health challenges, shifting demographics, and evolving student expectations are significantly influencing how education is delivered, accessed, and experienced. The integration of technology in education, remote and hybrid working environments, and the importance of mental health and wellbeing are critical to delivering our People Strategy.



3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1. Where do we want to get to?

We want to attract, develop, and retain exceptional talent, fostering a culture of collaboration, autonomy, adaptability, innovation, and growth amongst all our staff and across our College.

We are committed to empowering our people to make informed decisions, and to have the freedom to innovate and try new ways of doing things.

We want our staff to be accountable, with everyone contributing to our College achieving its ambitions and strategic priorities, whilst demonstrating our values of working together and being respectful, responsible, trustworthy, and student-centred.

To ensure we can do this, we will deliver the following aims and objectives:

Priority 1

ENSURING EVERYONE'S EFFORTS COUNT

Collectively, we will deliver the College's vision, aligning our individual efforts with our strategy, empowering our people with decision making at the appropriate level, removing barriers to productivity and having future-focused plans which identify the roles and skills we need to flourish.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

- Develop a workforce planning approach and simplify processes to ensure we attract and retain the most versatile, flexible and highly-skilled people needed to take the College forward
- Provide regular and transparent information about how we're progressing in delivering our strategic aims, and how our people are and can be involved
- Introduce new ways for our people to have a say and contribute their ideas and expertise to our aims through staff surveys and focus groups
- Develop our employer brand, linked to the Edinburgh College brand, values and People Strategy

Priority 2

INSPIRING AND EFFECTIVE LEADERS

We will create a management culture which is supportive, empathetic, inclusive and collegiate. Our leaders and managers will consistently epitomise our values and have the capability and confidence to engage, develop, challenge and recognise our people, take measured risks and deliver excellence.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

- Support our leaders and managers to champion a culture of innovation, positivity and inclusiveness
- Explicitly drive cross-function and departmental initiatives in support of College priorities, building a collective awareness of the contributions that all teams play
- Enable and support efficient and effective management practice at all levels

Priority 3

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING OF EMPLOYEES

We will continue to create opportunities for staff to develop personally and professionally and to support the wellbeing of everyone to ensure a fulfilling career at our College.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

- Refresh our workplace health and wellbeing action plan
- Create a Development Academy to support our people in developing and maintaining their knowledge and skills and in advancing their careers
- Invest in the digital skills development of all staff, giving people the confidence and the expertise to maximise the potential of technological solutions
- Continue to develop and enhance the EC Cares health and wellbeing campaign and supporting activities

Priority 4

RETRAINING AND ATTRACTING TALENT

We will attract and retain talented, versatile, flexible and highly skilled people.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

- Develop an onboarding process so that new starts can begin engaging with our College from the point of recruitment
- Ensure, through our annual workforce planning process, that the job roles required for the future are clearly identified and our recruitment and appointment process is designed to recruit the best people
- Focus available resources on development activities designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning and improving the performance of our people
- Maximise the opportunities for employer-led, work-integrated learning and teaching, including a greater focus on project-based, industry-relevant assessment across every curriculum area

Priority 5

CREATING A THRIVING ENVIRONMENT

Ensuring that people are clear on what is expected of them, that workloads are appropriate, and expectations are correspondingly clear.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

- Enhance work-life balance through using technology as an enabler
- In partnership with union colleagues, continue to implement a range of sector-leading, socially progressive, people-oriented policies to support our staff
- Deliver a learner journey which secures positive destinations for our students, supported by customer-focused, streamlined and accessible services including student wellbeing, financial support and support for learning

Priority 6

ACKNOWLEDGING REWARD AND RECOGNITION

We will reward and recognise our people in ways that they value and that are affordable. We will develop a total rewards package tool for staff and job applicants.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

- Engage with our people to understand the ways in which they want to be recognised and rewarded
- Launch a range of non-pay reward and recognition options that reflect what our people have told us they value

4. HOW DO WE GET THERE?

We will ensure that:

- we provide the best possible work experience, support and development for every staff member.
- we have a culture which supports and promotes a sense of pride in our College and everything we do.
- we have a culture where our managers – at every level – listen and collaborate to ensure everyone in the team is clear about individual and teamwork priorities and what is expected of them.
- our people have the skills and information needed to carry out their role to the best of their abilities.

Key Performance Indicator

(to be confirmed following Hive engagement work)

I'm inspired by the mission and purpose of the College

% of staff who recommend our organisation as a good place to work

My Manager keeps me informed about what's happening across the College

People of all cultures and backgrounds are respected and valued

The College does a good job of communicating the goals and strategies set by senior leadership

Percentage of eligible staff who have had an Enhance review in the last 12 months

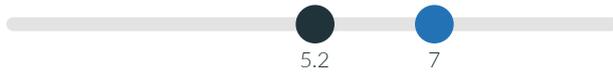
I believe there are opportunities to develop my career

Percentage of staff accessing at least one benefit in the EC Perks package

The college provides the environment and resources I need to be my best at work

5. HOW DO WE KNOW WE HAVE GOT THERE?

I'm inspired by the mission and purpose of the College



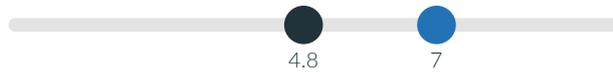
My manager keeps me informed about what's happening across the College



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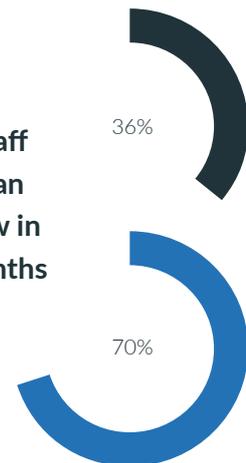
Baseline 2023 survey ●
Target for July 2026 ●

*Based on Hive Survey (2024) Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) which measures employee advocacy. 18% of staff were promoters. 29% were passives and 52% were detractors.

% of staff who recommend our organisation as a good place to work*



% of eligible staff who have had an Enhance review in the last 12 months



6. GOVERNANCE

6.1. Who is responsible?

Operational and tactical responsibility for delivery of the People Strategy will sit with the Vice Principal Corporate Development with the support of the Director of HR and OD. They will be supported in this task by all Executive and Senior Management team members, all Middle Managers, Heads of School and Curriculum Team Managers.

Strategic responsibility for strategy oversight and evaluation of delivery will sit with the Planning and Resources Committee, who in turn will report to the Edinburgh College Board of Management.

6.2. When will we review and report progress?

Delivery of the People Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis and reported accordingly.

Final review of the strategy will take place in 2026.



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