



sgs

South Gloucestershire
and Stroud College

Chief Executive Officer / Principal

Candidate Information Pack
September 2024



www.fea.co.uk/sgsc-cep

FEA
FE ASSOCIATES

Welcome

Matt Atkinson
Chair of the Corporation



Dear colleague,

CEO/Principal at SGS College

Thank you for your interest in the role of CEO/Principal at SGS College. After an extensive period of leadership stability at the College we are now seeking to make this new appointment to take what is a College with excellent and firm foundations into a highly successful future.

We are a regional College with three main campuses serving Bristol, South Gloucestershire and Stroud. As a regional College we are focused on meeting the post-16 education and skills needs of the West of England Combined Authority area and the county of Gloucestershire. SGS was formed from the merger of Filton College and Stroud College in 2012 and since merger we have successfully delivered growth, two Good Ofsted inspections with outstanding features, stable finances and a positive and valued student experience. We have strong relationships with employers and we make a strong contribution to meeting local skills needs.

The appointment of a new CEO/Principal is one of the most important responsibilities of any college governing body and as such the Board is determined to appoint an excellent leader who is able to build on our many strengths whilst positioning us successfully for the future. We obviously want our new CEO/Principal to be highly skilled, strategically strong and a first-class ambassador for the College, but I think it is helpful for candidates to have an insight into some of the board's priorities in making this new appointment.

First of all, it is essential that there is strong alignment between our new leader and the culture of the organisation. Our staff are highly valued and enjoy working at the College. They have benefitted from a leadership approach that has been caring, ambitious and genuinely puts the needs and interests of our students at the centre of decision-making. We expect this culture to continue and therefore it is essential that our new leader can build on the culture that is already here rather than bringing about fundamental changes in the way that we achieve success. As a Board we are highly ambitious and following our recent successful Ofsted inspection we are determined to do even better at our next inspection and for us this means that we are striving to be an outstanding college. We believe that we need to achieve this for the benefit of our students, employers and the communities that we serve. We will expect our new CEO/Principal to sign up to this ambition and to have the capacity to deliver on this strategic objective. As part of this aim, we need to continue to strengthen the quality of teaching, learning and student outcomes. We expect our new leader to drive a process of accelerated improvement, particularly around student achievement outcomes and to ensure the approaches we take to the delivery of education and training are innovative and future focused. Whilst our finances are in a good position, we believe that the next period for the further education sector could potentially be challenging and therefore we will want our CEO/Principal to strengthen our financial position, particularly our operating position, so that we are able to face the future from a position of strength.

Welcome

As a Board we are highly ambitious for the organisation and we have a number of important strategic developments that are underway and which we will require our new CEO/Principal to continue with. Essentially, we are wanting positive and accelerated evolution rather than revolution. However, whilst we are clear on a number of priorities and our general direction of travel, our new leader will have the support of the Board to lead on the development of a new strategic plan and to bring their own leadership style, approach and ideas to the role.

The Board provides the right level of balance between support and challenge to our executive leaders. Over the past year we have focused on being more strategic and achieving stronger alignment between the work of the Board and the executive and as Chair of the Board, I will ensure that our new CEO/Principal is well supported to succeed in this very exciting role at this great College.

We have appointed FE Associates to support us with this crucial appointment and interested parties are advised to contact our lead consultant at FEA, Jo Johnston, for an initial discussion prior to making an application. Jo can be contacted at Jo.Johnston@fea.co.uk. It may be the case that potential applicants are also interested in a discussion with me and if you feel you would benefit from this then Jo can arrange this for you.

If you are excited by this opportunity and feel you have the skills, experiences and leadership values we are looking for, the Board looks forward to receiving your application.

With best wishes

Matt Atkinson
Chair of the Corporation



The Priorities and The Person

A full job description and person specification is provided on the FE Associates web page for this role. However, the following summarises the key elements of what we require from our new CEO/Principal.

The Priorities

- Our staff enjoy working at the College and our culture promotes and achieves high levels of staff commitment. This culture must be maintained and built upon.
- Bringing about accelerated improvements in student achievement outcomes is a priority for the College. We are an ambitious and aspirational organisation, and we need to maintain our position as a place of positive choice.
- We are aiming to be 'Outstanding' at our next inspection and the new CEO/Principal will need to provide inclusive leadership that inspires staff to deliver consistently excellent curriculum and learning experiences that meet the needs of learners, employers and the communities served by the College.
- Working with the Board on the development of a new strategic plan which sets a positive direction of travel for the College and secures our position as a regional provider of education, skills and training.
- Through horizon scanning and strategic planning, and by promoting a culture of innovation, ensuring that the education and training offer of the College successfully responds to the needs of the region's businesses and identifying and pursuing opportunities for growth in income and learner numbers.
- Strengthening the financial position of the College so that our financial health rating is consistently a 'strong good'. This will involve improving the College's operating position, improving our EBITDA and achieving efficiency levels in line with the best in the sector.
- Developing a strategy that prioritises the improvement of key areas of the College estate and delivers improvements that create capacity for growth and excellence.
- Leading the reputation and brand of the College externally through impactful networking and ambassadorial activities resulting in mutually beneficial partnerships with leading stakeholders being established. Building local and regional relationships that ensure the College is benefitting from key opportunities and that the College always has a seat around the table.
- Building on our current strengths, raising the profile of the College in the sector and beyond. Building a reputation for success, innovation and excellence so that SGS is a recognised brand in the FE sector.
- Ensure a one team culture that promotes learning and development for everyone, encourages innovation and recognises success.



The Priorities and The Person

The Person

Our new CEO/Principal will bring:

- A personal style and leadership approach that is inclusive and encourages a culture of collaboration, trust and respect which achieves high levels of staff commitment and engagement.
- A deep commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging as demonstrated by a track record in strengthening diversity in a relevant organisation.
- Strong personal leadership visibility and the willingness to actively engage with staff, students and stakeholders.
- Successful experience of inspirational and effective senior leadership in an organisation of similar size and complexity.
- The ability to be a credible leader of learning and a clear sense of how to develop a learning offer that is contemporary and responsive to the needs of today and tomorrow.
- A strong commitment to post-16 education and skills landscape, and experience of developing strategies and plans to ensure high-quality learning and organisational resilience in this fast-changing environment. A track record of driving sustainable improvements and driving up student achievement outcomes.
- Strategic thinking and the ability to lead the development of innovations in curriculum, teaching, learning and an outstanding student experience.
- A genuine passion for high-quality learning and support for students.
- Strong commercial acumen with experience of delivering growth and achieving financial strength and environmental sustainability.
- A collaborative approach to working with a Board on the formulation of strategies and plans to enable success.
- Excellent networking and ambassadorial abilities with the ability to win the trust and respect of staff, students and stakeholders.
- The intellect and curiosity to contribute to the development of national, regional and local policy on further education and skills.
- Unimpeachable integrity, with the emotional intelligence to lead change through people.



Key dates and the application process



Closing date: **9am on Friday 25 October 2024**

Interview dates: **Monday 4 and Tuesday 5 November 2024**

We have retained FE Associates to support us in finding an outstanding individual to inspire excellent practice across our organisation. The application process is outlined below.

Initial Discussion and Recorded First-Stage Teams Interview

Prior to submitting an application, interested candidates are advised to arrange an initial conversation with our FE Associates lead consultant, by emailing Jo.Johnston@fea.co.uk, to discuss the role before the closing date. ***Once it is agreed for you to proceed with an application, the lead consultant will schedule a first-stage interview via Teams with you which will take place before the closing date and will be recorded.*** Once this interview has been scheduled, you should submit your application. Please see the final page for full details on how to submit your application.

Shortlisting and Invitation to Interview

After the closing time/date, our lead consultant will send all applications and recorded first-stage discussions to the college for shortlisting. Once the shortlist has been agreed, candidates will be notified by the lead consultant and shortlisted candidates will be invited to a formal interview/selection process with the college.

Safer Recruitment and Due Diligence Checks

Applicants are advised that, as part of the statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education, colleges/training providers are advised to make arrangements for an online search as part of due diligence on shortlisted candidates. The searches are aimed to assist in identifying things said or done that may harm the organisation's reputation or make the candidate unsuitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Where a cause of concern arises from the online search, a risk assessment will determine whether the concern is of such a nature that it is appropriate to exclude a candidate from the process or whether a clarification discussion, before or during an interview, is needed.

Submitting Your Application



Having obtained the full information from <https://www.fea.co.uk/sgsc-cep/>, discussed the role with Jo Johnston and scheduled your first-stage interview via Teams, you should email your application to recruitment@fea.co.uk in advance of the closing date and time (see Key Dates section). Applications received after this time will not be considered. **Please note, CVs will not be accepted in place of, or in addition to, the application form.**

Email Checklist

Please use the latest version of the application and ED forms found on the job page for this role and not older out-of-date versions. These forms are **not** compatible with IOS/MAC (Pages).

Ensure your email includes only the 2 forms necessary for your application (these forms are located with the candidate information pack on the FEA website jobs page for this role):

- 1. An Application Form with all sections completed** including:
 - An explanation of any gaps in your employment in **section 6**.
 - A supporting statement which does not exceed the equivalent of 2 pages of A4 and is included as part of the form in **section 9** and **not** as a separate document. In this section, explain how you believe your knowledge, skills and experience match the criteria as stated in the person specification for this role (detailed in this candidate information pack).
 - Please include 2 referees and their full postal and email addresses and their contact numbers in **section 10**. References are usually sought after the interview process and the college will not contact referees without your prior approval.
 - **Ensure you enter your name/e-signature and date in section 11.**
 - Save your completed form as a Word document with your surname, first name and the job reference as the filename i.e. **Surname, First Name - sgsc-cep - Application**
- 2. The Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form.**
 - This is a Word format document. Please click **inside** each check box that applies to you.
 - Once you have fully completed the form, please save this as a Word document with your surname, first name and the job reference as the filename i.e. **Surname, First Name - sgsc-cep - ED**