



THE  
**BEDFORD**  
COLLEGE  
GROUP

# Chief Operating Officer

ATTITUDES

KNOWLEDGE

SKILLS



Candidate Information Pack

December 2024

[www.fea.co.uk/tbcg-coo/](http://www.fea.co.uk/tbcg-coo/)

# Welcome

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chief Operating Officer at The Bedford College Group (TBCG). The Group is the 7th largest further education college group in the sector by income and comprises 7 distinct colleges with 3 further educational colleges, 2 sixth form colleges, 1 agricultural college and 1 national college for motorsport.

Our values are extremely important to us and keep the student at the heart of everything we do, but none more so than those of valuing teamwork, continuously improving, caring and inclusive, all of which sit at the heart of this role.

The successful candidate will provide strategic leadership and management across key professional service departments of TBCG and is integral to ensuring the Group achieves continuous improvement by ensuring our staff have the right tools and infrastructure to achieve excellent student experience and outcomes.

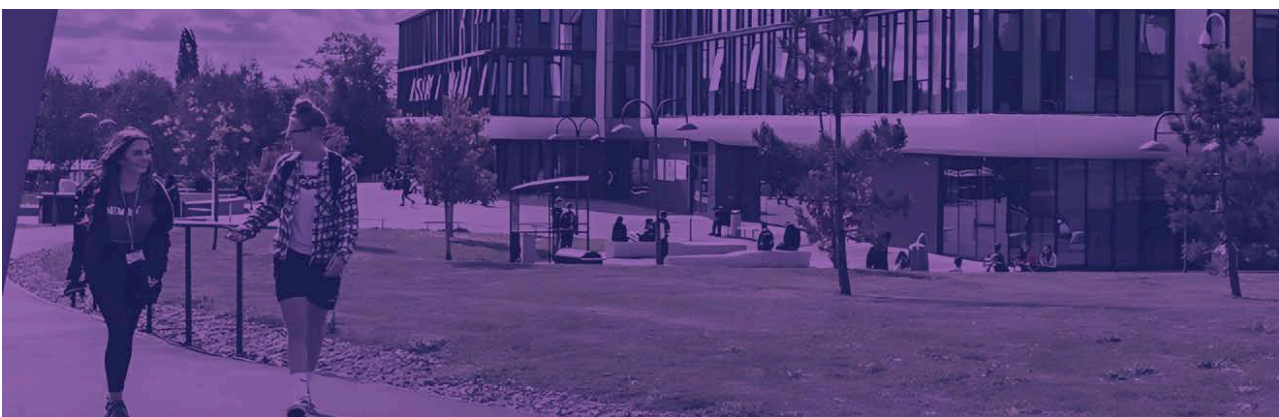
To succeed in this role, you will come to us as a successful senior leader of corporate services functions within a similarly complex environment as that of TBCG's. As well as being an excellent communicator, you should have a strong commercial awareness and the ability to translate strategy into operational plans.

You will be coming to TBCG at an extremely exciting period of change, with our new CEO having commenced in January 2024 with a passionate commitment to, and vision of excellence that will take us forward in the next stage of TBCG's evolution.

Interested parties are strongly encouraged to contact our FE Associates recruitment partner, [Jo.Johnston@fea.co.uk](mailto:Jo.Johnston@fea.co.uk), to arrange an initial discussion prior to submitting an application.

With best wishes

**Yiannis Kouris**  
**Group Chief Executive**



# About Us

TBCG is one of the largest FE providers in England and has grown rapidly in the last few years. Initially based on the old Bedford College site, through mergers and acquisitions, this year we have grown to have approximately 18,000 learners on multiple sites. In 2018, it successfully merged with Tresham College to create pan-Bedfordshire and North Northamptonshire provision based on the concept of developing regional market towns, and this has been boosted by Central Bedfordshire College (CBC) deciding to join the Group in February 2023. The Group has an Ofsted judgement of 'good', having rapidly improved the quality rating of Tresham on merger. These developments mean that TBCG has geographical sites in Bedford, Kettering, Corby, Wellingborough, Silverstone (housing a specialist motorsport facility), Shuttleworth (a land-based campus), and CBC sites in Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard.

Our strategic plan from 2022 to 2027 has a straightforward but challenging aim: 'to be the best and most authoritative further education provider in the South East Midlands'. This reflects both our current position as being the largest provider of FE in the region and also our ambition to be recognised as a system leader in national FE and a major source of civic leadership within our communities. TBCG is explicitly a regional institution and has no interest in being a national group or in growing for the sake of growth. Our rationale for expansion has been (and will continue to be) to achieve the benefits of regional integration, and its location is a major strength sited, as it is, within the southern part of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and within easy commuting distance of London. Economic growth and employment opportunities are buoyant (under almost all economic models) and population growth and long-term demographic projections are strong. The region has genuine world-class employers with needs requiring world-class technical skills, and TBCG is committed to





making a substantial contribution with regional partners to achieving this. We are also aware that advances in digital technology will change many aspects of how FE operates and we intend to be a leader in this area as well.

Notwithstanding such ambitions, TBCG will remain a values-driven institution with its students and the communities it serves at its heart, and with a strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (our strategic plan reaffirms this). TBCG has always striven to do what is best for its students and, thereby, to promote educational excellence by delivering programmes that stretch and challenge them. Continuing to enhance the quality of provision and student and employer satisfaction is at the heart of our strategic plan.

The strategic plan is available on our website and has been included on the FE Associates microsite for this role. The financial position of the Group is strong and it has a reputation in the sector for excellent financial management including having retained an ESFA financial rating of 'outstanding' for many years. Clearly, the national funding environment is difficult, particularly given inflation and the challenges of many aspects of staff recruitment and reward. Nonetheless, TBCG is better placed to weather such storms than the vast majority of the sector and we have a strong working relationship with our banks.

Our CEO, Yiannis Koursis OBE, continues to build on the Group's strong reputation, guiding us through the next phase of our journey. Yiannis has been transforming the lives of students for more than 17 years, having held senior roles in further education at colleges across the UK. In recognition of his exceptional contributions to social progress and development, he was awarded an OBE in 2022 and a fellowship from the Royal Society of Arts in 2020. Yiannis is a passionate national advocate for further education, championing its power to transform lives and tirelessly promoting the sector as a vital force for opportunity and growth.

We operate a model where each of our colleges has a designated Principal responsible for the day-to-day leadership of their respective campuses, ensuring the effective development and delivery of curriculum, teaching, and learning. The Business Development team, part of TBCG's professional services operations, is led at the Group level, serving the needs of stakeholders across each institutional region.



# Job Description

**Job title:** Chief Operating Officer (COO)

**Reports to:** CEO

**Direct reports:** Group Director of Estates, Group Director of IT, Head of Health and Safety

**Salary:** Competitive

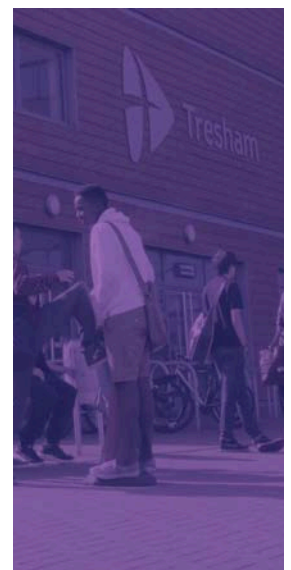
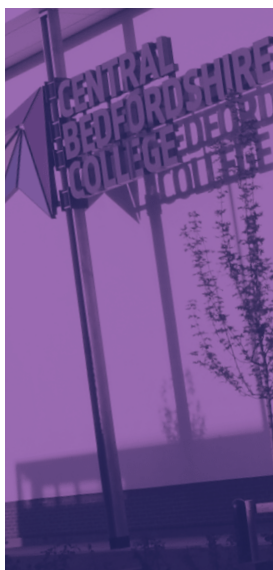
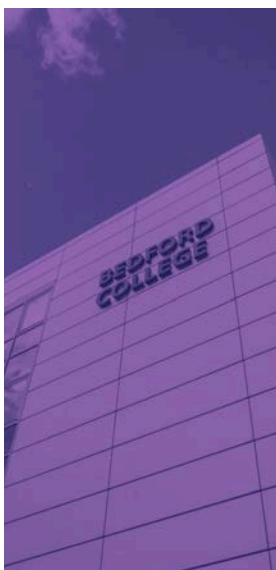
## Job Purpose

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) will provide strategic leadership and management across business support services of The Bedford College Group (TBCG). The role is integral to the delivery of the Group's strategic aims, ensuring continuous improvement and fostering an ambitious and forward-looking culture. The COO will work closely with the CEO, the Executive Team and Governors to ensure operational efficiency and strategic growth of the Group.

### Priorities

The prime requirement for the COO is to facilitate the best possible learner provision and outcomes by:

- Successfully removing any non-student barriers to achieving The Bedford College Group's goals.
- Representing the business support teams at Executive Leadership level to the Governing Board and external bodies where appropriate.
- Representing the business support teams in planning and development within The Bedford College Group and ensure clear and effective two-way communication between curriculum and business support teams.



# Key Responsibilities

## Strategy and Planning

- To provide strategic and operational leadership to the core operations of TBCG's business support teams ensuring they are well managed on a day-to-day basis.
- Systems and processes are rigorous, robust and fit for purpose.
- Colleagues work as one team towards a common purpose, are effectively and efficiently deployed, and perform to the highest standards.

## Estates and Property

- To review, embed, oversee and deliver an ambitious strategy for TBCG 's estate.
- To work with the CEO to lead and deliver significant short and long term improvements to TBCG 's estate and physical resources.
- To ensure TBCG estate in its fullest is well maintained, fit for purpose and reflective of the College ambitions and high standards.
- To work with the CFO to ensure that TBCG capital projects are appropriately managed and that key financial information accurately reports the impacts of these projects.
- Leadership of the effective and efficient investment and utilisation of physical and IT resources.
- To ensure that the estate and operations are as sustainable as possible, leading on the climate and sustainability agenda, delivering the over-arching actions to make TBCG as sustainable as possible.

## Digital

- Lead and oversee the planning, coordination and implementation of digital resource investment across TBCG.
- Support the effective roll out and impact of new digital resources through the provision of effective specialist training and IT support.

## Health and Safety

- Leadership and oversight of TBCG 's security provision, ensuring it is fit for purpose and contributes to a safe environment for our students and visitors whilst delivering an appropriate level of customer service.
- To carry out such duties and responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act and associated legislation as described in the College's health and safety policy documents.
- Be ultimately responsible for the safety of all people who engage with our premises ensuring a good level of health and safety is maintained.
- Lead risk management and mitigation, ensuring business continuity plans are in place.
- Partner with legal advisers to ensure compliance in all areas.
- Ensure clear accountability for Health and Safety, reporting risks and mitigations to the CEO and Governors.



## General Responsibilities

- Oversee the implementation of strategies for business support teams, ensuring processes and structures are efficient.
- Ensure challenging appraisal objectives and personal development plans for all business support colleagues.

## Leadership and Management

- Lead staff and carry out the role of Chief Operating Officer in alignment with the values of TBCG.
- Be open and curious in your leadership, challenging yourself and others to achieve ongoing improvement and development.
- Lead in an inclusive manner and inspire colleagues to achieve excellence in everything they do.
- Communicate a clear vision and purpose that others are able to understand and support.
- Collaborate closely with colleagues and work in partnership to achieve the vision, mission and strategic aims of TBCG.
- Empower others to take ownership, achieve their professional potential and hold colleagues to account for performance.
- Always champion the entitlement of learners to receive excellent education and training and achieve educational success.



## College-Wide Responsibilities

- To attend other TBCG campuses for team management, meetings etc.
- To act as Duty Manager as assigned by rota.
- To support and participate in weekly ID checks and walk rounds.
- To support and participate in invigilation during exam periods.
- To support and participate in TBCG open days.
- To carry out investigations and disciplinary hearings as an independent Director.

## Statutory Duties

- **SAFEGUARDING** – To be responsible for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and for raising any concerns in line with BCG policy and procedure.
- **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY** – To be responsible for promoting equality and diversity in line with BCG policy and procedure.
- **HEALTH & SAFETY** – To be responsible for following health and safety requirements in line with BCG policy and procedure.
- **TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT** – To participate proactively in training and development including any required qualification development.





# Person Specification

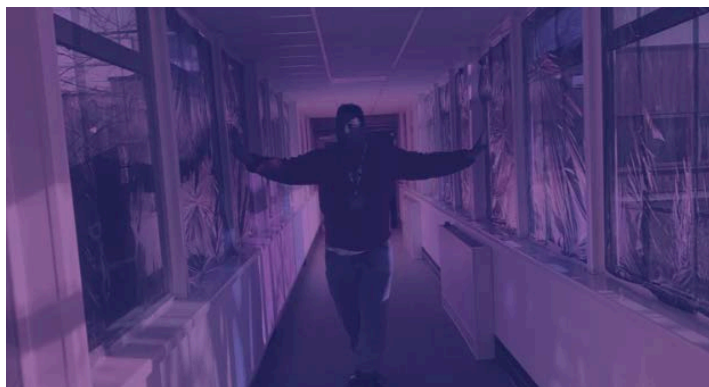
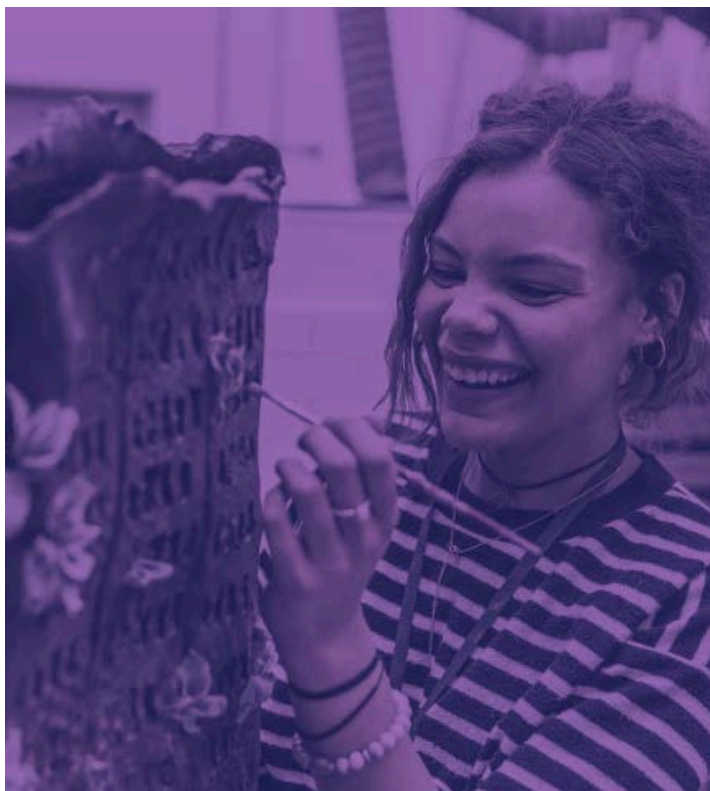
The following are considered essential for the role:

## Qualifications/Training

- Relevant degree level qualification or demonstrable experience.
- Evidence of continuous professional development.
- Appropriate higher level professional and /or qualifications relevant to a senior corporate services role.

## Experience

- Successful senior leadership of corporate services functions in an operating environment of similar complexity to The Bedford College Group.
- Delivering services within internal and external regulatory frameworks.
- Formulating and implementing plans and strategies for the effective and efficient delivery of services.
- Experience of assuming strategic responsibility for one or more of the corporate service areas which are relevant to the job role.
- Working as part of an executive leadership team on the delivery of high-quality services.
- Experience of senior leadership that is relevant to ensuring effective and best practice in Health and Safety is implemented across the College.
- Experience of working with external stakeholders in promoting an organisation.
- Strategic and business planning experience gained in a relevant setting.
- Experience of contributing to the management of significant change programmes.



## Skills and Competencies

- Strong commercial awareness and strategic planning skills.
- Awareness and understanding of key issues in relation to Finance, ICT, Human Resources, Estates, Procurement and Health and Safety.
- Excellent communication, interpersonal and leadership skills, with the ability to motivate and inspire teams.
- Ability to translate strategy into operational plans and provide clarity to others.
- Strong problem-solving abilities and resilience.
- Excellent numeracy and analysing skills.
- Knowledge of safeguarding legislation and best practices.
- Understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion principles.
- Proficiency in using IT systems, including Microsoft Office and relevant educational software.

## Personal Attributes

- A collaborative leader who enjoys working within teams and jointly owning challenges and issues.
- A strong strategist who is able to act swiftly to address issues and concerns.
- A team player who is able to cope with ambiguity and make sense of complexity.
- A forward looking individual who is able to scan the horizon to identify opportunities and identify risks before they occur.
- The ability to translate strategy into operational plans and to provide clarity to others.
- The ability to lead others with clarity, energy and enthusiasm, commanding respect across the organisation.
- Ability to commit to TBCG values, in particular around embracing diversity and the welfare of students.
- Willing to work flexibly, including evenings and weekends. As well as regionally/nationally, including working away from home.
- To demonstrate credibility across a wide range of audiences.
- Ability to forge and sustain good working relationships with colleagues and external agencies.
- A resilient operator with strong problem-solving abilities.
- Commitment to the highest professional and personal standards of work, behaviour and conduct.
- A strong passion, commitment and empathy for education, students and young people.

## Other Requirements

- Flexible approach to working hours, as required by the needs of the Group.
- Ability to travel between campuses or locations, as needed.
- A clear understanding of the appropriate professional boundaries and relationships that should be formed and maintained with children and young people.



# The Bedford College Group

## Terms and Conditions

The appointed candidate will receive the following:

- a competitive salary
- 35 days annual leave plus bank holidays
- a pension through the local government pension scheme

## Key Dates

<b>Closing date for applications:</b>	<b>9am Thursday 30 January 2025</b>
<b>Shortlisting:</b>	<b>Monday 3 and Tuesday 4 February 2025</b>
<b>Interview date:</b>	<b>Tuesday 11 February 2025</b>

---

The images used in this document are the copyright of The Bedford College Group; acknowledgement of that copyright is hereby given. All images are used with the permission of the owner and may not be used by third parties without permission of The Bedford College Group.



# The Application Process

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 parties are advised to arrange an initial conversation with our FE Associates lead consultant, by emailing [Jo.Johnston@fea.co.uk](mailto: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 of this pack for full details on how to submit your application.

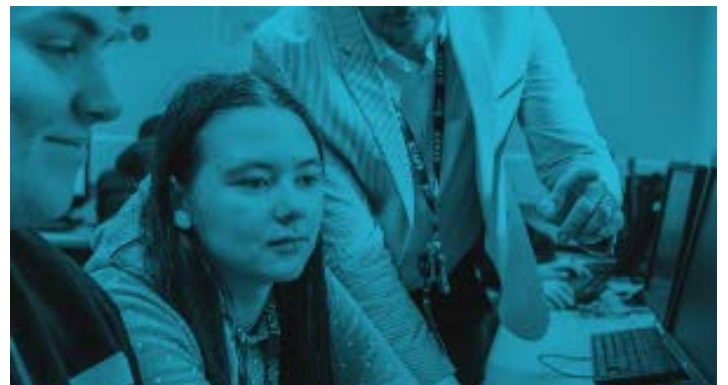
## **Shortlisting and Invitation to Interview**

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.

This post is exempt from The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Exceptions Order 1975 provides information about which convictions must be declared during job applications and related exceptions and further information about filtering offences can be found in the DBS filtering guide. The Bedford College Group's policy on the employment of ex-offenders is available upon request. Candidates who are barred from working with children are reminded that it is a criminal offence to apply for this post.



Having obtained the full information from <https://www.fea.co.uk/tbcg-coo/>, discussed the role with Jo Johnston and scheduled your first-stage interview via Teams, you should email your application to [recruitment@fea.co.uk](mailto: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).**

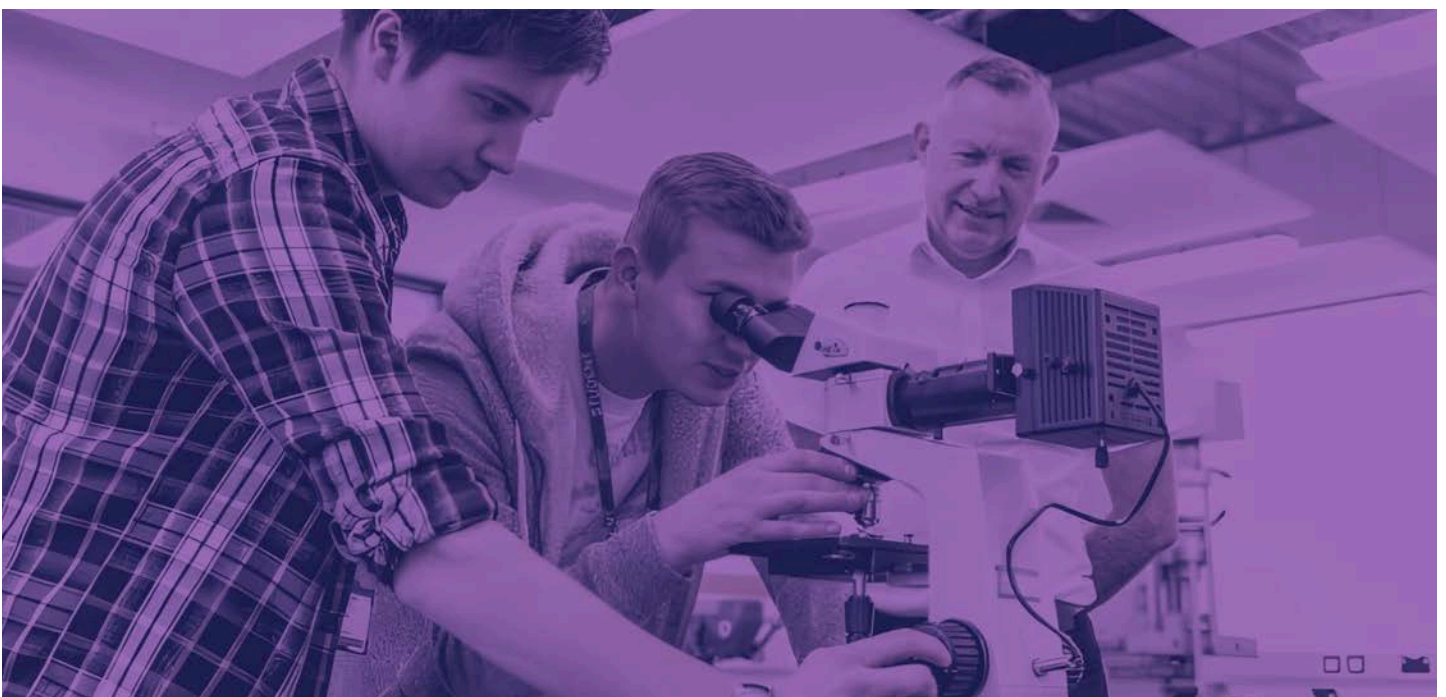
Ensure your email includes only the 2 forms necessary for your application (these forms are located with the candidate information pack on the FEA website jobs page for this role):

### 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 – tbcg-coo- 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 – tbcg-coo- ED.





THE  
**BEDFORD**  
COLLEGE  
GROUP

The Bedford College Group  
Bedford College (registered office)  
Cauldwell Street  
Bedford  
MK42 9AH

Tel: 01234 291000  
[bedfordcollegegroup.ac.uk](http://bedfordcollegegroup.ac.uk)

**FEA** **FE ASSOCIATES**

