

Runshaw College Retains Coveted STEM Assured Status

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With technology pervasive in every aspect of life today, it's little wonder there is such a high demand for people with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) skills. Preparing and futureproofing curriculum to ensure educational institutions provide the STEM skills needed by employers, requires such institutions to develop a delicate balance of ingredients in curriculum development. New STEM curriculum needs to address those missing technical specialisms so desperately needed in companies, whilst at the same time, ensure that a good mix of transferrable and professional skills, such as communication, creativity, problem-solving, relationship-building and leadership, are inculcated into new STEM programmes. In this way, students leaving the institution are workplace ready, immediately productive, and are able to carve out their own opportunities in a competitive market space.

Runshaw College, a Further and Higher Education provider in Lancashire with campuses in Chorley and Leyland, and a student population of over 6,000 learners has, through its STEM curriculum planning, achieved such a balance of STEM specialisms, transferable and professional skills. It has now reasserted its leading STEM position by once again securing the STEM Assured Standard status for the second time. The College works with approximately 650 employers, delivering Apprenticeships and T-Level qualifications, and it offers programmes covering such subjects as Medical Sciences, Health Care, Childhood Studies and Veterinary Sciences, Engineering, Media and Music, as well as Digital Technologies, including Cyber Security, Digital Marketing and Communications.

The College was benchmarked by the UK's STEM Foundation and the Institute of Innovation and Knowledge Exchange (IKE Institute), using the STEM Assured Standard. Runshaw College was validated using the Standard's Framework across six category areas: Strategy and Planning, Collaboration and Consultation (Educational Partners, Business and Industry, and Stakeholders), Innovation, Design, Delivery and Impact (on students, employers and the regional society at large).

Clare Russell, Principal and Chief Executive of Runshaw College said: "We are delighted that we have achieved our renewal of the STEM Assured status for another 3 years! It was a lengthy application process, but all went very well, with a detailed validation event involving staff, students and employers across Maths, Science, Engineering, Health Care and Childhood Studies, Digital Technologies and Music Media and Performing Arts. A huge thank you to everyone involved!"

Prof Sam Medhat, Chief Executive of the STEM Foundation and IKE Institute said: "Having the STEM Assured designation differentiates Runshaw College from other colleges by demonstrating its commitment to providing high-quality STEM education. In the fast-paced world of STEM, Runshaw College has maintained its STEM Assured status, shown its ability to meet the rigorous standards set by the STEM Foundation and IKE Institute. The College's innovative curriculum enriched by employer engagement with significant contributions from their eight Employer Partnership Boards, state-of-the-art facilities and hands-on learning opportunities and unique student experiences, provided a robust foundation for driving performance success in their STEM education."

About IKE Institute

The Institute of Innovation and Knowledge Exchange (IKE Institute) is the UK's professional body for

innovators. It accredits, certifies and benchmarks innovation in such sectors as construction, defence, education, energy, electronics, nuclear, security, technology and transportation. IKE Institute's work is guided by the Innovation Council of over 50 c-suite executives that represent different economic sectors. The Institute runs think tanks, conducts research studies, delivers certified training, develops new business models and provides tools to support organisations in their strategic innovation developments. The Institute's Innovation Manifesto highlights its commitment to support the development of innovative people and organisations. The IKE Institute is represented on the UK Scientific and Parliamentary Committee and the BSI/ISO Technical Innovation Committees amongst other innovation related boards, to influence the inter-relationship between education, business, and government through collaborative networks and knowledge exchange.

IKE Institute Website (<https://ikeinstitute.org>)

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About Runshaw College

Runshaw College was established in 1974. It initially began life catering solely for school leavers from Balshaw's High School in Leyland, and Parklands High School in Chorley. In the early years of its existence, the college gained a reputation for high-quality education and expanded at a gentle rate.

The 1990s saw the college expand rapidly, as it undertook an extensive building programme (naming each new building after a place in the Lake District, the most recent of which is Buttermere – a nod to the trees and wildlife that make the campus so attractive) to accommodate increasing student numbers, as its reputation for high calibre teaching and strong exam results spread beyond the borders of South Ribble and Chorley. It was during this phase, under the nationally recognised leadership of Principal Bernard O'Connell (who was later knighted for his services to education and to the college) that the college started to recruit in large numbers from surrounding towns of Blackburn, Wigan and Preston.

After the millennium, the college's results went from strength to strength, and it achieved: Investors in People Awards, Grade 1 inspections and superb links with the country's top universities, allowing the college to consistently have more than strong progression to the country's elite universities including Oxford and Cambridge.

Today, Runshaw College has consolidated the previous 48 years of hard work and is now acknowledged as the finest provider of Further Education in the sector, attracting students from all around the North West. Our students at Runshaw College always seem to perform outstandingly well in their advanced level qualifications.

And that is certainly the case for Runshaw's highly talented Class of 2022. The average grade achieved by A Level students was once again a B grade this year. Overall, 96% of our Vocational students progressed to their chosen university.

Runshaw College Website (<https://www.runshaw.ac.uk/>)

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About STEM Foundation

The STEM Foundation is an innovation driven charity that supports improvements in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education, delivers STEM assured accreditation, offers CPD in innovation and new and emerging technology areas, encourages multidisciplinary collaboration and conducts action research to enable knowledge and technology exchange. Thus, underpinning economic development and strengthening students' progression and employability. Since 2004, we have benchmarked and enabled the transformation of over 130 institutions at all educational levels across many regions. Our efforts so far have positively impacted over 700,000 STEM learners.

STEM Foundation Website (<https://www.stemfoundation.org.uk>)