

**Launching 16-19 programmes (T-levels) in Manchester**

Outline proposal

**Purpose of the document**:

* To articulate Manchester City Council and the DfE’s interest in Ada launching 16-19 programmes in Greater Manchester
* To articulate an outline of why and how Ada might launch 16-19 programmes (Sixth Form) provision in Manchester from September 2025

**Context:**

Manchester City Council (MCC)/ Combined Authority (GMCA):

* Manchester City Council has identified a shortage of 16-19 provision and insufficient places to accommodate its current and forecast 16-19 population due to a ‘demographic bulge’ predicted to run through until 2030. MCC estimates that it will be short around 1,000 places in Autumn 2024 and at least the same if not more in 2025.
* This problem is exacerbated by overall 16-19 demographic population growth across GMCA, bucking the national trend.
* The Dept. for Education (DfE) have now formally acknowledged the shortage of places in GMCA and MCC and have requested that MCC and GMCA work with local providers to put forward proposals for how to alleviate the shortage of places in the coming years.
* Both MCC and GMCA have stated their desire for Ada to launch 16-19 provision in the region. They believe this will complement existing provision and strongly align with the Skills strategy for GMCA.

Ada:

* We have successfully relocated to its new, permanent campus at 16, Blossom Street, Ancoats in March 2024
* Through our apprenticeships, we already have a number of well-developed industry partnerships in the region with employers such: PwC, Bank of America, Booking.com, Moneysupermarket Group, Siemens, Arup and Netacea.
* Initial building capacity utilisation in Manchester is low due to the block release training model used for apprenticeship training.
* We have staff who are experienced in 16-19 programme development and delivery
* Our sixth form provision is well-established in London, has high achievement and progression rates and is rated ‘Good’ by Ofsted (2023).

**Outline proposal:**

* We build on our growing reputation in GM as a centre of excellence for the teaching and learning of advanced digital skills. Our specialist Sixth Form provision will be positioned with learners, and their families, as a logical progression route for those with an interest in technology and belief that a career in the tech sector is for them.
* With industry, we will position our Sixth Form as a highly skilled, diverse entry-level talent pool to meet their well-articulated technical skills shortages.
* We propose to start by launching the Digital Production, Design and Development T-level, a new high quality Level 3 offer that includes a 315 hour (45 day) work placement
* Based on learner demand and levels of support from MCC and DfE, we could consider expanding our level 3 curriculum offer (as exists in London) in the region in the future. This could include a T level foundation course and GCSE English and Maths resits.

**Opportunities, Risks and (potential) mitigations**

| **Opportunities** | **Risks** | **Potential Risk Mitigations** |
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| Demographic ‘Bulge’ and shortage of places gives some assurance of demand | Uncertain demand - T-levels are not well understood by young people and parents | T-level adoption in North West has been higher than other regions; new government may relax level 3 restrictions |
| 16-19 provision is likely to attract a high % of disadvantaged learners allowing us to better address our mission | Other colleges, esp. Manchester College, are already delivering (Digital) T-levels at larger scale than Ada | MCC assure us that demographic bulge means that there is more demand than supply and Manchester College, in particular, are at capacity already |
| Rigour of T-levels & mandatory work placement is likely to increase progression rates to (Ada) apprenticeships | Ability to learn lessons from T-levels on London will have to be ‘live’ |  |
| Our HL/Degree Apprenticeships progression opportunities creates a clear, demarcated ‘point of difference’ for Ada in the region versus other training providers / Colleges / Schools / Unis for employers & learners | Inability to recruit good quality teaching staff | To date, we have found technical talent somewhat easier to recruit in the North West and we now have a good network / awareness among technical educators in the region |
| Ability to learn lessons from T-level in London launching in Autumn ‘24 | Programmes likely to be loss-making until volumes are achieved without commitment to in-year funding and/or up-front revenue support provided | MCC indicates that being classified as ‘gap provision’ will allow for a 3-year ‘in-year’ funding commitment from DfE.  Proposal has gone to MCC asking for £100k in upfront support (03/05/24) |
| Programmes would bring additional income to Ada and allow the college to extend its reach | T level work placements for each student must be sourced. If these are our USP they must be high quality | Leverage our existing Industry partnerships |
| The addition of T Levels further establishes our Ancoats Campus as a ‘Tech Education Hub’ with industry standard facilities |  |  |