

BORDERS

COLLEGE

vision
2030

Your College, Your Future



Your College, Your Future

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Foreword

Welcome to 'Vision 20**30** – Your College, Your Future', Borders College's statement of ambition for the next five years. This Vision was created following feedback from our students, our staff and our stakeholders, including public bodies and private industry.

Our Vision is one of learning excellence for the Scottish Borders, where our College is the first-choice destination for all learners in the region. Borders College will be recognised by individual learners, businesses, community partners and other stakeholders for delivering a best-in-class learning experience to and for the Scottish Borders community, giving learners the skills and knowledge they need to succeed, enabling them to add real value to businesses and make a positive contribution to the wider community. We will provide life-changing educational opportunities across the whole of the region, enabling access to learners of all ages and backgrounds.

We will continue to be a standalone anchor institution for the Scottish Borders community. Collaboration and engagement will be the key to this success. By working in partnership with our region's businesses and key stakeholders, Borders College will be the institution best placed to understand

the needs of learners, businesses, and communities in the Borders to deliver what they need. The College will also make a significant contribution to delivering priority objectives for Scottish and UK governments, for our Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership, and for the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership.

The Scottish Borders region is a great place to live and work, and Borders College is a great place to study. Our ambition is to provide access to the fullest range of learning opportunities and the best possible learning experience, increasing the numbers of learners who remain within our region as they fulfil their own ambitions. As we continue to develop and grow our reputation for excellence, our aspiration is that the College will also attract learners from beyond our regional boundaries, enriching the learning experience for all and increasing the talent base of the Scottish Borders.

The College and the Borders community should be confident and comfortable with this ambition. Our staff are well-respected experts, and our learning environments support high quality learning for our students and external stakeholders. Our adoption of cutting-edge technology for learning and for our business systems greatly enhances our student experience and ensures our resources are directed to where they have most impact. We are an inclusive and successful college, recognising and supporting the diversity of our learners and achieving levels of learner success among the highest in Scotland. While our main focus is on providing skills and supporting economic growth in the Scottish Borders, we are also committed to preparing our learners for an increasingly globalised society.

Vision 2030 will build on our current success. We know our College changes lives. We know that we are a critical part of the learning and skills infrastructure of the Scottish Borders. But we also believe we can and must do more. Ours is a journey from very good to excellent. Vision 2030 is inspired by the heritage of our Scottish Borders, and is combined with an ambition to drive a successful future for learners and businesses across the region but also recognises our impacts must extend far beyond the region.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ray McCowan'.

Ray McCowan, Chair of the Regional Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pete Smith'.

Pete Smith, Principal and CEO

Our vision and values

Our mission

Our mission is to provide the highest quality learning experience and outcomes, to support business and drive economic growth in the Scottish Borders.

Vision 2030

Our College will ensure the people and businesses across the Scottish Borders have access to the breadth of learning and skills opportunities they need to raise aspirations, inspire entrepreneurship, enhance lives and drive economic growth.

Values

Our values represent our underpinning beliefs in who we are, how we want others to see us, and how we can ensure our learning delivery is most impactful and inspiring.



Strategic context

Delivering for the Scottish Borders

Borders College plays a pivotal role in the delivery of skills and learning in the Scottish Borders. As the largest provider of tertiary education in the region, in 2024-25 we enrolled 1,143 full-time and 2,965 part-time learners. We are also the largest provider of Modern Apprenticeships in the region, with 289 directly-contracted starts in 2024-25.

The region itself is largely rural, covering around 1,800 square miles, with a population of around 115,000. It has a rich heritage of agriculture and industry, and our College can trace its roots in delivering training for those sectors back to the 1830s.

As the designated Regional College for the Scottish Borders, our curriculum offer still primarily reflects the needs of the region, and is based on market intelligence gained from our partnerships with industry sectors and schools, and in utilising our Regional Skills Assessments to shape our future offer to meet anticipated changes.



We believe that clearly defined learning pathways are essential to developing and retaining talent and skills within the Borders, and we also work with higher education institutions to maximise those opportunities for learners.

Our participation in the *Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership* ensures we play our part in delivering wider positive outcomes for the Borders, responding to the skills needs of our public and third sector partners, and working closely with them to reduce poverty, and improve health and criminal justice outcomes.

We are also engaged in the *Regional Economic Partnership* across the Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway to ensure the wider skills demands across the south of Scotland are met, while using the resources available to us as efficiently as possible and gaining from existing synergies.

The *Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal* and the *Edinburgh and South East Scotland City*

Region Deal both present enormous opportunities to support economic growth for our region, underpinned by a robust, integrated skills framework. We will continue to be a key partner in the delivery of both, to ensure our region benefits from those opportunities.

Our wider community engagement will also be key to the success of the College, our learners and our region. We are determined to retain our place as a civic anchor. While it may not be possible to retain a physical footprint in every town or village in the Borders, we will continue to engage with the people in those communities to understand their needs and to ensure they can also benefit from the wider services the College can offer.

Strategic context

Delivering for Scotland

As well as our mandate to deliver learning in the Borders, our College plays a significant role in delivering for the Scottish Government's national priorities:

Eradicating child poverty

Creating opportunities for learning and the provision of higher level skills are fundamental to improving employability, increasing economic activity and reducing poverty.

Growing the economy

The skills we will deliver for the Scottish Borders are designed to support economic growth across the region and Scotland.

Tackling the climate emergency

Our College leads by example, demonstrated by our past performance in carbon management and also our ambitious targets for Net Zero. As well as this direct intervention, we deliver skills for the sustainable construction sector and embed sustainable practice across our curriculum.

Ensuring high quality and sustainable public services

Quality is at our core, both in our delivery of learning and the wider services we offer. The principle of public value is essential to ensuring a sustainable business plan and efficient use of our resources.

In June 2023, the Scottish Government published its "*Purpose and Principles for Post-School Education, Research and Skills*". Borders College recognises the messages within that as being fundamental to our success.



Your College, Your Future



The ability for public, private and third sector partners to develop a shared vision and purpose is critical to regional economic success.

Sara Thiam, CEO, Prosper

Strategic context

Meeting global challenges

Our College will equip our learners to meet the challenges of an increasingly globalised society. Embedding meta skills and optimising the use of technology in our learning will ensure our learners are prepared for employment, self-employment, continued learning or other aspirations they have.

In particular, we will continue our focus on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, embedding these within our learning and demonstrating how these can positively influence decision-making in our business and personal lives.

We strive to give our learners as wide an experience as possible, both in Scotland and overseas, to encourage broader thinking and to consider the impact that our lives have on the world, and how world events impact on us.



Strategic outcomes

Vision 20**30** will see us deliver the following strategic outcomes:

Improved learner success

More learners will be supported to achieve their learning outcomes and achieve positive destinations.

Sustainable curriculum that meets the needs of our region

Our curriculum priorities will clearly reflect regional needs, with clear learning pathways supported by a sustainable resource plan.

Increased support to regional businesses

We will demonstrate increased engagement with businesses across our region, with a focus on supporting innovation and growing commercial opportunities.

Reduced environmental impact

Our environmental impact will be demonstrably reduced, with a clear path to Net Zero by 2045.

An efficient estate and optimal use of technology

Our estates planning and investment will deliver facilities that are tailored to our current and planned curriculum delivery. Our investment in technology will deliver an enhanced learning experience, improved learner outcomes and efficient business planning and delivery.

To deliver on our vision, we will put in place **six key strategies**, defining how we will achieve and measure success.

Our learners and community

Contributing to community life is at the heart of many of our programmes, from horticulture students working with local groups to green our towns, to hair and beauty students visiting our care homes. We believe this type of experience enriches both the learning experience and the lives of our citizens.

“

I never thought going back to college would result in me owning my own business. The support was fantastic and made my dream a reality.”

Lucie Shand,
Business Management,
Animal Care

“

The ESOL course has been vital to my progression in this country. Knowing another language opens up the whole world.”

Svitlana Norel,
Ukrainian artist

“

I acquired new skills to lead effectively, including ways to persuade and influence people and to widen my ability to think in innovative and creative ways.”

Pam Peacocke,
Scotch Whisky
Association

“

The course was instrumental in shaping my career path, providing me with invaluable knowledge and confidence. It was an experience that truly set me on the path to success.”

Corporal Megan Reid,
British Army

Business and enterprise

Our engagement with business and industry is critical to developing and delivering relevant learning matched to the needs of the workplace.

Our teams work with industry sectors and trade bodies to ensure our learners are equipped with the skills they need to meet their aspirations for work, enterprise or further study.

We work with **over 500 businesses** each year

delivering direct and bespoke training, through our apprenticeship programme and work placement opportunities.

“

Borders College are a valued partner. Their continuing flexibility and collaborative working supports NHS Borders to appropriately train and develop staff to enhance the services provided as we strive to deliver world class health care.”

Kim Smith and Edwina Cameron
NHS Borders

“

Borders College gave me the start I needed for going into the industry. It prepared me for the real world of work and the tutors were great.”

Greg Anderson,
Hospitality



We are the largest provider of Modern Apprenticeships in the region, supporting over 650 individuals annually, with 289 directly contracted starts in 2024-25.

“

It's so important for girls to see other women in engineering. It shows them that they can do it too. We need different voices to drive innovation.”

Erin Moffat

Our skills and enterprise strategy

Learners come first

We are adamant that our learners must always come first and that delivering an excellent student experience is essential to this. This is central to all of our decision-making and planning. As a College, we know that there is unmet demand in our region and we must seek growth and alternative ways of meeting that demand. To do this, our Skills and Enterprise Strategy will show how we will:

- Build rich partnerships and relationships with government, public sector partners and stakeholders
- Grow our relationships with businesses and deliver increased commercial courses for employers and individuals
- Grow our partnerships with schools and with higher education institutions to deliver clear learning pathways and increase higher education opportunities in the Scottish Borders
- Work with our communities to ensure we have a programme of community learning that is sustainable
- Further develop our partnership with our Students' Association to ensure our students are represented in our decision-making
- Work with students and partner organisations to deliver support mechanisms that are inclusive, responsive and improve outcomes.



How will we know we are successful?

- Student outcomes will improve, both in terms of success in their chosen course, but also in those going on to a positive destination
- Our offer will promote and enhance entrepreneurial skills
- We will see improved success for priority groups
- Student satisfaction with their College experience will improve
- Income from our commercial courses will increase
- We will deliver increased publicly-funded student activity
- The number of annual engagements with industry will increase
- Employer satisfaction with College services will improve.

99%

of students say staff encourage students to take responsibility for their learning.

4,100

students enrolled at Borders College in 2024-25.

92%

of students believe all students at the College are treated equally and fairly by staff.

“

Achieving my qualification has given me the opportunity to develop my skills and progress in my job. Doing so has also allowed me to gain the confidence to pursue a qualification as a 'mature student' and hopefully make my family proud.”

Laura,
SCQF Level 7, Management



“

This place really feels like a community. We learn from each other and work together, which makes it so much easier. It's great knowing we're all in this together.”

Abigail Barraclough,
highlighting the support
system at Borders College

Our people strategy

Empowering people, driving success

Borders College is rightly proud of our people and the success that they deliver for our learners. We believe that our people really are the heart of our College and our People Strategy will ensure we invest in all of our people to ensure the best outcomes for students and the College. It will describe how we will do this by:

- Enabling people to flourish
- Attracting and retaining the best people
- Developing exceptional people and people leaders
- Valuing diversity and promoting wellbeing and inclusion
- Investing in a healthy culture
- Enabling great performance and delivery
- Measuring and learning from our success.

How will we know we are successful?

- We will see progress against benchmarks and targets for recruitment and retention
- We will continue to see progress in meeting our obligations for equalities, diversity and inclusion
- We will have a clear approach to succession planning and a transparent and robust approach to implementation
- Our approach to wellbeing will be designed to ensure we are inclusive and supportive
- Development opportunities will be clearly linked to business priorities, and also support individual aspirations
- We will see improved staff engagement and satisfaction.

98%

of students believe their time at Borders College has helped them to develop knowledge and skills for the workplace.



11%

of our staff have disclosed a disability.

65%

of our workforce are female, as are 60% of our senior managers.

We are committed to fostering talent and support a wide range of professional development, encouraging each individual to be a leader within their role. Borders College is an inclusive and listening employer that encourages ideas and solutions from all our staff.

Our estates strategy

An inspiring learning environment

Our current estate portfolio includes our main Scottish Borders Campus in Galashiels, our Landbased and Rural Skills Centre at Newtown St. Boswells, our Centre for Business Development at Hawick, and our Construction Hub at Tweedbank.

We believe that the right facilities are essential in inspiring both our staff and student bodies to achieve the outcomes they desire.

The facilities were largely refurbished since 2007 and have benefitted from a well-planned maintenance programme. The College has a wide range of specialist facilities, designed to meet the needs of our regions and current industry practices.

We also benefit from strong partnerships across the Borders to enhance our learning, including access to land management, sports and horsecare facilities.

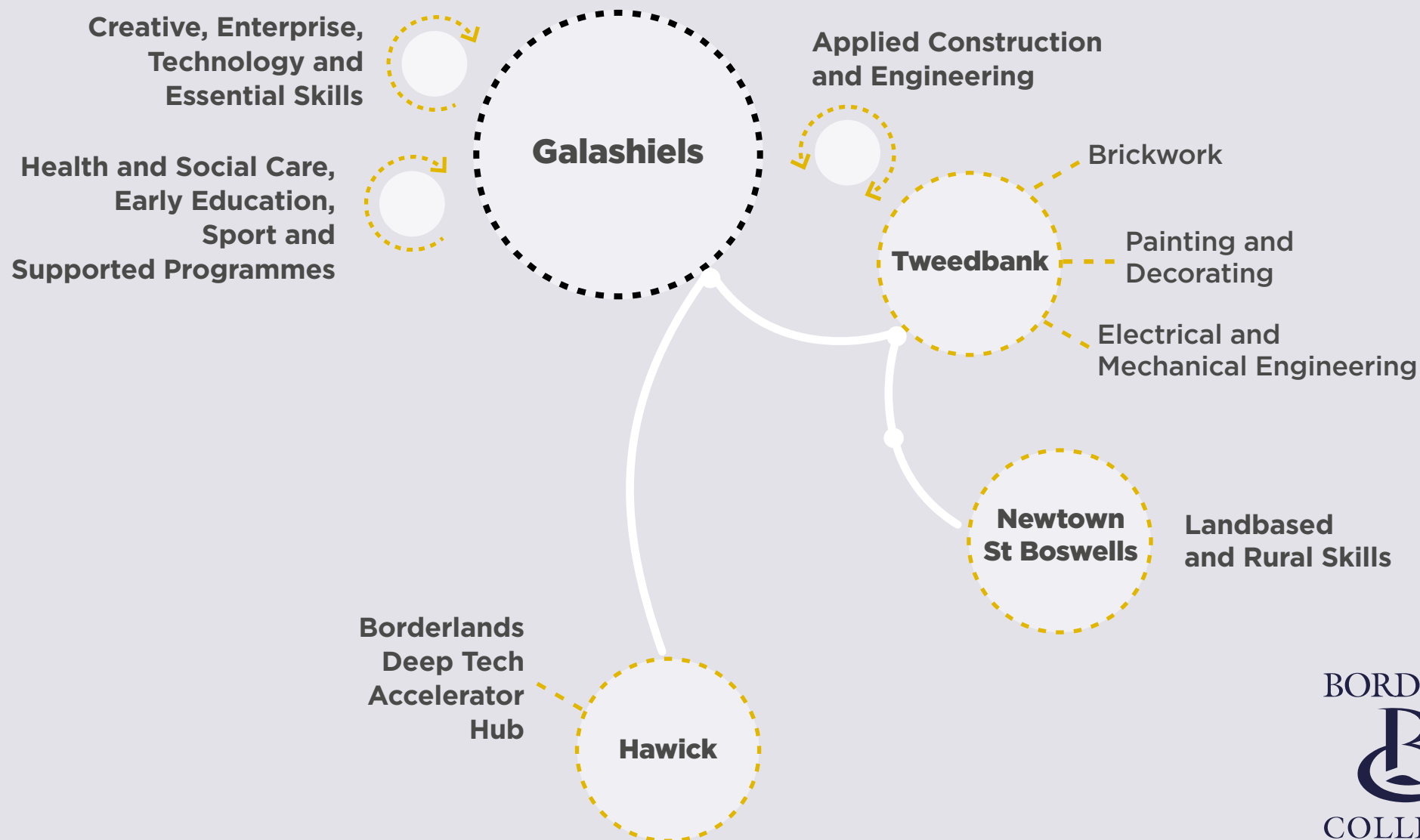
With the withdrawal of partners at Scottish Borders Campus, the College has taken the opportunity to consider efficiencies in its current estates portfolio. Initial feasibility work has indicated an optimum model, consolidating delivery as far as possible to two campuses.

We are now currently creating a masterplan and Estates Strategy that will see us:

- Repurpose large areas of our Scottish Borders Campus in Galashiels, currently let to a tenant institution
- Relocate current curriculum delivery from Hawick and Tweedbank to Galashiels
- Create new learning environments to support new curriculum
- Provide enhanced facilities for student support, welfare and social areas
- Add new and reconfigured staff bases, recognising changes in working practice.

How will we know we are successful?

- Our staff and student satisfaction and outcomes will be improved
- We will increase our income from commercial use of our facilities
- We will seek to maximise the performance of the estate across a range of metrics, including space utilisation, energy performance and operating costs.



Our digital and data strategy

Harnessing the power of technology

Borders College has always taken a leading role in utilising technology to improve outcomes.

We use digital technology wherever it is appropriate to do so in enhancing our learners' journeys with us, from supporting applications and enrolments, to our virtual learning environment, our student support services and in classroom and remote learning delivery. But we also recognise that every learner is different and may interact with technology in a different way.

We also have specific facilities to support individual learning programmes from cyber security, esports, and digital design to our technology enhanced care hub and immersive classroom.

In recent years, we have invested significantly in our business systems, enhancing our management information capabilities and student support.

In order to future-proof our capabilities, we must now ensure our digital network remains fit-for-purpose and 2025-26 will see us invest in a major network replacement project. Over the period of the strategy, we will further develop our approach to Data Driven Innovation.

This will mean our Digital and Data Strategy will have three key areas of focus:

- Supporting learning
- Supporting business processes
- Supporting decision making.

How will we know we are successful?

- Our learner and staff satisfaction levels will improve
- All of our programmes will clearly define their digital requirements for staff, students and support
- Our capital planning and programme will include clear criteria for future investment
- Our business planning cycle will clearly define the data requirements and our processes will support this.

This is all underpinned by a robust cyber security approach, including strengthening of our IT and data security defences, cyber security awareness and training, development and practice of cyber incident response and regular external assessment of our defence posture.

Our sustainability strategy

A college for people, planet and prosperity

Borders College has a rich background of leadership in developing and delivering sustainable practices. From our initial Carbon Management Plan developed in 2009 to our groundbreaking waste-water heating system installed in 2015, we have sought to be an exemplar institution in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Now, as we embed sustainable values across our whole curriculum, we continue to lead by example.

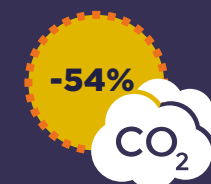
We firmly believe an ethos of sustainability must underpin everything we do. Our Sustainability Strategy will do this via four areas of focus:

- Leadership and Governance
- Learning and Teaching
- Estates and Operations
- Partnership and Engagement.

How will we know we are successful?

We will deliver an inclusive framework for transformative change, based upon actionable data to ensure accountability.

- We will demonstrate a culture of sustainability-focused education, empowering learners with the knowledge, skills, and ethical commitment needed to become global citizens
- Linked to our Estates Strategy, we will transform the College's estates and operations into a model of sustainable practice – reducing greenhouse gas emissions and waste, and promoting biodiversity
- We will lead dynamic partnerships and engage with diverse stakeholders to deliver environmental stewardship, social responsibility and sustainable development
- Our Sustainability Strategy will set out how, by 2030, we will achieve a further reduction in our carbon footprint of 10%, based on our 2015 baseline, bringing our total reduction to 60%. An annual action plan will deliver individual initiatives to achieve this.



We have **reduced** our carbon emissions by **54%** since 2014



Net Zero:
We are responding to the climate challenge through a series of innovative projects and organisational behavioural change.

Our financial strategy

Ensuring we can resource innovation and sustainable growth

With the majority of our learning being publicly-funded full- and part-time further and higher education and apprenticeships, the College must ensure it delivers value for money. It must balance this with the skills needs of our region, ensuring success for our learners and supporting growth for the economy.

Our financial planning is driven, first and foremost, by our Skills and Enterprise Strategy, together with the needs of our estates and investment in people and technology.

Our Financial Strategy has therefore been structured to deliver success by:

- Growing our commercial business and reducing reliance on public funding, giving greater flexibility to invest in new and innovative learning opportunities
- Ensuring our business processes and learning delivery are as efficient as possible, reducing the impact of external influences outwith our control
- Delivering financial plans that allow for investment and reinvestment in our fixed assets to ensure the best possible learning environments and facilities
- Retaining modest positive cash balances in line with public sector requirements.

92%

of our
provision is
Further Education.

**We fully recognise
that government priorities
may change as the needs of
the economy and wider society
also change, and we will ensure
our business model is flexible
enough to adjust to
any such changes.**



Credits

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Photography:

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Borders College and
NC Art and Design students.

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