

# **Kirklees College Higher Education Strategy 2016-19**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

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The Higher Education (HE) Strategy is based on a critical evaluation of our current position, using the College Strategic Objectives; Local Economic Partnership - Leeds City Region Strategic Priorities; Department for Business Innovation and Skills Higher Education Strategic Papers; Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Quality Assessment Review consultations and Higher Education Funding Council England (HEFCE) policy updates. The HE Strategy will also incorporate the QAA UK Quality Code and the requirements for the new operating model for quality assessment, including transition arrangements.

The College firmly locates its Higher Education provision at the core of its mission.

The College mission is simple; "Creating Opportunity, Changing Lives". This is underpinned by the following Strategic Objectives.

### **1.1 Strategic Objectives**

- SO1** To deliver enterprising, responsive and efficient education and training.
- SO2** To provide an inclusive, student-centred learning environment focussed on development, success and progression.
- SO3** To provide modern, safe, estate and resources;
- SO4** To promote effective communications and customer services;
- SO5** To attract, nurture and develop a highly skilled, efficient and professional workforce;
- SO6** To ensure the solvency of the College and generate resources to continuously invest in learning and staff;
- SO7** To deliver creative and effective decision making, learning and risk management.

These translate into the following aims for our Higher Education provision at Kirklees College.

### **1.2 Aims for Higher Education at Kirklees College**

To provide a coherent range of Higher Education and Higher Levels Skills which is both efficient and effective, offers appropriate progression routes, and widens participation.

To be responsive and flexible in response to employer demands and higher level skills gaps to support the regeneration of Kirklees, with employer satisfaction and employment outcomes high on the criteria for success.

To engage in partnerships that adds value to the experience of the students and improves their ability to become economically active.

To offer teaching staff opportunities for research and scholarly activity that directly relates to improvements in teaching and learning and the vocational relevance and currency of the curriculum offer.

To provide high quality teaching and learning which effectively utilises ILT and provides enterprise opportunities for our students, which will enhance their employability skills.

To develop the VLE to support “blended learning” and distance learning strategies.

To strive continuously to improve student satisfaction, retention, pass and overall completion rates.

### 1.3 Key features of the strategy will provide continued focus on the need to:

Establish clear technical and vocational progression routes from Further to Higher Education where there are gaps / identified skills need and effectively manage the provision in a difficult economic climate.

Engage with the Local Authority, Leeds City Region LEP, employers and other providers in the design, development, delivery, funding of short courses and programmes of study of higher level learning.

Place emphasis on the higher level vocational skills agenda, with particular focus on Higher Apprenticeships, and improving employability in Kirklees.

Provide innovative opportunities for widening participation and increasing access to Higher Education.

Develop opportunities focussed on the College’s areas of expertise, within the international market aligned with the College strategic objectives.

Be ambitious in raising aspirations of students in the region and support the development of a highly skilled, knowledgeable workforce for the future.

## 2. CONTEXT - Factors and the environment which impact on the strategy

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### 2.1 External

The College recognises that it has a key role to play (within the communities it serves) in the achievement of national targets for HE participation.

- There are significant concentrations of deprivation in Kirklees. One in five young people live in poverty in Kirklees. Youth unemployment (18-24) remains high (24%), with a claimant rate of 12%. 18% of working age adults have Level 1 or no qualifications.<sup>1</sup> Kirklees is a relatively low wage economy (second lowest in the Leeds City Region), 60,000 households are classed as being in poverty (one in three households) with one in four households having an annual income of less than £10,000.<sup>2</sup> Overall, in Kirklees 9% of the population live within Lower Super Output Areas which rank in the worst 10% in England; lower than the average for England.<sup>3</sup>
- The local economy was traditionally dominated by engineering, textiles, chemicals, and food and drink manufacturing. The economy has in recent years is more diverse with a wider range of manufacturing, service industries, retail, business and ICT. Of particular note has been the growing importance of tourism, especially in rural areas.
- Manufacturing and engineering remain important to the local economy, with the Leeds City Region being identified as the UK’s largest manufacturing centre.<sup>1</sup> Manufacturing employs

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<sup>1</sup> Kirklees Council (2014) *Kirklees Economic Strategy 2014-20*

<sup>2</sup> Kirklees Council (2016) *Tackling Poverty in Kirklees: Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2018*

<sup>3</sup> Kirklees Council (2015) *Kirklees Social Profile*

18% of the Kirklees workforce (compared to 9% national average) and has the third largest number of people employed in the sector in the UK. The Kirklees economy has strong specialisms in manufacturing, wholesale, motor trades, retail, education and construction. Manufacturing specialisms cover textiles, furniture, machinery, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and clothes. Manufacturing (18%), Health (13%), Retail (11%) and Education (11%) are the most significant areas of employment in Kirklees.

- Regional economic model (Experian) predicts growth in Kirklees by 2016 in:  
Business services  
Construction  
Transport  
Retail  
Hotel and Catering  
But reductions in public sector and manufacturing.
- Emerging skills needs in the Leeds City Region have been identified as:  
Leadership and Management in Manufacturing  
Manufacturing and Engineering  
Retail  
Textiles, Tailoring and Apparel  
Software Coding and Engineering  
Technical Skills in the Creative and Digital Sector  
Visitor Economy
- Recommendations of the Post-16 education and training area review for West Yorkshire and its impact on the subsequent positioning of the Kirklees College Higher Education offer and its working relationship with Wakefield and Calderdale colleges in particular.

## 2.2 Internal

- The College has a long history of providing high quality, affordable, vocationally related Higher Education in North and South Kirklees and seeks to address the need to provide higher level courses and qualifications for the local community and employers. It recognises the advantages to some students of studying near to home, reducing the costs of accommodation and travel, making Higher Education a viable option. In some circumstances there are domestic or cultural reasons for studying locally. Higher Education within a Further Education setting supports vocational progression and access in this context. Within the Leeds City Region 82% of higher education students studying in Further Education Colleges grew up in the area (2012-2013 to 2013-2014 data).
- The nature of College Higher Education is distinct from that provided by traditional HEI's in that it raises the aspirations of those who would not normally consider higher education as part of their career path. By making such provision available to aspiring learners, Kirklees College plays an important role in contributing to the economic development of the local community, the widening participation agenda and the achievement of national targets for HE participation. Within Kirklees, the majority of wards fall under quintile 2 areas with respect to participation in Higher Education (POLAR3 data), where quintile 1 areas have the lowest participation (most disadvantaged) to quintile 5 areas with the highest rates (most advantaged).
- Kirklees College currently offers a wide range of vocational and technical Higher Education from Higher Nationals and Foundation Degrees to full Honours Degrees. This revised strategy will focus on the emerging and existing skills needs at levels 4 and 5, with particular emphasis on Higher Apprenticeship delivery.
- Kirklees College has developed a Memorandum of Understanding with Calderdale and Wakefield College to provide a clear framework within which to plan and oversee effective and productive partnership working relating to Higher Education across the geographical

regions. The institutions will work collaboratively to address the following priorities across the higher skills agenda:

Employer Engagement  
Curriculum Development and Progression Pathways  
Professional Development and Training  
Marketing, Promotion and Recruitment  
Quality Assurance and Enhancement

- The College recognise the changes that may be brought in response to changes in HEFCE funding (e.g. Student Opportunity grant input and the impact/output, changes to the DSA), LEP strategic priorities, along with “Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice” white paper. Our focus remains on the development of locally based, vocationally and technical related provision through the emphasis on Higher Nationals, professional qualifications, Foundation Degrees (where required), Higher apprenticeships and other relevant higher level skills delivery.

### 3. STRATEGY

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The College aims to support local employers with a range of appropriate Higher National, Foundation Degrees linked to Higher Apprenticeships, where possible, providing a workforce that has higher level skills and knowledge to underpin the economic regeneration of Kirklees.

- The College continues to be well placed to offer a responsive approach to workforce development. We are able to respond to market intelligence and work with employers, the Local Authority, the Leeds City Region LEP and the HEART (Higher Education, Access, Rewarding, and Transforming) partnership.
- The College will predominately offer Higher Nationals unless the sector norm is for a Foundation Degree programme (with clear rationale).
- The College will retain distinctive features within these programmes by utilising the Meeting Local Needs option within Higher Nationals wherever appropriate.
- There will be exit points at both level 4 (HNC) and 5 (HND) with progression agreements in place to enable articulation to higher level study.
- The College will focus on strengthening STEM skills with quality technical knowledge and a developing occupational competency for engineering roles.
- Offering a work based routes into professions which have traditionally been for graduates through in work training and learning resulting in a higher apprenticeship qualification.
- Internal progression will remain a feature of the strategy. Internal progression to full-time Higher Education programmes at the College constitutes around **85%** of our student profile. In 2017-18 the College will spend the 3% of the tuition fee income above the basic fee income on outreach activities. These will further focus on the widening participation of under-represented groups:
  - Disadvantaged socio-economic localities;
  - Looked-after by a local authority or care leavers;
  - Those without a family history of Higher Education;
  - Mature students (aged 30 years old and above);
  - Part-time students;
  - Black and Minority (BME) communities.
- Kirklees College has a strong performance with internal progressing students from Level 3 vocational programmes (85%) and students with a declared disability or identified learning support need (15%). The College acknowledges it needs to increase participation from

appropriate Access to Higher Education programmes, Carers and Care Leavers and also to increase participation from low participant neighbourhoods.

Internal activities will include:

- Working with further education students within the College at all levels to promote progression options to vocational Higher Education programmes including Higher Apprenticeships.
- Providing internal progression events across the College which utilise student curriculum area ambassadors.
- Utilising the College's Early Offer Scheme with internal applicants.
- Providing 1:1 support for students researching HE opportunities, completing UCAS applications and interview preparation (via Progress Coaches as part of the PAD programme).
- Providing 1:1 support for students researching job opportunities, compiling CVs and interview skills (via Progress Coaches as part of the PAD programme).
- Jointly marketing HE programmes, with other providers in the local area with low HE participation.
- Applicants meeting the minimum entry criteria are interviewed, providing an opportunity to discuss programme suitability, individual support needs and associated plans.
- Providing appropriate pre-entry support to both potential students and students progressing to "top up" awards within the College (for example, Summer Schools).
- "Extended induction" and mentoring for late applicants.
- An HE dashboard that will monitor student progress and identify those "at risk", with associated intervention strategies.
- Smaller class sizes aiding continuation and completion rates.
- Offering additional study skills support throughout their studies (including Ethics).
- Developing Progression Agreements (where needed) with appropriate institutions to enable progression to level 6 study (for example, Land based provision).
- Offering appropriate advice and support regarding progression to other institutions (for example, APL if needed).
- Providing additional employment-related support to all final year students.

### **3.1 Fees**

- Kirklees College will continue to review its fee policy annually with the aim of keeping fees at an affordable rate that will encourage and support participation. However with the development of more niche technical level 4 and 5 provision it will be necessary to develop a range of fees, which will require an Access Agreement for 2017/18.
- The College through its Fees Group, will consider on an annual basis, the needs of students on part-time programmes where there are skills shortages, or where provision is particularly price sensitive.
- The College continues to review current internal recruitment strategies to encourage current students to continue their studies into Higher Education at Kirklees College. This includes an Early Offer Scheme, along with a number of bursaries that will be offered for 2017/18 entrants.

### **3.2 Awarding Bodies**

- The College currently has formal agreements with two HEIs within the North East (Teesside University) and West Yorkshire (University of Huddersfield) regions.
- The College will expand its offer of Higher Nationals via Edexcel, where recruitment and performance indicators are strong.
- The last intake on to Teesside University validated provision will be September 2016. This will be supported and underpinned by a clear exit strategy.

- Post Graduate Teacher Education provision will continue to be delivered in partnership with the University of Huddersfield. Further development and delivery with other awarding bodies to enhance this provision will continue.
- Where the sector norm favours a Foundation Degree as a Higher Education qualification, the College will develop an appropriate qualification with a suitable partner.

### **3.3 Providing high quality provision including teaching and learning**

- The College continues to have a strategic focus on the quality of teaching and learning with an annual Teaching Learning and Assessment strategy.
- Staff are encouraged and supported to undertake a range of research, professional updating and scholarly activity in accordance with the Research and Scholarly Activity policy. The College recognises the need to reduce the teaching load for HE delivery in line with the additional requirements of delivery, assessment and research informed teaching

### **3.4 The Student Voice**

The College is committed to ensuring all HE students have appropriate mechanisms for sharing their views about their HE experience.

- The College has implemented a Higher Education student consultative committee that acts as a conduit for student views across all programmes.
- Students also contribute to module, course reviews and focus groups within curriculum areas. These feed into the Higher Education Student Consultative Committee, which in turn has two representatives who sit on the HE Student Parliament for the college. A rolling action log records the outcomes from meetings and tracks progress to provide a feedback loop for students.
- The National Student Survey [NSS] also provides benchmarked data; students are encouraged to undertake the survey annually. Feedback from the survey is then used to inform programme developments. Additionally, the College is subject to annual visits by the awarding bodies (Teesside University, Edexcel).

### **3.5 Supporting Procedures**

The College works closely with its awarding body partners and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to ensure the delivery and management of Higher Education conforms to the relevant quality procedures and the UK Quality Code. This will include the transition arrangements under the New Operating Model for Quality Assessment in 2016/17.

## **4. THE MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

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The strategic management of Higher Education is embedded in the Senior Leadership and Management structure, with an Assistant Principal (Quality, Student Experience and Higher Education), Head of Higher Education, Head of Quality, Performance and Standards (FE and HE), and a HE Academic Standards and Liaison Manager. These roles bring together all Higher Education activity to ensure consistency and quality in achieving academic standards in all the College's Higher Education delivery.

- The management structure oversees the continued management of all the College's Higher Education activity, including direct and indirect funding and non-prescribed Higher Education.
- In conjunction with the Assistant Principals (Curriculum), the Assistant Principal (Quality, Student Experience and Higher Education) and Head of Higher Education will ensure that the college procedures impact on improving the student experience and quality of Higher Education and in Kirklees College.

## 5. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

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Performance monitoring of Higher Education forms part of the full performance review process for the College, any programmes that are under performing will be monitored through this process.

- Improving student retention, pass and overall completion rates.
- Completion rate targets are included in the College Strategic Plan, with a KPI of completion rates in Higher Education at 85% (QAA methodology).
- Students' views will be gathered from major cross college surveys, student module surveys, tutor module surveys and student focus groups. These will be scheduled to generate data/comments for feedback and action. In addition the HE student consultative committee provides an opportunity for review and evaluation and a rolling action log provides an effective feedback mechanism. The college has specifically appointed a Student Voice Officer within the college Quality, Performance and Standards Department, and the HE Student Voice quality processes, have been embedded within the college processes.
- The National Student Survey [NSS] provides the College with detailed feedback and benchmarking both locally and nationally. Improvements in our scores are evident in 2014/15, with an overall satisfaction rate of 90% (benchmark 86%).
- Recommendations made by External Examiners are addressed by relevant curriculum team and actions will be monitored by the Quality, Performance and Standards Department.
- Assessment Management is monitored using standard moderation documents and procedures. This includes standardisation meetings that, amongst other assessment matters, will take note of External Examiner (EE) advice. Boards of Examiners (Edexcel) and Progression and Award Boards (Teesside University) will meet regularly and will formally record assessment decisions affecting student cohorts. Where appropriate, these procedures will generate actions for improvement.
- The Corporation Quality, Performance and Standards Committee, and the HE Quality and Standards Group will regularly receive reports to monitor, evaluate and review HE provision. The HE Quality and Standards Group is a sub group of Academic Board.
- Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards:  
Board of Examiners;  
Corporation Quality, Performance and Standards Committee;  
Academic Board  
HE Quality and Standards Group;  
Course/Curriculum Area Reviews (involving students representatives);  
Course Management Team.
- Mechanisms for improving quality and standards for individual staff  
Staff development: Research and Scholarly activity, subject updating, learning and teaching;
  - All staff possess a recognised teaching qualification;
  - Staff performance development and review process and CPD;
  - Partnership working with external agencies, colleges, employers and HEIs.

## 6. COMMUNICATION PROCESS FOR STAFF AND STAKEHOLDERS

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The strategy will be placed on the College portal (KC Share) and staff will be informed through a communications briefing and will be shared with all HE staff through the HE forum. Furthermore, the

strategy will be communication in accordance with the requirements of the HEFCE Key Information Set (KIS) and Wider Information Set (WIS) data requirements.