



## Higher Education Strategy

January 2019

# 1 Introduction

This Higher Education Strategy outlines the college's commitment to promoting and sustaining the high standards which have consistently delivered the best possible learning opportunities for its students, summarises the processes used by the college to assure itself and the wider academic, industrial, professional, and general public of the quality of the learning and teaching provided across both campuses.

It is one of a number of related and inter-dependent subsidiary strategies which enable the college to meet its overall strategic goals:

- To provide an environment in which all students can enjoy their learning, be ambitious and have very high standards of academic and personal achievement which will enable them to progress to employment, further study and enterprise.
- To maintain leadership and management that will continue to ensure the highest possible standards of teaching, training, learning, assessment and support.
- To offer innovative and responsive programmes that meet the needs of employers and students, respond to the demands of the economy and continuously explore new market opportunities.
- To implement effective strategies that respond to local economic growth opportunities and social priorities.
- To develop resources and inclusive learning environments that are of a consistently high quality, support the College's evolution, promote sustainability and inspire learning.
- To operate management processes which maintain outstanding financial stability and continuously improve the efficient use of resources.

These college-wide strategic goals provide the framework from which the wider Higher Education Strategy has been developed, which is that the College:

- will develop vocational pathways from the full time further education provision and respond to the needs of local employers;
- will identify the most appropriate accreditation routes and will develop Higher Education provision through both our own funding and through appropriate partnerships;
- will continue offer Higher Education provision that is high quality and affordable;
- will provide educational, professional and academic opportunities which are accessible to all members of the local community and in particular to those from disadvantaged areas and non-traditional backgrounds.

This strategy document informs, influences and leads into the Higher Education Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Scholarship Strategy, which like this document is monitored, updated and approved by the Higher Education Strategy Group.

## 2 HE Strategy Objectives

Excellence in delivering Higher Education is central to both the college's vision "... to be the organisation of choice for learning for young people, adults and employers through their recognition of our excellent and distinctive experiences in vocational education and training" and its mission statement to "...make significant contributions to the local and regional economies and beyond, by providing high quality vocational education and training for individuals, employers and the wider community."

In order to ensure that all of our HE provision will adhere to these principles, the college is committed to following six strategic objectives across our HE curriculum offer.

**SO1.** Recognise, value and reward all those who teach and support learning by providing opportunities for their continued personal and professional development such as recognition by the Higher Education Academy and Professional Bodies relevant to each individual's career or field of work through financial support and where possible bespoke working hours.

**SO2.** Enhance the teaching skills of all academic staff through a carefully considered and evaluated programme of continuous professional development which is outlined in the college's Higher Education Teaching, Learning Scholarship and Assessment Strategy.

**SO3.** Promote teaching and learning through scholarship<sup>1</sup>-informed, and where appropriate, research<sup>2</sup>-informed activities by providing formalised mechanisms and opportunities for staff to engage with scholarship and/or research-informed activities

**SO4.** Promote and share pedagogic innovations both within, and outside the college, which will include:

- Developing degree, foundation degree and post-graduate partnership programmes which will increase current progression opportunities;
- Develop the capacity to validate our own programmes through seeking Foundation Degree Awarding Powers;
- Re-evaluating and updating our Higher National programmes so that local employers can be supported and provided with qualifications with which they are both familiar and confident in the content and quality;
- Developing Degree Apprenticeships and Higher Apprenticeships to align with current governmental initiatives and increase our curriculum diversity and progression opportunities for current and future students;
- Continuing to focus on, and develop, employability as a core component of all our Higher Education programmes;
- Providing work-based, part-time and flexible educational frameworks responsive to local needs.

**SO5.** Engage students in the mechanisms, processes and procedures developed by the college to enhance their learning opportunities by ensuring that their feedback informs staff development needs, curriculum development and college policies, and that they are informed as to which actions have been taken in direct response to receipt of their opinions.

**SO6.** Ensure that **all** staff, not just those directly involved in teaching, learning and assessment, are trained and supported in ways which will guarantee the effective delivery of this and other college strategies, and that the college is accurately portrayed nationally as part of the Teaching Excellence and Student Opportunities Framework, National Student Survey, Destination of Leavers from Higher Education, Unistats and other metrics used to compare providers of higher education courses.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this document, scholarship is considered to be any activity which develops staff expertise in their subject area and includes all forms of employer engagement.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this document, research is considered to be any enquiry activities which result in publication in peer-reviewed journals, conference papers and presentations etc

### **3 Management, Evaluation and Strategic Development**

The HE Strategy Group provides direction for teaching, learning, assessment and scholarship activities using Key Performance Indicators to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of the college's HE provision, and acts as a proactive and operational body for enhancing teaching, learning and scholarship matters, including quality enhancement and sharing of good practice.

Its Terms of Reference are:

- To enable senior managers to participate in the development of the College's Higher Education Strategy;
- To identify areas for new curriculum development aligned sector priorities and employer needs and coherence of the HE curriculum offer;
- To enable senior managers to report and consult on their areas of work and the impact of local and national initiatives;
- To oversee and ensure that systematic approach is taken to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities;
- To identify appropriate communication strategies for the promotion and marketing of Higher Education ensuring that the information is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy;
- To ensure that data and statistics relating to the Key Performance Indicators embedded in the college's strategy documentation is disseminated and used to inform the management of the college's Higher Education provision;
- To confirm that the college's HE provision consistently aligns with national expectations and frameworks;
- To explore, and provide a framework for, the enhancement of learning opportunities.

#### **Key Performance Indicators**

- Student success/attainment: e.g. retention, 'drop-out' rates, achievement indicators;
- National Student Survey (NSS) and other student satisfaction survey results;
- Employability and progression statistics;
- Student evaluations and module reviews;
- The Teaching Excellence and Student Opportunities Framework.