

Higher Education Strategy 2019-21

1. The College's Vision for 2019 and beyond.

We will transform the lives and economic prosperity of local people by providing the opportunity to access learning delivered to the highest standards in subjects that match local growth sectors, and address skills gaps.

2. Background – Weymouth College

Weymouth College is one of three post-16 Further Education Colleges in Dorset, it is a small College and the only provider of General Further Education (GFE) in West Dorset. The nearest general FE College to Weymouth College which supports HE provision is Yeovil College, around 30 miles away, with Bournemouth and Poole College being the next nearest at around 40 miles away. Kingston Maurward College, a largely agricultural College located close to Dorchester some 9 miles away, offers a small, but growing, range of HE curriculum mostly aimed at land-based studies. This area is a well-known HE cold-spot, and something we are addressing by collaborative work with Kingston Maurward.

Weymouth College is reported as the 3rd most isolated college in the country with Weymouth and Portland classified as 'rural' and ranked 322/324 in the Social Mobility Commission Index 'State of the Nation' report November 2017. Weymouth and Portland have several wards that are amongst the most deprived in the country, it has the lowest average weekly wages in the country and has the 3rd highest level of child poverty in the region. There are 12 areas in Dorset within the top 20% most deprived nationally for multiple deprivation, 9 of these areas are within the borough of Weymouth and Portland - the travel to learn area for the College.

The population of Weymouth and Portland in 2015 currently stands at around 65,000. (Males, 32,210, females 32,950. 0-15 year olds 10,730, 16-64yrs 38,700, 65+ 15,730). As of 2016, 816 pupils are designated with a Special Educational Need defined as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and just under 4,000 adults in Dorset are thought to have Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC). The number of young people aged 14-19 has fallen by 8% over the period 2011-2016 and is starting to slowly rise again. The proportion of Weymouth and Portland school leavers achieving 5 GCSE's grades 9-4 (including maths and English) is lower than for the rest of Dorset but about the same as the national average.

In 2017/18, the College enrolled 128 Higher Education (HE) students (100 full-time and 28 part-time), there were 1836 Further Education (FE) students on roll excluding full cost. Of these, 1169 students aged 16-19 were enrolled on programmes of study. The number of 19+ and fully funded totalled 667.

3. The historical development of Higher Education at Weymouth College

The higher education provision at Weymouth College has grown steadily since 2013, driven by the development of strategically aligned HE provision to strongly recruiting and performing level 3 provision. The college has worked closely with a range of higher education providers over a number of years including Bath University, Bournemouth University, Plymouth University and Kingston University. From 2014/15 the college has placed increasing emphasis on one key partner, Plymouth University, bringing all HE under a strategically aligned and assessed approach. Additionally, the college has increased its partnership with the awarding body Pearson in order to offer HNC and HND that are responsive to industry need.

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The current college offer:

- FdSc Public Services
- FdSc Sport; Coaching Health and Fitness
- FdA Theatre and Media Performance
- FdA Creative Media Production
- FdA Contemporary Photography Practice
- FdA Contemporary Fine Art Practice
- FdSc Health and Social Care
- HND Creative Media (Visual Effects)
- HND Computing
- HND Business
- HND Music
- HNC Engineering
- HNC Business
- HNC Construction

The college is also planning to offer HNDs, and higher level courses in the following subject areas.

- HND in Construction;
- Level 6 in Health and Social Care

Discussions regarding proposals for further programmes will take place with Plymouth University for development for September 2019 during the academic year 2018/19.

4. Higher Education as part of the College's Curriculum Planning

The College's second strategic priority is to achieve year-on-year growth through the development and delivery of relevant, responsive and innovative education and training. Our ability to sustain and grow the College over the lifetime of this plan will largely be dependent upon:

- Our ability to deliver curriculum that is relevant to the needs of our students and the local economy;
- Our ability to be responsive and flexible in the way in which we deliver this curriculum;
- Ensuring that the curriculum offer remains current and responsive to industry and local community need.

The main driver of our curriculum planning will be the strategic alignment of our curriculum portfolio with the latest local labour market intelligence (LMI) and the priorities of our key funding agencies. Curriculum innovation is vital to our institutional survival and future growth.

The Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (DLEP) Strategic Economic Plan was refreshed in early 2016, building on Dorset's Strategic Economic Plan, to reflect the changes within the County. Dorset's Economic Vision is: *'By 2033 Dorset will be one of Britain's Core City-Regions, and the most sustainable of these. Its competitiveness will be driven by innovation.'*

Each part of Dorset will play its role in achieving this vision for the City-Region. Priorities for the regions of Dorset include:

- The Western Dorset Growth Corridor from Weymouth to Dorchester and other urban areas will support increased competitiveness in the key sectors. Improved transport and communications infrastructure and the world-class natural environment are key to enabling growth here and in rural Dorset and the market towns
- Rural Dorset and the market towns will contribute to increasing competitiveness in Dorset and growth in the key sectors, particularly via the Dorset Enterprise Zone
- The City - Bournemouth, Poole and the surrounding area will be a focus for international connectivity and infrastructure, including two universities, the airport and port and will be home to internationally competitive sectors including Advanced Manufacturing and Financial Services

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Dorset's sectors with potential for high growth are advanced engineering and manufacturing, creative tech, and agri-tech and aquaculture. These have grown alongside Dorset's more mature, established strengths in financial services and tourism. Digital technologies are a cross-cutting enabler across all of our high-growth industries and cross-sector collaboration provides a unique opportunity for further growth. Many of these high-growth businesses are headquartered locally, so there is a great opportunity to upscale their operations to directly benefit our local economy

Summary of key sectors for Dorset:

DLEP high-value and important sectors:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Financial Services & Insurance

DLEP high-value sectors which need to grow:

- Creative & Digital Industries
- Environmental Goods & Services

DLEP important sectors which need to increase their quality:

- Care
- Construction
- Tourism & Leisure
- Real Estate

DLEP sectors with the potential to grow and become more important:

- Manufacture of Chemical Products
- Travel Agency

Curriculum Planning Guidance:

- Working with a preferred local regional university or appropriate awarding body to further develop a specialist Adult and Higher Education Centre, offering a comprehensive range of higher education, access to HE and pathway programmes developed in partnership with that local university or awarding body.
- Expanding our higher education offer by further developing a range of provision in response to sector need as well as niche offers. This provision will appeal to internal level three progressing students as well as adult full-cost and international students.
- College provision will have clear and transparent progression pathways with all curriculum areas developing progression maps, highlighting the journey from level 1 to higher education where appropriate.
- The college will continue to develop teacher training provision and internal staff development opportunities.
- We will further develop provision in construction and level 6 Health and Social care as well as being responsive to higher apprenticeships linked to demand.
- We will investigate the development of HE provision within cyber security in response to local demand with opportunities for progressing level 3 students as well as adult, full-cost and apprenticeships within this area.
- We will continue to work with the local council and develop provision which is both employer led, and responsive to the sustainable economic growth of Dorset and supports Dorset's strategic economic plan. There are opportunities in some of the major developments proposed, some examples are below.
- Weymouth College pipeline projects to the Dorset LEP:
 - Advanced Engineering and Technology Centre
 - Centre of Excellence for Construction Skills
 - Centre of Excellence for Motor Vehicle Technologies
- Memo project: Support the establishment of the global monument for biodiversity being developed in collaboration with international scientists and artists
- Jurassic Project: Support the establishment of Jurassic, the world's most spectacular prehistoric visitor attraction, bringing the Jurassic Coast to life

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- Dorset wide-Digital Economy : Digital infrastructure improvements to support growth sectors and sites, eg Digital media and online learning.
- We will regularly analyse the developments of other providers to make sure that we remain competitive in the marketplace. We will also regularly analyse key LMI information sources such as government consultation papers and LEP reports to ensure that we remain responsive to local, regional and national priorities.
- We will continue to increase our levels of use of on-line learning and assessment technologies such as the virtual learning environment (VLE) and other e-learning resources.
- We will continue to cultivate partnership working to provide outstanding learning opportunities for students.

5. Sector Context:

The publication of the Green Paper *Fulfilling our Potential: teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice* (2016) closely followed by the White Paper, *Success as a knowledge economy: teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice* (2016), has a greater focus on social mobility, student choice and teaching and learning, and the implementation of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) will see the government monitoring and assessing the quality of teaching. The Office for Students (OfS) - the new regulator designed to champion the interests of students, promote choice and help to ensure that students are receiving a good return for their investment in higher education (operational from April 2018). The OfS has replaced HEFCE and OFFA. OfS will now manage and maintain a list of registered English higher education providers that must be publicly available and will monitor quality and standards via outsourcing to QAA, access and participation and will be the agent that provides degree awarding powers to an institution.

This strategy is underpinned by a contextual assessment of the current landscape of HE and aims to ensure the College is not only equipped to meet current challenges, but also develops the employability skills of students to meet national, regional and local needs of employers and industry in the 21st Century. The College remains focussed on the development of locally based, vocationally and technical related provision through the emphasis on Foundation Degrees, Higher Nationals, Higher apprenticeships and other relevant higher-level skills delivery.

6. Higher Education objectives for 2019-21

During 2019-2021 the college will:

- Develop a higher education offer that includes flexible modes of delivery and different entry and exit points, which meets the needs of employers and students;
- Review the higher education curriculum to ensure that it is viable and that it supports employability, social inclusion and lifelong learning priorities;
- Work with employers and their representative bodies to identify their training needs, and develop a higher education curriculum offer that meets these needs and extend our delivery in the workplace;
- Develop a range of Higher Apprenticeships which articulate the needs of students, parents, employers and the LEP;
- Ensure progression pathways exist onto and from all its higher education provision and benefit higher education learners;
- Provide first class higher education teaching, learning and support that is a model of Excellence;
- Continue to investigate new relationships and partnership opportunities with higher education Awarding Bodies.

The College Higher Education Strategy 2019-21 delivers on the strategic priority to achieve year-on-year growth through the development and delivery of relevant, responsive and innovative education and training. This underpins the college aim to transform the lives and economic prosperity of local people by providing the opportunity to access learning delivered to the highest standards and levels in subjects that match local growth sectors, and address skills gaps.

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7. Definitions

None

8. Strategy Owner

Vice Principal (Curriculum)

9. Who Will Need To Know About This Policy

- All HE staff including those who are franchised to undertake work for the College
- All HE students
- Employers with whom we work and who are in contact with the College
- External partners and stakeholders and those engaged in projects with the College

10. History

This policy was adopted and approved:

Signed: *Nigel Evans*
Nigel Evans, Principal

Date: *19 December 2018*

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