

1. Provider context

New City College (NCC) is a large further education college group comprised of 6 further education (FE) colleges that have merged over the last 7 years. New City College serves a diverse, but geographically coherent urban area, from the edge of central London to the outer boroughs of northeast London, and south Essex, although not all sites currently offer Higher Education (HE) courses.

NCC (the College) was formed following the merger of Tower Hamlets College with Hackney Community College in August 2016, Redbridge College in April 2017, Epping Forest College in August 2018 and Havering College of Further & Higher Education, and Havering Sixth Form College in August 2019. Tower Hamlets College has been the surviving corporation throughout and formally changed its name to New City College in February 2017.

The College is now one of the largest further education providers in the UK. The College's catchment areas include areas of high deprivation, as well as some of the most affluent areas in the country. The majority of the student body lives in significantly deprived wards.

The largest amount of HE provision within the group is delivered at the Ardleigh Green Campus (previously Havering College of Further & Higher Education) within the London Borough of Havering.

Mission and Educational Aims of NCC

The following is taken from the NCC Strategic Intent Document February 2020 **[001]** which sets out our strategic priorities for the next five years.

Vision

NCC exists to give our students a better future.

To achieve this vision, we will:

- Use the scale and strength of our group (the 6 legacy further education colleges) to drive educational excellence and innovation
- Continue improving student outcomes and achievement. We will inspire and support every student, whatever their background, to maximise their potential within an environment of challenging targets
- Support our staff to develop their skills and talents and look after their wellbeing
- Make a positive impact on our local communities and the local economy by meeting the unique needs of all the areas in which we work, within a group structure
- Have an influential position locally and nationally

At the heart of NCC's educational vision is *creating opportunities through inspiring teaching and learning*, and one of its core values is *the celebration of equality and diversity*. The College's educational vision and values demonstrate our commitment to increasing access to a high-quality education for all, which includes raising access to HE through widening participation in our curriculum offer and delivery model. Equality of opportunity is a key objective of NCC's overarching strategic intent, which is not a static plan, but a set of aspirations which allows the College to be a responsive organisation constantly evolving to respond to the external environment.

The College is committed to empowering all students, regardless of their background to access HE provision and succeed in their courses. NCC's processes, policies, procedures and ethos reflect this commitment.

NCC has the following values that shape, underpin and inform its work:

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UKPRN: 10006963

- Effort, determination and aspiration in our students and ourselves
- Continuous improvement in high-quality education and training
- Deep-seated support for student wellbeing and success
- Local priorities within a regional and national landscape
- Sharing knowledge and skills, working productively together across the group
- The celebration of equality and diversity

The College seeks to play an important role in providing local HE provision, with internal progression routes and actively seeks to widen access. HE access has always been inclusive and purposefully targeted non-traditional participants into HE.

Student profile – size of provision

Based on the OfS size of provision 4-year undergraduate aggregate data, from 2017-18 to 2020-21 [002] the college student demographics are as follows:

- 89.6% of students are on full-time two-year courses
- 65.6% of students are part-time
- 4.7% of full-time students are under 21 years of age on entry
- 11.1% of part-time students are under 21 years of age on entry
- 95.3% of full-time students are 21 years of age and over
- 88.9% of part-time students are 21 years of age and older
- 69.0% of full-time students' ethnicity is white
- 71.7% of part-time students' ethnicity is white
- 58.3% of full-time students are female
- 51.5% of part-time students are female
- 41.7% of full-time students are male
- 48.5% of part-time students are male
- 55.4% of full-time students reside in IMD quintiles 1 and 2
- 39.2% of part-time students reside in IMD quintiles 1 and 2
- 61.1% of full-time students enter higher education with entry qualifications of access/foundation courses or other Level 3
- 33.2% of part-time students enter higher education with entry qualifications of access/foundation courses or other Level 3

Based on the above data, a typical HE student is on a two-year full-time course, over the age of 21, white, female living in IMD 1 and 2 whose qualifications on entry are not traditional A levels.

The majority of HE courses are within the care and education sectors, for example, social work, teaching and counselling; these are known to attract a high proportion of female students. These students are often returning to education after a long break, therefore require support to transition into HE in particular within the following areas:

- IT technology
- Study skills
- Research skills
- Referencing
- Academic writing
- Critical thinking

To support students the College appointed a dedicated full-time HE Academic and Support Tutor who started in September 2022. Previously support duties were carried out by a part-time student advisory/support member of staff and ad hoc support by the Learning Resources staff. The full-time

Provider name: New City College
UKPRN: 10006963

role was established following feedback and consultation with students [003]. Students are made aware of the support available to them during student induction [004].

The College also has a small cohort of students who have progressed directly into HE from an FE Level 3 course, in 2021-22 this figure represented 25% of all entrants to HE. These largely came from the counselling, education and science fields [005].

All HE subject areas within NCC offer courses starting at Level 1/2 through to HE. This offers continuity, enabling preparation for HE study, as well as a good understanding of the strengths and areas for further focus of progressing students. The College believes this is a key strength.

Partners

The College delivers HE programmes through various partnerships, franchised, validated or 'off the shelf' Pearson courses. The time period covered by the OfS TEF dashboard data [006] includes provision with the Open University, 4 courses are currently on a "teach out phase," the last intake of students on an Open University validated course was in September 2021, as well as a now-ceased franchised course with the University of East London.

The College has developed a new strategic partnership with Bath Spa University, with the first cohort of students commencing in September 2021.

NCC has an established partnership with William Booth College (WBC). Havering College (legacy college) has been in partnership with WBC since 2005. WBC is a charity and linked to The Salvation Army. WBC is the training college for officers (ministers of religion) and employees of The Salvation Army in the UK. Under this partnership, WBC delivers the bespoke BA (Hons) Pastoral Care with Psychology course to Salvation Army Officers, this course is not available to anyone else.

As evidenced by the size and shape of provision dashboard [002] there has been a significant year-on-year reduction in the number of students on HE courses, from approximately 3000 students in 2017-18 to under 600 students in 2020-21 [007]. This is primarily due to the cessation of a substantially large, subcontracted partnership provision, with the final cohort completing in July 2021 and to a lesser extent the declining HE numbers across the College with the removal of some courses from the HE offer. Students who were based at the partner institution, therefore constitute a substantial portion of the TEF data sets, which no longer reflects the College's HE offer.

Courses taught at the partner organisation were:

- HND Computing and Systems Development (delivery ceased August 2021)
- HND Business Management (delivery ceased August 2021)
- HND Travel and Tourism Management (delivery ceased August 2021)
- HND Health and Social Care (delivery ceased August 2019)

Courses that are no longer delivered by the College are:

- BA (Hons) Social Work (delivery ceased July 2022)
- BSc (Hons) Engineering (delivery ceased July 2020)
- BA (Hons) Health and Social Care (delivery ceased July 2020)
- HND Computing (delivery ceased July 2019)
- HND Performing Arts (delivery ceased July 2019)
- HND Business (delivery ceased July 2018)

Current Offer 2022-23

Course	Awarding Body/Organisation	Campus
HND Applied Science	Pearson	Redbridge
HNC Construction *	Pearson	Rainham
HNC Engineering *	Pearson	Rainham
HND Graphic Design	Pearson	Redbridge
HNC/D Sport & Exercise Science	Pearson	Havering
L5 Dip. Education and Training	Pearson	Hackney
FdA Early Childhood Studies **	London Metropolitan University	Hackney
FdA Education Studies for Teaching Assistants**	Bath Spa University	Havering
BA (Hons) Education & Professional Practice (L6 Top-Up)***	Bath Spa University	Havering
BA(Hons) Integrative Counselling***	Bath Spa University	Havering
PGCE ***	Bath Spa University	Havering
MA Advanced Educational Practice ***	Bath Spa University	Havering
MA Critical Studies and Education ***	Open University (Teach-Out)	Havering
BA(Hons) Early Years, Childcare & Education ***	Open University (Teach-Out)	Havering
BA(Hons) Integrative Counselling ***	Open University(Teach-Out)	Havering

Note * includes apprenticeships, **franchised provision *** validated provision

Teaching staff qualifications and training

All College teaching staff are required to have a teaching qualification. Any new teaching staff who do not, are required to achieve one within two years of starting employment. The College supports all new teaching staff without a formal teaching qualification to achieve a teaching qualification via continuous professional development (CPD). Staff are given time off to attend classes.

New lecturers engage with a teaching and learning induction programme. This is led by one of the teaching and learning support coaches, the aim of which is to ensure the College's teaching ethos and high expectations are clearly communicated to every lecturer. New lecturers are given the teaching and learning handbook detailing the requirements [008]. Within the first year of employment, all lecturers are subject to a rigorous probation period, at the heart of which are 3 reviews of teaching and learning practice. This ensures that any poor practice is highlighted, and an appropriate support plan created.

The College has a dedicated teaching and learning support team, consisting of highly qualified expert practitioners, whose role is to develop and share good practice and ensure students receive high quality teaching across the College.

Learning coaches also deliver cross-college CPD sessions known as masterclasses, these are offered throughout the academic year on various topics, for example, lesson structure, sequencing learning, using graphic organisers for assessment. This ensures that the College lecturers have the

opportunity to keep abreast of emerging pedagogical development and keep their teaching practice current.

TEF student submission

The College's TEF student contact authored the student submission on behalf of the College's HE students. The College provided support and guidance to the TEF student contact, notably:

- A training session on the student TEF guidance document
- A OneDrive folder containing:
 - TEF guidance on student submission
 - TEF student submission proforma
 - TEF dashboard data 2022
 - List of current HE courses
 - NSS and HE internal survey report
 - Minutes of meetings
- Administrative support:
 - Arranging meetings as requested by the TEF student contact, in person or via Microsoft Teams
 - Booking rooms
 - Sending invitations to student representatives as requested by the TEF student contact
 - Minute-taking
 - Sharing meeting minutes via the OneDrive
- Creating an online TEF student questionnaire using the TEF student contact's questions
- Factual accuracy checks of the draft TEF student submission
- Sharing the College TEF draft submission

2. Student experience

Impact of teaching and learning on the student experience

The College HE students receive a high-quality teaching and learning experience. The College is committed to the delivery of outstanding teaching and learning which is adapted to the specific profile of our HE students, explained further below.

The quality of the College's teaching and learning has been recently judged by Ofsted as Good in the Inspection of November 2021, the overall quality of education was also judged to be Good **[009]**. Ofsted stated that "most teachers use effective strategies in lessons to encourage learners and apprentices to think more deeply about what they know and how they can apply it."

Lecturers use assessment well to check students' understanding in order to inform teaching and set targets based on students' performance. Ofsted identified that "most teachers provide students with frequent and useful feedback on their work Teachers use their understanding of what learners have remembered correctly, and any misconceptions that they have, to plan their next lessons. As a result, teachers are able to close learners' gaps in knowledge." Regarding apprenticeships (including higher level) Ofsted commented that "apprentices experience good quality teaching and learning which supports them to make progress."

Lecturers either solely teach on HE courses, or teach across further education (FE) and HE, the latter supports students' transition from FE to HE, as lecturers are familiar with the rigour and expectations of HE.

HE pedagogy

The College HE provision is made up of small cohort sizes, a strength of this is that students have regular direct access and contact with their lecturers and peers.

Lecturers adopt a teaching and learning strategy based on the cohort's demographics. For mature students, this encompasses utilising their life experiences within their learning, for example, teaching assistants undergoing teacher training use their background in schools, to inform their learning. A further example would be apprentices using their work-based knowledge and skills to inform and enhance their academic studies on their course.

Within all the HE courses there is a dedicated focus on employment equipping students with the skills, knowledge and experience they need for work. Many of the students are already in employment and their courses' aim is to enhance and develop their career progression. Students are very satisfied with this approach which is evidenced by the 2022 NSS results and the College's internal HE survey results for teaching and learning **[010]**.

Leadership impact on student experience

The College's leadership team is focused on the importance of teaching and learning across all levels of curriculum. It identifies the following core tenets in its annual self-assessment document **[011]**.

- Strong and effective leadership has driven a culture of high expectations and a student-centric approach
- Good use of teaching and learning strategies which have inspired and motivated students to develop new skills, knowledge and behaviours
- Highly effective development of skills, knowledge and behaviours that support and prepares students for progression into further study or work

Students are encouraged to share their academic experience, research and industry practice thus developing key employability skills, such as presenting, communication and self-confidence. For example, students in education and counselling present their work at a teacher education and counselling conferences, the latter is by attended by local schools and counselling employers **[012]**. Within the context of teaching and learning, NCC apprentices benefit from the industrial experience of their teaching staff, leading to strong knowledge and skills transfer. The Ofsted inspectors commented **[009]** that "teachers plan and teach the content of the apprenticeship curriculum in a logical order so that apprentices develop complex knowledge, skills and behaviours over time."

Impact of CPD and scholarship on student experience

NCC adopts a range of strategies to improve the teaching practice of its lecturers, one of the primary means is learning walks. Line managers, learning coaches or peers will observe periods of lessons and then complete an observation form which is shared and discussed. The form highlights areas of good practice and identifies areas for consideration or implementation. In subsequent learning walks, the areas for improvement and consideration are reviewed. Any outstanding practice identified is shared with the teaching and learning lead and encouraged to be shared more widely through a masterclass (see below).

CPD opportunities are available for all teaching and support staff with the aim of enhancing the quality and effectiveness of their teaching, support and learning strategies. Termly staff development days are scheduled throughout the academic year. Often a high-profile expert speaker gives a key note session on teaching, learning, theory and practice, for example in 2021 Prof Dylan Wiliam shared his work on learning through formative assessment. Staff were all encouraged to apply and experiment with these techniques during the day and in their subsequent teaching practice. This

demonstrates that the College encourages innovation and allows teachers to experiment, to take 'risks'.

The College runs scholarship sessions each term for HE lecturers, often led by external practitioners from HE institutions. The aim of these sessions is to provide a space for critical discourse analysis, professional learning, the sharing of research ideas and contemporary issues. An example of how this impacts the student experience can be seen in a session exploring the challenges students experience in the transition from Level 3 into HE. Lecturers have been able to implement some of the support strategies such as engaging constructively with feedback from early assessment submissions in counselling, providing support through ungraded assessment.

The College has an established teaching and learning lab, the aim of which is to use evidence-informed approaches, developed by practitioners through small action research projects, to explore and solve problems that result in an enhanced student experience. For example, as a result of this approach, a lecturer within teacher education has been using a 'well-being' technique at the beginning and end of each session gauging students' emotions and motivation to learn. Students in class have commented that they find it helpful in engagement and preparation for learning.

Lecturers are supported by the College to complete their research and implement changes within the College arising from their findings. A further example of a small research project in 2021 was 'reading reconceptualised', to develop academic skills in HE classes. The impact of this on the student experience was the further development of students' critical reading skills, in particular on the education courses.

The Open University commended the College's lecturers on the "enthusiasm and commitment of staff delivering higher education" as well as the "evident commitment of teaching staff to individual student support" at the March 2021 institutional revalidation event [013].

On the FdA Early Childhood Studies, the course leader returns to industry practice regularly, to update their practice and knowledge as an early years' practitioner by spending time working within the sector. This has not only updated understanding, but has also enhanced the practical understanding of the new early years' curriculum framework. This has then been used in teaching, in particular for modules that include research activities.

The external examiner for the BA(Hons) Integrative Counselling highlighted the high quality of the research element of the course within the EE report [060].

Student engagement

The College has a robust and embedded culture of student engagement and input in the quality assurance and enhancement of HE provision. Students are seen as partners in the quality assurance of their course.

Student views are captured using a variety of methods including student surveys (external and internal), end of unit/ module feedback, student representation (committees and boards) and direct access to tutors (one to one and group tutorials) ongoing conversations, course boards of study (course boards) and focus groups. These provide opportunities to discuss and reflect on course-related matters and identify good practice, examine potential improvements or suggest possible enhancements.

The students have an allocated personal tutor, with the opportunity to meet them on a weekly basis. The personal tutor will monitor students' progress, using the College's ProMonitor system, to review learning needs, attendance, punctuality and pastoral care needs. This supports students to succeed, and maintains good retention rates, through regular meetings with their tutor.

At a strategic level, student feedback is discussed at our Higher Education Committee (HEC), whilst at course level, it is discussed during course boards (student representatives are members of both HEC and course boards). Evaluation of student feedback is an integral constituent of annual monitoring and programme review reports. Student feedback is a standing agenda item at course boards. All action(s) are minuted and shared with student representatives, and progress made with actions is discussed at the subsequent course board, in addition “you said, we did” posters are created and displayed [016]. Examples of action taken as a result of student feedback at course boards include extended library book loan periods for students with learning difficulties.

Action plans are created for each course and these feed into the annual programme (course) monitoring reports which are shared with our university partner/ Pearson and reviewed by HEC [014].

NSS

The number of students in scope for the NSS is very modest (37) 70% of the sample completed the survey [010]. Only one course could (and did) meet the threshold for publication of results at course level.

Therefore, in 2022 due to the limited scope of NSS published data, the College carried out its own internal HE survey mirroring the NSS questions [015]. This covered all year groups and provides a better overview of students’ experience. The response rate for the internal survey was just over 50%. The internal survey reflects the current HE offer, the TEF dashboard data [006] includes courses no longer being delivered.

Table 1 provides information from the College’s NSS data set and enables a comparison to last year’s (2022) national benchmark and the College’s own internal HE survey. Overall College HE survey results are used rather than disaggregated full-time and part-time, due to the very low numbers of the latter.

The TEF Dashboard indicator value for student voice is 79.5% for full-time students compared with a benchmark of 82.9%, however for part-time students the indicator value is 79.5% compared with a benchmark of 65.6%. Table 1 show that the College HE Internal survey satisfaction rate for student voice is 86%. At course level, Table 2, apart from one course the satisfaction rates are consistently above the 2022 NSS national benchmark.

External examiners meet with students as part of their role and have commented on how responsive the course teams are. For example, the external examiner for the FdA Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools commented following meeting with students that “the students mentioned the challenge of the ‘bunching’ of assignment deadlines, particularly as this means they have both to recall the first tasks of several modules and, at the same time, address the second task of those modules. Having provided this feedback to the course team after my meeting with the students, I was impressed with the speed of their response in shifting assessment deadlines in a flexible manner to give each student the best opportunity to succeed” [017].

In summary, we believe student engagement and in particular our response to student feedback is another key College strength. This is further evidenced within the Open University institutional reapproval report which noted following meetings with students that “students highlighted the open communication with tutors as one of the College’s strengths. Individually and as classes they felt listened to, and tutors responded positively to feedback received informally or through the course boards of study” [018].

Table 1 NSS and HE internal survey results 2022 by overall category and NSS benchmarks

NSS Category	NSS %	NSS BM %	Internal HE Survey %
The teaching on my course overall	88	80	94
Assessment and feedback overall	79	68	92
Academic support overall	80	74	91
Organisation and management overall	82	70	84
Learning resources	70	81	87
Learning opportunities	89	79	98
Learning community	77	68	94
Student voice	67	67	86

Table 2 HE Internal survey satisfaction rates for overall student voice category course level

Course	Overall Student Voice %	Response rate %
HND Applied Science	88	80
HNC Construction	100	29
HNC Engineering	56	43
HND Graphic Design	100	67
HNC Sport & Exercise Science	100	75
FdA Early Childhood Studies	81	64
FdA Education Studies for Teaching Assistants	87	65
BA(Hons) Education and Professional Practice (Top up)	94	60
BA(Hons) Integrative Counselling	82	65
BA(Hons) Early Years Childcare & Education	73	50

Teaching and learning

The TEF dashboard data indicator value for teaching on my course is 85.8% for full-time students compared with a benchmark of 89.0%, however, for part-time the indicator value is 91.0% compared with a benchmark of 84.7%. For 2022, Table 1, the overall satisfaction rate (indicator value) for teaching is 88% this compared to an NSS national benchmark of 80%, whilst the College HE internal survey in the satisfaction rate is 94%. At course level as shown in Table 3 the satisfaction rates indicator values at course level are consistently very high.

The College believes that due to the currency and larger sample size the internal survey represents a more accurate picture of student satisfaction. This is triangulated with student feedback received at course boards, for example, at the BA(Hons) Educational and Professional Practice course board the class representative commented that the students were very happy with the course and the quality of the teaching [019]. This is also supported by module evaluation feedback on the course, with positive comments including “the teaching content of this module has been exemplary” [020]. Whilst on the Level 5 in Education and Training another student commented that the “teaching is very motivational” [021]. Another example is on the BA (Hons) Early Years and Childcare & Education course a student made the comment, “fantastic teaching” [022].

At the October 2022 HEC meeting the student representative commented during a discussion on teaching and learning that “students receive a variety of teaching from the lecturers who have different specialisms” and that “they get a lot of time with their tutors” [023].

Table 3 HE Internal survey satisfaction rates for overall teaching category course level

Course	Overall Teaching on my course %	Response rate %
HND Applied Science	97	80
HNC Construction	100	29
HNC Engineering	100	43
HND Graphic Design	100	67
HNC Sport & Exercise Science	100	75
FdA Early Childhood Studies	86	64
FdA Education Studies for Teaching Assistants	95	65
BA(Hons) Education and Professional Practice (Top up)	88	60
BA(Hons) Integrative Counselling	94	65
BA (Hons) Early Years Childcare & Education	80	50

Table 4 Overall satisfaction College level

NSS	2020 %	2021 %	2022 %	Variance from 2021 %	BM %	Variance from BM %	Internal HE Survey %
Overall satisfaction	61%	71%	93%	+12%	76%	+17%	97%

The above Table 4 illustrates the continuous improvement in students' satisfaction for their course, there has been a significant year-on-year improvement in the satisfaction rate for the question regarding overall satisfaction. This is now 17% above national benchmark. This is also supported at course level by the internal HE survey data, see Table 5.

Table 5 HE Internal survey course satisfaction rates for overall satisfaction question course level

Course	Overall satisfaction %	Response rate %
HND Applied Science	100	80
HNC Construction	100	29
HNC Engineering	100	43
HND Graphic Design	100	67
HNC Sport & Exercise Science	100	71
FdA Early Childhood Studies	100	64
FdA Education Studies for Teaching Assistants	100	65
BA(Hons) Education and Professional Practice (Top up)	100	60
BA(Hons) Integrative Counselling	95	65
BA(Hons) Early Years Childcare and Education	100	60

Assessment and feedback

Formative feedback is provided to all students on each unit/module, this has been put in place to support students with their academic performance on their assessment. All students are provided with written feedback on their draft work.

The College believes that feedback to students is another College key strength, and this is also evidenced by the HE internal survey results, external examiner reports and student feedback via module evaluations and at course boards.

The TEF dashboard data indicator value for assessment and feedback is 82.1% for full-time students compared with a benchmark of 84.0%, however, for part-time the indicator value is 85.9% compared with a benchmark of 82.6%. For 2022, Table 1, the NSS overall satisfaction rate (indicator value) for assessment and feedback is 79% this compares to an NSS national benchmark of 68%, whilst the College HE internal survey in the satisfaction rate is 92%.

At course level as shown in Table 6 the satisfaction rates indicator values at course level are consistently very high.

Table 6 HE Internal survey course satisfaction rates for overall assessment and feedback category course level

Course	Overall Assessment and feedback %	Response rate %
HND Applied Science	100	80
HNC Construction	85	29
HNC Engineering	75	43
HND Graphic Design	100	67
HNC Sport & Exercise Science	100	71
FdA Early Childhood Studies	92	64
FdA Education Studies for Teaching Assistants	88	65
BA(Hons) Education and Professional Practice (Top up)	83	60
BA(Hons) Integrative Counselling	96	65
BA (Hons) Early Years Childcare & Education	80	50

Developmental and formative feedback to students is a central component of teaching practice. Assessment and feedback are efficaciously used to support achievement. Examples of external examiners confirming the efficacy of student assessment and feedback are provided below.

- The materials and guidance for students are very good and it is clear that the staff are supportive and committed to ensuring the students get a good experience, BA (Hons) Integrative Counselling [024].
- The marking criteria is clearer. The feedback is constructive, fair and unified in terms of its structure, average length and detail, BA(Hons) Integrative Counselling [024].
- The quality of the teaching, the assessments and programme design provide opportunities for students to perform well, and to understand where improvements are needed, FdA Supporting Teaching & Learning in Schools [025].

- The delivery team provide detailed and bespoke feedback and feed forward to enable students to understand the grade they have been awarded, and how to improve future submissions, BA (Hons) Education & Professional Practice [026].
- The amount of feedback provided to students is impressive, and often supportive and helpful BA (Hons) Early Years, Childcare and Education [027].
- Students have clearly been well supported in developing effective key academic skills, and issues around writing, referencing and plagiarism are minimal in this year's assessments, BA (Hons) Pastoral Care with Psychology [028].
- Staff are to be commended for the detail and clarity of feedback, which is closely related to learning outcomes of each particular module. The feedback indicates areas for students to improve future work, BA(Hons) Pastoral Care with Psychology [029].
- Assessor feedback is constructive and supports the learner in their learning journey, EE report HNC Construction [030].
- There are some excellent examples of tutor feedback which is clear, directed and linked to assessment criteria, HNC Construction [031].
- Students felt fully supported both by their tutors and their peer group and found the feedback provided on their assignments to be constructive and helpful in showing how they could improve, FdA Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools [032]
- The delivery team provide detailed and bespoke feedback and feed forward to enable students to understand the grade they have been awarded, and how to improve future submissions, BA(Hons) Education & Professional Practice [033].

Employer contribution to the assessment of students

Employer engagement and input in the student assessment process is a central theme across the College's higher education provision. We believe this enhances students' knowledge and skills in preparation for employment, this is particularly strong in counselling, social work, early years and education courses.

In all vocational subject areas, there is a high engagement with employers and industry specialists. For example, with Tottenham Hotspur Football Club, with local Healthcare Trusts and hospitals

On the HNC Construction and Engineering courses the curriculum content, in a particular the delivery pattern, coursework and assessment are driven by local employers (students are either apprentices or employed within the two sectors). This can be done while developing assignment briefs and live briefs [034, 035].

On the HND Graphic Design course curriculum staff work with employers and clients as a part of student assessment, for example, a property development company who specialise in enhancing neighbourhoods, through celebrating people, their stories, and their cultures. The assignment brief required students to produce marketing and promotional materials for a recent company development. The external examiner identified these strong links with industry as an example of good practice on the course [037].

The HNC/D Sport & Exercise Science is a relatively new course with the first cohort of HNC students completing in July 2022 with a number progressing to the HND. This course has a unique special partnership with Tottenham Hotspur Football Club which means that their Global Football Development staff support with the practical coaching units taught on the course. In addition, the Tottenham Hotspur Academy share their insights into football development philosophy with students in order to support those who have aspirations to pursue a career within coaching and/or sport.

Provider name: New City College
UKPRN: 10006963

Through practical-based learning, which takes place at Tottenham Hotspur's premises, students enhance their knowledge and understanding of a range of topics that support coaching practice. This partnership has led to Tottenham Hotspur employing a student as a full-time junior coach and another female student as part-time junior coach, whilst progressing onto the HND. She has also recently been given a unique opportunity to work with the Women's First Team.

Additionally, all students will undertake further mentoring opportunities within the Tottenham Hotspur Coaching Excellence Centre programme to shadow Academy staff - as well as the opportunity for selected students to gain casual employment on the Tottenham Hotspur Global Football Development programme whilst continuing with their studies.

Within, counselling, early years and teacher training courses placement is a mandatory course requirement [038, 039, 040, 041, 042]. Within placement, students are allocated a mentor who is a subject specialist and therefore can provide appropriate support and guidance to the student. Observations are carried out, feedback is given to the student, allowing them to reflect on and improve their future practice.

Student academic support

The College has a well-developed and holistic approach to student support processes for academic (and pastoral care).

There are dedicated student support officers, focusing on academic support and skills development. In early 2022, an evaluation exercise was undertaken on the effectiveness of this existing support provision with a student focus group [003]. The result of which was to create a new role to lead on this support, entitled HE Academic and Support Tutor. The roles include the following core support functions:

- Run workshops for higher level academic skills including support and advice in completing research
- Support academic tutors with study skills sessions
- Monitor students' academic progress and intervene as necessary if a student falls behind, any tutor can refer students to the HE Academic and Support Tutor
- Provide one-to-one support for low-level mental health issues
- Provide one-to-one support for students with a disability
- Facilitate drop-in sessions for pastoral and academic support
- Organise enrichment workshop - resilience, mindfulness
- Lead on and manage the preparation for study 'transition module',
- Collect regular feedback from students on their support needs and make recommendations to the College
- Train student mentors

Students are made aware of this support during student induction.

The College has developed a recording tool to ensure all support activity is logged. This will enable an annual evaluation exercise on the impact of the intervention on student continuation, completion and progression, commencing July 2023. The HE Academic and Support Tutor works closely with the personal tutors, who are assigned to each group of students.

During semester one for the current 2022-23 academic year just over one-fifth of all HE students have engaged with the HE Academic and Support Tutor [043].

The top three support themes support were:

Pastoral support

- Emotional support
- Referrals (e.g., mental health)/guidance on issues related to the academic study/challenging barriers
- Student finance

Academic workshops

- Referencing and citations
- Academic writing
- Research skills

Academic one-to-one support

- Summarising/paraphrasing
- Layout/structure of assignment - help with introduction/starter sentences
- Research skills

Initial feedback from students is positive, for example at the Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training course board a student commented that the student was frequently supported by the postholder and “appreciates all the help and support” provided [061]. Whilst students on the BA(Hons) Integrative Counselling commented the help provided has been invaluable to the students’ learning and development, especially around structuring essays and on conducting research. Another student commented wrote “thank you so much for all the support you are giving me. I really appreciate it so much. The sessions I have with you are so beneficial to me not just in terms of my studying but also in my well-being as I am struggling with the academic side of my degree. I feel you are always here to support me; you respond to my emails straight away and are so helpful. I can't thank you enough! I am so glad to have your knowledge, guidance, and support during my studies” [062,063].

The College’s Careers advice is good: the college has Matrix accreditation (a DfE quality standard for organisations that deliver information, advice and/or guidance) across the group. Apprentices are given ongoing careers support through their 6- week review and in consultation with their employers. Adults can access this service through formal sessions built into their study.

Tutorials also embed academic support, through a class delivered tutorials. The class tutorial session can include, ‘what the student may struggle with.’ For example, for referencing skills, the course tutor will implement one-hour workshop for referencing to support academic writing. In addition, student will also be referred to academic writing session that are delivered in the learning resource centre or other professionals, will be invited to carry out any support a student may need. This can include inviting or booking library sessions to support research skills, inviting a counsellor and placement officers.

The College believes that the student support process is another key College strength and this is evidenced by the HE internal survey results, external examiner reports and student feedback.

The TEF dashboard data indicator value for academic support is 81.4% for full-time students compared with a benchmark of 86.2%, however for part-time the indicator value is 91.9% compared with a benchmark of 80.1%. For 2022, Table 1, the NSS overall satisfaction rate (indicator value) for academic support is 80% this compared to an NSS national benchmark of 74%, whilst the College HE internal survey in the satisfaction rate is 91%. At course level as shown in Table 7 the satisfaction rates at course level are consistently very high.

Table 7 HE Internal survey course results overall academic support category course level

Course	Overall Academic Support %	Response rate %
HND Applied Science	100	60
HNC Construction	93	23
HNC Engineering	78	43
HND Graphic Design	100	67
HNC Sport & Exercise Science	100	75
FdA Early Childhood Studies	89	64
FdA Education Studies for Teaching Assistants	96	65
BA(Hons) Education and Professional Practice (Top up)	94	60
BA(Hons) Integrative Counselling	83	65
BA (Hons)Early Years Childcare & Education	87	50

Students have commented that “assignments are well broken down” [021] and that the assessment “has been clearly explained step-by-step for each assignment – expectations are clear and I feel supported” [044].

Learning resources

The Learning Resource Centre (LRC) ensures that students have access to a wide variety of physical and online resources. The LRC team deliver iSkills tutorial training on:

- eResources
- Research Skills
- Harvard Referencing
- Copyright

Post-tutorial session surveys during 2021-22 show that:

- 95% said the information in the sessions was new or mostly new to them
- 90% felt there were sufficient follow up resources and information

Whilst the TEF dashboard indicator values for learning resources for both full-time and part-time students is below the benchmark values and despite an improvement this is also reflected by the 2022 NSS results, Table1. However, the internal HE survey results give a different picture. At course level as shown in Table 8 the satisfaction rates indicator values are consistently very high.

As a result of the above strategies, plagiarism has reduced significantly since 2017-18, self-evaluation document 2021[044].

The College has an interlending system with the British Library (BL) similarly periodical articles can often be obtained via BL or by accessing online databases.

Student handbooks contain information about and/or links to key dates, academic structures, policies and procedures, programme specifications. Student handbooks and related documents are made available on the College VLE and on the College website as appropriate. The Systems Innovation team supports HE students with the College VLE and assignment submissions via Turnitin.

The external examiner for the BA (Hons) Education & Professional Practice reported that the College provides a positive adult learning environment which enables all students to flourish. The VLE and the course materials were all of a good standard and are used effectively to enable the students to achieve [026].

Table 8 HE Internal survey course results overall learning resources category course level

Course	Overall Learning Resources %	Response rate %
HND Applied Science	75	80
HNC Construction	93	29
HNC Engineering	78	43
HND Graphic Design	92	67
HNC Sport & Exercise Science	100	75
FdA Early Childhood Studies	93	64
FdA Education Studies for Teaching Assistants	93	65
BA(Hons) Education and Professional Practice (Top up)	89	60
BA(Hons) Integrative Counselling	85	62
BA(Hons) Early Years Childcare & Education	87	50

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3. Student Outcomes

Continuation

As a widening participation institution, with a high concentration of adult students returning to education, the College is particularly prone to continuation and completion issues, mirroring the national trend [046]. The College TEF dashboard data [006] highlights continuation and completion as an area for improvement. Although overall aggregated TEF data for continuation for full-time students is below benchmark, this is largely due to a historic partnership provision which has now ceased. The College has had consistently high continuation on its FdA Education Studies for Teaching Assistants at 91% and 92% over the last two years, and 89% on the BA(Hons) Integrative Counselling programme in 2021-22 and BA Pastoral Care with Psychology 85% in 2021-22 [047, 048, 049]. Whilst the 2022-23 continuation on the franchised FdA Early Childhood Studies was 88% [064].

The College has put in place further measures to support continuation, as well as completion, rates. For example, student performance is reviewed and analysed at individual course level within annual progress monitoring review documents. These are summarised and reported to the Higher Education Committee (HEC) which meets regularly to review all strategic and quality HE issues. Where groups are underperforming actions are recorded and implemented.

The College updated pre-course start information (course expectations including workload) and enhanced our induction processes (additional bespoke induction by the HE quality team). Whilst on-course, one-to-one tutorial offers pastoral support opportunities for students to discuss any issues that may affect their studies and workshops provide additional academic support. These measures also focus on better understanding adults' aspirations, concerns and the challenges they face to enable them to succeed on a course.

The College has a highly effective student monitoring system. Where there is concern over a student's progress or attendance their personal tutor will arrange a meeting. Issues are discussed and actions agreed, a record of the meeting is recorded on ProMonitor, which is an online live portal. The student has access to the notes of the meeting. In some cases of serious concern, a student is referred to the HE Academic and Support Tutor for a structured support plan. As mentioned previously this full-time role is relatively new and its impact is yet to be determined, however student feedback to date on this new role is positive as evidenced earlier within this submission document.

Completion

The College's TEF dashboard data [006] presents a variable set of data for completion, this data is due to the historic partnership provision, as previously stated. The full-time completion indicator value is 5.6% below national benchmark; however, the part-time completion rate is 6.5% above benchmark [006].

Regarding comparison with current provision the modest or small cohort sizes makes it difficult to validate performance reliably. Also, as a widening participation institution with a large mature student body, students intend to take longer to complete their courses, especially on three-year degree courses. Nevertheless, the assessment board data [050] shows the following completion rates:

- 100% FdA Education Studies for Teaching Assistants 2020 starts
- 75% HNC Construction 2020 starts
- 88% FdA Early Childhood Studies 2020 starts
- 87% HNC Construction 2019 starts
- 84% FdA Education Studies for Teaching Assistants 2019 starts
- 83% HNC Engineering 2018 starts

Progression

The progression data indicator values for both full-time and part-time provision are below benchmark though not materially below, again this data primarily reflect legacy provision.

Non-apprentice students on Level 4 and 5 courses progress on to a degree programme or on to employment.

Feedback from students and HEIs confirms that students are well-prepared for further study. For example, the link tutor for the FdA Early Childhood Studies course commented that the students who progressed into the top up degree at London Metropolitan University, had high attainment rates.

Student monitoring

The College measures and tracks student progress using a variety of metrics and progress is discussed with each student during one-to-one tutorials. Monitoring of student progress is recorded on ProMonitor. The key feature of this tracking system is an eLights traffic light system which highlights 'at risk' students, allowing for targeted early interventions, support and setting of SMART targets to get students back on track as required. Examples of SMART targets include time management, meeting deadlines and academic writing or referencing skills.

Provider name: New City College
UKPRN: 10006963

Each course personal tutor completes a learner profile of each student, covering their background, qualifications, any support needs and teaching strategies deployed to support, stretch and challenge.

If other College services have had interactions with students such as careers, pastoral support these are also recorded on the system, thereby enabling a holistic overview of the student.

Likewise for apprentices, regular scheduled reviews are recorded on ProMonitor, a notable addition to the review process is employer input.

A range of supportive workshops take place throughout the academic year, often arranged due to student feedback. Topics covered have included support with completing assignments, giving presentations and referencing skills.

The College supports employability through a series of events. This includes workshops, a range of interactive activities on interview techniques, writing curriculum vitae as well a demonstration on dressing for an interview. For careers support, students can meet with the Careers Team who provide assistance via drop-in sessions or appointments. Similar careers support is provided via Information, Advice and Guidance to students.

Students on placements are supported by work-based mentors or supervisors in their place of employment. These placements allow students to apply course knowledge within the subject matter as well as develop essential employability skills such as communication, teamwork and problem-solving. Students are observed in their work settings as a part of their assessment.

On the recently ceased BA(Hons) Social Work course the external examiner reported that practice learning placements appear to be robust and well organised [059]. Whilst on the BA(Hons) Integrative Counselling the external examiner reported that the programme has a wide range of assessments that assessed elements in placement and practice links can now be more effectively embedded in teaching and assessments across modules [024].

Students on the Education and Training programme are placed in further education colleges as well as within the College. Over the last three years 55% of completing students on Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training course have been employed by the College.

Professional engagement

The College actively encourages and arranges for guest speakers, who are currently working practitioners within their field, to share their current knowledge skills and practice with students. The impact of this is to ensure that students are prepared for progression into work and for those already working their next step, for example on the early years, counselling and education courses.

On the BA(Hons) Social Work course the College invited past students to share their experiences within the workplace. They spoke about their individual jobs, the challenges that they face, day-to-day responsibilities and how to build resilience and look after yourself. Student feedback was positive; they felt that they get an insight to the different career possibilities and how to develop the required skills in relation to social work practice.

Whilst for Counselling, we held our first Counselling Placement Fair in March 2022. This involved guest speakers and an opportunity for students to network with a wide variety of counselling placements. Guest speakers such as St Francis Hospice, Isaac Harvey and the Kadampa Buddhist Centre shared their thoughts and experiences with the students and placement providers. As a result, 11 out of the 15 students seeking placements secured a placement due to the Fair [036].

As a further education College, and in light of our vision of widening participation, the College can offer progression routes from Level 1 to undergraduate courses. For example, an adult wanting to teach in a primary school can access our level 1 Preparing to Work in Schools then progress to the level 2 and level 3 Supported Teaching and Learning in Schools and the on to the FdA Education

Provider name: New City College
UKPRN: 10006963

Studies for Teaching Assistants and then the BA (Hons) in Education and Professional Practice and then the master's in education. An adult wanting to become a qualified counsellor can access the Level 1, 2 & 3 Counselling Skills courses and then apply to the BA (Hons) Integrative Counselling course. Two students have successfully completed this journey and are now employed part-time members of staff with their own private counselling practices.

Where it is appropriate, the College employs lecturers, who have been former students after they have worked in their field. These lecturers understand the issues and challenges of being a mature learner in HE. Examples include counselling, early years, sport, and teacher education.

On the HNC Engineering General Engineering pathway is offered following employer feedback (employers requested a mix of mechanical and electrical/ electronic units) [035]. Due to the practical and work focus, the course meets the Engineering Technician Council's standard and upon completion of the course students can apply for membership of the Engineering Council's Technician Standard.

On the HNC Construction course, the College's links with the Chartered Institute of Building have led to the development of online webinars and 'how to videos'.

Education gain

Over the years the College has developed effective strategies to combat academic misconduct and supporting students to avoid misconduct. The College provides students with a guide to enable them to develop the skills required to reference effectively. The Learning Resource Centres (LRCs) run sessions during induction detailing good academic practice. An online Harvard referencing assessment has been created to support students. Higher education courses have embedded sessions on Harvard referencing and plagiarism at the beginning of the academic year. However, following discussions with students, it was evident that this was often lost in an overload of information at the beginning of the year, and therefore the College introduced one-to-one sessions/ group work sessions throughout the year. This has resulted in decline in the number of academic misconduct cases with less than 10 cases in 2021-22, however this has to be seen in the context of declining numbers [051]. We consider our student support measures, both academic and pastoral support as another key strength.

Covid-19 pandemic

During the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown the College further enhanced our support measures to ensure the continuity of study.

As the majority of our students are mature students with families, balancing a higher education qualification whilst supporting their own children in home schooling and dealing with the effects of the pandemic and the pastoral challenges for our tutors were immense.

Tutors often met/emailed students outside of their contracted hours online in the evening and at weekends to fit in with students' lifestyles. Lectures continued as normal keeping to timetables as much as possible and for those that could not attend remotely extra tutorials were timetabled and lectures were recorded so students could access them in their own time.

Students (and staff) were signposted to mental health and well-being support throughout the lockdown.

The College recognised the importance of resuming in-person teaching and therefore restarted in-person teaching as soon as it was legally permitted. Students were offered a transitional period where they could choose to attend in-person or remotely.

The following measures were undertaken to support students at the start of lockdown in March 2020

Provider name: New City College
UKPRN: 10006963

- Microsoft Teams training for all students
- Additional one-to-one tutorials
- Learning Resource Centre – click and collect book service; scan and deliver journal article service
- Additional online resources for learning for example: discussion blogs / online quizzes
- Focus groups were established to discuss how to improve the learning experience

Feedback from students on teacher training courses indicated that students would like additional opportunities to practice their teaching activities in class. During lockdown, students were encouraged to try range of online approaches. Students set up an area to practise new ideas using Microsoft Teams and gave feedback to one another **[052]**.

Post pandemic, the curriculum and its delivery has been updated to reflect societal changes, for example, on the counselling course counselling practical sessions now also take place online, to reflect current practice in the workplace. This further develops students' employability skills.

External examiners commented positively within their reports on the steps the College and course teams had taken to support students and continue teaching and learning. For example:

- The team should be commended on the results of this cohort, clearly, they have provided a cohesive approach to ensuring the students have access to staff with the appropriate levels of expertise in their respective areas. The teaching team offered ample support in the challenging times brought about by Covid-19, BA(Hons) Education & Professional Practice **[026]**.
- Good practice: Student support measures put in place due to Covid 19, HNC Engineering 2020 **[053]**.
- The centre is commended for trying to maintain the education of its learners [during lockdown]. Learners have continued to produce work during lockdown, HND Applied Science 020 **[054]**.
- Despite the unprecedented challenges of the last year caused by the pandemic and the additional administrative challenges of college merger and establishing a new teaching team, the team have remained student-focused, continually striving to improve the student experience and readiness to practice. The commitment and dedication shown to supporting all student progression, retention and success have been impressive throughout the year, BA(Hons) Integrative Counselling **[055]**.
- The students I spoke to were very complimentary about the level of support they received and the quality of teaching and learning, both face-to-face and online, BA(Hons) Education & Professional Practice **[056]**.
- Effective and innovative systems in place to deliver and assess the programme during Covid 19, HND Graphic Design **[057]**.

The Open University commended the College on the “study skills resources made available online during the pandemic” **[013]**. The University of East London also commended the College during the 2021 collaborative review on the “proactive support given by the Course Team and the wider College team to trainees (students) during the disruption caused by Covid 19 restrictions” **[058]**.

In summary, the College's key strengths across the HE provision are:

- Outstanding and inclusive student support processes that enhance the student learning experience
- Comprehensive assessment feedback which enables students to understand their performance, how and where to improve

- Strong links with employers and support for employability through a range of innovative practices which enable students to acquire the knowledge, skills and understanding for employment.

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Provider name: New City College

UKPRN: 10006963

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