

## 1. Provider Context

### 1.1 Overview of London School of Management Education (LSME)

[1]. LSME's identity and drive is rooted in its delivery of an inclusive and transformative lifelong learning experience. Our exceptional student focus and the highest standards of teaching and learning, is demonstrated by a completion rate of 95.6% (which is over 15% above the national benchmark). This is achieved within the context of 97% of the cohort being mature and 58% of our students living in IMD quintiles 1 & 2 areas. In conjunction with low entry qualifications, this provides evidence of a genuinely outstanding record of accomplishment of adding value during the student journey. The word 'outstanding' is employed because, when we juxtapose our results against those of other higher educational institutions in the UK, outcomes at LSME are outstanding<sup>1</sup>.

[2]. Our innovative, cost-effective and high quality programmes provide exceptional practical education and training in business, health & social care and education, and align closely with the UN Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME).

[3]. We provide a creative and supportive academic environment based upon an ethos of inclusion, respect and transparency. We actively share expertise to strengthen capacity, foster professional relationships and embrace equality and diversity for all stakeholders. We are embedded in our communities through our student lives and create an effective platform for social mobility for our students.

[4]. We value diversity and are committed to providing an equal opportunity for all individuals irrespective of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age or religion in the provision of education and training or employment. Our Access and Participation projects present a focused and tailored approach to the needs of our students. These initiatives facilitate the passage of non-traditional students with low entry qualifications into and through Higher Education. We are vigilant and continually exploring ways to provide inclusive teaching and learning experience by using well planned and quality assured learning materials. As a result, our continuation (98.6%) and completion (95.6%) data outperform that of many higher education institutions (national average of 88%)<sup>2</sup>.

[5]. Our **strategic aims** include:

- The maintenance and enhancement of academic excellence strengthening our student experience by providing accessible education and innovation that drives demand.
- The maintenance and enhancement of the access and pathways for continuation and completion for underrepresented students to increase the diversity and size of our student population.
- Enhancement of academic and non-academic staff training and development in line with the growth objectives outlined in the LSME Strategic Plan for 2021-2026.
- The implementation of an Employer Engagement and Employability Skills Development Strategy to improve the employability of our students.
- Embedding the United Nation's Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) in the curriculum to ensure that we develop learners to become responsible leaders who value the sustainability of business and the global society as a whole.
- Ensuring proportionate expansion of the infrastructure and learning resources
- Enhancement in research and innovations<sup>3</sup>

[6]. Since our inception in 2007, LSME has maintained academic excellence and professional standards aligned with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and the Quality Code for Higher Education in the UK. We take account of local needs to determine our academic provision. For example, the demand for health and social care professionals, teachers and trainers

is one of the major determining factors in our choice of provisions<sup>4</sup>. We deliver a range of undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications from Levels 4 to 7 of the FHEQ.

[7]. Under the leadership of its Board of Directors which comprise of a dynamic team with diverse academic expertise led by the Executive Director, the institution fulfils all its regulatory and statutory obligations<sup>5</sup>. Our most recent academic quality review was conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in the UK in December 2018 with a very successful outcome<sup>6</sup>. From 2017 to date, our students have participated in the National Student Survey (NSS), each time achieving an overall student satisfaction of over 90%<sup>7</sup>. This is testimony to both the teaching and holistic experience offered to our students.

[8]. The College campus currently consists of two premises in Gants Hill. Each building has the potential for future expansion and can currently accommodate about 800 students in total. The rear extension of one to the Gants Hill premises is being developed in preparation for the planned growth in student numbers and courses. This includes the recruitment of students on our accelerated programmes in the 2022-23 Academic Year. Our classrooms are furnished with overhead projectors, computers, interactive smart boards in conjunction with the necessary technology for remote access to livestreamed lecturers. This facilitates a stimulating environment for onsite delivery of courses and enhances the potential for future digital provision. Our learning resource centre, an ICT suite with a good range of print and online publications, is accessible to all students and offers a safe and inclusive environment for learning. Our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), based on the Canvas platform is tailored to the needs of our students and provides a diverse range of learning resources required for independent and collaborative studies.

## **1.2 Academic Programmes**

[9]. Our courses range from Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) and Certificates (HNCs), to BSc and Masters' Qualifications. Through a validation arrangement with the University of Chichester (UoC), we deliver BSc programmes in Business Management, Health and Social Care Management and International Tourism and Hospitality Management as full degrees with or without the Foundation Year and Top-up qualifications. We also deliver the Master of Education qualification and we are accredited to deliver degrees in Business Management and Finance, Accounting and Finance Management, MSc Business Management, Masters' in Business Administration and Accelerated Degrees in Health and Social Care and International Hospitality and Tourism Management<sup>8</sup>.

[10]. In addition to the UoC suite of undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications, our other undergraduate courses at levels 4 and 5 (Higher National Certificate/Diploma in Business and the Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training) are awarded by Pearson Education. Through this partnership, we also have the accreditation to deliver Pearson Level 4/5 Higher National Certificate/Diploma in Social and Community Work (RFQ) and the Pearson BTEC Level 4/5 Higher National Certificate/Diploma in Healthcare Practice (RQF)<sup>9</sup>. The full list of qualifications on offer is shown in Table 1 below:

[11]. The Diploma in Education and Training (DET) qualification allows learners to register with the Society of Education and Training (SET), a professional membership organisation of the Education and Training Foundation for practitioners working in the post-14 education and training sector. This enables an application to be made for QTLS (Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills) status, inspected by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

**Table 1: List of Programmes Currently Offered**

<b>Award Title</b>	<b>Course Duration (Years)</b>
Master of Education (MEd)	1.5
Master of Business Administration (MBA)	1.0
MSc Business Management	1.0
BSc (Hons) Business Management - Foundation Year	1.0
BSc (Hons) Business Management	3.0
BSc (Hons) Business Management - Top-up	1.0
BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care Management - Foundation Year	1.0
BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care Management	3.0
BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care Management - Top-up	1.0
BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care Management (Accelerated)	2.0
BSc (Hons) International Tourism and Hospitality Management	3.0
BSc (Hons) International Tourism and Hospitality Management - Top-up	1.0
BSc (Hons) International Tourism and Hospitality Management (Accelerated)	2.0
BSc (Hons) Accounting and Finance	3.0
BSc (Hons) Business Management and Finance	3.0
Pearson BTEC Level 4 HNC in Business (RQF)	1.0
Pearson BTEC Level 5 HND in Business (RQF)	2.0
Pearson BTEC Level 4 HNC in Health and Social Care (RQF)	1.0
Pearson BTEC Level 5 HND in Health and Social Care (RQF)	2.0
Pearson Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training (DET)	1.0

### 1.3 Student Numbers

[12]. In the 2021-22 Academic Year, we had over 750 mature (over 21 years old) students taught across the three main programmes, with the BSc (Hons) Business Management constituting the largest population of students in the College as shown in Table 2. TEF 2023 considers data from 2017 to 2020. The total number of students in 2017 was 320 for the three core subjects (110 students for the HND BM programme, 60 students for HND Health and Social Care and 150 DET students). There was a slight increase in student numbers in 2018 when we recruited one cohort of students each for the BSc (Hons) degree in Health and Social Care and Business Management. The student numbers increased from 2019 to 2020 to approximately 480 and 640 students respectively. The aggregate numbers from 2017 to 2020 was 1810 students as presented by the OfS published data on the shape and size of LSME (Table 3).

**Table 2: Student Population [Headcount: August 2022 (2021-22 Academic Year)]**

<b>Award Title</b>	<b>Number of Learners</b>
Pearson BTEC Level 5 HND in Business (RQF)	57
BSc (Hons) Business Management	474
BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care Management	108
Pearson Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training (DET)	96
Master of Education	10
BSc (Hons) International Tourism and Hospitality	10
<b>Total Number of Learners</b>	<b>755</b>

### 1.4 Demographic Characteristics of the Student Population

[13]. Our student population is a demographic cohort who tend to experience more struggles and challenges in higher education, due to their family and work commitment. They consist overwhelmingly of non-traditional students such as those from low-income households, students

from minority ethnic/racial backgrounds, mature students (age 21 years or older on entry and constitute over 97% of the student population as shown in Table 3) and/or students with declared disabilities (2.7%)<sup>10</sup>.

[14]. Information from our internal analysis of student data collected at the end of 2021-22 Academic Year, as part of an annual survey to review the provision of welfare support, suggests that over 85% of students have a household income of less than £25,000 in the 2021-22 Academic Year<sup>11</sup>. In addition, analysis of the contextual data shown in the table below suggests that 58.6% of students live in IMD quintiles 1 and 2 areas<sup>12</sup>. Over 30% of new entrants had existing higher education qualifications and another 33% entered with International Baccalaureate (IB) qualifications that are equivalent to A-level grades BCC and above. The remaining students (~40%) had entry qualifications aligned with that of a low-tariff higher educational institution. 96% of our students are drawn from three ethnic minority groups: white Eastern European (57%), Black, mainly of African heritage (26.8%), and Asians (12.2%).

[15]. Hence, LSME caters mainly for mature UK and EU learners, some of whom have low-level entry qualifications and / or are from low-income households. Mature students often juggle the responsibilities of education, work and family and generally have poor higher educational outcomes<sup>13</sup>.

[16]. LSME aspires to continue to broaden the range of students that access its educational provision. To this end steps have been taken to increase the number of young British white students (particularly males) from low socioeconomic or working-class backgrounds (IMD Quintile 1), students with disabilities, students who were from a looked after background and asylum seekers. The initiatives taken to achieve these aims include undertaking a series of outreach projects in our local communities, with several charities, the local council and local schools via our access and participation agenda. LSME is working with seven local secondary schools and has engaged effectively with three charities within the Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge and surrounding Boroughs. The impact of this current initiative will be assessed at the end of the 2022-23 Academic Year.

**Table 3: Contextual Data from the Aggregate Data on Student Characteristics from 2017-20**

Characteristics	Split Indicators	Headcount	Percentage
<b>Entry qualifications</b>	HE-level	600	33.2%
	A-levels (BCC or higher) or IB	560	30.9%
	A-levels (DDD or lower), other L3	10	0.6%
	BTECs (lower than DDM)	180	9.9%
	Access courses, foundation courses, L3 at 65 tariff points or higher	110	6.1%
	No or unknown entry qualification	350	19.3%
<b>Age</b>	<21years	40	2.4%
	21-30 yeas	490	26.8%
	>30years	1280	70.8%
<b>IMD quintiles</b>	1-2	1068	58.6%
	3-5	742	41.4%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	White	1040	57.7%
	Black	480	26.8%
	Asian	220	12.2%
	mixed	20	1.2%
	Other	20	0.9%
	Unknown	20	1.2%

## 1.5 Summary Explanation of the Current TEF Indicators

[17]. LSME progressed from TEF Provisional Award in TEF Year 2 to Bronze Award in TEF Year 3. Our current split and core metrics for TEF 2023 are a significant improvement on the previous TEF. As indicated earlier, our students are substantively non-traditional in terms of entry qualifications, age, ethnicity and socio-economic status. Nevertheless, we retained (continuation) 98.6% of our students (17% above the national benchmark) and engaged them sufficiently to achieve a high completion rate of over 95% (which is over 15% above the national benchmark)<sup>14</sup>. This result is comparable to that of top higher educational institutions in the UK such as Cambridge University<sup>15</sup>, despite the differences between the socio-economic profile of LSME students and the cohorts that attend Russell Group HEIs.

[18]. Analysis of the overall core TEF 2023 metrics obtained from the NSS, HESA Student Alternative records and the Graduate Outcomes Records clearly confirms a strong provision where teaching quality, assessment, student support and continuity consistently outperform many providers<sup>16</sup>. The full-time core indicators for continuation and completion from 2017 to 2020 display excellent results. These results reflect and confirm the Colleges' culture of commitment to developing excellence in teaching and learning, and enabling student development and achievement, which is discussed in more detail below. This has ultimately led to our outstanding student continuation and completion numbers and their ability to secure effective employment outcomes in a professional or managerial capacity or progress onto further study (51.6%)<sup>12</sup>. Further details of this 'theory of change' with additional supporting evidence are shown below:

[19]. Although the overall proportion of graduates in graduate-level employment or further studies (51.6%) falls below the benchmark figure by 4.5 points, it is a marked improvement over our last TEF metrics which was approximately 18% below the benchmark<sup>17</sup>. Hence, although it is possible that the COVID-19 Pandemic, which started in the 2019-20 Academic Year, had a detrimental impact on graduate employment nationally, the employability figures for LSME graduates is now more closely aligned with the national graduate employment data. This can be attributed to measures introduced to enhance the work readiness of our students. Further details of these measures and their overall impact are shown below:

[20]. This submission makes a compelling case for a higher TEF rating as a more accurate representation of our high-quality provision. It is based on a detailed analysis of quantitative and qualitative data on student experience with academic support, teaching, learning, assessment and feedback, learning resources, learning environment, student community and engagement. It further reiterates the impact of these activities on student outcomes (continuation, completion and progression) and an assessment of educational gains.

## 2. Student Experience

### 2.1 Teaching and Learning Quality

[21]. The quality of our teaching is indicated by the student experience indicators for 'Teaching on My Course' for 2017 to 2022. An overall satisfaction of 93.6% from cohorts of non-traditional students, which both continue (98.6%) and complete (95.6%) are significant<sup>12</sup>. The combination of the consistent NSS feedback and the continuation and completion of our mature students with low entry tariff constitutes a substantial body of evidence that the delivery and the experience we offer are outstanding. Further evidence of the delivery quality is provided by External Examiner reports<sup>18</sup>.



### 2.1.1 Teaching and Learning Strategy

[22]. *Effective dissemination of our Teaching and Learning Strategy to enhance the learning experience*

The College has taken the necessary steps to ensure that it has a robust and detailed teaching and learning strategy that is consistently and comprehensively followed at the Programme level<sup>19</sup>. The strategy is shared with academic staff to inform their day-to-day activities aimed at ensuring that students are effectively engaged in learning and understand the learning environment and resources available to them. This affords them the opportunity to follow their programme of study and enjoy their learning experience. The effectiveness and consistency of policy implementation at LSME is indicated by the similarity in NSS responses for the overall satisfaction with Teaching and Learning for Business Management (93.1%) and Health and Social Care Management (93.7%)<sup>12</sup>.

[23]. *Reflective practice helps students to be proactive in self-directed learning*

We encourage both staff and students to be reflective practitioners. The keeping of a reflective journal enables students to think about the ways their skills and knowledge are evolving overtime<sup>20</sup>. It also helps learners to reflect on the application of concepts to the work environment, to consolidate learning and to help understand the usefulness of the knowledge gained and ensures a continuous improvement in our teaching and learning delivery. Typical evidence of reflection can be demonstrated in several modules for example, Personal and Professional Skills for Management module which is taught at Level 4 in which classroom discussions are largely based on reflection and experiences drawn from the workplace<sup>21</sup>.

[24]. *Personalised teaching and learning for successful outcomes for ALL students*

Another unique approach to ensuring success in LSME and maintain a high continuation and completion rate is the routine use of personalised learning for all students. After an initial assessment during the induction period, we develop detailed Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for all students. This gives learners the opportunity to recognise and value their existing knowledge and skills and build upon them and encourage teachers to deliver personalised learning<sup>22</sup>. ILPs are stored on the Canvas platform and are accessible to all lecturers to enable effective follow up and additional support for students to achieve their learning aims. The ILPs are reviewed each term, encouraging students to make effective use of advice, guidance and feedback on their progress.

[25]. *Transforming our teaching and learning with UN PRME*

In addition to the high-quality standards, LSME has transformed its teaching and learning by embedding United Nations-supported values of sustainability, responsibility, and ethics. The institution become a signatory to the United Nations Principles of Responsible Management Education (UN PRME) in 2017 and gained access to dynamic local and global learning communities that work collaboratively to address some of the complex challenges facing business and society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Since then, we have embedded the UN PRME in the existing academic curriculum. Hence, we use every opportunity to discuss environmental sustainability and green economy, ethical and responsible leadership, and corporate social responsibility to the environment. This helps to develop learners with the skills to overcome this current global challenge. Staff receive training on the UN PRME Principles and take part in workshops on how they can be successfully embedded in the curriculum<sup>23</sup>. Our internal feedback from students as part of an annual survey in the 2020/2021 academic year suggests that over 95% of students appreciate the importance of the PRME activities and feel they are more responsive to global challenges and are privileged to have the opportunity to learn about sustainability<sup>24</sup>.

### 2.1.2 Quantitative Information on Teaching Intensity and Course Delivery

[26]. *At LSME each student is 'noticed' and challenged to achieve*

LSME students are successful in their studies by national standards and in comparison with prestigious HEIs who select from high achieving A Level students. This successful outcome can be attributed to our small classroom sizes that enable students to participate and focus on learning and are sufficiently challenged to achieve their best work. This is evidenced by our 2021 (94.6%) and 2022 (91.7%) NSS response to how students are challenged to achieve their best work<sup>25</sup>.

[27]. Our teaching intensity is appropriate for our students and helps them to stay focused and motivated to succeed. Our learners attend face-to-face teaching for a minimum of 15 hours per week. Students who require extra support have an additional 7.5 hours of contact per week. This is highlighted further in section 2.1.3 below. Students spend an average of 4 hours on tutor facilitated VLE based learning each week. Learners on a work placement spend about 6 hours per week on work-based learning activities. Students spend an average of 20 hours per week on their independent studies and are additionally supported with 15 minutes of one-to-one tutorial each week for academic and/or pastoral support. Hence, lecturers and staff are readily accessible to students to ensure academic progress. This positive learning experience impacts on continuation and completion rates (previously referred to in paragraph 17). In our 2021 NSS, 96.4% of our students suggested that the timetable worked efficiently for them<sup>25</sup>.

[28]. *Systematic, comprehensive and auditable approach to supporting students*

As well as in lectures, seminars and similar, our teaching staff deliver placements sessions, workshops, supervised online learning, and 'flipped classroom' activity that enables highly productive use of contact time. One reason for the successful outcomes for our students during the pandemic (continuation rate of 98.3% in 2019-20) was the additional online support provided to students on a daily basis. For example, the tutors stayed online longer than anticipated to enable students who struggled with any aspect of the session to have a one-to-one discussion or tutorial to ensure they have grasped the relevant concepts.

[29]. Hence, our remarkable continuation and completion rates are not small achievements and they are not attained easily. As previously mentioned in paragraph 1 we offer an inclusive and transformative learning experience delivered to a non-traditional and substantively mature student cohort. This unusual success does not happen 'naturally'. Hard work, reflection, understanding the needs and challenges of our students, staff development to help academic and professional staff attune to, and understand the needs of our students along with a systematic approach to supporting them, underpins their success and satisfaction.

[30]. We celebrate our achievement and hard work. The high continuation and completion rates across all of our programmes have been maintained throughout the last four years. For example, the Diploma in Education and Training programme experienced a completion rate of over 95% while students on Business Management and Health and Social Care experienced similar rate of 93.6%<sup>12</sup>. Over the last five years, all the External Examiners' reviews of teaching throughout the range of disciplines and modes of delivery have been excellent<sup>26</sup>.

### 2.1.3 Additional Academic Support

[31]. Several factors have been identified as barriers to greater equality in higher education for students from different backgrounds. These include the prior attainment of students, insufficient

advice, and support both before and during higher education, financial concerns that deter young people from applying and can have a detrimental impact on their experiences of higher education<sup>27</sup>.

[32]. LSME has introduced intervention strategies for disadvantaged students and for those with identified protected characteristics. In line with our learning Support Policy<sup>28</sup>, all students with special needs, including cognitive, physical, and mental health issues or those from disadvantaged social backgrounds, especially those with an intersection of disadvantages (such as belonging to IMD quintiles 1-2, with low household income of <£25,000, or any other indices of deprivation) are offered additional intervention.

[33]. *Regular monitoring of academic progress and appropriate interventions results in similar outcomes for students with different social backgrounds.*

We monitor the attendance, assignment submission and the academic progress of all students with a view to identifying those at risk. A student will receive a personalised email from their teachers if they miss one session without prior notification. Students have commended the institution for showing genuine care for their wellbeing and success, making them feel valued<sup>24</sup>. Students from the groups referred to above are flagged and where needed offered additional one-to-one support if necessary. This support is also extended to all students with a temporary mitigating circumstance that affects their continuation. Academic support includes the extension of their assignment submission deadlines, provision of study skills support and peer mentoring by placement teachers, student volunteers and ambassadors. The level of support provided is normally recorded on student meeting forms<sup>29</sup>. This approach mitigates against factors that affect disadvantaged students and explains the absence of differentiation between both completion (IMD<sub>1-2</sub>:96.5% and IMD<sub>3-5</sub>: 96.5%) and continuation (IMD<sub>1-2</sub>:98.6% and IMD<sub>3-5</sub>:98.7%) among the socially disadvantaged and those who are relatively well off<sup>12</sup>.

#### **2.1.4 Support for Wellbeing and Mental Health**

[34]. LSME has a structured, multi-faceted and robust approach to student welfare and pastoral support. Although our provision has developed as the institution has learnt, there has been a comprehensive and supportive approach that has prevailed since inception. The QAA has commended this aspect of LSME provision<sup>30</sup>.

[35]. Within LSME, an engine driving the identification and support of at risk students is the Welfare Committee. Regular meetings are held with students in need of support. Germane information reviewed by the Committee includes: student engagement, evidence of additional mental health support, and financial support for eligible students. Further academic support, additional employability skills development, pastoral care and in house counselling services are readily available. The Welfare Committee works closely with community mental health teams and GPs and signposts to the relevant external mental health provision where appropriate.

[36]. *Impact on Students*

Students directly affected by the pandemic either by their personal loss or a family member's loss of employment received a one-off payment from the Hardship Fund in addition to ongoing financial support via bursaries or fee waivers based upon eligibility. This enabled students to continue with their studies when they otherwise might not have been able to do so. Similarly financial support has been provided to students in order to acquire equipment such as a laptop with effective web cam and sound systems to enable participation in online sessions.



### [37]. *Student Feedback*

Students who were eligible for financial support provided feedback on the impact of the support on their academic progress. The majority of learners expressed their satisfaction with the financial support. The largest proportion of respondents (81%) found that financial support helped them pay for books, study materials, field trips etc. 49% of respondents found that financial support helped them pay for essential living costs and 35% of respondents found that it helped them support their family. 30% of respondents found that financial support helped them enjoy a more comfortable life while studying<sup>31</sup>. At the end of each Academic year, students were encouraged to complete a survey on the welfare provision at LSME. Over 95% are satisfied with the provision and suggested they will be happy to see the in-house counsellor should they experience any issues that may affect their progression<sup>32,33</sup>.

## **2.1.5 Graduate Employability and Skills Development**

### [38]. *LSME investment in new Employability and Enterprise Hub*

LSME as a business and management College has a crucial role to play in supporting students with employability and entrepreneurial skills. Since 2018 to date enhancing, the employability skills of our students have been high on our agenda. In the 2021-22 Academic Year, the institution developed its Employability and Enterprise Hub (EEH) despite its inability to secure funding through the OfS Capital Grant bid. The hub is currently providing a focal point where LSME students can access resources to support their business ideas. This is a well-designed, dynamic, and interactive website with all the relevant toolkits to support students with business ideas and career development skills<sup>34</sup>.

### [39]. *Impact of Graduate First*

In the first year since inception, over 450 LSME students have access to employability skills development tools via the Graduate First Portal used by most Universities in the UK. The EEH provides a range of features and functions including online registration, Business idea chat box, budget preparation and business proposal feature and Company registration. It also contains online training resources and webinars on the Corporate Governance Code and commercial law. LSME subscribed to the Graduate First software, which provides the opportunity to further develop employability skills, available to most university students in the UK. The Graduate first portal is linked to the EEH and about 450 students are actively engaged with the hub and have access to a range of skills including CV writing, psychometric testing, interviewing techniques. The system also access to job vacancies and students are encouraged to apply.

### [40] *Engagement with local employers have yielded positive results*

We work closely with local employers. A particular example is the monthly workshops organised by the NatWest Bank for the Business students<sup>35</sup> and career events with Active SEN for teacher training and the invitation of potential employers as guest lecturers<sup>36</sup>. Feedback provided by our students suggests a high level of satisfaction with the services they obtain. A direct result of this support and these initiatives, current students obtained professional and highly skilled employment in the 2021-22 academic year. Based on this success, we anticipate that a growing number of students will make use of the provision to enhance their prospects of securing graduate level employment during their studies or as soon as they have graduated. **A few testimonies from students are below:**

**"After 3 months in which I worked as support worker I have showed my skills to the manager, this way I got a position as an office administrator. My position is the first step towards improving my career and learning how to be a responsible manager. Therefore, I**

*can say that LSME has broadened my perception of how to get a career and to improve myself to become a successful manager. And I'm working towards a future where I will be able to open my own successful business" [LSME BM Student; 2022].*

*"I am proud to say that I am able to acquire a teaching job, in a Higher Education institution, even before my graduation ceremony. I would not have been able to get to where I am without this DET course and the support I received from my lectures and LSME as a whole" (LSME DET Student 2021-22).*

*"My engagement in teaching placement activities externally prepared me to become an effective teacher as I was able to put theory into practice. Continuously receiving constructive feedback from my lecturers and placement mentors helped me to improve on my teaching and assessment skills. Now, I am honoured and very grateful that I am a qualified practicing Health and Social Care Management Tutor and Assessor at Level 6. This has helped me to excel professionally and financially. Therefore, I would strongly recommend LSME to anyone who plans to complete their Higher Education studies." [LSME DET Alumnus - 2019-2020].*

[41]. The development of entrepreneurial skills supports job creation, protection of existing small businesses and jobs and the development of new sustainable businesses, which implicitly support the local economy. Facilitating student entry into sustainable employment has huge economic benefits not only to the local community but also at the national level. Since our target student population is the most vulnerable in society, our career development strategy is addressing key societal issues and constitute a small step towards closing the existing gaps between the different strata of society. It is worth noting that this is a 'small step' within the macro context. However, from the perspective of individuals and their lives, the 'step' is meaningful and non-trivial. The confidence, self-esteem, and well-being of graduates is improved which in turn motivates them to succeed in their working life and make a positive impact on their local communities. Section 3 will examine educational gains in more details.

## 2.2. Assessment and Feedback

[42]. *Ensuring a prompt formative feedback is within one week supports student success.*

LSME regularly delivers outcomes well above the current national benchmarks and our robust assessment and feedback mechanism are no exception. In 2021 our student satisfaction with assessment and feedback was a staggering 98.2% (a significant 20% above the national benchmark)<sup>25</sup>. This result is a testament to the hard work we put into transforming the learning experience of our students with relevant assessment and the provision of appropriate feedback. Students who may be falling behind with their course work receive focussed support. Lecturers provide a timely and constructive formative feedback within one week. This enables the student to see how they could have done things differently to obtain an improved mark and consequently facilitates effective learning. These approaches are evident from our completion and continuation data that does not differentiate between the different students characterises as evidenced in our split indicators<sup>12</sup>. At the national level, non-continuation is higher in the black minority ethnic groups, and Caribbean students compared to their white counterpart in both high and low tariff higher education providers<sup>37</sup>.

[43]. The approach to assessment and feedback is aligned with our commitment to inclusivity and equality and a demonstration of equal access to teachers and learning resources that enables a student to attain their maximum potential in line with our values and commitment to widening access and participation. All our students are supported to develop the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes for a desirable outcome.

[44]. Excellence in assessment and feedback is acknowledged by our External Examiners from Pearson and UoC in all the three Departments within the institution<sup>38</sup>. These independent reports also confirm our processes for fair and transparent assessments and our adherence to the requirements of relevant external frameworks for HE qualifications and subject benchmark statements, the quality and quantity of feedback to students and the extent to which we comply with PRSB Standards. An example of the latter is how we have incorporated some of the requirements of the Society for Education and Training (SET) in the Diploma in Education and Training programme. As part of LSME's drive for continual improvement, we consider data for individual programmes and departments within annual monitoring: this includes student outcomes data, which we compare between programmes, institution-wide and to historical data that informs actions going forward.

### **2.3. Staff Development: Teaching and Academic**

[45]. It is unusual for a privately owned institution to have a formally embedded systematic approach to staff development. LSME encourages and expects its academics to develop their teaching and learning competency via participation in AdvanceHE. Moreover, academics are expected to and supported to develop as 'academics' with the core knowledge needed to carry out teaching and learning activities at the appropriate level and also uphold the professional values underpinning the higher education teaching profession. As a result of our approach to staff development, LSME obtained over 90% student satisfaction for 'Teaching on my course' in NSS 2018, 2019 and 2020 and exceeded the sector average for England each year in a row by about 6%. This is reflected in the information from our recent TEF metrics in the last four years suggesting that 'teaching on my course' scored an overall percentage of 93.6% compared to the benchmark value of 87.4%<sup>12</sup>. In 2021, 96.3% of our students thought the staff are good at explaining things to them<sup>25</sup>.

[46]. The institution currently employs 31 staff (FTE) on established contracts. External Lecturers deliver additional specialist teaching. All academic and professional staff are working towards recognition by the AdvanceHE using the guidelines from the UK's Professional Standard Framework.

[47]. *Prioritising the initiation of research development raises our profile of excellence among similar institutions.*

LSME differentiates its offer by not only its outstanding NSS performance and continuation and completion data, but also by its support for research development in the pursuit of scholarship. For a small independent institution, this is uncommon. Yet the management of LSME understand the importance of research and have initiated collaborative activities to support this vision. To this end since 2014, LSME have organised international conferences and workshops under the theme of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI). This provides its academic staff with valuable networking opportunities, encourage, and support research within LSME. Our sixth annual research conference took place in London in July 2019, followed by three online conferences due to the disruptions to face-to-face activities resulting from the pandemic. Far more than just an internal staff development activity, over the years these conferences have significantly raised the profile of

excellence within this institution. They offer our staff and students the opportunity for local and international networking. For example, information gained from our conferences informed the development of a research project for a staff MSc thesis on student engagement and retention. The conferences have also encouraged dialogue on environmental sustainability and the green economy<sup>39</sup>. As a result, staff are currently undergoing internal research training and developing proposals for future collaborative research.

[48]. *QAA commendation for LSME research initiatives*

The Learning & Teaching Strategy and our Research Strategy are linked. As we push forward the agenda to develop research within the academic institution, our teachers are all expected to research and develop the culture of research-led teaching within the institution. So far, we have encouraged collaboration with international institutions through our annual research conferences. This kind of agenda is unusual in a private institution of our size and shape, and we have been commended by the QAA for this initiative<sup>40</sup>. The aspiration and intention is that this approach will positively impact the student learning experience, adding value through stimulation and challenge, and through the introduction of research-enriched curricula. An full evaluation of this strategy will take place at the end of the academic year.

### **2.3.1 Academic Staff Recognition, Awards and Promotion Opportunities**

[49]. *LSME Staff feel valued and are motivated to work hard*

LSME is committed to teaching students and transforming people with skills as well as recognising and rewarding those who are engaged in this task. We recognise the breadth of experience that our staff bring and we embrace this richness and draw upon it. As an organisation, we encourage and facilitate the sharing of good professional practice. This approach supports the overall development of the individual as well as fostering the growth and development of the institution. To date, we have integrated 30 hours of CPD annually and peer support by using feedback from external examiners, students, and staff<sup>41</sup>.

The UK Professional Standards Framework drives our Staff Development Plan as the institution prepares to apply for Degree Awarding Powers. With our flat organisational structure, academic staff with good record of performance are assured of job promotions to positions that require more responsibility and authority. This is fertile ground for new learning in higher education and more rapid professional progression. This scenario is not easily achieved in large institutions. As a result, staff are motivated, say they are satisfied, and feel valued. This is seen in the way teaching is valued and promotional decisions are made<sup>41</sup>. We are developing additional pathways to grow leadership, scholarship, personal influence, and esteem within our colleagues to prepare them for management positions going forward in our quest for Degree Awarding Powers.

### **2.3.2 Impact and Effectiveness of Our Teaching Observation Scheme**

[50]. Our periodic teaching observation aligns with the current teaching and learning strategy. This practice is not common in large universities. Observation is undertaken by experienced senior staff. Staff also carry out peer and inter-departmental observations and undergo annual appraisals with their immediate line managers. This informs individual practice and establishes a clear connection with the UKPSF requirement. It also facilitates reflection and further development of lessons and appropriate learning resources as well as promoting the career development of the staff<sup>42</sup>.

## 2.4 Educational Environment, Resources, Student Engagement and Community

### 2.4.1 Investment in Teaching and Learning Resources

[51]. *Over 90% of our students are satisfied with the learning resources provided.*

LSME is a high achieving institution with a governing body that prioritises financial sustainability so that student growth is not at the expense of the learning experience. Our NSS outcomes for access to learning resources was 87.9% (2018), 90.8% in 2019 and 90.5% in 2020 which were all above the national benchmark figures<sup>12</sup>. A top priority within our Teaching and Learning Strategy is the investment in appropriate learning resources to enhance student-learning experience within the institution. In addition to the digital resources and the Canvas VLE, platform mentioned above, LSME has a well-stocked learning resource centre with over 900 print publications that meet the needs of our learners. Last year, we procured over 600 additional print publications. These enhancement initiatives were in direct response to feedback from learners. Our most recent student survey report acknowledged the improvement in the library. The College is committed to continuing the implementation of planned enhancement of learning resources in line with its strategic goals and there is a yearly investment of £50/student/Academic Year on books in order to maintain a student to book ratio of 5:1

[52] *Learning community*

We have created a learning community in which students can feel the sense of belonging that is crucial to the success of their studies. Evidently, our 2020 NSS result suggested that 86.3% of our learners felt they were part of a learning community (national average of 75.5%). This proportion improved further in 2022 to 92.01% with a national average of 68%<sup>43</sup>. Our current success in improving student experience is reflected in the systematic investment of £2.5m in the learning environment since 2016. Our small classroom sizes (25 learners per class) create an environment that maximises the attention each student receives from their lecturer. LSME ensures that the physical environment is conducive and safe for all learners and appropriate adjustments are made for physically disabled individuals and we encourage the principle of confidentiality, student privacy and mutual respect.

[53]. Teaching rooms benefit from interactive whiteboards with lecture-capture software. This facilitating technology has driven student engagement, creativity, independent study and the development of research skills. The online learning infrastructure was improved during the COVID-19 pandemic. A new online library (Perlego) subscription was purchased after feedback from students. This has had a positive impact on student continuation and completion during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 2.4.2 Student Engagement in the Academic Provision

[54]. *Students felt valued because we listen to them*

At LSME, we ensure that students are sufficiently challenged to engage in the teaching and learning process. Our current TEF metrics for teaching quality showed an overall satisfaction of 91.3%. There is an established practice of student involvement in the evaluation of teaching. We listen to the voice of our students and consider them as equal partners. As such, a high proportion of our students (92.5% in 2021 and 88% in 2022) felt their opinions about their course were valued<sup>25</sup>. A survey conducted on the impact of the online learning on student achievement, led to the acquisition of the additional online resources. The impact of which was the excellent completion and achievement rate observed at the end of the 2019-20 Academic Year.



[55]. At Programme Boards, students and staff are invited to reflect on, and then discuss, matters of concern or good practice. Actions are formally recorded, implemented, followed-up, and concluded. We can give an example of how students have requested more diverse assessment evidence. In 2017-18 Academic Year, HND students in Health and Social Care have requested for some assignments to be submitted using specific formats such as the use of a televised class debate followed by the preparation of reflective summaries. This is a useful and innovative approach to assessment, which diverges from well-worn mechanisms of oral presentations, essays and reports. In this case, all students will prepare for the debate and be given one hour to write their independent reflections. This was introduced in their Public Health and Health Promotion modules, and the good practice has since been disseminated throughout the college. This is a good example of institutional learning. A 2017-18 initiative is now an institutional-wide practice.

[56]. Our internal analysis of student feedback in 2021-22 Academic Year<sup>44</sup> confirms that this process of engaging students by inviting them to reflect on, and then discuss matters of concern or good practice, positively influences the student experience, and generates a sense of empowerment in their educational process and belonging within the LSME community. A few statements from students are included below:

*'I feel valued and empowered to do better by being at LSME as I can see my opinions are listened to and in most cases, action is taken for improvement. I can relate this renewed sense of confidence to my own life outside the school. I feel more confident in discussions than before and my family is surprised with how much I have improved in communication'* [HND Health and Social Care Student, 2018-2020].

*"During the pandemic period, while the global education system was facing turmoil, LSME thrived and provided us with the continuous support needed to complete and achieve our DET course by working with us as partners and focusing on their mission and purpose, and investing in technology, innovation on the intellect, and insight to improve our paths to success. Everything we achieved was based on listening to what the students wanted attentively"* [DET Student, 2019-20 AY].

[57]. In the interest of transparency students have opportunities to meet External Examiners for closed discussions. Students report overall high levels of engagement and satisfaction with teaching and over 90% have also commented on the good level of staff enthusiasm and commitment, satisfaction with the learning environment, and the academic atmosphere of the institution. There is a valuable iterative 'feedback loop' between External Examiners, students, and programme teams, signalling a culture of continuous improvement and enhancement throughout the institution<sup>44</sup>.

[58]. The impact of some of the College's engagement with students in evaluating and enhancing their academic experience is evidenced with some examples below:

- It is common practice to assess students holistically by cross-referencing a range of learning outcomes. This came about because DET students requested a need to combine the assessment of certain related modules to reduce the academic burden. The Department listened to their feedback and this led to the modification of assessment instrument. The assessment of a module on Wider Professional Practice in Education and Training and another module on Theories, Principles and Models in Education and Training were cross-referenced on learning outcomes related to quality assurance to reduce the academic

burden. The Developing Teaching Learning and Assessment in Education and Training and the Teaching Learning and Assessment in Education and Training modules were completely merged because they had similar learning outcomes related to teaching practice. Since then, the rate of achievement from the DET department has improved to over 90% in some cohorts in 2018. The practice of one assignment being used to assess more than one module has been adopted in other departments since 2018.

- Students requested additional online resources during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This led to the procurement of a subscription for Perlego® in the 2019-20 Academic Year.
- Our students also requested the opportunity for progression to further studies within LSME. We improved our portfolio of courses to include the MEd qualification and Master of Business Administration (MBA) qualification.
- In 2016, students suggested the use of the WhatsApp social media platform within the student community, (with class reps as administrators) to encourage academic discussions and peer support. This initiative was rolled out to all classes and since then, we have noticed improved attendance, academic performance, and progression on the course. The continuation rate is currently around 98%. Although this initiative arose from students in 2016, it provides an exemplar of a listening organisation that has adopted and embedded student driven ideas that is relevant, useful and current.
- Towards the end of 2018, we piloted a Student Welfare Support & Wellbeing Survey (SWSWS)<sup>45</sup>. This was well received and following the good level of participation, became an annual event in the school. In this survey, students made suggestions for improvement in mental health support and facilities for relaxation. We have since prioritised our staff-training calendar and from 2019 it included Mental Health First Aid training. A management decision has been made to develop a standalone policy for mental health support for 2022-23 Academic Year. The impact of this initiative will be assessed towards the end of 2023.

[59]. Students are at the heart of the College's system for quality assurance and are engaged with this through student representation on the Board of Directors, Academic Board, Programme Board, and Welfare Committee. Our enhancement-led approach to student development is designed to gain evidence of the effectiveness or impact of the range of actions that we take to improve the quality of the student learning experience. For example, our annual monitoring of programmes at the Departmental level, includes feedback from students, to confirm that any examples provided meet with expectations for excellence in teaching<sup>46</sup>. These are disseminated primarily through the College's VLE. Similarly, we propose to invite the views of students from various department conducting their periodic reviews. This will be done by meeting the panel and making a submission using a range of formats from a short film and a SWOT analysis.

### 3. Student Outcome and Learning Gains

#### 3.1 Student Outcome

##### 3.1.1 Student Continuation, Completion/Achievement and Progression to Further Study or Graduate Employment

[60]. The core indicators for continuation and completion rates for TEF 2023 are 98.6% and 95.3% respectively. These figures are approximately 15% above the benchmark figures of 80% and 81.5%<sup>12</sup>. There were no significant differences between the programme of study, gender, age, disability, ethnicity, or socio-economic status (measured by the IMD quintiles). For a low tariff institution of our size and shape, this is an impressive outcome for our students and can be attributed to the excellent learning experience we have offered our students from the time of enrolment to the completion of their studies. Further details can be found under Student Experience in Section 2.

[61]. Our core metrics indicator for progression in the OfS published data for TEF 2023 suggests that 51.6% (approximately 4.5% below the national benchmark) of LSME graduates are in graduate level employment or progressed to further higher education. The difference of 4.5% below the benchmark value is insignificant statistically and suggest an improvement on LSME's previous progression rate, which was 18% below national benchmark. This achievement has been in the context of a low tariff, small, inner-city institution and has come about because of enhanced support for students as per our Career Development Strategy. Specific examples of enhancement activities introduced before the investment in our EEH and the Graduate First portal include strengthening of our Employability and Employer engagement initiatives. We invested in our alumni and existing students and engaged more proactively with employers in curriculum and extra curriculum activities.

[62]. *A strengthened emphasis on employer engagement has helped us to drive up graduate outcomes.*

LSME reviewed and improved its Employer Engagement Strategy to include key employers in decision making about the choice of modules that are more appropriate for their businesses. This makes our learners more employable in specific businesses and job roles. A Memorandum of Understanding were signed with several employers in the field of Teaching, Business and Health and Social Care since 2018. These employers agreed to engage more with LSME and assist in the development of the potential workforce for their businesses. They are now playing an active role in the development of career workshops and delivery of some specialist lecturers in their respective professions once in a year. Employers are also encouraged to influence scenarios and contexts used for assessment and to provide valuable insights into case studies used for seminars and workshop. Potential employers are also working closely with the College in the choice of modules and for overall customisation of the curriculum to suit their job interests and requirement.

[63]. In our career fairs or workshops, specialists from Social Services, care settings, Business and Education, are invited to give lectures on their job roles, salaries, progression pathways and entry requirements. We have had Social Workers, Nurses, Care Home Managers and Managers from other sectors in attendance during the last few years. These workshops are evaluated by obtaining feedback from learners at the end of each session. Our recent employer engagement and career fair attracted potential employers from Banking, recruitment agencies, local businesses including restaurants, estate and property development, care providers, public services including the Police and the Military Services.

[64]. Our new approach also includes registration of our students for regular coaching on employability skills and provision of job alerts when necessary. For example, three of our students are currently working with the Met Police as Community Support Police Officers shortly after we conducted an employer engagement workshop with the London Metropolitan Police. A few more students are undergoing the recruitment process to join the Met Police. We also registered all our students with the National Career Services and booked one to one support on career and employability skills development. In addition, a career workshop with Active SEN supported six DET graduates to obtain teaching opportunities in FE Colleges and 120 students have benefitted from employability skills workshops delivered by the NatWest Bank. A few student testimonies are included below.

[65]. Despite having a lower trajectory than counterparts in other HEI, LSME students are receiving special support through EEH, the alumni network and other programmes that help to overcome this. Our TEF 2023 data suggests that there are no differences in employment status between the graduates from IMD quintiles 1 and 2 neighbourhoods and those from 3-5 neighbourhoods. However, more males (59%) compared to females (46.4%) were in graduate level employment and further studies. Considering the demographic profile of our learners, it is possible that female graduates are less successful in finding graduate level jobs because they prioritise family life and childcare. These results have influenced us to intensify our support for students to become self-employed. The aim is to provide a practical alternative to traditional graduate employment channels for those who have childcare and family commitments and would help to bridge the gap in employment between males and females. The establishment of the EEH is supporting learners who want to establish start-up businesses to undertake the relevant training and support as discussed in paragraph 38. In addition to the EEH, LSME is promoting Entrepreneurship studies as an activity to facilitate business start-up among its learners who wish to become self-employed after graduation. This is also useful for students who are already running small-scale businesses. This is to improve the confidence and skills required to start a business. These workshops are currently organised by NatWest and cover effective planning of resources required to get small scale businesses started. Students are also being signposted to sources of financial support for start-up businesses. Currently

two HSC and three Business students have succeeded in starting their own businesses. A few statements from students are shown below:

*'When I started this course, my first job opportunity was when I became an unqualified social worker for my borough. Having combined this job with studies, I realised how difficult it was to                between caring for my family, studying and working full-time. With the training, I gained from LSME and the advice provided in self-employment, I decided to consider my own business. Today, I have succeeded in establishing a Supported Living Setting in partnership with two other people. We only have four clients at the moment, who are being funded by social services. I don't work for anybody at the moment, and I am pleased with how flexible my working life has become. We have also offered placement opportunities for LSME students in my Supported Living Health and Social Care setting in appreciation of the training I received from LSME.'* [HND in Health and Social Care Graduate, 2017-19 AY].

[66]. Our split indicators also suggests that 43% of graduates from Business Management, 63% from the Education and Training and approximately 30% of graduates from Health and Social Care department are in graduate level employment. The majority of the Health and Social Care students are in low paying employment as healthcare assistants and have not yet had the opportunity to be promoted to professional and managerial roles. We have since worked hard with Managers in the Health and Social Care sectors to arrange more shadowing opportunities for the health and social care students who wish to become managers in future. This initiative, together with the establishment of the EEH have supported the students to grow and develop. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Caremark UK and this resulted in shadowing opportunities for 4 Health and Social Care students in 2021.

[67]. The current TEF metrics captured data for students and graduates from 2017 to 2020. Hence, the actual impacts of the enhancement activities introduced from the 2020-21 academic year will become apparent in subsequent years. The College continues to support the alumni association in their career development even after they have left the institution to improve their confidence in the



search for graduate level employment. The management of the institution anticipates that students will continue to utilise the knowledge gained from these workshops to start a business of their own in the near future as demonstrated in the examples above. We also believe it can significantly increase their chances of getting a job as it demonstrates motivation, independence and a desire to succeed. Additional measures that have been taken to support our students have been outlined below:

[68]. Volunteering Opportunities: We believe that students can learn better in a practical setting and their chances of getting a job are improved if they have some work experience. While there are no mandatory work placement components in the programmes, it is important for learners who do not have jobs to take up voluntary work while studying and they are encouraged to do this. Volunteering is important as it provides an opportunity for application of theoretical knowledge in the real world and also demonstrates motivation to succeed in the chosen career. The College offers voluntary placements for students on DET courses. In some cases, they are offered positions within the college after graduating as a result of skills and competencies they demonstrate in their volunteering roles. Since 2018, nearly 40 students are working directly with various employers for voluntary work-placements and we are hopeful that this strategy will yield positive results for our learners in the near future.

[69]. Career Advice and Guidance: LSME provides individual career guidance during the learner recruitment process and the new-learner induction process, in addition to the continued support provided throughout their academic journey. This enables students to make informed decisions about the routes and options they might want to take during their programmes.

[70]. Employability Skills Development: Employability sessions are organised and delivered to students on a termly basis. These provide information on personal development and achievement. Topics covered in these sessions include Employability Skills, Interview techniques, how to develop a CV and Cover Letter and employment search support. These processes are evaluated with the feedback obtained from learners.

[71]. Personal Development Planning: At LSME, students are offered the opportunity to develop themselves by conducting a Personal Development Plan (PDP). PDP is a structured and supported process undertaken by a learner to reflect upon their own learning, performance and/or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development. Such sessions are held during career days and are very popular with the Business Management and Health and Social Care students.

### **3.1.2 Preparation of Students for Further Study**

[72]. At the time of admission and recruitment of students, they receive detailed career guidance and information on possible progression routes for their courses as well as employment opportunities. Tutorial sessions are used to discuss their future plans further and to provide additional guidance and support. Students are also given information and guidance on university open days to explore other possibilities available to them. Based on student feedback, specialists in their subject areas are also invited as guest lecturers or participants in our career day workshops.

[73]. LSME's current validation agreement with UoC affords a valuable opportunity for our students to continue their education and go on to obtain a BSc qualification in their specific subject specialisms

and further on to postgraduate studies such as the Master of Education (MEd) and MBA qualifications within our institution.

### 3.2 Educational Gains

[74]. In line with our commitment to transforming people with skills, LSME is committed to ensuring that its students have made significant gains by investing in individual change through personal transformation with academic and extracurricular activities. Our individual learning plans are conducted for all students irrespective of their special characteristics and helps us to identify what needs to be changed and what interventions might enable collective change in our student population. We believe this approach is distinctive and different compared to mainstream HE. The demographic profile of our learners also indicates that we provide higher education to a cohort of non-traditional students, with low income and with low-level education to aid their social mobility. We also improve their general confidence and motivate them to develop progressively and achieve their maximum potential.

[75]. In consideration of the current environmental crises, the need for responsible and authentic leadership is vital to the achievement of sustainable environments and communities. The College became a Signatory to the UN Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) in 2017<sup>47</sup>. Since then, we embedded the UN PRME into our educational curriculum to develop our students into leaders for the future. The principles include ethical and responsible leadership, dialogue, partnerships to meet social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenge, responsible research and promoting the values of global social responsibility.

[76]. These broad outcomes for our students as mentioned in paragraphs 74 and 75 have been categorised into improvements in the knowledge and skills (cognitive gains), work readiness and the personal development made by the students during their educational journey with LSME.

[77]. LSME has delivered relevant educational gains to its students and supported them to succeed beyond their studies. Cognitive gain is assessed in this report by considering the educational level on entry into higher education and the exit grade and level they achieved at the end of their studies as supported by the completion / achievement data. Our undergraduate students entered with Level 3 or Level 2 qualifications under the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) in the UK. Our high completion rates is an output indicator of cognitive gain at the higher educational level by achieving a graduate level qualification.

[78]. LSME is a low tariff institution, but is making substantial and documented progress in supporting our learners in putting their qualification to use by obtaining highly skilled jobs. This is evidenced by the number of employability enhancement activities discussed in paragraphs 61-71 and the number of testimonies received from the learners demonstrating their confidence in the work environment.

[79]. The impact of cognitive gains is also assessed by considering the range of academic skills that students have developed throughout their educational journey. From induction and throughout their training, students have been taught critical thinking skills, analytic reasoning, problem solving, academic writing, and research and referencing skills and their knowledge and understanding of the UN PRME principles have been assessed in various modules. LSME is yet to use more informative surveys to assess the impact of such cognitive gains in its student population. However, a selection

of testimonies from students on the impact of these teaching and learning activities have been compiled and published<sup>48</sup> and are also evident from testimonies included in several sections of this report. We conducted a short survey to measure the development of soft skills such as critical thinking skills, problem solving, independent learning and collaborative skills development from questions adapted from the UK Student Engagement Survey<sup>49</sup>. The response rate for this survey was only 50%. The analysis of the responses were as follows:

[80]. The survey responses suggest that students are very satisfied with the soft skills they have developed while undertraining academic work. Students were asked if they were encouraged to develop critical thinking skills during their studies. The majority (95%) of students indicated that they have been encouraged to develop critical thinking skills and we encouraged many times (68%) or quite often (32%) to use critical thinking skills. 91% of students agreed that their course emphasised the use of research and enquiry most times. All students were satisfied with the reflective skills they developed and confirmed that the use of reflective skills were emphasised many times (68%), quite a bit (27%) or a few times (5%) during their studies. The students were asked how much of their course emphasised the need for independent learning. The majority of students thought independent learning was emphasised 'very much' (77.3%), or 'quite a bit' (13.6%). Only 9.1% suggested independent learning was rarely mentioned. 64% of students indicated that they were very often involved in collaborative activities with other students and 36% suggested that they were quite often involved in activities with other students<sup>50</sup>.

[81]. **Personal development** includes the development of resilience, motivation and confidence and a behaviour-based soft-skills for example communication, presentation, time management, and networking and interpersonal skills. Several parameters in these categories are deduced from feedback obtained from students and specific student testimonies. Further information is derived from existing knowledge of the services we have provided to students. For example, our students are assessed with presentations to develop their communication skills. They are also educated about time management and this is supported by the fact that the majority of our learners meet their assignment submission deadlines. Students are encouraged to develop interpersonal skills through their class interaction and collaborative learning. These skills are reviewed further at the beginning of each term making use of the mid-course review process<sup>51</sup>. Mitigating actions are proposed for students who may be at risk of not moving forward with their personal development. In the pilot survey referred to in paragraph 80 on soft skills development, the majority of learners commented on their ability to improve on time management (96%) and inter-personal skills (88%) and communication skills (96%)<sup>50</sup>.

[82]. There is clear evidence that our students have developed resilience, motivation and confidence from the start of their studies to the award of their qualifications. This has been captured in testimonies provided by students and included in their student submission document. Their ability to complete their programme of education and training provides evidence of behavioural skills such as time management, communication and presentation skills. Our students are assessed by oral presentations and are provided with feedback on their communication skills and areas they are required to develop further in future.

*'I can confidently undertake more whiteboard related tasks with my students during my teaching practice based on the experience gained from LSME. We only asked for one and now every class has an interactive board. Brilliant.'* [Diploma in Education and Training Student, 2018-19 Academic Year].

[83]. After becoming a Signatory to the UN PRME, our staff development sessions have incorporated the six principles (Purpose, Value, Methods, Research Partnership and Dialogue) and offered academic staff guidance on how to embed them in their teaching and learning activities. The overall aim is to ensure that our students are developed in a way that they have sustainable value for business and society at large, respecting the principles of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption and are capable of leading the actions that would advance societal goals. Several Units/modules in the programmes we deliver have been changed in order to embed the PRME Principles. We ensure that our study materials, processes and environment enable effective learning for responsible leadership within the institution. We have organised training by external experts on Climate Change, Plastic Waste and Global Warming. Students welcome the idea of paperless submissions and measures we take to ensure implementation of the UK sustainable development goals and have included several examples in their class activities and assessment reports. Undoubtedly, they have developed knowledge of these principles and have contributed in changing the culture of the organisation as a whole.

A student made a comment as follows:

*'In a recent CQC visit preparation in my organisation, I told my manager about the need to ensure cleanliness in the environment and ensure that we are implementing the necessary measures that that demonstrates our institution is paying attention to environmental issues. I suggested to introduce monthly general cleaning and improved recycling of waste. I also suggested that our garden should be remodelled to encourage clients to use it more for walking and relaxation. I indicated it was good for their health and wellbeing and will also avoid unnecessary use of electricity. These measures are being implemented and my manager is satisfied with my progress since I joined LSME.'* [HND Health and Social Care Student, 2019].

[84]. **Work readiness** is assessed in this report by considering activities focusing on employability and career development and a consideration of self-assessments from students' participation in work experience activities. The acquisition of team working, commercial awareness, leadership, and influencing skills are also very relevant. This assessment also focuses on the student's ability to use the skills learnt in class in a work placement setting or through a simulated activity.

[85]. **Conclusion:** LSME is an institution which serves a niche inner city need. In candid terms; financially poor, older students, who live in recognised deprived areas. It is with these people striving to improve their lives that LSME works, helps, supports, facilitates and delivers. The available data, which has been provided in this document, suggests that this is done to a level, which might reasonably be described as exceptional.

The realpolitik of U.K. Higher Education is a hierarchy. The internationally prestigious Ancient universities command status and power while members of the Russell group are the engines of research and carry with them a high status. As one travels down the hierarchy, one passes those red brick institutions that are not part of the Russell group and the Plate glass universities to what is often referred to as million+ or the Post-1992 universities. To acknowledge that small independent institutions like LSME are at the bottom of this panoply of HEI's is a truism.

If teaching and learning were the only criteria, an objective assessment of LSME's achievements in this sphere might invert the hierarchy outlined above. The capabilities of students upon joining LSME programmes as indicated by their entry qualifications is low. Many HEI's currently aspire to the positive experience LSME students report via the NSS. Similarly, the Continuation and Completion

of participants of LSME programmes is impressive in comparison with most of the institutions in the hierarchy which has been referred to. All of this is achieved with 97% of students being mature and over half residing in IMD quintiles 1 and 2.

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