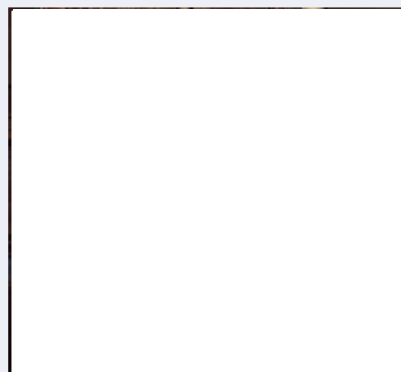


THE SHEFFIELD COLLEGE SUBMISSION FOR TEF 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

The Sheffield College (TSC) provides excellent support to our Higher Education (HE) learners. We are passionate about supporting our exceptional students, many of whom are from disadvantaged backgrounds, and areas of low HE participation. This means many of our students are the first in their generation, from their family to access HE. We offer a unique HE experience, utilising some of the best aspects of a further education (FE) approach, where attendance is supported to ensure student engagement, and where classroom sizes are small, allowing us to have an in-depth knowledge and care for our students. We have excellent links to employers, given we are a technical and vocational college, and this allows us to give our students access to an outstanding range of opportunities with companies and employers both public and private, alongside other stakeholders.



"My degree has got me to where I am today. It's brought out a lot of qualities in myself that I didn't think I had. It pushes your boundaries and gives you a whole lot of fulfilment."



1.1 Provider context

TSC is the largest general further education (FE) college in the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, with five main campuses located in Sheffield namely: City, Hillsborough, Olive Grove, Pennine 5 and Peaks and around 14,000 young people and adults enrolled annually. We are rightly proud to be one of three anchor education institutions in the city alongside Sheffield Hallam University (a post-92 institution) and the University of Sheffield (a Russell Group member) and to share the same values; that the highest quality teaching, delivered in an inclusive and supportive environment, can transform the lives of our collective 73,000 students. In fact, we suggest that it is our HE study programmes that are by far the biggest contributory factor of TSC's impact on added skills in the city and regional workforce, stemming from higher incomes of students and raised productivity of their employers. Indeed, our economic impact regionally is worth £282.5 million in added income in TSC's catchment area each year alone (Emsi, 2019).

TSC students reflect and contribute to the vibrant socio-economic and cultural tapestry of Sheffield – known as The Outdoor City and a city of seven hills – and the wider Sheffield City Region (SCR) with its reputation for the production of special steels and advanced manufacturing. Although economically deprived across a number of metrics (Dickinson, et al. 2021) – including high rates of economic inactivity, low employment rates, low productivity, high unemployment levels among young people, higher than average in-work benefit claimant count, fewer growth sectors, a lower proportion of high skilled jobs, mixed rankings on social mobility scores and increased levels of deprivation on education, skills and training indicators – Sheffield, like the wider city region, is known for its 'rich provider base' and the overall good quality and responsiveness of its further education (FE) and higher education (HE) provision, with providers responding well to the needs of local learners and employers with programmes ranging from entry level qualifications to postgraduate degrees (Kada Research, 2022, p. 25). Serving an economically challenged city, in a deprived geographic region, where the majority of our students are local, puts us in a highly responsible position. A 'student first' ethos underpins

everything we do. At TSC we focus on 'careers not courses' and we are proud to be the recipients of a Pearson College of the Year Bronze Award (2021) in recognition of this ethos. Students achieve so much more than a qualification from our offer of full honours degrees, foundation degrees (Fd), higher national diplomas and certificates, and higher-level apprenticeships. Our range of over 500 academic, vocational and professional teaching programmes stretches from entry level learning through craft and trade, technical, associate professional, managerial to degree level, including in apprenticeships, and gives our students the skills they need to progress in their careers and provides an all-essential ladder for accessing their next level of learning.

1.2 Vision and Mission

Our commitment to high quality teaching and learning, a culture of collaboration which extends to working with over 2,700 employers from across the region who are involved in apprenticeships as well as other work-related, work-based experiences, and the centrality of our students in all that we do has been reflected positively in our recent grade 2 OFSTED inspection outcome (December 2022). Our last higher education review (2014) carried out by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), identified seven features of good practice relating to expectations and course enhancement including employer-led projects for students. Other forms of recognition for the work we do in maintaining high standards include pride in being a finalist in the Careers and Enterprise Company Award for Innovation in Careers and Enterprise category at the 2021 Association of Colleges, Beacon Awards. The Beacon Awards celebrate the best and most innovative practice among UK FE colleges each year and our inclusion in the award category celebrates our outstanding careers education and guidance.

In collaboration with our university partners, The Open University, Sheffield Hallam (which has led to enhanced students' learning opportunities and is now our principal partner), University College Birmingham (which ended in 2021/22), the University of Hull, Pearson and one PSRB (the General Dental Council), HE is a key and important aspect of TSC provision. It is central to our ambition to level-up access to HE, support social mobility, provide opportunities for young people and adults to realise their potential, and widen the ability for many, including individuals from underserved groups to access and benefit from higher level learning. Around 500 students annually choose to study HE with us currently and we are working hard to develop new progression routes including from T levels to higher technical education, including Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), higher level apprenticeships (of which we have 40 apprentices on programme) and more traditional forms of HE delivery.

In acknowledgement of this, TSC received a national award for its contribution to widening access for students to HE. We won the National Education Opportunities Network's (NEON) 2021 School or College Widening Access Award category in celebration of the transformative power of our provision and its contribution to social mobility by delivering over 100 impartial advice and guidance activities to more than 500 young people. From 278 students who applied to UCAS in 2020, 52% progressed to HE with 8% securing places at Russell Group universities. With a strong focus on those most at risk of missing out on HE, we have an unswerving commitment to the challenge of how to 'tackle persistent inequalities' and respond more positively to 'non-traditional' entrants in our required Office for Students (OfS) Access and Participation Plan (APP) as acceptance of the value our HE provision brings to supporting appropriate progression. A series of task and finish groups work to support quality improvement and curriculum development. One such group focuses on providing additional routes for adults to access higher-level learning via new Access to HE provision and securing pathways via a broad range of adult re-training programmes.

Our HE progression fair, the intent of which is to provide a further opportunity for our students to research and consider their progression routes from FE, was delivered in November 2021. More recently 'UpFest', TSC's careers fair, was delivered in March 2022 as part of National Careers Week. This event was open to schools and colleges in the South Yorkshire region, with over 40 organisations in attendance accompanied by numerous guest speakers. Around 800 college students participated in careers and employability focused activity during this week alone.

1.3 HE Priorities and Ambition

TSC's strategic aims and objectives for HE, centre on supporting the new college-wide strategic plan 2021-2025 with its vision of transforming lives through four key ambitions based on learning, people, partnerships and sustainability. Our higher-level skills vision and strategic priorities, in turn, centre around our longstanding drivers of alignment to the needs of the local and regional economy, internal student progression into and through the college's HE provision.

As part of the 'Go Further' Strategic Plan to develop, expand and enhance HE at TSC we have set out the following priorities:

- P1. Growth in line with TSC's strategic ambitions for higher education.
- P2. Be recognised as a leading provider of higher education in Sheffield.
- P3. Increase participation rates for adults undertaking Level 4 and above qualifications.
- P4. Establish a higher-level community, which embodies collaboration and continuous improvement.
- P5. Focus our higher education offer on partnerships, embedding employability and development of professional skills.

In addition, we have the following ambitions for learning:

- A1. Develop and grow the higher-level portfolio to provide an offer that meets the needs of individuals across the region.
- A2. Establish ourselves as a leading provider of Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs).
- A3. Ensure students are highly satisfied with their teaching and learning, achieving high student satisfaction rates in the National Student Survey (NSS).
- A4. Strengthen the support for students to provide a wraparound offer that ensures all students can achieve and have access to services which prioritises our ethos of 'go higher'.
- A5. Enact an employability and scholarship framework across programmes, which supports student progression into professional employment and life-long learning.
- A6. Provide targeted support for underrepresented students, to ensure potential barriers to learning are removed.
- A7. Continue to ensure an active HE Student Forum which helps to shape and enhance teaching and learning - creating opportunities to bring members of our HE and higher-level learning community together and support them in shaping their own identities.

1.4 Local and regional context

TSC is delighted to be a central part of a new 'city strategy' and a desire for 'whole-place collaboration' (Buckley, 2022) to reflect a new economic context; one which chimes well with our aims around people and place and its reliance on educational assets. A longer-term and place-based approach to inclusive growth has increased focus on the key causes of inequality and inequity at earlier life stages.

This includes investing in understanding and addressing the factors behind growing disparity in educational outcomes and to ensure Sheffield's future economic growth is inclusive. The challenges to that growth are significant; Sheffield has a population of approximately 575,000 and is the 4th biggest city in England. However, unemployment in the city, including youth unemployment, and the proportion of adults without any formal qualifications are above the national average and the proportion of workless households is significantly greater than the regional average (The Sheffield College, 2021a, p. 5). There are many systemic economic challenges that the city faces, both old and new, including major inequalities across its communities.

The local economy retains a strong advanced manufacturing sector and an association with its industrial heritage (Dickinson et al, 2021). However, it is the public sector in health, education and public administration which is the major employer and in the private sector the largest employers in Sheffield are in wholesale and retail trades, and in administrative support services. These are typically lower productivity and lower skilled sectors, and therefore act as economic inhibitors and while we have expanded our higher apprenticeship provision in the health sector where there is clear demand, we are keen to ensure that they are effective for improving access to, and employment in, professional careers (such as nursing with its powerhouse effect on widening participation), particularly for those with social and economic disadvantage. There are, nevertheless, signs of wider structural changes in the economy; changes that require support for those less able to transition into new and growing employment sectors such as information, communications and telecommunications activity (Sheffield City Council, 2022). Sheffield is also home to some dynamic independent companies, household names and headquarters of homegrown, UK, international and foreign owned companies. However, the city lacks business density and start-up rates, and fewer firms operate in highly innovative and fast-growing sectors.

Ethnic diversity in Sheffield is higher than it is nationally with 17% of the population aged 16 and over from ethnic minority groups compared with 14% nationally, whilst in the Sheffield City Region overall the 16+ population from ethnic minority groups is significantly below the national rate at 9%. A higher proportion of the working age population in Sheffield are classed as inactive (27%) due to sickness and disability or work-limiting disabled compared to the national average, with rates particularly high for females. This contrasts with a city-wide picture that shows young people in Sheffield are more likely to go to a Russell Group university, and a relatively highly skilled workforce - with 56% of workers holding a qualification equivalent to a National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) at Level 4+, compared to a national average of 37%, (Nomis, 2021). TSC is proud to report that over the TEF time period, some 20% of ethnic minority HE students continued to study with us, a greater proportion than the local demographic makeup, which is a testament to the diverse and inclusive nature of TSC.

1.5 College context

TSC variously offers full or part-time HE provision in the following subject areas: creative arts and design; performing arts; education and teaching; computing; engineering; health and social care; medicine and dentistry; sociology, social policy and anthropology; sports and exercise sciences; architecture, building and planning; policing; and allied health, and consists of mostly 'other undergraduate' provision at level 4 and level 5.

Our mission has also been to reduce barriers to HE. We maintain a student intake that is reflective of our most challenged local communities. We are above the sector average for the proportion of our students who continue to study with us who come from low HE participation and/or the most deprived areas.

The OfS dataset shows that TSC has a higher number than average of its students in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) deprivation decile 1 (the most deprived area). At 39% this is 17 percentage points (pp) above the national rate of 22%. Similarly, data show that the overall number of students who fall within POLAR4 Quintile (Q) 1 (the lowest higher education participation area) has remained reasonably constant (41%), 23pp above the national rate (18%). From the data, our efforts to boost participation from underrepresented groups are having an impact to positively 'narrow the gap' between those that go to university and those that do not (The Sheffield College, 2021b, p. 5).

Our male/female split has increasingly moved towards an even split where once, females accounted for almost 60% of our cohort in HE. We have a relatively low proportion of BAME students and TEF contextual data also show more of our students come from lower participation areas (POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 2), and areas with higher levels of deprivation (IMD deciles 1 and 2).

Ensuring excellent student outcomes for such a profile of student brings challenges and opportunities and has required us to develop a distinctive and highly successful style of HE. TSC is built on a strong sense of an academic learning community in which students are partners and whose feedback we use extensively to inform our continuous improvement. It is one in which small class sizes promote immersive and highly interactive teaching, focused on practical, employment-related learning. We combine this with excellent academic support. We know our students very well and successfully deploy a variety of approaches to support and engage our students throughout their study and beyond. We have an established Social Mobility Working Group which brings together leaders and practitioners in student support, admissions and equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) to discuss support for marginalised groups of students and to develop appropriate training.

The success of our educational approach is reflected in our metrics during this TEF period. Student satisfaction at TSC is high and, in some cases, significantly exceeds benchmark. Student satisfaction for each element of the National Student Survey (NSS) is particularly high for students studying creative arts and design courses.

We significantly and substantially exceed the continuation benchmark for both our full and part time mode of attendance, with continuation rates showing an improving picture (see 3.2 for further detail). Employment outcomes is strong and within benchmark and has been increasing annually throughout the TEF period. Highly skilled and sustained employment has also improved during this TEF period, for both full-time and part-time students, but can be a significant challenge for the college because of significant levels of low skilled low paid work in an around Sheffield (South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, 2021).

HE student cohorts at TSC are characteristically split between full-time and part-time provision. Full-time students are predominantly white, female, aged under 21 years and the majority consistently drawn from areas of lowest undergraduate participation areas in HE. The TEF data shows 59% recruited from POLAR4 Q 1 and 2 and almost 20% reported a learning difficulty or disability, well above the national benchmark (includes disability, learning difficulty or medical condition). For part-time learners, females are slightly in the majority compared to males, are more typically over the age of 21, again predominantly white but mostly drawn from some of the highest participation areas in terms of students entering undergraduate provision. The overall rates for female students and male students for both IMD deciles 1 and 2 and POLAR4 Q 1 and 2 are the same and are significantly above the national average. However, part-time students from these backgrounds over the period of the dataset are similar to the national average. The proportion of younger students is slightly lower for

both IMD decile 1 and POLAR4 Q 1 and 2 than other age groups but still well above the national average.

In summary, in terms of ethnicity and wider social demographics, TSC cohorts are made up of mostly underrepresented and underserved learners in our community which means we work with a proportionately high numbers of students from areas of significant deprivation.

We work to our mission and vision for HE by recruiting young people and adults who had poor outcomes from compulsory education, would not normally be expected to go to university and for those who need a second (or even third) chance to progress in learning. We do this in a number of ways: from enhancing aspirations to recruitment strategies that are designed to impact on widening access including our new Higher-Level Skills Strategy, new Access to HE programmes, an established Social Mobility Working Group and an HE Learning and Enhancement Committee which developed a 'Skills and Attributes Framework' (SAF) that provides consistent support and development for HE students including enhanced careers advice and guidance. We are particularly proud of the SAF as it supports students' educational gain and provides students and programme staff with data on 'distance travelled'. Comparing first-wave SAF results has helped us gauge the effect of our enhanced teaching and support. Second-wave results are informing the academic and holistic support offer put in place for HE students for the 2022/23 academic year, and curriculum teams can consider where they "add value" for students on their courses in relation to the SAF.

1.6 Educational Gain

Informed by the SAF, we carry out a supportive Study Skills Self-Assessment (SSAA) of all our HE students every academic year. This excellent tool helps students reflect on their strengths and weaknesses in principal skill areas and, importantly, their academic priorities. Our autumn 2022 responses (71% of the 2022/23 cohort) that reflect Level 4 learners' confidence in their abilities show self-perception that overlap with their tutors' views on where learners are weakest (written communication; reading) and for learners at Level 5 and Level 6, a similar pattern of least confidence. The findings are used to inform and focus on developing skill areas and are addressed in a number of ways; through teaching by curriculum teams, signposting to additional opportunities such as placements and external speaker events to drawing on support such as Google Classroom resources, one-to-one and in-class sessions with the Tutor Mentor (HE) or drop-in/bookable support from the Learning Resource Centres (LCR). The pattern of results across levels suggest students are gaining an awareness of their abilities and needs, particularly in relation to employability and academic skills.

This framework is an excellent ipsative measure for individual student progress and is used as a measure by the HE Tutor Mentor to devise a bespoke curriculum for every HE student.

Tutor Mentor, said, *"Highlighting the SAF at the start of the academic year encourages students to reflect and identify their strengths and areas for improvement. Equally, it informs ongoing student support because staff can discuss where additional development is needed and how this can be implemented most appropriately."*

As a response to a review of student experience due to COVID (where an increase in mental-ill health was identified), the college reviewed its reasonable adjustment policy and broadened criteria to ensure a wider range of students could be supported other than those in receipt of Disability Student Allowance (DSA). As a result, we can support all students who declare an additional need (of our HE student body 12-15% of our students have a disclosed disability) and tailor the support offer, drawing upon internal resource to

"The Skills and Attributes Framework (SAF) is a clear, relevant, and pragmatic point of reference to help students understand and attain capabilities which are key for higher education and graduate roles."

undertake this. This has been particularly important to our students in IMD decile 1, who have also been doubly impacted by the cost-of-living crisis too, as we seek to reverse a decline (-63%) in participation in HE from the Sheffield's most deprived areas.

Our own student feedback survey data from 2022 says that students choose to study HE at TSC because we provide the right study environment for them with 91% and 94% of first-year HE students satisfied with the Learning Resources and Academic Support (Internal Survey for other HE students not in the National Student Survey (NSS) cohort) and our work to encourage a wider demographic to apply has resulted in a widening participation rate of 82% (The Sheffield College, 2021b) which exceeds the national averages. Work to stretch, challenge and support all students has resulted in strong satisfaction. According to the 2022 NSS survey, only one question trended downwards (Learning Resources) and one remained static (Academic Support), and eight out of nine scale questions were higher than benchmark.

TSC offers a wide range of Level 3 courses, to enable students to progress into HE across the whole curriculum. Specifically, our Access to HE programmes enable coherent progression routes into higher levels of learning in priority sectors such as healthcare, science, health science, and digital industries. Access to HE teams foster close partnerships with universities and employers to ensure the curriculum remains relevant and current. For example, a new route into policing services is now available as this is a growth area of employment, pre-access programmes have continued to grow whilst completion of the TSC Access to Nursing (NHS Pathway) programme has been developed collaboratively to provide direct entry onto Sheffield Hallam University's Nursing Degree programme at year two. Our high-quality teaching, learning and assessment ensures that the development of personal, social and employability skills is explicit, planned, and meets the needs of individual students, including those with additional needs and those from areas of disadvantage. Systems for tracking progress and achievement are extremely effective, user-friendly, and accessible, enabling students to retain ownership of their own targets and development plans. As a result, in 2020/21 97% of 'Access students' progressed into positive destinations including 79% into HE and 12% into employment. The positive outcomes from 2021/22 further extend to student results with a 93% pass rate and level 5 students achieving 83% positive destinations (full time employment, further study) and level 6 students 66%.

2. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

TSC's Higher Level Skills Strategy (HLSS) has at its core the provision of an outstanding adult learning experience through a highly responsive and relevant curriculum where teaching and learning excellence is central. The aims of the Strategy are:

- S1. For TSC's HE to be renowned for excellent teaching.
- S2. To ensure good levels of support for students and staff to ensure people can access, and successfully progress through HE.
- S3. To ensure an agile approach to course development and delivery, complementing the wider regional HE landscapes, and to support different groups of students through their HE journey.
- S4. To ensure that TSC is distinguished in its work in key sectors, complementing the local education landscape, and supporting a range of delivery methods for qualifications and courses at level 4 and above.

2.1 Student Satisfaction and Feedback

Our students are extremely satisfied with our provision. Student feedback indicates that staff are approachable, and that students receive feedback and support tailored to their individual needs such as introducing a more flexible mode of delivery for our students with caring responsibilities. TSC offers several ways in which our students can be involved in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. The main channels are via student representatives and regular, termly, student forums. In addition, TSC also performs annual student surveys and provides both informal and formal complaints procedures. A 'student charter' informs our students of ways in which they can be involved in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

Following a review of the HE Committee Structures in 2020/21, the HE Academic Board has been instrumental in developing and implementing measures to enhance the student experience, including increased programme level meetings, closing feedback loop mechanisms, and introducing on-boarding and end of year surveys. Such data has allowed us to review student feedback at a programme level, whilst reviewing themes across programmes. For instance, in enhancing the student experience, TSC now has HE student designated spaces. The TEF metrics demonstrate that full-time student satisfaction with 'the teaching on my course' is above the benchmark. In our most recent NSS return (2022), overall satisfaction with teaching and learning in HE was 79% (+3pp against the sector average). Our own internal surveys following induction and end of module surveys also demonstrate the consistent quality of teaching, reflecting the ethos of 'student first', 'students at the heart of everything' and 'careers not courses' which pervades TSC. Indeed, students are satisfied that staff are fully trained and qualified and have business and work experience which enhances their teaching.

In a previous review (2014) by the QAA, TSC was judged as fully meeting UK academic standards. The review cited areas of good practice, and this is still up to date, including:

- The breadth and diversity of work-based learning opportunities, including employer-led projects available to students.
- The approach taken by TSC to embed student employability in all programmes.
- The close working relationship between TSC and Sheffield Hallam University which enhances students' learning opportunities.

2.2 Responsive Curriculum

A series of task and finish groups worked to support quality improvement, enhancement, and curriculum development to ensure a high-quality student experience. One such group focused on developing education provision for adults. TSC has implemented the group's work to provide additional routes for adults to access higher-level learning via new Access to HE programmes and through a broad range of adult re-training programmes. Curriculum planning is supported and informed by regional labour market intelligence, ensuring that TSC is optimising opportunities for development in those growth and emerging sectors that are strategically important to the region's economy as well as the communities that TSC serves. A focus on the future and on economic and sectoral shifts is an area of our good practice. As part of the developing HLSS, and in response to our adaptations in 2020/21, TSC has expanded higher apprenticeship provision in the health sector, science, health science, and digital industries and other access, education and (re)training programmes where there is increased regional demand. For example, a new route into policing services is now available as this was recognised as a growth area of employment. Pre-access programmes have continued to grow whilst completion of the TSC's Access to Nursing (NHS Pathway) programme has been developed collaboratively to provide direct entry onto Sheffield Hallam University's Nursing Degree programme at year two.

Across 2021/22, we explored the development of other new provision. These include developments ranging from new areas of health and social care, on conservation and green technology and new HTQs to looking at opportunities in sectors such as logistics, rail, and public sector work (to link to the current Access to HE offer), to developing Level 6/top-up provision where there are lower-level qualifications such as dental technology and animal management.

Observations, learning visits and moderation activities ensure that a very high quality of teaching, feedback and assessment is evident for all HE provision at TSC. Our Teaching, Learning and Assessment Improvement Policy has been fundamental to the strength of, and ongoing, improvements TSC has made in recent years. The policy, which is HE specific and tailored to HE delivery staff, ensures that observations are carried out with all teaching staff annually, and an excellent and extensive programme of individual development agreed with each 'observee' is then put in place to support pedagogical enhancement. In addition, short visits to sessions are completed through learning visits, which are thematic and supportive in nature to help identify CPD needs at a departmental level. To further triangulate observations and learning visits, moderations are also carried out to ensure high quality delivery. Planning moderations are carried out early in the year to ensure that content is sequenced to develop long term knowledge, skills, and behaviours, teaching and learning activities are inclusive, and assessment supports students' learning, progression and attainment. Finally, marking and feedback moderations are also carried out to support all teaching staff to embed effective practices based on the latest research, and where support needs are identified these are put in place at pace to ensure our high standards are met. As a result, students at TSC experience extremely strong and passionate delivery of their subjects by their teachers.

We are committed to providing a quality learning experience to students, so we place a strong emphasis on the development of staff who deliver and support teaching to enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. A series of enhancements as part of our teaching, learning and assessment strategy include progress towards Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA) under the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) – as the mechanism for recognising teaching practice and experience is up to date. New staff are strongly encouraged to achieve Fellowship through a mentor process and annual appraisal and undertake either a PG Cert in Education, the Academic Professional Apprenticeship or accreditation as a teacher of their subject from a professional UK body. This is an example of our good practice.

By working in this way, we ensure that the teaching and training expertise of staff is relevant and meaningful with regards to a wide range of intended delivery models including blended, work-integrated and tutor supported online approaches that are relevant for our HE learners and is a deliberate step to enhance the quality of student learning opportunities through staff development. As part of a targeted approach, where possible, staff are dual professionals, or 'pracademics'. Such an approach has clear benefits to students in terms of their subject knowledge and skills and behaviour development but also their ability to integrate theoretical knowledge with workplace, applied, practice. We have also worked with Advance HE (HE in FE networks) and QAA to support activity in the HE in FE sphere by undertaking professional CPD activity in support of our staff achievement of fellowship status, with Advance HE Fellowship an aspiration for all who teach predominantly in HE, and this is a KPI for TSC. Indeed, we have embedded the UKPSF for teaching excellence across the institution. We are pleased to observe that following two development sessions in 2021/22, 22% of staff achieved both fellowship and senior fellowship. This provides a distinctiveness to HE delivery at TSC and supports staff aligning their skills with HE sector expectations.

As TSC places a significant emphasis on CPD and invests heavily to support this strategic intent, our HE team benefit from regular and ongoing CPD to develop salient aspects of practice in line with our HE development plan. These ongoing CPD sessions have focused on pedagogy, such as advanced questioning techniques or developing critical thinking skills, to innovating through assessment. Moreover, the HE team have utilised this time to engage in a range of approaches to CPD that have been positive and aligned to the current thinking related to practitioner CPD. Excellent examples of this are staff who have taken part in 'unseen observations', joint practice development projects, or our internal digital leader programme.

"The range of CPD on offer at the College is excellent and has really supported me to constantly reflect and develop my practice. The education technology transformation has been really beneficial and something I have thoroughly enjoyed."

Ongoing CPD is accompanied by larger developmental events aimed at supporting thematic findings throughout the academic year. In the last academic year for example, the HE teaching team attended a lecture by leading academic Professor Paul A. Kirschner on the science of learning, to support with their future planning and approach to content and teaching design. This session was very well received by the staff, as having access to the leading authority in a given field is an excellent developmental opportunity. Additionally, the HE team are very much involved in the recent Teach and Research Meets, where innovative approaches to teaching are shared and showcased, that further highlight the excellent support in place for staff at TSC to support staff development and enhancement. The latest Research Meet (November 2022) was attended by Professor David Hyatt from the University of Sheffield's Institute of Education, who discussed a range of research informed initiatives including HE pedagogies, the impact of language in a HE context and feedback processes

Our staff appreciate the offer and ongoing CPD enhances the student experience.

"[Educational Technology] has become a keen interest of mine and I have now challenged myself to learn about the theory of technology to support my practice. This has resulted in me completing Advanced Teacher Status (ATS) through the Society for Education and Training (SET) and researching the flipped learning approach as part of my masters."

TSC have supported all teaching staff in their digital evolution, and each member of the HE team has worked through our sector-leading digital development programme over recent years. Excellent examples of the impact of this are the teaching team implementing more verbal feedback into their practices, utilising 360 cameras to record practical performances to improve student evaluation of performance, and the innovative use of websites to enhance assessment and meet industry requirements. Pleasingly we have seen the impact of this initiatives with evidence showing 95% of HE teaching staff are graded 'good' or 'better'.

2.3 Technology and Digital Skills Development

TSC has accelerated the development of its Digital Strategy, investing in mobile devices, advanced technology, and a large teacher development programme to support online learning and blended learning. Our move to develop online activity and digital competency, has supported some excellent development and innovative initiatives in teaching and learning and in managing programmes and reviewing student progress.

Our response to the pandemic was swift and ensured that the impact to students was minimised. Prior to the pandemic we had a flexible delivery strategy with a 'digital first' approach and we had introduced a blended approach prior to 2020 with digital resources, scaffolding and online discussion facilities, requiring little change to a move to a fully digital model. So, our learners and staff were already familiar with working digitally, the only transitions needed typically being to move the remaining face-to-face inputs, tutorials, and reviews online. TSC was one of those institutions that had already adopted new and work-oriented methods so was in a better position to adapt. Joshua, a student from BA Business Management said, *"The college was supportive during the pandemic, they've helped out a lot."*

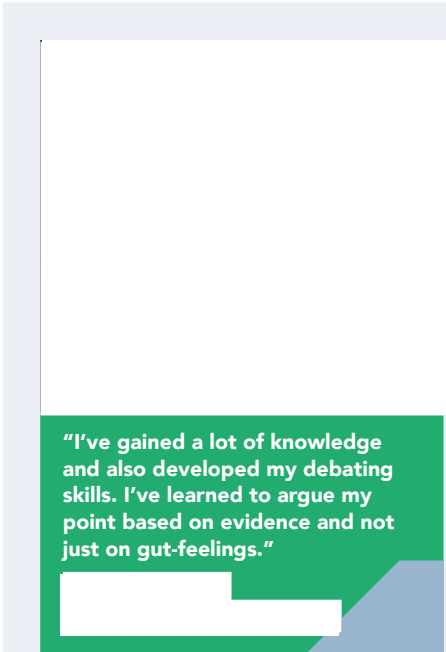
Approaches have been rethought for online and blended learning and programmes redesigned according to a consistent pedagogical framework (Anderson, 2020; Abu Talib et al., 2021; Khamis et al., 2021). We have developed blended models that, while they were initiated via digital channels, integrate different components, make sense as a package, and promote active learning. In many sessions we have adopted the "flipped" or "inverted" approach, where learners come to a session equipped with the relevant factual learning and use the time for discussion and application, because it translates well to online learning. More generally we have adopted the most effective practices which involve well-designed combinations of asynchronous activities of various kinds with synchronous ones for discussion and questioning. This has been implemented alongside appropriate structuring and learner support, including signposting through a course or package, supporting learners according to their individual needs and contexts, and strengthening their capacities for self-direction and for integrating between theory and practice. While there is still some preference among learners and tutors for face-to-face meetings, with online methods being too formal and missing serendipitous encounters we have kept the most successful digital elements online, including big lectures, one-off inputs, tripartite reviews, online learning communities and fora and one-to-one tutorials.

2.4 Learning Environment

Our college campuses are a critical enabler in delivering our HE ambitions. TSC has developed excellent learning spaces in recent years, from dedicated HE spaces to innovation centres that all staff and students benefit from using. The innovation centres are large learning spaces that facilitate a more collaborative style of learning assisted by the advanced technology available. We have a bigger ambition to develop and build a standalone fully resourced university centre campus as testament to our ongoing investment and commitment to higher education in Sheffield and the City Region.

The use of Google Classroom to support students learning both synchronously and asynchronously is excellent, and the HE team have utilised the tools within Google Classroom very well. The positive student voice reflects this as do the awards TSC has achieved in recent years, for example, we are recognised as a Google for Education Reference College for our use of Google products to enhance learning and in 2021 we received recognition in the Edtech 50 award (2021), a prestigious award for any institution, in celebration of our innovation in digital pedagogy and practice.

a Fd Policing Studies student said, *"I have grown in knowledge but also in confidence thanks to the support of my Tutors, which has always been so positive."*



"I've gained a lot of knowledge and also developed my debating skills. I've learned to argue my point based on evidence and not just on gut-feelings."

2.5 Student Support

One of the college's key strengths is that we recognise that every student is different, and their learning experience is different as they work towards differing life goals. We understand that to support our students to become TSC graduates of the future we need to provide support and enable students to manage their own learning and maximise the value they get from their time with us. Every student has access to the specialist HE Tutor Mentor, whose role is to work as an advocate, monitor students' academic progress and wellbeing and ensure they receive appropriate and timely advice. Offering personal and academic support the Tutor Mentor offers HE students the opportunity to access study skills support alongside their programme, and to signpost students to services to support their health and wellbeing. In 2021/22, the HE Tutor Mentor and Senior Learning Facilitators supported 208 students in one-to-one sessions. Of these one-to-one sessions, 80% of students were associated with at least one of the priority groups in our Access and Participation Plan (APP), 59% were associated with 2+ APP indicators, 63% had declared an additional learning need, 33% were from POLAR4. Quintile 1, 31% were minority ethnic and 27% mature students. We endeavour to give our students access to a good educational experience – and take from it to build, own and realise the potential of their personal learning experience. It is also important that our staff have confidence in our support of the learning environment. We measure this regularly through a TSC staff survey and in a recent result (2022) the majority of staff agreed, we deliver a good quality of service to students.

Significantly, students with declared needs achieve well, and retained at the same level as their peers who do not disclose a disability. For HE students the Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) enables learners with disabilities and long-term health conditions to access support in a variety of ways to assist their progression. The service we offer is very important to ensure students receive support tailored to their specific needs in order to give them the best support possible such as adaptations in learning, including the use of assistive technology.

For 2020/21, our Business Review Dashboard identified students with DSA to monitor attendance and progress and to allow for early intervention. Similarly, work was undertaken in order to provide more timely support for students across a wider range of support needs. Learning Contracts were re-named Reasonable Adjustment Plans (RAPs) and expanded to include more students. TSC now has three levels of RAP which open up support plans to students with short term support needs, including, those who are unable to obtain the appropriate medical evidence for DSA, and those who are in the process of applying for DSA but need immediate support. RAPs give an enhanced opportunity to understand the student and their individual needs and provide more robust support.

The end of year 2021/22 data show 60% of all students with a declared need were in receipt of bespoke support via the DSA co-ordinator. The number of students in receipt of DSA at TSC is 16pp higher than the national average and as TSC attracts higher than average DSA/Declared needs students, the increased focus on student support at HE, currently, represents a step change increase of 116%, compared to 2020/21. Indeed, students in receipt of DSA or have Declared needs, have accessed 67% of all additional support sessions, compared to 33% of students without DSA/Declared needs and the data from 2020/21 highlights how DSA students achieved +4pp above non-DSA students. Support from the HE Tutor Mentor clearly supports positive outcomes. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the above ways of supporting students is having a positive impact on student retention and means that the college continues to meet the expectations of the OfS' new quality conditions, specifically B2.3 which expects bespoke support for students.

Our HE students have access to the extensive range of TSC employability and careers guidance resources to support ambitions in work, learning, chosen occupations and sectors. The development of a TSC wide student community is also expressed in our commitment to an integrated careers and progression support service. These services support the student in achieving their aspirations,

including their study and career goals. We put emphasis on opportunities for independent self-assessment and decision making by providing online and on-campus services that are easy to access, clear, relevant, and up to date. Knowledgeable staff provide timely and targeted careers information, advice, and guidance (IAG) to learners at key points along their learning journey that recognises and is responsive to diverse and distinct need and motivates attendance (85%), retention (93%), pass rates (93%, with some programmes achieving 100%) and progression rates (87%).

The health, safety and well-being of our students is central to our teaching and learning philosophy and from our own survey 99% of HE students reported feeling safe at TSC (The Sheffield College, 2022, p. 6). We utilise a dedicated team of safeguarding and well-being officers to provide personal, virtual and telephone support to ensure full and effective implementation of our responsibilities. The procedure for identifying concerns, referral, follow-up, decision making, and actioning are all well understood and advertised via college communication outlets. Again, students have access to the HE Tutor Mentor who offers additional support. This demonstrates our commitment to student support by better utilising data to provide a bespoke and more pro-active service. We know with certainty that the strength of our pass rate relates to the role of the HE Tutor Mentor together with the availability of a more expansive Disability Student Allowance and the effect of a bespoke Reasonable Adjustment Plan.

TSC offers an effective and extremely well-regarded study skills provision, widely regarded as being crucial to developing academic competence and achieving educational gain and engagement (Gettinger and Seibert, 2002) and in recognition that they are also embedded into wider graduate outcomes and abilities expected across all HE levels (QAA, 2014). At TSC, higher-level study skills provision is delivered by lecturers, Learning Resource Centre senior learning facilitators (SLFs) and the HE Tutor Mentor. Resources and methods of delivery may vary between lecturers and SLFs, but all HE students have access to Google Classroom resources and a 1:1 appointment with the HE Tutor Mentor.

An online Study Skills Self-Assessment Tool (SSSAT) was created during 2020/2021, linked to the embedding of a Skills and Attributes Framework (SAF), our bespoke HE framework, and was introduced to learners at induction sessions. The 2021/22 SSSAT was completed by 73% of all HE students, representing a +20pp increase on completion compared to the previous year. Responses were received from 100% of subject areas surveyed, compared to 94% in 2020/21. 74% of subject areas achieved at least a 50% response rate, compared to 62.5% of subject areas previously. This represents an increase of 11.5% between the two academic years. Responses from the 23 questions, covering management, critical thinking and problem solving, verbal communication, written communication, literacy and numeracy and indications of confidence show us most students said they were 'confident' in each of the principal skill areas. The overall findings are fed into an enhanced teaching and support initiative, to the benefit of the student experience, an example of this would be the work the HE Tutor Mentor undertook in 2020/21 in meeting with course leaders to identify areas of focus for their cohort. The analysis that followed helped to identify the top 3 lower confidence ratings (as per students' SSSAT results). This informed academic tutorial activity and was bespoke to each course.

2.6 Student Attendance

Student attendance is excellent at 85% for our HE cohort. This demonstrates excellent engagement with our offer. The restructure into one Higher Education Faculty (2022/23), and with it a newly introduced Head of Student Experience post, is now increasing the breadth of all SHAPE (Staying Safe, Health & Well-being, Active Citizenship, Progression & Careers and Equality Matters) activities and frequency of participation for all students, and an increase in student mentor resource to support learners, is having a positive impact.

TSC is extremely active in the engagement of successful partnerships to support the progress of learners through the HE student life cycle. We are a key partner in the Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire Plus (HEPPSY+) Uni-Connect programme. Many of our FE students who are eligible to participate become college ambassadors on the merit of achieving in FE and progressing into HE. We actively target positive recruitment of care-leavers into TSC via Student Services and our marketing teams that build on the positive work already underway to embed promotion of HE progression to level 3 students including our additional support offered with the application process. The development of bespoke workshops on our college HE programmes for pre-16 care leavers and for those already studying with us is an active way of encouraging progression. We continue to attend external partnerships relating to access and participation, engagement, and progression. This includes leading debate and engaging with the National Education Opportunities Network (NEON), the Forum for Access and Continuing Education (FACE) and the Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in HE (TASO).

Since July 2021, all curriculum areas have developed bridging programmes to support student progression from one academic year to the next. This followed the implementation of visualised 'curriculum learning ladders' as a clear demonstration to our students about how progression can be achieved from level 2 to level 7 in associated careers and job roles. The new HE careers offer provides additional support via termly employer events, career talks and bespoke support, including one to one engagement for students, for each curriculum area. The development of 'alumni' case studies from graduates and students of each of our HE curriculum areas has had a major impact on demonstrating the idea that HE is 'for people like me'.

2.7 HE Student Participation and Voice

We recognise that academic support in facilitating student success and determining the best student experience is essential. A key strength of our provision is our collaboration and partnership with students, including their role in research and enquiry. They are active partners in TSC forums and quality committees, and most critically, partners in determining the current and future curriculum. HE student voice processes and activities are effective at bringing frequent reports to the HE Academic Board, the Executive, and the Governing Body on areas such as continuing improvements to survey outcomes.

TSC's systematic approach to student support and engagement is reflected in the role of the HE Student Forum which brings together 33 representatives from across the cohort of HE provision to look at HE teaching and learning, support, student experience and facilities. HE student representatives continue to help to co-design the forums. To ensure students have a positive start to the academic year and to start gathering quantitative student satisfaction data, in 2020 we introduced a new Term One Induction Survey for HE students. Participation has grown 3pp higher than in the first academic year and this year was 92%. Every KPI question this year has received a 91% level of satisfaction or above, reporting on, for example, the ease of the application process, the interview process being clear, fair, and timely and that students received all the information required about assessment regulations. A further enhancement for 2022/23 has been the development of the Head of Student Experience role in this area, with a specific remit to ensuring Student Voice and Student Survey activity facilitates a 'student first culture' by listening and responding effectively to students via an embedded academy student representative system.

Overall participation for 2021/22 NSS was 72%, this is +3pp higher than the sector average of 69%. Programmes in scope for individual responses were those award end programmes (e.g., final year FD or degree). Key outcomes show TSC:

- Is higher than the sector average for 7 of the 9 scale questions, including overall satisfaction.
- Overall satisfaction was 79%, a sharp rise from the previous year's 67% and well above the sector benchmark at 73%.
- Satisfaction with 'teaching on my course' was 81%, above the benchmark of 79% and an increase on the same question from the previous year at 78%.
- Learning opportunities satisfaction rose considerably from 78% in the previous year to 86%, this was also well above the sector benchmark of 78%.

All questions are above TSC target, excluding questions on organisation and management (-0.89) and learning resources (-16.17). Although learning resources records the lowest satisfaction in the latest NSS, it is important to note that according to our own internal survey level 4 students report high satisfaction when responding to learning resources (at 89%). Nevertheless, we are striving to address the concerns of students over the learning resources and to reiterate the excellent resources they have within our partner institutions, including Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) which offers our students access to their physical learning resources as well as our own. We will work to review, better understand, and improve student access to and satisfaction with learning resources is ongoing, via programme committees and HE student forum meetings.

There were only 49 student responses to the 2021/22 NSS published, out of the cohort of 148, due to the comparatively high thresholds of response rates needed. While this represents only 13% of the HE student population – with the two groups of student responses published coming from Foundation Degree in Public Services and Policing Studies and Foundation Degree Health and Social Care – the overall response rate was +1% on the NSS sector average, at 70%. For the nine NSS scale questions overall TSC exceeded the sector average scores in eight of the nine categories. The question, which was below sector average, focused on learning resources, particularly highlighting the challenges some students faced accessing libraries and course-specific resources due to COVID restrictions. The scores for the 2021/22 survey were also significantly higher than in the previous NSS survey, with every scale question scoring higher, with the exception of the Learning Resources question. This includes +16% for Student Voice and +11% for Overall Satisfaction. When analysed at programme level compared with institution level some differences could be seen in the results. For example, for the overall satisfaction score it was 85.71% positive for Public Services and Policing Studies whereas in Health and Social Care it was comparatively lower at 74.29%.

An internal on programme survey was newly created in 2021 to replicate the NSS survey in order to prepare first year HE students for future NSS completion, and to gain a fuller understanding of all the HE students' experience. It also gives TSC the opportunity to gather feedback and respond to it to enhance the student experience ahead of the NSS the following year. We opted to include questions on careers and destinations. On careers support, 61% positively rated the college's offer. Student satisfaction on employability and skills was 69%, whilst positive destinations were recorded at 75% for 2021/22. Careers and employability will continue to be an area of focus for us. This survey had 133 responses with outcomes of this survey more positive in comparison with both TSC NSS results and the NSS sector average scores. This was evidenced in all nine scale questions. Significant responses above the NSS sector average scores for individual questions included marking and assessment being fair, receiving helpful comments on work, good advice being available when study choices needed to be made, courses challenging students to achieve their best, feeling part of a community of staff and students, staff valuing students' feedback about the course, clarity on how students' feedback on the course has been acted on and the Students' Union effectively representing students' academic interests.

2.8 Ensuring Standards

Our external examiner (EE) reports indicate that the variety of our programmes and the strength of our achievements are applauded and commended. These showcase the innovative approach to our delivery. Independent acknowledgement and recognition of our high teaching standards is evidenced through our external examiners as it is they who confirm that the standards we set in our programme aims, objectives, learning outcomes and assessment criteria are appropriate for the qualifications. Further, they ensure standards are in line with other comparable programmes and modules. TSC ensures arrangements for receiving and responding to external examiner reports and their integration to our quality assurance systems, to the betterment of learner experiences. Our students have access to all external examiner reports via publication on our 'student classrooms' virtual environment and are reported on at the first course committee of each academic year.

EEs comment on the excellent feedback to students and state that it is transparent, constructive and supports development and is a particular example of good practice as it provides a framework for students to improve the standard of their work and avoid errors. Evidence of high standards of academic work, across programmes, comparatively to the HE sector, mentioned by a number of examiners, evidences the commitment, expertise, and enthusiasm of staff. For example, in Music Performance and Production (FD and BA, Hons) the standard of work on FD Music as observed by the Open University (OU) 'is of good quality and BA (Hons) of excellent quality, comparatively to other UK institutions. Academic standards are notably high' with evidence of structure and supportive progression. In Performing Arts (FdA) the SHU external examiner stressed the excellent spread of marks and the strength of student performance. The EE stated that the standard of work achieved is exceptional. Pearson, in examining Animal Management (Science) HND, reported on excellent, supporting and developmental feedback to learners. Other areas of strength include support from Programme Teams to students during COVID, which took the form of a loan of digital equipment (including laptops and dongles) to all students who needed it as well as technical support, and flexible modes of assessment utilising novel online methods, such as virtual exhibitions. This supported student engagement and retention during a particularly challenging period.

2.9 Employer Engagement

Underpinning our students' experience is our extensive employer engagement. We work with approximately 2,700 employers and organisations both locally and nationally (especially in sectors such as dental, bakery/patisserie, music, performing arts, animal management and construction). Successful employer engagement initiatives have a positive impact in progressing students into relevant employment opportunities. Staff who teach on the Foundation Degree in Dental Technology work in collaboration with the Chesterfield Royal Hospital to ensure that industry related knowledge in relation to orthodontics is current and relevant and ensures that students are equipped with the latest industry standard knowledge and skills when they enter the employment market. As part of this two-way collaboration, the Chesterfield Royal Hospital advise on the content of the course and frequently provides guest speakers, whilst also providing students with work placements that often result in permanent employment for our graduating students. As well as the Chesterfield Royal Hospital the teaching staff on this course have a similar arrangement with other key employers in the dental technology industry, such as Dencraft and S for S Dental Laboratories. In 2021/22, more than 50% of the students progressed into employment with the partners highlighted above.

Final year students from the FdSc in Bakery, Confectionery & Patisserie Science course, annually take part in a nationally recognised competition hosted by the Alliance Bakery Students and Trainee's (ABST). This event is attended by a number of colleges and provides an elite opportunity for students to present their work to the major employers in the baking and confectionary industry, such as Warburtons, Puratos and The Bagel Company and other leading employers from the chocolate industry. Through these competitions, students have gained employment with these leading

employers. For example, in 2020/21, 18% of the posts available at the competition were offered to students from TSC. As an annual event it provides our students with one of the best opportunities to access key graduate opportunities, within the industry.

As 74% of people employed in the music industry are self-employed, it is important that students on the FdA/BA Music Performance and Production courses are able to forge links with the local venues as part of their studies. The students on these programmes take part in up to 6 productions per year, utilising key venues within the Sheffield area, such as The Leadmill and Maida Vale. This has proven to maximise student opportunities for forging links with the venue owners, which can be utilised by students going forward for their own projects after graduation. High profile personalities were consulted in the development process for both the music and performance courses. The tour manager for the Arctic Monkeys, who is also the Operations Director for the Tramlines festival, as well as the manager of Foundation Studios, was consulted and contributed to the content of the programme.

Collaboration is further utilised through employers providing students with live briefs, as part of their Work Based Learning modules. Examples include the UBER Design Company and the Field Design Company, who have worked with students on the Fd Graphic Design and BA Creative Practices programmes, setting live briefs, which form part of the students' assessment. Staff and students on the Fd Games Design programme work also work in collaboration with SUMO Digital and Double Negative in the setting of live briefs. These partnerships are particularly effective as students from the college progress into employment with the partners, returning to work collaboratively with future student groups on a range of topics, including the setting of live briefs or acting as guest industry speakers.

Through this network of relationships, we have facilitated the design and development of programmes across all HE levels and offered outstanding opportunities to our students. At the recent graduate ceremony our students successfully completed a range of university level qualifications, including honours and foundation degrees, higher national certificates and diplomas and higher apprenticeships. A graduate who completed a BA Honours Degree in Performing Arts,

said, *"Thanks to the academy, I have launched my own business."*

RISE is one such innovative, award-winning, and unique business support initiative that connects small and medium sized businesses across the Sheffield Mayoral Combined Authority with talented graduates. It focusses on enabling business growth and retaining graduate talent bringing together growing small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) with suitably qualified graduates who match specific business needs; enabling them to overcome barriers and develop the knowledge to become successful graduate employers. TSC and the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce launched the Business and Enterprise Academy to offer an interactive and engaging programme of activities to support students to develop their employability skills. Each month there is a different employability theme and a supporting workshop delivered by a local employer. Together, Sheffield Chamber of Business and our Enterprise Academy equips students with the skills that businesses need and in partnership with TSC, the academy offers all students across the curriculum the opportunity to be mentored by Chamber members. Specialist speakers also visit TSC to provide an insight into a particular industry or role.

"The academy is such a great idea. It teaches you problem-solving skills and it gives you a network of support, builds your self-confidence and makes you resilient."

In 2021, TSC won national recognition for the role our employer skills academy programme is playing to enhance students' employment skills and we won the Edufuturists Award for employer engagement alongside a bronze in the BTEC Awards for the BTEC College of the Year category. TSC also won the Educate North Award 2022 for employer engagement in curriculum design and in recognition of the role our skill academies play in preparing students beyond achievement of their qualification by engaging in real-life work and offering workshops, masterclasses, workplace and industry visits or placements.

"The Sheffield College plays a huge role in shaping the minds of our city's future, I think the people that are coming out of The Sheffield College and graduating today are going to be highly employable and will have really bright futures in the region."

Sheffield
Chamber of Commerce

3. STUDENT OUTCOMES

3.1 Retention

The data show a marked improvement in retention over the TEF data period, demonstrating the effectiveness and the exceptional way that TSC supports its students. Our approach is having a positive and improved impact on students' progression through their courses, and these outcomes are above the sector average, which is particularly impressive given the demographic of our student body, as a higher-than-average proportion of our cohorts come from deprived low participation areas.

Table 1: Retention

End of Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
TSC Percentage %	73.0	80.0	89.0	93.0
HE Average %	80.0	92.0	88.0	93.0

3.2 Continuation

The continuation rate has seen improvements year on year. Continuation is particularly strong for part-time students over the age of 21 according to the TEF data dashboard, with continuation rates for all mature students being materially above the benchmark value. Such positive outcomes are linked to the bespoke support provided to older and part-time learners through our flexible timetabling to accommodate external work pressures and the study skills support provided by the HE Tutor Mentor role to assist those who have been out of education for some time, to ready themselves for teaching and learning at the level of HE. We anticipated that the rate of improvement in continuation rates may slow, due to a combination of factors, with students continuing to feel the long-term impact of COVID on mental health compounded by the high cost of living effects which has a particular impact on our student cohorts.

Table 2: Continuation

End of Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Percentage %	71.0	92.0	86.0	87.0

Table 3: Continuation Gap

End of Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
% Gap between IMD Q1 and Q5	11.0	8.0	+9.0	17.0
% Gap between ABMO and White Students	N/A	+1.0	+8.0	+3.0
% Gap between Male POLAR4 Q3-5 and Female Q1-2	+2.0	7.0	+4.0	7.0
% Gap between AMBO POLAR4 Q1-2 and Q3-5 White Students	10.0	-3.0	11.0	16.0

Our data show that the overall continuation rate for students aged under 21 (young students) has generally been higher than for those students aged 21 and over (mature) but has in recent years reversed. For the latest year the continuation rate for all students in POLAR4 Q1-2 was 81% and for Q 3-5 was just 85% - a small gap of 4pp whereas in a previous year the gap had been 9pp. Thus, the trajectory of this gap is closing. However, the continuation rate in year 5 for IMD Q 1 for all undergraduates is 79% and for IMD Q 5 is 90% and 3-5 is 88%. Thus, a gap of between 9 and 11%. TSC recognises that it will need to keep monitoring all this data to establish if there are any increases in the continuation gap between different socio-economic groups as the number, of HE students, changes over the period of the HE Strategy.

3.3 Pass Rates

In terms of learning gains and distance travelled overall, the end of year pass rate in HE for 2021/22 was 93%.

Table 4: Pass Rates

End of Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Percentage %	87.0	89.0	89.0	93.0

Our own observations indicate that lower pass rate programmes relate to level 5 or level 6 students who have faced additional difficulties as a result of COVID and other extenuating circumstances. Individual circumstances are discussed in pre-exam boards. Student support has been increased, and additional work continues to regularly review students identified as at-risk of withdrawal or under-achievement. In relation to these programmes, over the summer 2022, leaders reviewed programmes with small cohorts and removed groups with very low numbers. The aim here is to improve efficiency, student experience and generate data that represents the student experience more accurately.

With overall good achievement rates, initiatives that aim to close gaps in development, retention, attainment, and progression for our students from disadvantaged backgrounds or those at risk of not achieving are now a key focus. Our disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students are equally significantly above benchmark with regards to their satisfaction with assessment and feedback.

3.4 Attainment

This data has been drawn from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and exam board records. As TSC works with a range of awarding bodies, grading categories vary from 'pass, merit and distinction' to 'pass and fail', to the standard full degree classifications of 1st, 2:1, 2:2, 3rd'.

To make a comparison of 'good outcomes' across validating and awarding bodies, a 1st grade has been equated to a 'distinction' and 2:1 to a 'merit'. During the 2019/20 academic year, review boards started to consider the variances in attainment at module level and analysis of the data shows that there is a positive gap in performance between economically disadvantaged groups and other groups. The proportion of students from IMD Q 1 and 2 achieving a higher classification of qualification is 80% compared with 86% in IMD Q 5 in 2019/20 and this is in line with data from previous years. The proportions are evenly split between other measures such as male and female. This indicates that students who study HE at TSC do achieve well. The positive gap is maintained when comparing POLAR4 Q 1 and Q 5. Overtime we observe that POLAR4 Q 1 students achieved 'good outcomes' compared to those in Q 5. This positive gap, again, has been maintained in subsequent years.

Table 5: Outcomes for all HE students (B3) – full TEF period 2018/19-2021/22

Mode	Level	Completion		Continuation		Progression	
		TSC %	Threshold %	TSC %	Threshold %	TSC %	Threshold %
Full-time	Other UG	70.7	65.0	78.7	75.0	56.3	45.0
Part-time	Other UG	80.1	55.0	74.7	55.0	81.6	65.0
Apprenticeship	UG	52.8*	55.0	81.2	70.0	75.7	75.0

*NB, a change in completion outcomes for just 4 learners would have supported achievement of the threshold due to the size of the cohorts. Further, apprentices were particularly challenged during the Covid period due to balancing work commitments, difficulties accessing the workplace in some cases and progression to End Point Assessments falling outside of the standard duration.

The bulk of our provision is 'other undergraduate' and in relation to it, all our outcomes are well above threshold. Our outcomes are particularly strong for our part-time learners, in contrast to the national position where the outcomes are weaker than full-time students. It is our wrap round support that directly supports these outcomes. Our concern is for the completion rates for apprentices which is just below threshold. While there are a small number of learners in scope (n=180), we are prioritising support for apprentices' timely completions but recognise the definition of completion rates for apprentices is problematic given the timing of end point assessments which can take the learner beyond the time allocation for standard undergraduate calendar.

Table 5: Outcomes for all HE students (B3) – full TEF period 2018/19-2021/22

Mode	Level	Continuation		Completion		Progression	
		Numerical threshold %	TSC % above	Numerical threshold %	TSC % above	Numerical threshold %	TSC % above
Apps	All UG	70.0	100.0	55.0	27.8	75	52.6
F/T	Other UG	75.0	99.3	65.0	100.0	45.0	99.9
	1st degree	80.0	0.0	75.0	(low)	60.0	63.7
	UG with PG	85.0	(low)	85.0	(low)	-	-
P/T	Other UG	55.0	100.0	55.0	100.0	65.0	97.2
	Other PG	75.0	3.0	75.0	(low)	-	-
	PGCE	65.0	(low)	60.0	(low)	85.0	(low)

*Taught or registered students

The above table summarises the TSC student outcome data over the TEF period and reveals a strong performance in relation to the majority of our students who are categorised as undergraduate 'other'. Where provision is below threshold, e.g., other part time PG provision, the number of students over the period is very low, and therefore statistically insignificant.

3.5 Employment and Further Study

Contextually, where there is progression to other HE providers, few students enter with high or medium tariff points. Yet, from 'non-traditional' starting points, TSC students go on to achieve significant success. In the UCAS Apply 2022 cycle, 10% of offers were from higher tariff providers and 4% accepted places at higher tariff providers (out of 733 who accepted places).

Ensuring our graduates and leavers progress into the career or further learning of their choice, is our primary aim. One of our responses to supporting all our students' employability outcomes is through our highly regarded Careers Advice Team which provides direct support to careers planning, expanded to ensure all subject areas have a dedicated subject specialist careers advisor. We design and develop our university level programmes to integrate, where possible, work-based or work-related learning. Given our relationship with the other anchor institutions in the city we put a high premium on working collaboratively and in partnership, where working together can create benefits for our students.

The OfS data dashboard shows that positive progression is particularly high for students from IMD deprivation deciles 1 and 2, being 8pp above the national benchmark. This is representative of the college's commitment to widening access and improving the quality of opportunity for under-served groups. It also demonstrates the positive outcomes that arise from the work of the Careers Advice Team. In the three years to 2022/23 over 500 careers group sessions, workshops and events have been booked and delivered. TSC Careers Leader is also the Community of Practice Lead for the South Yorkshire Careers Hub, following the achievement of the Quality in Careers Standard Award in 2020 and the achievement of fully meeting the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks for good careers guidance. This practitioner role involves sharing best practice, delivering staff CPD to careers leaders from across the region and supporting the Careers Hub's strategic aims to improve and provide high quality careers education, information, advice, and guidance. This assists TSC given our student body is highly diverse, reflecting our widening participation agenda and many of our students face significant challenge both in achieving successful educational outcomes and in progressing through their chosen careers.

In addition to the NSS core questions, in our own internal survey, TSC opted to include questions on careers and destinations. This is the first year these questions have been included, therefore there is no comparable data. On careers support, 61% positively rated the college's offer. Student satisfaction on employability and skills was 69%. Whilst positive destinations are at 75% for 2021/22, careers and employability will continue to be an area of focus. The Vice Principal HE will work with Heads of School and Student Experience to review the 2022/23 careers support strategy and timing of activity across the calendar year. HE student forums will continue to run on a half termly basis to engage the student voice and help drive continuous improvement. The internal survey of first year HE students revealed improved levels of satisfaction of Learning Resources (91%) and Academic Support (94%).

Successful employer engagement projects in a range of curricular areas have a high success rate in connecting students with employment opportunities, as highlighted in the employer engagement section.

3.6 Transforming Futures

Our HE provision is founded and grounded in TSC's methodology of embedding relevant skills into our curriculum that meet the needs of employers and support good employment outcomes and progression in learning. Achievements at TSC reflect our style of education; one built on a strong sense of community, working in partnership that supports and engages students throughout their educational journey with us and equips them with the skills for success in the future.

We provide high intensity teaching in small, interactive classes that promote a genuine community of students and staff, forms of assessment closely linked with our employer partners, high quality and supportive feedback, coupled with outstanding student and careers support and an environment that encourages significant levels of student engagement. The importance of teaching to TSC is embedded in our academic framework and system of awards and recognition.

Reflecting our strategic approach to HE, academic performance continues to improve, supported by a robust HE Tutor Mentor model, which offers tailored regular one to one mentoring and coaching support to HE students to improve their academic and employability skills. This increases engagement with our learning and teaching facilities, the wider college environment and support services. This approach empowers our students to take ownership of their own learning and as a result is highly effective at meeting the needs of a diverse group of learners. We believe that this tailored support helps ensure that our DSA and students with additional needs perform as well as, or better than, their nondisabled peers.

TSC curriculum embeds skills valuable to employers and our employment outcomes are good once the importance of the challenges faced by our diverse student body are understood.

These achievements are founded on a strategically informed and distinctive style of teaching, learning and assessment. They are built on a strong sense of community, one that supports and engages students. In the words of one of our degree holders,

"I've come a long way and I just didn't think this was possible for people like myself. Studying at The Sheffield College has changed my life. I want to say a massive 'thank you' to the college."

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