

## TEF 2023 Provider Submission New College Swindon

### Provider Context

New College Swindon formed in 2020 following merger of the two existing colleges in Swindon, Swindon College and New College. Swindon College was founded in 1904, focussing on vocational qualifications, and had longstanding higher education provision, with circa 380 students on campus at the point of merger. New College, was established in 1983 offering provision centred on A level's, and in recent years included some higher education programmes both in Swindon and through subcontracted provision. New College had total provision of over 1000 HE, with less than 100 studying at the Swindon campus. Merger has brought the two colleges together, with two separate campuses either side of the town centre, Queens Drive and North Star, which still reflect a diverse provision across A level and vocational learning, which provide appropriate progression routes into higher education.

In 2019 Swindon College was successful in a bid to develop an Institute of Technology at the North Star campus, and the new facilities opened in 2022. The IoT is centred on increasing opportunities for study in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects, and has had considerable investment in digital, science and engineering resources. Employers as partners in this development have been critical in informing curriculum design, and working with us to increase opportunities for Higher and Degree apprenticeships.

Swindon does not have a University in the town, the nearest being University of Gloucestershire, and Oxford Brookes, and it is these University partners that are supporting our provision with both franchised and validated programmes both within the IoT and wider offer of Higher Education. This provision is critical to our local strategy for growth and supports our intent to increase participation in Higher Education in Swindon, given that since being designated a 'cold spot' in 2014 (HEFCE) there has been little improvement in this position.

Unemployment data from the ONS (2021) shows that 16.1% of the population of Swindon gave being a student as their reason for not being employed, against a 28.9% of the population of England as a whole. This reflects the low participation in Higher Education in the Swindon area, and that there is not a university in Swindon. It is also notable that many of our students continue to work as the HE offer at the college is centred on one or two days attendance at college, therefore enabling students to continue in work, and often to work in the career sector linked to their study choice. This is particularly true of those studying our Health and Social Care programme, who work in clinical and care settings, and this is identified as the fastest growing type of job role in Swindon with 135% increase in roles between July 2021 and July 2022 (ONS 2021) demonstrating the key role our programme plays in this sector.

We understand the importance of being able to offer Higher Education opportunities for people in Swindon, and that the local area particularly needs graduates to fill higher level positions. A Local Enterprise Partnership report states 'a large proportion of students who grew up in the SWLEP area, leave the area for study, and don't come back for employment' (SWLEP 2018) which is reflected in the number of employers filling positions with candidates from outside the locality, often relocating to Swindon. The report also draws on national evidence that 'students are more likely to stay and work locally if they have studied locally' (ibid). A statement which supports the importance of the college as a provider of HE, and the need to continue to work with local employers in our

strategy for development of programmes to meet their needs, and to secure opportunities for skilled and graduate employment locally.

Both the merger and IoT development, fundamental changes in provision in Swindon, have taken place during the pandemic and against a backdrop of lockdowns and the resulting delays to building work and merger plans. This has made progress in the merger of systems, departments and staffing changes, as well as carrying out relocation of facilities and provision very challenging.

This submission aims to discuss the data provided, and any changes made since or through the impact of merger. The Student Experience data includes post-merger information and so is more reflective of the new institution, however the majority of Student Outcome Data provided for TEF is pre-merger data. Therefore, although this is relevant to both colleges, this data does not reflect the positive impact of merger on student outcome data, and so we present additional information that represents our current position.

### Partnerships

The college continues to maintain the partnership relationship with Oxford Brookes, and have been part of their Associate College Partnership for over a decade. We have an established provision of four Foundation Degrees, all of which now have a Level 6 progression to BA/BSc/BEng at the college, in Health, Education and Engineering, as well as a three-year BA programme in Illustration.

The college continues to develop provision with the University of Gloucestershire, a small amount of which existed at both colleges prior to merger. The main focus of development of new programmes has been in STEM provision at the North Star campus, as the University is our Anchor Partner in the Institute of Technology. We are also continuing to offer Pearson provision across both sites with full-time HND, and at North Star as part-time HNC, which is heavily employer sponsored, in Engineering and Construction/Civil professional programmes.

Students value the opportunity to be able to study locally, gaining recognised qualifications and accessing degree level studies. Students are able to continue in employment, contributing to the local economy, and are able to maintain any personal commitments, and value the 'community' environment.

*Because the course I do is taught at a partnering college, I had the opportunity to be in a small class with several people, which allowed us to have easier access to tutors if we needed help. It is also very close to my family home which allowed me to save money and was convenient. The teachers are also lovely and create a friendly environment. NSS 2021 (franchised)*

Merger of the two colleges has changed the shape and size of provision. There has been some relocation of provision across sites, and removal of duplicate provision resulting in the final year of teaching out provision with one pre-merger University partner in 2022/23. The college has also retained a subcontracting partnership, established by New College pre-merger, with CECOS, and in 21-22, completed the teaching out of a previous sub-contracting agreement.

New College is the registering institution for the CECOS provision, which is centred on Business qualifications and Teacher Training. The student characteristics are very different to our Swindon based students, with predominantly Eastern European, mature students with English as a second language, studying in London. The TEF data reflects the provision of the previous sub-contracted partner college, where the profile of students was more mixed, with greater ethnic diversity. They also had a wider range of courses. Whilst we can see the impact in our data, this provision is now

taught out, and the developing CECOS provision has not been in place long enough to show a significant impact on our outcomes data. However, our developing partnership gives us opportunity to forge closer links, and increase mutual working practices to have a collective and positive impact on student experience and student outcomes.

### Student profile

Our student demographic has also shifted following merger. Prior to this, Swindon College provision was predominantly mature with circa 60% being over 21. New College had fewer programmes of higher education, and predominantly Level 4 and 5 HNC/D, which attracted greater progression from Level 3, giving a younger point of entry into HE. The bringing together of this provision through merger, has increased the number of under 21's studying at our Swindon campuses, and this trend is continuing across digital and business provision. Our programmes in Health, Social Sciences and Humanities subjects, and our Engineering professional programmes, are still predominantly recruiting mature students, already in employment in their chosen sector who are studying for reasons of career and earning progression, or promotion within their current work. These students often have caring responsibilities, attending college one day a week and working around their studies.

We are mindful that we now have a bigger pool of students studying Level 3/A Level courses, who could progress into HE at the College, and our HE Strategy cites improvement to internal progression. In the last academic year, we had more activities with our FE cohorts to promote the HE offer, with Lecturer talks and Masterclasses, and the recent addition of our HE Outreach and Transitions Officer has enabled many more links to be made with FE groups and staff to encourage progression into our Higher Education. The development of a 'level ladders' project aims to demonstrate the progression students can take from Level 1 or 2, through to Level 6, within each faculty area of the college. These are displayed in key areas of the college as a visual reference for students, staff and visitors, to raise awareness of the college offer, and the opportunities to stay and study higher education locally.

We know that Swindon has relatively high employment, therefore many of our young people are able to easily get into work, mainly low skilled, and with the increasing financial pressures on families, there may be further impact on HE recruitment. In our recent Access and Participation Plan (2022-24), we acknowledge that financial help will be essential to support participation, and have launched a suite of bursaries. These are for Low Income households, as well as those who are care experienced or carers, and to reduce barriers further for those with learning differences, we also support students in paying for diagnostic assessment required for Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) applications. This can be a significant cost for many students, and is an essential process if the students are to access financial support, assistive technology, and study support to help them enjoy and succeed in their studies. This is particularly pertinent for those mature students who may have had a significant gap in their education, and may not have had a formal diagnosis in the past, and found study difficult, but not fully understood the reason why, but now have the opportunity to unlock their potential.

## Student Experience

### Academic experience and assessment

In order to monitor and improve the quality of academic experience and assessment, the college has four supporting strands:

- Staff development-supporting staff to improve subject and professional knowledge through formal and informal means

- Observations of teaching to identify excellence, share practice and to address and support any identified staff needs
- Teaching and Learning Coaches (TLC team) to support development of teaching and assessment practice
- Programme development- ensure content is relevant, current and embeds academic challenge, graduate employability, and assessment is appropriate to the level of study.

The college requires staff to achieve a recognised teaching qualification at level 5 or above and any staff joining the college without this, are supported to achieve a level 5 Diploma in house through both financial support and remission from teaching whilst in the training phase.

In each HE curriculum area, we have lecturers who have taken on roles as External Examiners with other Universities and awarding bodies, and many others are developing their practice engaging with external staff development and sharing best practice across the university and college HE sectors. This helps to develop their knowledge of academic practices, and assessment, and this enhanced understanding is shared with their programme teams to improve practice.

The college also supports staff to achieve academic and professional qualifications or undertake specific training that will benefit their teaching activities, including sector/industry professional updating opportunities, as well as support to undertake Masters level qualifications for those who don't hold this on employment, in particular those delivering at Level 6. The college sees this as an important role in ensuring excellent academic practice in the quality and level of delivery.

The college Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy aims to assess and develop the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, encouraging professional dialogue, celebrating and sharing excellence and innovation, whilst also operating a rigorous and supportive improvement strategy. All staff who deliver or formally assess students are in the scope of the policy and will have at least one observation per academic year. All college observers are trained, and in order to ensure consistency of judgements and quality of feedback, ten percent of observations are moderated, and all observers have at least one joint observation per year. The HE manager is a trained observer and can also support joint observations and moderation to ensure HE colleagues are observed by an experienced HE practitioner, having taught and assessed levels 4-6. This supports judgements and feedback of HE sessions based on sound expectations for quality and level of delivery, as well as being grounded in employability.

The college TLC team includes practising HE lecturers, who also operate as Teaching & Learning Coaches, with remission from their teaching commitments in order to support the development of teaching, learning and assessment across the HE provision at the college. The TLC team are assigned to support new members of staff settling in to their role in HE, and also to work with anyone identified as needing support through lesson observations and feedback from students or Curriculum Managers. They will support individuals to make improvements in planning, delivery, and assessment practice and to increase the confidence of the staff member, should they be new to teaching. Existing members of staff can also 'self-refer' for help with any aspect of practice that they need support with, for example, when taking on a new Module/Unit, or level.

The college has designated days for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and these will each contain sessions relevant to HE staff. These can involve external training, for example recently a staff update on Turn-it-in capabilities held on Teams, or led by the VP Higher Education and Curriculum, and HE Manager, such as OfS updates, for example recently 'B Conditions', and 'TEF' and sessions planned for this year include 'Competitions Market Authority refresher' and 'Assessment Practice'. These sessions periodically take place during the weekly college CPD slot, allowing HE practitioners and support teams across college to take part in relevant professional

updating throughout the academic year, and provide a forum for discussion of any implications to practice.

Our half-termly HE Programme Leader meetings, also gives opportunity for those involved in the delivery and quality of HE to meet more informally to discuss current matters, gain advice and support and to share best practice. There is also a dedicated Teams site for HE staff, and this will include resources and sharing of practice, and has joint administrative responsibilities between the HE office and a designated member of the Teaching and Learning Coach team in order to support HE practice.

Our lecturers prepare a Module/Unit plan that shows what is covered during each week of delivery, and from this a more detailed session plan is developed. This is a working document and staff are encouraged to reflect on sessions, making notes and changes where needed. Staff are continuously developing their knowledge of subjects and pedagogy through formal training and development, research and scholarly activity, to ensure Modules/Units follow a coherent plan of delivery and are sequential in building the students' knowledge, skills and understanding throughout the weeks of delivery, stretching and challenging students to achieve their potential. Comments in our NSS feedback mention how staff stretch students in their work.

*'[...] very open-minded about different approaches to work. They get you to push forward. And they get you to move out of your comfort zone.'* NSS Comment 2021

The college supports this by providing remission and releasing staff for opportunities of professional updating, and scholarly activity whereby staff return to the employer/sector relevant to their subject of delivery, to gain more current subject knowledge, and understanding of the relevant skills needed for students seeking employment in that sector. Updated knowledge and understanding is embedded into planning of content and delivery, or in the case of new programme developments, used to inform writing of new modules and to inform programme content. This in addition to student feedback on Modules/Units means that our staff can ensure the delivery remains current through new research and understanding of the subjects, and also taking on board any previous or current student feedback, lesson or peer observations, to adapt and improve content delivery next time.

Staff also take part in collaborative staff development with our partner Universities, such as Teaching and Learning conferences and work with wider faculty colleagues, taking on board research and development opportunities, and innovative ways to assess and deliver course content. In initial teacher training, staff have used the innovative approach of a 'speed dating' activity, whereby professionals from key departments are invited in, and students have a five minute 'date' with each of them to ask about their professional roles in education, before moving to the next guest. Students report that this activity provides a valuable insight into other roles, and how this supports their unit of study on understanding professional roles and their training to teach in FE or HE.

New programmes are written and developed by our subject specialists, with external input from both academics and employers. Developments will also take account of subject benchmarks, and Public Sector Regulatory Body (PSRB) information, in addition to feedback from local employers and stakeholders. This ensures their currency and value in terms of preparation for, and enhancement within employment sectors/industry, and new programmes go through a rigorous process of validation and/or approval to ensure these are fit for purpose.

In recognition of the need for a level 6 progression route for our successful HND programme in Production Arts (Media Make-up), the staff team, in collaboration with the HE manager and



supported by the University partner, wrote a BA top-up validated programme. This development reflects the focus on graduate development and employability.

*“The curriculum and assessment design allows for students to develop their skills as an independent practitioner reflecting standards and expectations required for onward employability. The expectation of professional presentation of work is high and shows a high level of creativity again reflective of industry expectations.” EE Report 2020*

Each curriculum area will work with the HE office and review their student experience and outcomes, forming action plans where appropriate, which are also discussed collectively by senior team members. This information is tabled at our Academic Board, held each Semester. This Board is attended by Assistant Principals and senior staff across Business Support areas, and has internal quality oversight for Higher Education. All aspects of the student journey from recruitment, student experience, progression, continuation and outcomes are also compiled in an annual report and action plan shared with Governors.

### Assessment and Feedback

The college processes and practice in assessing our students is effective. Our experienced staff understand the importance of assessment being valid and reliable, and conducted according to the regulations for the programme. Any new staff are mentored, and will have a period of peer marking and moderation/IV experience, before completing any assessment alone. This ensures they are familiar not only with the process to be followed, the expectation in terms of level, how the criterion for marking is used, and also what is needed in terms of writing good quality feedback.

*‘There is a clear internal quality process for both assignment briefs and marked learner submissions. The assessment decisions sampled were all agreed. The grades awarded by assessors reflected the learners standard, but this was congruent with the academic standards set by the team. Access to IV records was provided in terms of both assignment briefs and the sample of work. There is a clear up to date assessment plan in place signed off by the course lead and an Internal Verification plan with identified internal verifiers and assessors’ EE Pearson 2022*

Reliability begins with the staff member delivering the Unit/Module meeting with the IV/moderator or in the case of our degree programmes, the person blind-second marking. This meeting is used to discuss the method of assessment, learning outcomes or criteria and to document and standardise the assessment brief and expectations of the assessors. Briefs are checked for accuracy before they are issued to the students, and any Exam rubrics or alternative assessment types to be used to meet individual needs are confirmed, ensuring that these maintain the integrity of the assessment.

Assessment of presentations or practical demonstrations are recorded, and an IV or moderator is given access to these. In all assessments, any initial decision by the first marker, which is not agreed by the IV/moderator, is discussed to decide on the final grade, and this is recorded on the IV/moderation form. All elements of the assessment process, including judgements and student work, should be made available for the External Examiner, and internal university moderation process where applicable.

Students upload assignment work to the Turn-it-in platform hosted by the college, which enables deadlines to be set for individual assessment component submission boxes and electronic marking and feedback to be provided and released at a set date, known to the students. The capabilities of the platform also allows the IV/moderator to access the work before feedback or results are released. Another advantage of the platform is that it enables staff to check for originality and

identify any poor academic practice or plagiarism, which is then referred to the HE Academic Conduct officer for action.

The college follows the assessment regulations for each awarding body/university, and has a set of regulations which are based on Pearson guidelines for our HNC and HND programmes. This ensures that there is consistency in our processes and decision making for assessment and awarding of credit, and that students are treated fairly and equitably, maintaining the credibility of the awards.

Feedback is given in both formative and summative forms. Each programme builds in opportunities for draft submissions, which help students to use formative feedback to improve work, and seek help if needed.

*'Tutor provided really good formative feedback to enable students to improve their draft work' SEF FdA Educational Practice 2022*

*'Feedback very clear and useful; consistent due dates for formative and summative work' SEF HND Public Services 2022*

We encourage our students to be assessment literate and support this by going through assessment expectations in each Module/Unit, and ensuring the students understand the learning outcomes/criterion and the rubric criteria used in making assessment judgements and grading. This is essential if students are to achieve good outcomes.

*'The handbook is a helpful reference to know what is expected in terms of marking and grading' SEF BA Early Childhood Studies 2022*

*'Students are familiar with the marking rubric and have spent some time looking at this in class' SEF FdA Early Years 2022*

Marking of assignments also identify errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar, and this can be highlighted and commented on within the text using electronic marking. Students will be advised to seek support in their use of the English language in the feedback, if they are making persistent errors which remain unaddressed in subsequent assignments. As students' progress through the levels of their course the expectation for improvement in their use of English increases in the assessment and feedback, in preparation for employment.

For students with Dyslexia a flag can be added to their assessment to alert the marker that they are getting support. As this support enables them to reduce the potential errors prior to submission, the marker will not repeatedly comment on any recurring points, but will include comment in the feedback to tell the student that improvement is needed in this area.

All programmes have an Exam Board at the end of Semester one, and Semester two. The second exam board of the year is also the awarding exam board for those students completing their programme. For our franchised provision, we hold an internal board in college, prior to the final External and awarding exam board held by the University. This practice is embedded in our quality cycle for HE. Our exam boards enable us to examine Module/Unit results in detail, looking at the mean average mark, and standard deviation, and range of grades awarded. Any large fluctuations in these could indicate students are not achieving the same standard of grades previously achieved, for example if not as many students were achieving distinction grades compared to previous cohorts. If module feedback doesn't provide any reasons for this we must look at other variables such as changes in staff, or approach to the module, or cohort mix, and we can then make changes accordingly to improve student support for the cohort, or to improve outcomes on

the next run of the Module/Unit. This close monitoring helps to maintain the value and credibility of the awards over time.

Scores in the Assessment and Feedback section have been largely good, however were marginally below benchmark in 2021. This can be attributed to the pandemic lockdowns and the resulting remote teaching in this academic year. Remote teaching persisted throughout with our London partner, understandably where Covid rates were high, whereas students did have some face-to-face delivery on our Swindon campuses, with the space and ability to support social distancing, and enhanced cleaning and protective measures. However all provision was impacted by staff absence due to covid illness, and this is reflected in the results for this year of the NSS. When considering outcomes in this category in more detail, in 2021 all four questions in both taught and registered data remained above benchmark. Further progress can be seen in the 2022 outcomes for 'Assessment and Feedback' with a marked improvement overall. All question results in this category were up by between 12% and 22% against benchmark, and returning to the high levels we have previously been achieving in this section.

*'Feedback from academic work has been in good timing, very well detailed and later explained in one-on-one's with the topic lecturers.'* NSS 2021 (franchised)

*'We've been able to adapt well working from home and we get good feedback'* NSS Comment 2021

*'My tutors are very good at giving feedback and helping to inspire us, lessons are really interesting, and tutors are very knowledgeable on the subject'* NSS Comment 2021

Staff worked hard to mitigate the impact of remote learning and students continued to engage in their learning and felt supported. Our E-Learning team worked continuously to ensure that sessions could be streamed live to the students, and that all our learning resource platforms had capability to support staff and students during this challenging time. Alongside the academic delivery, our staff delivering in areas where practical assessment is necessary ensured that students were able to continue to develop work without access to the college. This involved some innovative use of materials, such as using recyclable items and materials students had to hand in the home, for a model costume required in an assessment in our BA Media Make up programme, as commented on by the External Examiner in 2020 report:

*"Within semester two students had to face difficult times with COVID 19 instigating a countrywide lockdown, students were unable to access college or university resources and therefore had to take a more independent, innovative and resourceful approach to their submissions".* EE 2021

*'I think the staff is very understanding towards the COVID-19 situation, and they tried to be as helpful as they can be from the distance. They are super supportive of the ideas that we come up with and always make sure that we do our very best when working on a project'.* NSS Comment 2021

*'Lecturers always go out of their way to help in whatever way was necessary. During COVID, when learning from home, the quality of teaching and learning was still of a high standard and enjoyable. Felt lecturers listened to our feedback and always acted upon it positively.'* NSS Comment 2022

### Resources support and student engagement

The College encourages students to be partners in their study journey, and looking at the student experience 'through student lenses', is always our starting point. Students benefit from small group sizes and so foster a sense of community within their study groups. Tutors are also able to get to know individuals, and this enables an open dialogue between staff and students.



This is beneficial when it comes to discussing the student experience, and we have strong quality mechanisms for gathering feedback in addition to informal dialogue. The Student Experience Forum (SEF) gathers feedback from every year group across provision, and are held as a whole group discussion, with staff present. This encourages students to record representative views of their experience, with input from staff on agreed solutions to matters raised. The feedback relating to teaching and learning, assessment and feedback and any comments relevant to the organisation and management, are actioned and fed back by the teaching team and curriculum management. The Higher Education office staff support with the comments on resources, facilities and student voice, coordinating responses from service areas and feeding back to curriculum teams. The SEF's take place in the middle of each Semester, followed by Programme Committees, where student representatives, programme teams and management can discuss in detail student feedback and progress on actions, or escalate any outstanding actions. Governors are provided with information on progress made to address feedback from students.

The college has had good response rates in the National Student Survey each year. Our SEF process and involvement of students in internal meetings, have helped us to achieve 80.4% against a benchmark of 79.6% have helped us stay 89.8% in line with benchmark for the Student Voice, despite not having a Student Union as would a University. We have worked with colleagues in other departments to share issues which are within their responsibility, and the HE office has co-ordinated meetings and responses to curriculum, to try to ensure students hear about actions and progress made on them, and this year students have been invited to meet staff directly to discuss refectory options. We have used our recent capital funding to make some significant improvements to the HE student environments post-merger, to invest in consistency of teaching accommodation across locations, but understand that not all students see the results of these projects during their time with us.

NSS results from some question areas have fluctuated year on year, however, we have maintained high satisfaction in the Teaching and Learning section 87.2%, with 97.6% in line with the benchmark, and showing an upward trend over the last three years. When separating provision types, partnerships shows as 86.3% with 94.7% in line with benchmark and Swindon provision at 88.7% against a benchmark of 85.9%, with 44.1% in line with benchmark, and 55.7% marginally above benchmark.

*'The teaching staff are amazing, great knowledge demonstrated and delivered to us. The learning and development centre staff are excellent and provide so much additional support to us students.'*  
NSS 2021 (franchised)

*'Good opportunities to learn about academic writing and further research in to studies broadening knowledge on your specific area of work. Great for building confidence in abilities.'*  
NSS 2021 (franchised)

Academic Support is generally strong at 83.5%, against a benchmark of 84.1% this is 93.4% in line with benchmark. We can see a demonstrable drop in year three (2020-21) and investigations suggest the impact of Covid preventing our usual face-to-face support for our Swindon students. Our London based students were more accustomed to receiving remote support and thus there was less impact in their expectations of academic support, which is reflected in the result, being materially above benchmark by 20.6%, and 79.4% in line with benchmark.

In recognition that many of our students come into Higher Education after a gap in their education, students undertake a screening exercise during induction to identify any support needs. These are followed up by our Study Support staff, enabling Individual Study Plans (ISP) to be put in place for those students who need support with their studies, or referral to other services such as mental health and wellbeing support, counselling or for further diagnostic assessment.

The Study Support staff will provide students with a support session, on request, and these can be on a regular or ad-hoc basis according to the student need. This member of staff also provides support to our franchised students on behalf of our University partner, locally in Swindon, removing the need to travel to the University campus to access support, and enabling students to choose face-to-face sessions, rather than remote or online support.

Our Access and Participation work, provided us with the opportunity to fund a role within HE, for an Outreach and Transitions Officer, which we recruited to in September 22. This post is enhancing the student experience by providing support for those who have made a transition into our Higher Education provision from both FE within the college, and those externally recruited. This can be advice and guidance on any barriers they are experiencing, and signposting to relevant support services, but also focussing on those groups identified in our data as having low participation in Higher Education, to remove barriers and support their journey in and through Higher Education here.

The post-holder is now developing links with sixth forms and other agencies providing support to potential HE applicants, and working with internal staff, to improve the experience of these students pre-entry as well as during study, which we feel will enhance the student journey as the role grows and develops throughout the academic year, and into the next. A recent contact with the University Technical College (UTC) in Swindon, resulted in a visit to the college by a group of 20 sixth form pupils. Some of these students have barriers to their studies,

and would not consider going away to a university campus to study. The HE Outreach and Transitions Officer gave them a tour of facilities, including the IoT, and did a presentation on our HE offer, and available support, including finance. Enhanced support for transition in to Higher Education at the college was discussed, and an orientation day in the summer when the college is quieter, to support the students transition is being planned.

The college has an induction process, which is common to all programmes, ensuring that the students have consistent information about the college services and facilities, as well as covering the academic requirements, including those of the relevant awarding body. The induction pack provides each programme team with a framework to cover, and presentation slides on particular aspects such as Academic Conduct to assist in their delivery of information across the first few weeks, also acting as a resource for future reference by the students. Students have an 'induction checklist' to ensure they have had all necessary components of delivery and information to give them the best start to their programme. The e-Learning team also produce an electronic VLE page as a resource for IT support, containing information about connectivity, printing and how to use on-line platforms whilst in college.

Student feedback on Induction is sought in the Semester One SEF in order to ensure it meets students' needs, and comments include:

*'Positive environment- given a lot of good information' HND Public Services SEF 2022*

*'Well organised, quick and effective' BEng SEF 2022*

*'Helpful people; well organised; induction materials and handbook with all information provided' HND Performing Arts (media make-up) SEF 2022*

Our NSS results in the 'Learning Resources' section for our Swindon based provision is 71.5% below benchmark of 76.9%, 90.5% marginally below benchmark. This area has been challenging, as we have some very positive feedback on our Library, but this is not consistent across both sites. We have done some work to improve the library spaces for our HE students, and have recently introduced HE only quiet spaces for reading and research within the library spaces.

*'Good environment to do work its quiet and well equipped' HND Public Services SEF 2022*

*'HE quiet room useful' FdSc Health & Social Care SEF 2022*

Our subcontracted provision scores 80.2% against a benchmark of 77.0% and this is 100% in line with or materially above benchmark.

Since our cohort that started in 2021, HE students on a programme duration of more than one year, (or FTE for part-time, and excluding apprentices) have been provided with a laptop for the duration of their studies. On completion of their programme, and providing there are no outstanding fees, the student retains the laptop. The students have very well received this investment in I.T. For any who do not meet the eligibility criteria, e.g. students on a 'top-up' level 6 programme who did not study with us prior to this, we have a laptop loan available through the library for the duration of the course. This ensures no students are disadvantaged by not having a suitable laptop device.

Last year (2022) capital funding was directed at 'course specific resources' and departments were invited to submit a rationale for items which would have a positive impact on teaching and learning. The college is pleased to have purchased, electronic design tablets and printing capabilities for our Art and Design programmes, a selection of interactive anatomical models for our Health and Social Care programmes, and enhanced lesson capture equipment for our HE classrooms. These additions will all enhance the student experience, and teaching and learning opportunities, and we hope to see an improvement in this NSS area as a result.

This year our capital funds are directed to improve the HE spaces. We have some positive feedback regarding some parts of the Learning Resources section, but as question nineteen also includes learning spaces, and we recognise that some of the available space for HE has changed through merger relocations, this is a priority this year.

Some positive feedback from our SEF's this year (2022) which show high satisfaction in classroom accommodation, facilities and resources to date are:

*'We like the new layout of tables- it improves collaboration' BA Illustration (year 3)*

*'Studios are well equipped; kit materials all supplied and room to work outside of class' HND performing Arts: Technical Arts (year 1)*

*'Photography studios have loads of equipment, really like new lockers; good facilities and classrooms' HND performing Arts: Technical Arts (year 2)*

*'Base room, Print room and Ceramics studios are well equipped' HND Art Practice (year 1)*

Many of our students do not wish to, or find it expensive to purchase lunch each day they are in college, and so we have ensured access to a microwave, fridge and kettle in our HE common room areas, installing a kitchen at Queens Drive campus. At North Star campus, the Common Room facilities are being extended and improved, and we are refurbishing some of the shared spaces. This is as a direct result of feedback from our SEF process, and in recognition of this area overall having a low score in our NSS. We will continue to gather feedback from our SEF process as these improvements take place, and review the impact in our NSS scores.

When looking at some of the NSS feedback split by study type, we see that for 'first degree' all sections are materially above benchmark at 85% or higher, with the exception of learning resources. For 'other undergraduate' Teaching and Learning, Academic Support and Student Voice are all materially above benchmark at 90% or higher, which is a strong performance in these key areas.

## Student Outcomes

Entry tariffs for our courses are below that of similar university provision. We support this in our intent to widen participation, and understand that this also means our students often have a greater distance to travel in order to achieve 'good' degree and high undergraduate outcomes. In order to support the achievement of our students we can offer high quality teaching with an emphasis on employability, smaller classes, a tutorial programme to support individual development, effective targeted assessment feedback and a safe and supportive learning environment. This coupled with wider support to overcome barriers to learning, such as individual needs through Study Support staff, our mental health and wellbeing team, and support with transition in and through HE, enables our students to become more independent and critical in their thinking and graduate with good grades, despite potentially low starting points.

The Annual Population Survey 2021, reports that amongst those of working age 16-64 years, who have a degree or higher are 33.7% of the Swindon population, against the rate for England of 42.8%. The gap between those holding a level 2 qualification at 74.2% (5 or more GCSE at A-C) and those holding a Level 3 qualification 53.4% (2 or more A levels or equivalent) is a significant 20.8% (ONS 2021).

### Completion

Completion is broadly in line with benchmark with an indicator value of 79.3% against a benchmark of 78.7%, this has a high statistical certainty with 100% in line or above benchmark. The decline in the data during a two year period can be attributed to the deterioration in quality of the previous subcontracted provision, now taught out, which impacted on our overall college performance. The indicator value for this population was 63.2% against a benchmark of 71.3%, with 99.2% of provision materially below benchmark, whereas the Swindon cohort completion rate is 83.2% against a benchmark of 79.2% with 93.8% materially above benchmark.

When considering completion by study type, 'other undergraduate' is in line with benchmark, with good statistical confidence, and first degree 2.7% above benchmark. Examining level of study, at Level 4, 'other undergraduate' is particularly strong at 80.9% versus benchmark 74.1%, with 98.5% materially above benchmark, however 'other undergraduate' at Level 5 less so. This study type was more latterly impacted by the subcontracted provision at the time. Completion of students who are under 21 years, is very strong with an indicator value of 83.9% against a benchmark of 78.9% which is 96.4% materially above benchmark. This age range had more prevalence in the Swindon cohort at that time, and the less well performing 21-30 years group was the dominant age range for the previous subcontracted cohort.

Examining completion using other splits in student characteristics, does demonstrate further the impact in the subcontracted partnership, for example ethnicity. Completion is close to benchmark for all ethnicities, with the exception of Asian students, which have a small denominator but account for 7% of the population. This split is 4.8% below benchmark, with 74.1% materially below benchmark, and can be attributed to the partnership at that time.

By gender, our female completion is slightly (1.5%) above benchmark, with all provision in line with or materially above benchmark, conversely male completion is fractionally below (-0.8%) 76.9% broadly in line with benchmark.

We recognise that we still have work to do in supporting our students from low socio-economic backgrounds, reflected in the ABCS quintiles, and as the HE Outreach and Transitions officer continues to develop the role, we will plan further targeted work in this area.

Part-time completion has been heavily impacted by the inclusion of professional courses, which have not been included in the quality processes for HE in the college, but rather follow the regulations, quality and assessment frameworks of their own awarding bodies. This area of pre-merger data shows 8% behind benchmark in year 2, and this is largely due to the provision of ILM framework qualifications and Level 4 Accounting.

Our HNC part-time provision in Construction and Civil Engineering included in the Level 4 data shows completion broadly in line with benchmark at 82.2% against a benchmark of 82.5%.

Numbers become too small when applying splits to part-time data, however when split by age we can see once more the influence of the previous subcontracted provision, which had a significant proportion of students in the '31 years and over' category were mostly behind benchmark for completion. We are mindful that our mature cohorts of students need support to achieve, and as discussed in previous sections, continue to work on ways to support academic development.

### Continuation

Full-time continuation overall is broadly in line with benchmark.

The most recent year of data is strong 2.5% above benchmark, and 51.2% materially above benchmark. This improving data could be due to the teaching out of subcontracted provision, and the subsequent reduction in numbers having less impact. In year two, 17-18, continuation was impacted. Closer analysis shows that many of these programmes were subsequently closed, demonstrating a robust approach to quality where we consider that programmes are not meeting our student's needs.

Continuation of our first degree students is excellent with an indicator value of 93.2% against a benchmark of 87.8% with 88.4% materially above benchmark, whilst we recognise this is a much smaller proportion of students it is still a good achievement. Other undergraduate level is also strong with an indicator value 5.1% above benchmark with 89.8% materially above benchmark. Similarly to our completion rates, other undergraduate level 5 and various splits is more latterly impacted by the previous subcontracting relationship and thus we feel this does not truly reflect our position as a newly merged provider.

We are aware that the continuation of learners across subjects is variable. Education and Teaching is very good with 91.2% against a benchmark of 86.8%, with 84.5% materially above benchmark. Similarly, Public Services (Politics) is 5.3% above benchmark with 99.2% materially above benchmark. We are aware of the areas that require improvement and either these have been removed as a result of the change of subcontracted provider, or have been removed through our own actions following quality reviews, however this is not yet reflected in the data provided.

### Educational Gains-Supporting employability

The college's HE offer is not as broad as that of a larger University provider. However, we are clear that the programmes we do offer must be relevant and firmly anchored in the practice associated with that sector or industry, to provide our students with the best chance of employment or advancement in their career. This is particularly important to our students and their future ambitions as the Swindon and Wiltshire Skills Plan (SWLEP 2020) recognises that the area is below the national average in the proportion of highly skilled jobs, and so opportunities exist to increase the workforce and elevate wages and productivity to improve skill supply and demand. The priorities identified include 'meeting the demand for high-skill jobs, in particular those requiring STEM' (SWLEP 2020).



In support of this aim, all programmes have strong focus on employability and developing and practising skills and behaviours that will support the students' success in their chosen role and career. The Swindon and Wiltshire Skills Plan (2020) identified that the subjects employers would like to see delivered by HE providers are core STEM subjects such as Engineering, Technology and Computer Sciences, but that the college(s) at the time were not meeting this demand. This was a key factor in the development of the IoT.

The Institute of Technology (IoT) will boost opportunities to work with employers in STEM sectors, to grow provision at level 4 and above in order to meet their skills needs, and to increase the supply and demand in highly skilled employment. Development of new provision in Computing Science pathways, Chemical and Biochemical, and Engineering has already taken place with University partners and are now open to recruitment. Ensuring the students have access to industry standard equipment and resources is also key to this provision and is essential in bridging skills gaps in the workplace along with enhancing the higher education experience.

The engineering and digital areas have had significant investment through the IoT development in both physical and virtual environments, equipment and learning resources. To meet the skills demand, there has been heavy investment in specialist equipment to meet specific requirements of upskilling; this includes Industry 4.0 factory for the future facilities, encompassing automation, pneumatics, Programmable Logic Controllers (PLC's), and the integration of these into the workplace. Coupled with this facility, there is a functioning Metrology lab for the integration of material measurement, meeting quality assurance platforms in the engineering sector. Our digital investment has included a fully functioning TV studio complete with green and infinity screens and access to high-grade movie/cinematic camera facilities, the same standard of equipment is used in Hollywood filmmaking and contests equipment in our local media production companies. Part of the digital investment also includes internal "dirty" networking, enhancing hands on access to develop white hat hacking skills, all on high-spec industry equivalent hardware from desktop personal computers to networking facilities.

We regularly look at opportunities to refresh provision, and are now offering programmes with HTQ in our digital offer through Pearson. We also consider new specifications in terms of how these will affect our offer, from recruitment and student experience of the curriculum and programme content, through to preparation for employment, or development in current work roles.

We are also aware that Swindon and Wiltshire ranks low amongst local authority areas for social mobility, and that coupled with low aspiration, adds to low participation in Higher Education. Those from disadvantage backgrounds are less likely to do well at school, or in the labour market and so raising aspiration is a key priority to begin to address these local challenges, as is improving employability of underrepresented groups (SWLEP 2020)

Our Access and Participation Plan identifies and aims to improve both the participation in Higher Education at the college, and more widely. Also, through the appointment of the HE Outreach and Transitions Officer, provide added support and reduce barriers for those who are care experienced, carers, or from military or traveller backgrounds, and we hope this in turn will support the intentions identified in the 2020 Skills Plan.

It is also of great benefit that many of our lecturing staff are often practising in their industry or employment sector, which means they can make direct and current links to practice within the classroom delivery. This also means they can effectively support students with work-based learning and assessment requirements, and in engaging with workplace supervisors. Our Health programmes require staff to have current practise in nursing or care roles, and many of our Art and creative staff work alongside their own creative practice or businesses, which also allows them to

share valuable knowledge and insights regarding professional practice, business start-up, and entrepreneurship.

*'I have achieved a lot on the course. Modules were well delivered and the tutors work in those fields so it was easy to link theory to practice.'* NSS 2021 (franchised)

*'Teaching has been excellent with good feedback and enthusiasm. Good links to practice.'* NSS 2021

The college has also continued to support our staff delivering Foundations Degrees in Health, Education and Early Years, to build in time in their schedules to make work place visits to students, which enable staff to understand their work environment, and to discuss their needs with those mentors or colleagues supporting them with their professional development. We find these visits valuable and key to development of relationships with our students, and employers, as well as providing opportunities for recruitment. Relationships built with Swindon schools mean that they support their workforce in participating in our courses in FdA Educational Practice, and BA Education and Lifelong Learning, sometimes resulting in at least one student per year group studying with us from one school. In a recent questionnaire to schools who are supporting their staff to attend these programmes, the following examples are comments made by Heads and qualified teachers, demonstrate the value that is placed on the provision here, and how this directly improves practice.

When asked 'How is the student's study at HE level evident within their practice?' the following responses were made:

*'[Student name] takes the skills from the course and assignments and applies them to her practice. Currently, [student name] is employed as an unqualified teacher, and has grown so much since completing her Foundation Degree, and currently teaching a class. What [student name] has learnt has been invaluable in supporting her in school.'*

*(Comment from school on BA Education & Lifelong Learning student)*

When asked 'Do they feel that higher education qualifications are beneficial to staff (HE Student) undertaking the role that they hold in the school setting?'

*"HE education qualifications, in my opinion, allows staff the chance to learn and progress which enhances their performance and knowledge within the classroom. This benefits the children, the school but most importantly the student as it gives them a sense of self, knowing that their learning is helping others to achieve through knowledge and support."*

*(Comment on FdA Educational Practice (Year 2) student)*

HND's which do not have a requirement for work-based learning visits do have strong links within their sector, or through particular employers who provide guest lectures or other experiences for our HE students. Students in our Creative Media (TV and film) benefit from many such experiences, which are vital in providing breadth and depth of skills development and understanding of the possibilities of employment that graduates may find.

The Managing Director and owner of Sandstorm Films, approached Creative Media staff, offering to come in and give a guest lecture which comprised of a masterclass, workshop and Q&A. Since then the college and Sandstorm have forged and developed a strong partnership, which has led to further guest lectures from Sandstorm staff, educational visits by large groups of students to Sandstorm's extensive studio facilities just outside Swindon. Students have also been given work

experience opportunities, which in many cases have led to paid freelance work and full-time employment.

In order to support our students to secure employment and develop themselves as graduates, we are using the graduate capital model of five pillars to underpin our development work in this area; social, psychological, human, identity and cultural, and it is suggested by Tomlinson (2017) that graduate capital and graduate employability can be linked. We understand that our students may have low confidence and low aspiration, and this varies across our provision. Our younger cohorts may have little experience of the industry or sector context in which they are studying, but are hoping to gain employment after their studies. Many of our more mature students are studying alongside their established careers/roles and are seeking to develop themselves to further their positions and secure pay increases. We know that there is much more that our students gain from studying higher education here, than subject knowledge and are working together to ensure that we support students to achieve these gains, in addition to providing value in terms of experience and outcomes.

The principles of Graduate Capital have been introduced to our HE staff, and we are working together to embed these principles across our provision. To date we have increased input around careers advice, applying for further study, personal statements, and since their recent appointment, we have also introduced one to one mentoring with our HE Outreach and Transitions Officer for those students who may experience barriers to entry to Higher Education. Support in these areas is also being provided for existing students wishing to access higher level study, making a transition to a University campus, perhaps for a final year or Masters programme, after studying HND or Degree programmes here.

Our CECOS partner uses an online study skills programme, in recognition that their students are often returning to study as mature students, and that English may be their second language, in order to give them the skills and knowledge needed for study, in addition to the support with academic skills taking place as part of their course. Our Swindon cohorts also have access to Study Skills information through our Library Moodle site, and other resources provided by programme teams, or awarding universities. However, we recognise that some students have had a considerable time out of education when joining our HE programmes and so we are planning to run Study Skills Modules this year face to face to those starting HE in September, in addition to developing study skills packages and other packages as tutorial modules, which will be available electronically. We believe this will give our students a good start to their studies, and improve confidence and engagement, which will ultimately improve their outcomes.

The college understands that in order to improve student outcomes, we need to monitor these, and also to understand the variables which can impact on outcomes. One of the ways we can ensure our understanding of how the students' experience of teaching learning and assessment can affect the student outcomes is to consider students evaluation of the Modules/Units. These provide the teaching team with information that they can use to adapt delivery and content, but are also valuable in understanding to what extent the delivery of the subject, and preparation for assessment correlates with the results at Exam Board. Module/Unit convenors then produce a summary report including their own reflection on the delivery, and add the profile of student outcomes for the Module/Unit. Thus, members of the Exam Board are able to examine the staff and student experience of the Module/Unit when reviewing student outcomes, including average grades for the Module/Unit and the range of marks awarded. This can then influence any changes to delivery of content, additional support, or adjustments to the timeline of delivery, in order to improve the outcomes from the Module/Unit moving forward.

Our student population is diverse, and reflects a range of needs in terms of students with disabilities, including neurodiversity, physical and sensory impairments, and Specific Learning needs (SpLD). The college ensures that the support it provides takes account of current developments in practise, some of which are driven by policy or sector change as a result of reports of student negative experiences, for example. Recent updates to practise by our University partner have also been embedded throughout our college practises. All HE Programme Leaders took part in a development session to ensure that they understand the potential consequences of failing to recognise and act on a student need. This recent directive supports them to be proactive in adjusting assessment methods/requirements and/or deadlines in agreement with individual students as part of their Individual Support Plan (ISP). Students can then complete assessment through a method more suitable to their individual needs, reducing anxiety and supporting mental health difficulties by removing the additional barriers resulting from application processes such as Mitigating Circumstances, in such cases. The new ISP's are a more developed document, which involves the student, the Study Support Officer, and/or college Nurse, and the teaching team. This enables a greater understanding among staff and in documenting the individual student need and agreed strategies for support both within, and outside of the teaching time, ensures needs are met in all elements of their time spent studying, and whilst in the college environment.

### Personalised learning environment

The benefits of a smaller class size is that teaching teams are able to get to know students as individuals. This means students have more time with our lecturers, both within the classroom and through individual support. Within the class environment, students develop working and supportive relationships with both staff and their peers, which makes them feel part of a community. Students' report that they feel able to express their views and opinions in class, and that these are listened to.

*'We have good open discussions in our group and lessons, in a safe space' SEF BA Education & Lifelong Learning 2022/23*

*'Very safe family feeling in class with classmates. Very comfortable attending' SEF HND Public Services 2022/23*

*'Students feel a sense of belonging as a group, and like being a small group' SEF FdA Early Years 2022/23*

*'Students always encourage and support one another' SEF FdSc Health & Social Care 2022/23*

The college utilises an internal secure platform to ensure that any student issues are communicated effectively. Pro-monitor allows staff to student communication, but also staff to staff. It is the latter than can ensure that members of the teaching team are aware of any barriers the student is facing to their attendance, engagement and achievement, so that departments who can offer practical or pastoral support can engage with them. This initial approach is supported with face-to-face meetings with the student and can have a positive impact on continuation and completion. This initial step to engage the student in support, can also be followed up with formal letters from the HE office should the student not attend or re-engage with the support on offer.

Tutors and Programme Leaders understand their students and can provide support tailored to their needs. Tutorials take the form of academic mentoring for particular Modules/Units. This is critical to checking students' progress in their learning of the subject matter, but also in making sure they are progressing well towards the assessment, and giving additional support where needed.

Staff will also have personal tutorials with the students on their programme, and this is a more rounded discussion of their progress, identifying and pastoral needs, and signposting to further

help as appropriate. The college has a Wellbeing team, which students can utilise to discuss any personal or pastoral matters, and students may be referred to the college Counselling services.

*'Personal tutorials with the tutor are very helpful' SEF BA Education & Lifelong Learning 2022/23*

*'Our feelings are validated and listened to' SEFBA Education & Lifelong Learning 2022/23*

*'Tutorials [...] very helpful to catch up on maths/engineering science topics, and develop a better understanding' SEF HNC General/Electrical Engineering 2022/23*

Our students are diverse in age, and many have lots of challenges in their personal lives during their studies. In some cases, these challenges involve serious personal health matters, caring for others, and bereavement. We understand that these challenges impact on students ability to continue to study, and this is why we work to ensure that, tutors, support staff, and all involved in the students journey can offer support, not just through mechanisms for extension through Mitigating Circumstances, but with support that gives students confidence that they can complete.

*'Lecturers have been very supportive throughout the course, feedback and one-on-one support has always been available if it has been needed. During the course, I have had several personal challenges, which have been supported by lecturers, which in turn enabled me to carry on with my learning.' NSS Comment 2021*

### Progression

The data provided on our full-time students shows we were 2.7% below benchmark overall, with 57.1% against a benchmark of 59.8%. Part time data was insufficient in volume, and therefore not displayed.

The data provided shows students taught by the college were 61.1% against a benchmark of 62.4%, which is 59.8% in line with benchmark, and 7.7% materially above benchmark. Of our partnership provision, 45.6% is against a benchmark of 47%, which is 42.4 in line with benchmark and 18% materially above benchmark.

Data provided for this section is less robust, and there is even less statistical certainty when looking at split indicators. However, we can see that when examining ABC Quintile 1, that is 51.9% against a benchmark of 45.7%, and 74.2% is materially above benchmark.

This area of overall data also reflects a limited number of students due to relatively small provision, and response rates in the Graduate Outcomes Survey.

In 2017/18 New College had a survey population of 125, 36% of whom completed the survey, with 6% only partially completing. This made a total response rate of 41%. Swindon College had a survey population of 110, 22% of whom completed the survey, with 2% partially completing. A total response rate of 24%.

In 2018/19 the survey population dropped considerably with New College having a survey population of 75, 47% of whom completed, and 3% partially completed the survey, but with a better response of 50%. Swindon College had a 36% response rate (6% only partially completed) out of a potential 85 students eligible.

In 2019/20 of the 215 student's eligible at New College a total of 48% responded, with 6% only partially completing the survey.

The Graduate Outcomes Survey is measuring our students' progression in employment or study fifteen months after finishing their studies, as well as asking broader questions on how study contributed to student's educational/career positions at that time. We know that many of the students who study here will benefit from a '2 + 1' model, whereby either they study a Foundation



Degree, or Higher National Diploma (HND) at Level 5, before going on to 'top-up' their studies to Level 6 with a final year either studied here, or with a University provider elsewhere.

We have previously discussed that our students may come into our programmes from a lower starting point, and understand that for some their confidence levels are low due to a range of factors such as negative previous experiences of education, being out of education for a considerable time, or having other learning difficulties, or personal challenges. Often a two-year programme is more attractive for such students, knowing that they still have opportunity to continue their studies, should they wish to, which is also a positive.

This '2+1' model suits our student cohorts and our intent to develop their professional and practice competence towards employment or career progression. This is because our Foundation Degree offer and Higher National Diploma's allow students to develop their academic knowledge alongside their competence in their chosen sector of employment, building the skills and behaviours, which will help them in their career journey.

We know that some of our students grow in confidence and ability thanks to the support and input of our academic and support staff who work together to remove as many barriers as possible for our students.

*'???! Absolutely a wonderful gem of a human being! Supported me and all my fellow classmates throughout our university experience and guided us each individually onto our next steps, I truly am thankful I had someone like him/her to guide me through my university career he/she is worth his/her weight in gold!' NSS 2022*

*The teachers have a different variety of knowledge, which really helps. They also worked in the industry so they're really helpful with work experience. Not just to teach but also with how you work. NSS 2020*

For many of the students surveyed as part of our progression data, securing a higher or professional role (as defined in the 'high skilled occupations' measure) is more of a long-term aim. Many of our Foundation Degree students in Health and Social Care, are looking to secure Band 4 roles working within their current disciplines, or moving from Assistant Practitioner roles into Nursing. This impacts on the outcomes for this programme in that the programme is specifically written to support academic development and practice in current roles, as well as allowing direct entry into the Universities own Nursing programmes. However, the college sees this as a positive in terms of the support this provides for the increase in roles in this sector locally as discussed previously. It also supports recruitment into Nursing, by building and developing the student in the first year to have the confidence to progress in to a Nursing career.

*'This course will provide me with the qualifications needed to better my career in healthcare. Teachers have been kind and supportive. I have made some life-long friends along the way.' NSS 2022*

In 2022, we added another progression route in the form of a 'top-up'. The BSc Professional Development in Health & Social Care, is designed to provide a progression opportunity for those students who did not want to go into Nursing, but wanted to take their studies further to level 6, and continue to work in their current role, or to look for supervisory or management opportunities within the Health and Care sector.

As included in the section discussing Educational Gains for our students, we know that our students progress in their careers, and will benefit from the knowledge skills and behaviours they are learning whilst studying HE at the college, and that we provide a valued local alternative to going 'away to university' for a lot of our cohort.

*'Yes, we have had many students come through New College Swindon and so many have gone on to be amazing teachers. These courses give students the support they need.'*  
(Comment from Questionnaire to schools- response regarding BA Education & Lifelong Learning student)

This is supported by our internal progression for this programme in 2021-22 students achieved on the BA Education & Lifelong Learning, and 11 of those progressed onto Initial Teacher Training programmes (ITT) onto Primary and onto Secondary education.

Also, 83% of the students studying the FdA Educational Practice progressed onto the BA top-up programme in 2021-22, demonstrating that they value our internal progression.

Since merger in 2020 brought the two college providers in Swindon together, we have made progress in the development of higher education both in terms of the breadth of our offer and the facilities and resources available, particularly with the addition of the Institute of Technology. This progress will continue, as we build on opportunities to do further work with employers and stakeholders to provide study options to those seeking to improve their careers or get into new employment.

We have an important role to play in improving the low participation in higher education in Swindon, and in reducing the skills gaps in the locality, and some of our plans through Access and Participation measures, will also support these goals. We will continue in our intent to provide our students with the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed for individual development and success. We remain committed to our purpose of 'Better lives through learning'.

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