University Centre Peterborough (UCP) TEF 2023 submission

Provider Context

UCP is a New Provider

UCP was formed in 2007 as a joint venture with ARU and Peterborough Regional College (and became a new provider in its own right in 2019). On the 1st August 2020, Peterborough Regional College and New College Stamford merged to form the Inspire Education Group (IEG). University Centre Peterborough (UCP) exited a franchise agreement with Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) and became a wholly owned subsidiary of IEG with all the Peterborough and Stamford HE provision moved to sit under it. Consequently, HESA19 only comprised of new HE students as Peterborough and Stamford closed off their HE data in their respective ILR's. As the TEF reviews data on a 4-year time scale, only the new students are accounted for in the UCP data for 2019-20 (denominator of 190 students for outcomes). Due to limited data our submission is optional and is supplemented by UCP internal data and HESES returns. As a new provider UCP should be seen in terms of the entirety of its provision as indicated in table 1 and this in turn reflects the years covered by the NSS (21-22 has a denominator of 210 students) which are discussed within our reflections on student experience. In 2021/22 UCP had a student population of 707 and in 21/22 a population of 774.

Table 1 (HESES 2022)

2021/22	Full-time (including sandwich)				Part-time				Total
	Postgraduate	First degree	OUG	Total	Postgraduate	First degree	OUG	Total	
Medicine & dentistry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subjects allied to medicine	0	13	0	13	0	0	0	0	13
Biological & sport sciences	0	48	8.6	56.6	0	1	1	2	58.6
Psychology	0	14	0	14	0	0	0	0	14
Veterinary sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agriculture, food & related studies	0	0	8.4	8.4	0	0	0	0	8.4
Physical sciences	0	29	3	32	0	0	1	1	33
Mathematical sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering & technology	0	0	0	0	0	4	17	21	21
Computing	0	33	8	41	0	1	0	1	42
Geography, earth & environmental studies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Architecture, building & planning	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	24	24
Social sciences	0	62	6.3	68.3	0	1	0	1	69.3
Law	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business & management	0	59	3	62	0	1	0	1	63
Media, journalism & communications	0	36	2	38	0	0	0	0	38
Language & area studies	0	11	0	11	0	0	0	0	11
Historical, philosophical & religious studies	0	13	0	13	0	0	0	0	13
Design, & creative & performing arts	0	10	268	278	0	0	0	0	278
Education & teaching	0	21	48.7	69.7	5	1	12	18	87.7
Combined & general studies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	349	356	705	5	9	55	69	774

UCP (ARU franchised), Peterborough and Stamford colleges had extensive experience of delivering taught and subcontracted HE programmes. This is evidenced by both Stamford and UCP (as a connected franchised undertaking with ARU) being awarded TEF silver garnering many commendations around for example, the high level of academic support, course design, assessment practices, quality improvement mechanisms and academic challenge.

Outline of provision and modes of delivery

Both the IEG (IEG, 2021) and UCP strategic plans (UCP, 2022) set out our ambitions and key objectives to ensure we are able to meet the needs of the City of Peterborough, Stamford and the broader region. Students are at heart of all that we do and are integral to the decision-making process. Students and staff work in partnership to achieve personal and institutional success. As a smaller provider we value and celebrate the diversity of our student body and provide a personalised experience for our students during their academic journey. As detailed in our Access and Participation

Plan (APP) (UCP, 2022), we are committed to ensuring that under - represented groups within higher education are given high quality support to access and continue to achieve their goals.

UCP has two 'direct delivery' campuses in Stamford (Lincolnshire) and Peterborough (Cambridgeshire), offering a diverse portfolio of courses covering a range of subjects and rapidly developing specialisms in a number of local and national key areas. Our educational portfolio is constantly being reviewed and updated to take account of the aspirations of our students and the needs of the local, regional and national economy. We offer foundation degrees, full degrees, top ups and HND in conjunction with the Open University, Bishop Grosseteste University, Pearson and ARU. In addition to a focussed curriculum offer, we also carefully consider the mode of delivery offering full time courses with delivery over 1 or 2 days as well part-time options and the development of micro-credentials. This is particularly important to our students as many have work and caring commitments that they undertake alongside their studies.

We are a small but growing provider with 440 registered students in 19-20 jumping to 730 in 20-21 (Office for Students, 2022). Therefore, this allows us to have relatively small class sizes and adapt our pedagogical strategies and support to meet student needs. UCP recognise that "part-time education – whether at undergraduate or postgraduate level – is an extremely important element in higher education in this country" (Maguire, 2013), however only 9% of our student population are part-time with no data on the TEF dashboard. We assert this is due to being able to offer full time courses in either 1 or 2 days a week and maintain high quality experience and outcomes. The vast majority of the part-time students we have (71% of UCP PT students) are employed day release students on our engineering and construction course and Initial Teacher Training (Office for Students, 2022).

Sub-contracted delivery (partners)
Sub-contracted activity is a fundamental part of UCP provision and is formally approved by the Board of Governors. Through our longstanding partners Eastern School of Performing Arts (ESPA) and Addict Dance Academy we are able to offer high quality niche delivery of professional training programmes HNC/HND Performing Arts (Musical Theatre) and HND Performing Arts (Dance).

Addict Dance Academy is based in Leicester and has attracted increasing numbers of applicants which resulted in excellent conversion to enrolment and a significant increase in numbers (118 in 19/20 to 208 in 20/21). Addict have new and extensive studios at Imperial House, Leicester that helps draw applicants from all across the country and the Eire. Unlike UCP taught students, many of the Addict students are residential in halls and private accommodation. ESPA is based in Stamford and attracts students predominantly within the Group's geographical area. ESPA run an HNC that is marketed as a foundation year designed to develop skills in preparation for further study at prestigious theatre schools.

These partnerships are managed effectively by UCP and partner staff who ensure a high-quality student experience. UCP Monthly team meetings, termly curriculum programme reviews, AMR and audits help ensure and evidence the quality of provision and parity of experience for these students. External audits by Haines Watts and Pearson's Academic Management Review, validate the effectiveness of these partnerships quoting "exemplary collaboration" (Pearson, G Hargreaves, 2022).

Widening participation
UCP is a widening participation institution with a strong civic mission. The UCP catchment area is considered an HE 'cold-spot' (HEFCE, 2015) with the local authorities investing to address this concern. UCP was initially set up in 2007 to address the poor regional participation rate in higher education. Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire are both DFE Educational Investment Areas and UCP students are predominantly commuter students from these two areas. However, we also recruit from

Norfolk and Northamptonshire which are all also DFE Education Investment Areas and Fenlands and East Cambridgeshire which are Priority Education Investment Areas.

More than half of our students come from low participation neighbourhoods (Polar 1&2), which means they are either the first in their family to attend an HEI or hail from a community where going to university is very much the exception rather than the rule (UCP, 2022). As stated previously, the vast majority of our direct delivery students live at home while studying, with many having work and caring commitments. We also have a high proportion of mature students at UCP especially at the Peterborough Campus 68% (UCP, 2022), many of whom have jobs or have family or caring roles. This is not reflected at partner provision because of the professional nature of course being aimed at young students.

Ethnicity tends to reflect the local and distinct regional demographics of each campus and partner. The UCP Peterborough Campus has an above national average number of BAME students that reflects the local demographics. However, Stamford has a very low percentage of BAME students but again this reflects rural local demographics (UCP, 2022). Both campuses have a high proportion of students from 1st generation Eastern European heritage. Almost all of UCP direct delivery students are 'home' students and therefore one would expect ethnicity to more closely mirror local demographics than a residential university. It is also notable that some of the feeder courses and professions associated with our curriculum offer are overrepresented by white people for example in mental health care and counselling. However, much work is being done under our APP to broaden access for BAME to students to UCP.

The 20/21 access data in table 2 (UCP, 2022) shows that UCP Peterborough has 6.52% more students declaring a disability compared to all English providers in 18/19. Disaggregated, the percentage declaring a mental health condition is 48.15 % at Peterborough. COVID has amplified the need for mental health awareness and support. Resources such as the student support team and the HE Chaplaincy have been invaluable in addressing this. We are now confident that we are able to map and log this data to ensure early interventions and support are in place for these students. There is a substantial gap between Disabled and Non-Disabled groups accessing HE at UCP Stamford. Although the Stamford campus has identified a gap in access for this cohort it is believed that through further signposting, encouraging early and timely disclosures and the tailored recruitment practices at UCP this will be addressed.

Table 2

New enrolments (20/21)	UCP Peterborough 20/21	UCP Stamford 20/21	ALL UK HEIs 18/19	UCP Total
Disability	22.32%	13.57%	15.80%	18.20%
No Disability	77.68%	86.43%	84.20%	81.80%
Grand Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

UCP is cognisant of the fact that Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire have lower than average levels of attainment at level 4 and above and this is key to developing our mission. Greater Lincolnshire has specific challenges such as lower qualification levels, geographic disparity, and employment skills mismatches. Qualification attainment at all levels in Lincolnshire falls significantly behind the national average. For example, in the South Holland area, 19% of the population have a qualification at level 4+ compared to the national average of 43%. 18 % have no qualifications at all compared to 6.2% nationally (Greater Lincolnshire LEP, 2022).

Cambridgeshire has a geographical disparity in terms of level 4+ attainment. Peterborough and Fenland areas fall starkly behind other areas of the county and country. For example, 26.1% of residents in Peterborough have a level 4+ qualification, 40 percentage points lower than the share in Cambridge. Similarly, in Fenland, the share of residents with a degree-level qualification is 28.4% which is 8.5 percentage points below the national average. (Office for National Statistics, 2017)

Curriculum
To help inform and deliver our ambitions, we work with key business, community groups and educational stakeholders who are committed to developing higher education provision that responds to the challenges of the 21st Century and meets the needs of current and future students. Key for us is understanding our local community, their needs and aspirations, and   matching this to the needs of the local and regional labour market. This does not mean that some of our graduates do not go on to pursue their careers outside the region, just that many of our students have opted to study with us because they are tied here in one sense or another, whether through family or employment. For this reason, we have strong links with local employers and professional networks to ensure the currency of our offer, the authenticity of our assessment practices, and to maximise the opportunities for our graduates to progress into employment. UCP work with local businesses to understand local sector and occupational demand, and to provide higher-level qualifications that are accessible to local people. This has been the strength of HE in FE provision as we are able to draw on progression routes from level 2 and 3 in addition to a large apprenticeship delivery in meeting local employer needs.

UCP has a key role in the local skills strategy and engagement with employers. UCP attends a number of network meetings including Opportunity Peterborough, the Chamber of Commerce and BNI to explore local labour market intelligence that drives the content of the curriculum provision. A wide range of small, medium and large businesses are invited to review the curriculum content in a manner that will ensure sustainable employability skills are embedded in the teaching and learning. Many businesses act as guest speakers to promote employability and support employer-engagement. A growing number of businesses are now establishing summer placements with support from UCP to aid the recruitment shortages being seen across a number of sectors. Our Employability Hub and Course Leaders identify employers to be linked to individual modules, whether this is to provide degree content feedback, career advice, placements, interview support, or employment.

The UCP strategic plan (UCP, 2022) outlines our commitment to making a sustainable, socially responsible contribution to the economic development of the region, UK and global community. As part of this it defines what attributes a UCP student will develop that will result in academic and personal success with our specified Graduate Attributes (these are outlined in the student outcomes section).

Other Factors
Since registering as a new provider with the OfS in 2019, UCP has experienced two major challenges with a new provider opening in the city and, along with other HEIs, the pandemic.

Anglia Ruskin University Peterborough (ARUP) opened to new students in 2022-23. There is substantial investment from the Combined Authority for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough behind this venture and it opened with a state-of-the-art new riverside building. ARUP has positioned itself as a technical university and directly competes with us in our Business Management and Computer Science provision. We have struggled to retain staff in Business Management who have moved to ARUP. We anticipate that this impact will diminish as we each find our niche and specialist area but it has affected our student experience data on this programme. The 2020-21 NSS return for business, for example, was impacted by the fact that the curriculum leads for Business Management were moving over to ARUP. These staff have been replaced but they were highly experienced, long standing members of

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our academic community and their departure has inevitably impacted on the student experience in this subject area.

UCP, like all other providers in the sector, had to adapt to the pandemic and to switch to online delivery and support. We were helped in this endeavour by the fact that we moved to a new VLE platform before this period, so all staff had gone through intensive training for this in 2019. Given the demographic and characteristics of our students, it was inevitable that some of our students would find this an extremely challenging time and that UCP would be impacted more than other providers. Mature students in particular with jobs and families found this a particularly challenging time. This, to some extent, explains the anomalous response of the 31 and over cohort in our 20-21 NSS return which is below other cohorts. As our students are predominantly living at home they did not necessarily have the facilities to work from home (i.e. a reliable fast broadband connection, a separate space to work, or a computer) and have family and caring responsibilities. We attempted to mitigate this as much as we could by providing laptops / dongles to students and access to the campus for those students who were not able to work from home. We also enhanced our student support through the provision of online counselling and wellbeing services. It remains the case however that our students were disproportionately affected.

The Student Submission
The student submission was produced by the Student Officer and a student representative in consultation with the student body. They collaborated in the production of the submission providing their own and student body perspectives with support from UCP as apposite. The Student Officer and student representative sit on a variety of deliberative bodies within the institution and are well placed to comment on the breadth of the student experience.

Student Experience

Outstanding teaching, learning and assessment tailored to support our students
It is UCP's aim to ensure that all students have an excellent learning experience with staff and students having high expectations and aspirations to be successful. We aim to equip students at all stages of their journey to develop and fulfil their intellectual and personal potential. We believe that our NSS results show that our students' experience is excellent. Key to UCP's overarching approach and the embedding of outstanding teaching, learning and assessment is the UCP Teaching, Learning and Student Outcomes Strategy. This was further developed in 2020/ 2021 and refreshed for 2022 (UCP, 2022) based upon the learning from students, staff and sector experiences (in addition to educational research) of the previous 4 years. The purpose of this strategy is to support these aims and commit to promoting a culture of excellence in teaching, learning and student outcomes. By working in partnership with students, industry and colleagues, UCP aims to exceed the expectations for quality and standards of the UK Quality Code, ensuring we deliver an outstanding experience for our students. The principles of inclusion and fairness underpin our work on teaching, learning and assessment and a partnership approach is a key component in this strategy. The strategy supports the UCP (UCP, 2022) and IEG strategic priorities (IEG, 2021) and reflects UCP's KPIs. The Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Student Outcomes Strategy is underpinned by three pillars, aligned with guidance and regulations from the Office for Students (OfS), Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), Advance HE, Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and the UCP strategy. It provides an outline for the future direction of learning and teaching at UCP and how we set out to meet our aims. We measure the success of this strategy through a series of appropriate KPIs rooted in, but not limited to the measures that are required by the OfS and QAA.

The three pillars all contain reference to, and guidance in, the role of teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) in achieving excellence, student engagement and in valuing our people. These
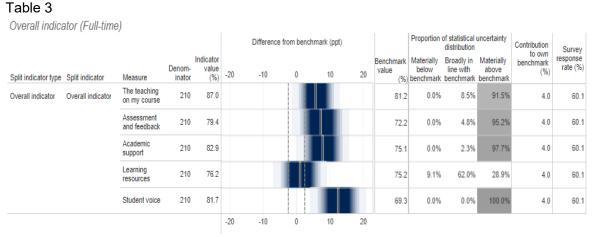
include, but are not limited to: co-creation of curriculum and innovative teaching and learning, using external expertise, supporting evidence-based reflection and building communities of practice.

We have embedded outstanding TLA practices that are tailored to our students' success in terms of learning, attainment and progression. Our NSS metrics are all 'materially above benchmark' (Office for Students, 2022) and highlight our excellent student satisfaction with respect to teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) for students registered at University Centre Peterborough (see table 3). This is evident in the excellent classification profile as detailed in the outcomes section. It is also representative of UCP's sharp focus on the quality of TLA, and the subsequent impact this priority has on the experience of our HE students. UCP employs a clear and consistent approach to the planning, monitoring, quality assurance, good practice sharing and further development of its teaching and assessment practices. The process by which we implement these practices, encourage staff to innovate in response to student feedback, research, external expertise and course metrics.

At the point of merger, UCP began moving the majority of its programme validation from Anglia Ruskin University to the Open University (OU) in dialogue with external academic expertise, professional bodies, and student feedback. The rationale for this was the autonomy this would give us to design programmes from the ground up permeating every aspect of our students' academic experience including the TLA strategies. This resulted in our programmes being able to reflect current research around impactful approaches to TLA. It is also important that these TLA strategies are transparent to students. Therefore, they are set out within each Programme Specification and each module plainly outlines the TLA strategies, the learning outcomes and feedback opportunities. Programme and Module specifications, alongside other learning resources, are available to all students via our VLE 'Canvas'.

Students on programmes validated by other HEI / awarding bodies also benefit from updated programme content including approaches to TLA. For example, UCP has a productive, collaborative partnership with Bishop Grosseteste University for some of its programmes where our staff and student voice are both heard and acted upon. We also have many students (especially partners) on Pearson Higher National provision. Although we don't have the same control over module specifications we do work extremely closely with their external examiners to ensure the professional and academic currency of teaching, assessment and learning resources. This is reflected in Pearson External Examiner Reports (Pearson, S Jewers, 2022).

This attention to TLA is reflected in our overall NSS returns for Teaching On My Course, Assessment and Feedback, Academic Support, Learning Resources and Student voice. All areas are materially above or above the benchmark (table 3). In the latest NSS 'Teaching on my course' has an indicator of 88% approximately 7% above the benchmark. Assessment and feedback achieved an overall score of just over 80% which is approximately 9% above the benchmark. Both scores are improvements on our 2021 results which were 86% and 77% respectively (Office for Students, 2022).

Table 3

Overall indicator (Full-time)

Split indicator type	Split indicator	Measure	Denom-inator	Indicator value (%)	Difference from benchmark (ppt)	Benchmark value (%)	Materially below benchmark	Broadly in line with benchmark	Materially above benchmark	Contribution to own benchmark (%)	Survey response rate (%)
Overall indicator	Overall indicator	The teaching on my course	210	87.0		81.2	0.0%	8.5%	91.5%	4.0	60.1
		Assessment and feedback	210	79.4		72.2	0.0%	4.8%	95.2%	4.0	60.1
		Academic support	210	82.9		75.1	0.0%	2.3%	97.7%	4.0	60.1
		Learning resources	210	76.2		75.2	9.1%	62.0%	28.9%	4.0	60.1
		Student voice	210	81.7		69.3	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	4.0	60.1

We are cognisant of the need to disaggregate these scores where data is available.
For example, it is very positive that we scored 13.5% above the benchmark in Social Sciences and have insight for example, from annual monitoring reviews and module evaluations as to the good practice on this course. However, we are also sharply focussed on areas that have not performed as well for example, we are approximately 9% below this in Business Management. As noted in our context, we lost a number of staff to a new competitor in the city during the 21/22 census and we believe that this adversely affected the NSS return in the Business Management subject area (Office for Students, 2022).

The NSS dashboard gives UCP access to non-public facing data that did not meet the numerator / denominator threshold and was therefore supressed. These all performed well with overall satisfaction i.e. Computing 100%, Psychosocial studies 100%, Sports and Exercise Science 100% and our partner provision HND Performing Arts Dance 90.6% all scoring significantly above benchmark and represented improvement on 2021.

In relation to Assessment and Feedback, Social Sciences again performed well at approximately 20% above benchmark (90%) and Sports Science at 16% above benchmark. Both represented improvement on the 20/21 NSS score.

These encouraging scores were achieved despite the pandemic and the moving of all teaching online for significant periods during it. Alongside student feedback, we take this as strong evidence that the measures put in place to support students during Covid were highly effective and these were discussed and negotiated with students at Student Council and Student Engagement and Learning Committee (SELT). The most successful of the innovations have since been integrated into our TLA practice. For example, social science lecturers found through informal feedback that students really liked short asynchronous lectures that could be accessed via their VLE in relation to their dissertation/major project. This enabled them to devote more time to their independent research. Dissertation delivery also was switched to a blended model. Internal data indicates that this resulted in increased attendance and improved classification profiles and has now been embedded as current best practice.

Social Sciences leads the way in areas of TLA good practice and many of our best practices have started as innovations in this faculty. The importance of good formative feedback to student attainment is proven (William, 2019). As identified in Module Evaluation feedback (UCP, 2021), innovations in teaching and assessment practice on a research methods module, led to improved formative feedback. This was achieved by formative feedback weekly submissions via our VLE and tutor feedback being provided promptly within 5 days allowing iterative improvements before final submission. As well as improving subject knowledge this also helped develop students' reflective skills and also manage their submission and time by "chunk" writing, Students were developing a tool-kit of skills that prepared them for further modules and alleviate some of the associated stress with deadlines.

As stated previously, partnerships are integral to our strategy and UCP work collaboratively and purposefully with Addict and ESPA with reference to TLA. In addition to regular partner meetings and audits, Addict and ESPA staff are included on UCP deliberative bodies and staff training, allowing best TLA practice to flow both ways. Partners provide high quality TLA, for example, External Examiner feedback highlights "excellent practice in relation to innovative forms of assessment evidence" and that "The quality of assessment feedback was exemplary" (Pearson, S Jewers, 2022). Our partners employ high profile professionally active tutors to deliver specialist elements of training and input on assessments alongside partner permanent staff. Student focus groups consistently highlight the value the students place upon the industry relevance of the course alongside the high-quality training imparted by the industry professionals

Our course content and delivery engage inspire, stretch and challenge our students

The UCP mission, co-created with students, clearly outlines our approach which is to "engage, enable and empower students to meet the challenges of the future" (UCP, 2022). From induction, a range of different strategies are used to ensure that every student understands the learning opportunities available to them through UCP and their responsibility to engage with the learning opportunities provided and to take ownership their learning experience. UCP staff aim to equip and support students with the knowledge, skills and experiences to flourish and continue to learn in a complex world through high quality TLA. We encourage students to actively engage in and commit to their learning by encouraging student's responsibility for their own learning while providing dedicated opportunities for students to engage with academic support activities (whether online and/or on-campus face to face) to supplement learning and development of competences.

UCP has actively engaged students in the co-creation of curriculum and teaching and learning, for example, in recent validation and revalidation events. This ensures that our programmes meet the needs of our students that may vary from those at other institutions. UCP is a teaching focussed institution and UCP academic staff are experienced in active pedagogical approaches that are inclusive, personalised and provide individual stretch and challenge.

In our last NSS (NSS, 21-22), just under 90% of our students found their course intellectually stimulating, while just under 85% said that their course had challenged them to achieve their best work. This is commendable against the benchmarks of 80% and 76.5% respectively highlighting the high expectations UCP staff have of all students and that they are encouraged to 'think hard'. UCP TLA has a strong emphasis on application of learning irrespective of curriculum area. 89% of students said that their course had provided them with opportunities to apply what they have learnt. These results are primarily achieved through our innovative TLA strategies that prioritise active learning encouraging students to play an important part in their own learning process (Cambridge Assessment, n.d.). Students build knowledge and understanding in response to opportunities provided by their lecturer. Our skilled lecturers allow deeper levels of stretch and challenge by providing learning environments, opportunities, interactions, tasks and instruction that foster deep learning. Many of these practices achieved commendations in our recent rounds of programme validations as detailed later in this document.

Curriculum industry relevance is imperative for our students in terms of progression but also in how it aids student engagement through the curriculum. UCP actively and wholeheartedly engages with external expertise to achieve this. Close links with employers, professional statutory bodies and other partners ensures the currency of the curriculum and the authenticity of the assessment. This is particularly true of our Higher National in Engineering and Construction provision where students often develop projects in relation to their employer needs. As stated in the provider context section, the institution embarked on a wide-ranging validation process as we moved to a new academic partner the Open University. Time and again in validation events we were commended for our partnerships with the local community and our engagement with local employers. The validation panel for BA Psychosocial Studies, BA Sociology, for example, commended the institution for its "effective Industry and Civic Partnerships links which support and develop the curriculum". (The Open University, 2021). Similarly the validation panel for the BA Hons Criminology programme commended UCPs "excellent local partnerships" (The Open University, 2020) and the validation panel for Computer Science singled out the "Institution's strong links with industry which supports the curriculum" (The Open University, 2020) These industry links enable our students to test, expand and apply their learning in professional settings whether through placement, live brief opportunities or visiting lecturers.

Another way in which we ensure the currency of our programmes is through links with Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). This ensures our students gain professional accreditation and

engage with networks to enhance career opportunities as they progress from their degree. While only two of our programmes are accredited with PSRBs, Business Management & Early Childhood studies, in the Open University Validation process PSRBs were given equal weight with QAA subject benchmarks in the course design to ensure that professional skills and competencies were embedded in the course. The Business Management programme is accredited by the Chartered Management Institute and the Business Management with Marketing pathway is accredited by the Chartered Institute of Marketing. The BSc Management Accounting pathway references the professional standards set out by the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) and the Human Resources Management references those set up by the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD). The Early Years Teachers' Standards and Early Childhood Graduate Practitioner Competencies (Department of Education) are embedded in the BA(Hons) Early Childhood Studies programme. Other programmes like Counselling, Journalism and History & Archaeology reference PSBRs leaving open the opportunity to accredit these programmes at a later stage.

Student voice is important in learners remaining engaged in their learning through active meaningful engagement in TLA, curriculum development and the institutional ethos and mission. As detailed later in this document, UCP has extensive opportunities for student involvement in their learning in for example in UCP deliberative bodies, Student Council, Course representation and the Student Officer. This was something singled out for commendation by the Open University validation panels. For example, the validation panel for English and Creative Writing programmes singled out "the measures that are in place for listening to the student voice." (The Open University, 2021) The panel for Sports & Exercise Science highlighted "UCP's engagement and interaction with the students, through different committees, including the Student Council." (The Open University, 2021)

We recognise that student wellbeing is very important to engagement and provide the support services that underpin this through our Student Support Hub as well as further academic support. We strive, with the help of student engagement, to maintain the optimum wellbeing of the student population by providing the appropriate tools and support to allow them to engage productively with the learning experience.

We use research and innovation to contribute to an outstanding academic experience for students

As outlined previously, the majority of our taught programmes, with a few exceptions, were validated with our new academic partner, the Open University, between 2020 and 2022. This rigorous process offered an opportunity for a root and branch review of our curriculum programmes, delivery and pedagogical approaches. Our aim was to improve on the already high-quality experience in relation to the needs of our students, community and local industry. The ethos around validation was that of co-creation involving external academics, students, UCP staff and local industry with cognisance of national bodies such as QAA, Advance HE and the OfS. By broadening the team involved in the validations we were able to provide a holistic approach to ensuring that programmes met all the needs of our students. This also helped also ensure synergy with OfS, IEG, UCP and local strategies, plans and research. For example, as UCP is in an HE 'cold spot' the UCP Access and Participation Plan (APP) (UCP, 2022) provided key data, insight, research and strategies in relation to our students through their 'learner journey' at UCP. It should be noted that students, academics and support staff form part our APP team and so can help close the loop in terms of the impact of these validations upon access, continuation, completion and progression. A particular focus of the validations in relation to underrepresented groups was our review of module assessments. Research informed our approach to this with reference to the interrelationship of the three core elements of assessment literacy, assessment feedback and assessment design (Evans, 2016).

Another emphasis was placed on industry and professional experience to ensure that programmes remained current and assessment practices were authentic. A key feature of our programmes are their links to industry and broader civil society - a feature frequently cited for commendation in our programme validations. Local employers and partners provide opportunities for our students to practice and apply their learning for example digital arts students working with Cadbury's on a design project. Our performing arts partners are particularly adept at using their extensive professional contacts to enhance and develop the students' professional practice. In addition to robust professional practice modules, students also have the opportunity to audition for national touring events such as 'Can You Dance' as well as exclusive opportunities with West End productions such as Wicked.

While we are a teaching led institution, research remains a key part of our offer at the University Centre and staff are encouraged and supported to undertake research and engage in scholarly activity in TLA. This activity is captured in an annual teaching and learning conference that is held in the University Centre and both UCP and partner staff are invited. The focus of each conference varies dependent upon mutually identified needs but this offers conference staff the opportunity to present elements of their own research and practice and this is taken up and rolled out across other programmes. In recent years we have seen initiatives on peer mentoring, formative assessments and working with SMEs start as presentations at the Higher Education Teaching and Learning Conference. External keynote speakers are identified in relation to the focus of the conference and staff and student feedback.

Research is at the heart of our offer, with students being encouraged to undertake primary / lab-based research where appropriate and/or research with real world applications.   Much of this research is community-facing and originates from a process of knowledge exchange with local partners. For example, our sports scientists assess the effectiveness of a training programme for a local football team or criminology students would assess the effectiveness of a youth mentoring programme. Students undertake major projects in their final year of study and these are often supported by a research methods, research and development module at level 5. Students from humanities, social sciences and media have the opportunity to present their research proposals to staff and external stakeholders at an annual dissertation conference. Digital arts and Sports science students convene capstone events like poster presentations where partners and stakeholders are invited in to see their work. There are also opportunities for staff and students to get involved in community research or action-orientated research outside their programme of study. In social sciences, for example, we have links with a range of organisations like Citizens Advice (Peterborough), Nene Park Trust, a range of local academy trusts, schools and colleges that provide opportunities for community engagement and action-oriented research. In 2019/20 we were chosen as the designated research partner of Peterborough City Council, to conduct community-based research to inform their integrated communities' strategy. Social science staff and students worked together on a range of different projects and students undertook work as paid research interns conducting interviews and focus groups. The findings of their research was published on the council website and fed straight into their integrated communities strategy (Peterborough City Council , 2019).

The University Centre also has a strong civic mission and is engaged in a range of civic engagement activities. We want our graduates to be able to participate fully in the life of the city and the broader region. Principal amongst these is the University Centres' pivotal role in establishing a civic alliance in the city - Peterborough Citizens (Peterborough Citizens, n.d.). Civic alliances are alliances of schools, colleges, faith communities, universities, trade unions and third sector organisations that work together for social justice and the common good. To establish the alliance, UCP seconded one of its staff to work as a development organiser for a day a week. Peterborough Citizens founded in November 2022 with 19 civil society institutions in membership with the CEO of IEG now elected as the chair. Membership opens up training in community organising to staff and students and opportunities to participate in social justice campaigns with other organisations in the city and the broader region. To

date staff and students have participated in campaigns on young people's mental health, street safety and refugee welcome. The initiative enables staff and students to acquire key leadership skills and build a professional network in the city and the broader region.

UCP was one of only 16 English HEIs to receive employability related OfS Challenge Fund Grant of £300k over a three-year period (2019-2022). This funding enabled the creation of an Employability Hub, recruitment of staff, creation of a "Career & Employer ready" online course, embedding of degree modules that focused upon employment, and a far greater awareness of how the university should work to enable increased alliances with small and medium enterprises (SME). Its purpose is to enhance the employability of our students by building links with local employers. The service provides tailored support and advice to students and organises in-semester internships and networking events for students. The Hub also works with staff teams to organise visiting speakers and has its own visiting speaker programme. In the last two years it has organised over 60 visiting speakers and 79% of our final year students received bespoke support from the Employability Hub. Since 2019 122 employers have been engaged in the design and delivery of activities on campus ranging from networking events, to career fairs, to conferences (McAllister, 2020). The Employability Hub also provides employability support at level 5 for all undergraduate programmes which following revalidation have a work-based / career module.

Work with SMEs significantly decreased during the pandemic and we were required to develop new and innovative ways of engaging with employers for the benefit of our students. UCP now provides more flexibility in the ways the SMEs can engage such as online meetings, forums and virtual tours. Many have decided to continue this post-Covid which has resulted in improved student engagement and opportunities. As identified the funding was to support the establishment of a dedicated Employability Hub for students to enhance their professional and transferrable skills, provide dedicated Employer Liaison staff and to ensure that effective communication between students and employers is maintained. The introduction of a new employer/student steering group ensured that the project was truly impactful for both parties. One area that became apparent was the change in skills required during/after Covid, with employer focus moving to resilience, media/marketing skills and digital literacy. This resulted in UCP revising our training and support so that students and staff were able to respond to these new challenges. This allowed students to engage with local businesses without creating restrictions for businesses or individual groups. The TEF dashboard progression data supports the assertion that the Employability Hub offers real value for our students with progression being above benchmark.

UCP provide outstanding support for staffs' professional development and excellent academic practice is embedded across the provider
UCP is primarily teaching-focussed and has no ambition in the short to medium term to develop a profile as a research institution and enter the Research Excellence Framework. It ensures the currency of its curriculum and delivery by recruiting staff with strong professional profiles and significant industry experience. UCP fosters collaborative relationships with external expertise in order ensure excellent academic practice. This was exemplified in the recent validation of our programmes as detailed earlier. Notwithstanding this, a significant proportion of our staff are research active and the University Centre has a strong track record on support for staff professional development. All UCP staff are encouraged to apply for funding to support their post-graduate studies. The selection process, each May, is guided by business need and staff aspiration. This scholarship feeds directly into course material and course design. For example, in Engineering, a staff PhD candidate is investigating developing forecasting and classification AI machine learning models to predict connected vehicle collisions. This expertise is inputting on a module design around AI / Machine for the planned BSc Engineering the top up. In addition, both academic and support staff are encouraged to apply and supported in fully funded HEA Fellowships. The OfS Challenge Fund enables staff to develop collaborative research partnerships

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. Industrial secondments and partnerships are also supported for staff ensuring their currency that ultimately benefits students.

UCP is also currently promoting the Research Further, the new Association of Colleges and NCFE initiative which encourages and supports college-centred research. This commitment to professional development was recognised in the recent validations where support for staff professional development received commendations in a number of subject areas. In the Sports and Exercise Science validation, for example, the panel praised the institution's "commitment to higher level study and continued professional development of the staff team" (The Open University, 2021). Similarly, the panel for the computer science validation commended "the Institution's support for staff CPD and the staff's willingness to engage with CPD" (The Open University, 2020). As outlined, UCP supports staff through its Higher Education Conferences and staff development sessions each semester, focusing on pedagogical enhancement. The focus of the 21/22 conference was digital learning, well-being and blended approaches building on the innovations that worked well under lockdown and were positively received by the students. We assert this is also borne out in the metrics of student experience on our programmes. Our above benchmark NSS returns on Teaching on My Course referenced earlier particularly on indicators like 'my course was intellectually stimulating' (6.5% above benchmark in 21-22) and 'my course challenged me to do my best work' (8% above benchmark in 21-22) (NSS, 21-22).

UCP have teaching and learning leads who alongside mentors (if new staff), support colleagues across the campuses and partners where necessary. UCP uses a peer observation process that reflects UCP's commitment to assuring and enhancing the quality of the student learning experience and to providing developmental opportunities for teaching enhancement. The focus of peer observation is developmental enhancement. The underpinning principle is that both the person observing, (the observer) and the person being observed (the observee) can benefit from the process and the aim is to provide opportunities for staff to collaborate in reflection, discussion and further development of their professional practice. The process is peer based, collaborative and non-judgmental, designed to provide opportunities for participants to enhance the learning experience of their students and to reflect on and develop aspects of their own professional practice. This has proved very popular with staff. Findings from these observations are shared at the HE conferences and influence UCP's professional development programme.

UCP ensures a supportive learning environment tailored to our students needs
As a small institution we pride ourselves in the supportive nurturing environment that we provide for our students. This is reflected in our 2022 NSS score for academic support of just under 83% (7.7% above the benchmark) (NSS, 21-22). This is an increase of 3% on the 2021 NSS. Disaggregating this by faculty, once again social sciences perform exceptionally well at 94.5% (approximately 24% above benchmark). When this is disaggregated in terms of age groups we find that all age groups are above benchmark with the exception of students who are 31 and over who are just under 7% below benchmark. This is disappointing but we think, at least in part, explainable by the impact of Covid on this demographic. This age group of students relate primarily to our 'in service' provision such as primary education teaching assistants. These students were not only under pressure during Covid from working in front line professions but also trying to balance this with family and studying. Due to smaller numbers and historical precedents, the Stamford campus have a dedicated academic support officer who works flexibly to meet the needs of students in relation to time of day and location. We receive many plaudits from students for this role relating to how the 'academic support has catered to their learning needs' and 'they felt understood by the coach'. (Anonymity, 2022). UCP at Peterborough also run a comprehensive academic support programme which includes face to face and online study excellence along with a 1-1 EAL programme.

Partners are offered help in formulating and providing academic and pastoral support for their students. As numbers grew, Addict identified the need for extra academic support on their programmes. Therefore, they created an academic support role which mirrored the good practice at Stamford. ESPA identified the growing impact of poor mental health on student engagement and employed an onsite counsellor for students to access. These initiatives were identified as helpful and supportive by our partner students in the annual audits UCP undertakes using mechanisms such as focus groups. We also have disaggregated data for Addict on our NSS dashboard that supports our own evidence. For example, overall, academic support scores 87.8 % in 2022 with 92% stating they are able to contact staff when needed (NSS, 21-22).

UCP operates a tutorial system which supports students on their programmes of study. Tutorials are places where staff are encouraged to innovate in the academic support they provide students. Some examples of this are found in Social Science which, as we have noted, scores well above benchmark in the NSS for student support. With increasing awareness of student mental health, a resilience programme was embedded in tutorials for Psychosocial studies and Sociology which combined mindfulness with values-based action. Drawing upon (Flaxman, P, Bond, & Livheim, 2013) students used an activity to identify their goals and then learnt mindfulness as a strategy of engaging in values-based actions and develop skills to manage stress and difficult situations. Students reported that this was successful in improving emotional wellbeing by aiding their confidence, helping them identify what was important to them, the barriers that held them back and aided them to act in accordance with their goals. A key finding (Bowes, 2021) was that whilst the programme did not remove the barriers the students faced, it gave them strategies to deal with the stress and anxiety manifested by these barriers. Impacts included reduced extension and mitigation applications, improved retention and academic success. This model has been adopted by other programmes particularly English Literature where it has also been well received by students.

UCP is proactive in identifying barriers to access, participation and progression. For example, many of our degrees require an understanding of foundation maths to support statistical or data analysis. In order to support progression into higher education, we recognise that many students are experiencing maths anxiety, impacting upon their application to HE, retention, success and progression. This is creating additional barriers for students wishing to transition into HE, which we urgently needed to address. UCP won two concurrent £3k bids to create an online maths course that covered the key transition maths knowledge required to succeed at degree level, that supplemented the bespoke degree teaching, whilst allowing students to identify their personal knowledge gaps and tailor a programme of learning to fit their needs. The resultant online course provides a convenient, flexible, online resource that all students can access independently and at their own pace whilst removing these barriers to engaging in lifelong learning by increasing confidence and ability.

As outlined previously UCP offer high quality support to student progression through its Employability Hub. An additional aspect of this was our partnership with the National Careers Service (NCS). NCS tailored their services to our graduates as part of an innovative pilot following an observation by UCP that external career services were not providing support for graduates. We were the first HEI to have NCS directly listed as one of our services. The impact of this was that students were more aware of local and regional opportunities, growth and declining career pathways and the commercial demands of each sector. NCS also identified regional opportunities and communicated them on a weekly basis to our Employability Hub; this excellent support enabled students to prepare for online interviews due to Covid.

In addition to the positive NSS results other evidence points to the high-quality levels of academic and pastoral support provided by UCP. Support provided by both academic and support staff was frequently singled out for praise in the recent round of validations. For example, the validation panel for History

and Archaeology commended the "high-quality support provided to students regarding employability, pastoral care and the welfare of the community" (The Open University, 2021).

UCP's physical and virtual learning resources effectively support outstanding TLA
Our Digital Learning Strategy's aim (UCP, 2022) is to ensure that the digital and physical environment is suitable, flexible, embedded in the fabric of the curriculum and responsive to current trends. As part of the OU validation process, all our programmes successfully went through rigorous scrutiny of our physical and virtual learning resources and how these were used to support high quality TLA. UCP strive to continually improve the physical and virtual learning resources. For example, animal studies students have access to Stamford's Animal centre which has over 100 different species of animals from boa constrictors, meerkats and monkeys. This allows students daily access to practical experiences related to their theory studies as well as unique opportunities to be involved in the day to day running of the centre. However, staff are always committed to improving this experience and in 2022 negotiated a unique opportunity and partnership with the Zoological Society of London to enhance their practical animal management skills and contextualise their learning by working behind the scenes with a range of rare and endangered species at Whipsnade Zoo. Media and Journalism is delivered at the state-of-the-art broadcast standard Media and Journalism Centre in the heart of the city and at the University Centre main campus where these resources are critical to learning under the guidance of current industry professionals. Performing arts provision is also delivered in a professional theatre in the heart of the city. Where UCP does not have the specialist facilities it will submit capital bids as was the case for Forensic Science which resulted in the refurbishment of an existing building to create a dedicated and permanent crime scene. This will also be used by the police and forensic departments of the local constabulary bringing the additional advantage of student engagement with industry professionals.

In our NSS, learning resources scored 8% above benchmark in year 3 but disappointingly dipped 4% below benchmark in year 4 but still above benchmark overall. We don't have data for many faculties due to low numbers but Business, Social Sciences and Sport all score above or significantly above benchmark (Office for Students, 2022). UCP continues to invest heavily in its own facilities, horizon scanning for future trends. Over £200,000 has been invested in our engineering mechanical laboratory facilities to incorporate more practical activities responding to national and local needs.

UCP has a well-resourced and supportively staffed physical and virtual library at both the Peterborough and Stamford Campus. UCP students benefit from online databases of eBooks and electronic journals. Other databases tailored to degree course are provided by UCP and links to these are found in their library guide and module reading lists available in their VLE. During 2020/21 Covid forced the closure of libraries but we were able to adapt by introducing new online services which students continue to benefit from. These enhancements as well as more general library help are available on the UCP website and are communicated via induction, student briefings and course handbooks. They also provide support for teaching and learning, including modern, high-quality audio-visual facilities, in their classrooms and provide 1-1 help as required by students. They also work closely and induct new members of staff.

Our partner's physical and virtual learning resources form part of their annual audit and are a condition of validation via inspection by Pearson. Their physical learning resources are especially high quality. In 2019 Addict moved into new premises in Leicester that includes 12 highly specified studios as well as support facilities such as a physiotherapy room and computer suites. Similarly, ESPA have outstanding physical resources in dedicated performance practice and performance spaces in addition to academic study and teaching spaces. Both partners utilise an intuitive virtual learning environment that is provided and supported by the IEG group. Both partners are able to access specialist virtual / digital library resources which have been purchased to support their studies.

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UCP embeds student engagement into its quality assurance and quality improvement

UCP aims to provide every student with an excellent learning experience and successful Higher Education journey. Central to this is our intention to empower students so that they are influential within UCP and have the confidence to engage with their communities. Our Student Engagement Strategy (UCP, 2022)) is underpinned by our graduate characteristics, our values and our commitment to a culture of partnership. Conceptualised around three pillars that align with the UK Quality Code for HE (QAA, 2018), the Strategy provides an outline for the future direction of student engagement at UCP and how we set out to meet our aims. We are measuring the success of our Strategy through a series of KPIs that are rooted in, but not limited to, the measures that are required by the OfS and QAA.

The Student Engagement Strategy outlines 3 pillars of student engagement; Continual enhancement, Acting on student voice and Information, communication and review. These pillars detail specifically student engagement in achieving these pillars. Students therefore play a central role in the decision-making process and the opportunity for student involvement in curriculum across UCP is considerable. Students are supported in this process and in 2019 we supplemented this by training offered through Citizens UK to enhance our listening skills and student's ability to engage in community organising. The intention being that this would be of benefit to the wider student community at UCP and its alumni.

An introduction to the Student Engagement Strategy is included in staff and student induction programmes. The Student Engagement Learning and Teaching Committee and the Academic Board agendas align closely with the Strategy. At an operational level, each academic team indicates how each pillar is being addressed through their Annual Monitoring Review, with periodic targets set via team briefings and also individual professional development reviews.

All Student representatives are able to attend the UCP Student Council which approves the UCP APP and also reviews policy changes. The Student Charter (UCP, 2022) is written in partnership with students and forewords are always provided by the Student Officer. The Student Officer is a current or former student who is still actively engaged in study. They are also a member of the UCP Council – the governing body. The Student Officer's role is one of mediator ensuring effective dialogue between academic staff and students. They also support students undergoing difficulties and will act as an advocate in meetings on their behalf. The Student Council is a vehicle for students to share their views and consult on policy changes, practice and experience. The Student Officer (a student) chairs the Student Council and is a governor on the UCP Council ensuring student representation at the highest level.

Students are key stakeholders in the validation process being consulted at an early stage about any proposed changes to their programmes of study. Frequently these changes are student-led where for example a gap is perceived in the existing module offer or where students are looking to break into specific areas in the evolving jobs market. For example, the success of a number of our graduates as content marketers and subsequent feedback from them led to the introduction of a specific module on content marketing in the Digital Marketing programme. The involvement of our students in the life of the institution was also commended by a number of different panels in our recent round of validations. For example, the panel for Early Childhood Studies and Education praised "the measures in place to listen and respond to the student voice" (The Open University, 2021) a commendation echoed by the panel for English and Creative Writing (The Open University, 2022).

The UCP NSS scores support our assertion that the opportunity for student voice is both plentiful and impactful. The student voice overall metric was over 12% above benchmark. Disaggregating this into disability, sex etc, the scores remain materially above benchmark in the majority of categories. For example, disability was over 12% above benchmark and deprivation quintiles 1 or 2 were more than 10% above benchmark. That said, we are committed to continual improvements via the new Student Engagement strategy and will monitor this.

Student Outcomes

UCP personalises approaches that are highly effective in ensuring our students succeed in, and progress beyond their studies

The overwhelming picture is of our students succeeding in their studies and progressing into employment or further study. We believe that this is due, not only the high quality subject TLA as described above but also the high expectations our staff have of all students and the graduate attributes that are embedded in their learning. UCP's HE strategy clearly details the vision of the graduate attributes we believe our students need to develop to succeed in their studies and progress in their journey after their time with us. UCP is provider committed to lifelong learning and it is this ethos that we communicate. The student experience section highlights UCP's vigorous, proactive and reflective commitment to provide the best outcome for all students, irrespective of their background. UCP provides learning support, advice and guidance to HE students at all stages of their learner journey, from pre-application to progression and beyond.

Our widening participation team work independently and in conjunction with regional Uniconnect agents to provide information and guidance on accessing higher education in variety of educational and community settings to both 'young' and mature students from our APP targets. Our admission teams offer 1-1 guidance for students that encompass both academic matters, guidance around other areas such as student loans and UCAS. Open days and taster sessions are well attended and allow students to meet academic and support staff to discuss all matters related to academic success and their application.

At the enrolment stage students are supported and encouraged to declare a learning difficulty or disability and are referred to the Learning Support team. The Learning Support team will then signpost and support students as appropriate including statements of reasonable adjustments, academic support or where appropriate referring them to external agencies. The student support team carry out a myriad of impactful interventions and advice on matters from the financial to the academic. They are proactive in monitoring student progress by characteristics and feed into academic and other deliberative bodies such as our APP team to provide real time interventions and evaluations. Attendance is key to academic success and the support team monitor this and intervene supportively when required. Timely communication between administrative, academic and support staff ensure the provision of any required support services or modifications.

Induction activities include sessions with all student support areas in addition to academic staff. We are experienced at identifying pinch points (academic, pastoral and financial) for our students and we pre-empt these by providing strategies for success and highlight the support on offer at regular intervals during the year. Simple academic strategies like carefully spaced deadlines can lessen the burden for students with caring responsibilities, while we offer financial help to students from a low-income background or care leavers. Our induction activities reinforce this by all students having sessions with all our support services clarifying when, how and in what ways they can access help. UCP Staff are pro-active in communicating and acting upon students' support and pedagogical needs from the get-go. For example, our mature students may initially need more support around academic writing and our carefully sequenced learning programme and academic support pre-empt this impacting on continuation or attainment. Digital literacy deficits are addressed through the use of diagnostics and supported through online tutorial and enrolment on ECDL courses.

UCP's academic staff's pedagogical approaches are evidence and research based with an emphasis on the needs and characteristics of our students. Programme content, assessments and strategies put the learner at the centre and are cognisant of the characteristics and aspirations of our students.

Strategies such as differentiation and scaffolding are effectively utilised to ensure student engagement and success. Staff CPD and the staff peer review process help identify and disseminate good practice.

UCP's strategy outlines our commitment to providing high quality progression routes into further study or graduate level employment. As detailed earlier, The Employability Hub provide a range of services from early in the students programme to ensure the best individual outcome. These services are able to provide general advice, formal careers advice (including appointments with the National Careers Service), 1-1 employability sessions including CV writing, self-employment, enterprise, sector signposting, sector specific surgeries and work experience placements. The aim of the Hub is to provide students with the attributes and knowledge to be successful in both their professional and academic careers with the focus on life long learning.

The validation panel for History & Archaeology commended "The high-quality support provided to students regarding employability" (The Open University, 2021) Our partnership arrangements and civic engagement activity ensures that our students are never far away from real world problems and real-world contexts in which to apply their knowledge. 79% of our final year students in 20/21 availed themselves of bespoke support from the Employability Hub. As noted elsewhere the Hub also leads on embedding employability skills across the curriculum and has brokered 76 in semester internships with local employers since being set up in 2019. It also provides networking opportunities for our students through the events and activities that it puts on. We assert that strong progression is in part due to the 'real world' experiences our students engage with. As a civic institution, with deep ties in local and regional government and civil society, there are multiple opportunities for students and staff to work on local policy initiatives and innovation. UCP is a key partner within the Cultural Alliance which has supported us in gaining the Malcom Bradbury Trust bursary and our future intentions include a close working relationship with the National Literacy Trust.

As an institution our insight and focus on the region was another factor repeatedly singled out for praise by validation panels. Industry and civil society links enable our students to apply their learning in real world contexts and develop a broader professional network as they do. Our students provide research and artefacts for local organisations. For example, social science students have undertaken research on the impact of the introduction of Universal Credit to welfare recipients in the city; and Computer Science students have developed new applications for children's mental health support charities. This enables the city to benefit from the presence of the University Centre and our staff and students to benefit from real world interactions with organisation and employers.

Our approaches and strategies are monitored and evaluated for their effectiveness by staff, students and governors through UCP's deliberative bodies such as academic board, UCP Council and other quality improvement mechanism such as Annual Monitoring Reviews. These mechanisms ensure timely reflection on qualitative and quantitative data on our students experience and outcomes by all stakeholders. Amendments and course corrections are acted on quickly and monitored through quality improvement plans.

There are outstanding rates of continuation and completion for the providers students and courses SO2
In 19/20 the UCP population of 190 students was largely comprised of first year students who generally have a higher discontinuation rate than 2nd and 3rd year students. However, by 20/21 first years contributed to 77.7 % of the population and by 21/22 they comprised 44.7 % of the total student body. HESES 20 shows a non-completion of 8.8 % and by HESES 22 this has reduced to 4.1 %. We are aware that although reported via HESES this does sit outside the OfS defined measure for completion which reports on a period of 4 years and 15 days. The strategies taken to improve this completion rate are outlined further within this section.

Continuation

As stated in the context section we have limited data as a new provider. We have for example no TEF data on completion so we have drawn on our own data and HESES returns to demonstrate student success. On the TEF dashboard we can ascertain that, in general, we are broadly in line with the benchmark for continuation with 83.9% against a benchmark of 84.5%. Disaggregating the most recent TEF data allows us to focus on split indicators by characteristics. Continuation for students with a reported disability is materially above benchmark by approximately 7%. It is pleasing that continuation is also strong for 31 years and over students at approximately 3% above benchmark.

We are however significantly below benchmark for Social Sciences and Business Management when viewing the 19/20 date in isolation. Just under 76% against a benchmark of 81% for Business Management and 74% against a benchmark of 86% for Social Sciences (UCP, 21). Annual Monitoring Reports 21/22 for Business Management and Social Science evidence successful interventions to improve continuation in both subject areas. For the Social sciences, Psychosocial Studies continuation has steadily improved at Level 4 & 5 from 2018/19 (83%) to 100% in 2021/22. Improving outcomes for level 4 students especially in Business Management and Criminology, continues to be a high priority for UCP and is highlighted as such in the Institutional Annual Monitoring Report (UCP, 2022) and has resulted in quality improvement plans that are scrutinised by the Academic Board.

ABCS quintile 1 were particularly hard hit during Covid for socio-economic reasons and dipped below benchmark. For example, digital poverty, gig economy, health reasons and caring responsibilities were cited as barriers for these students. Almost 100% of these students were 'live at home' students that compounded the Covid impact. UCP tried to mitigate this by providing laptops, 4g dongles, food drops, emergency financial support and food vouchers. A high proportion of students intermitted due to Covid but never returned. The reasons cited were health, financial, bereavement and dependent care.

Internal data identifies that during and just post Covid, one of our partners performing arts continuation rates remained above OfS benchmarks but dropped comparative to previous years. Upon interrogation of the students reasoning for exiting the qualification then it is arguable that this related substantially to the fact that these are intensive physical programmes upon which Covid had a significant impact. This was threefold, auditions had to be undertaken remotely which impeded on the ability to assess student's ability, students were less physically able with many injuries and the course is predominantly practical so remote learning was difficult for these students. External Examiners (Pearson, S Jewers, 2021) praised the partners approach to learning in this period but nonetheless Covid's impact could only be mitigated not eliminated.

Completion & Attainment

As a new provider there is no data on completion rates available on the TEF dashboard and then as seen above we have highlighted improvements in completion in the beginning of this section which references HESES 2022. We have, according to our own data and HESES returns, seen a steady improvement in the percentage of students achieving their intended award and in the proportion of students achieving a 2:1 or higher in the last 5 years. Table 4 below for those studying degree-based provision. Similarly, our Other Undergraduate provision in 21/22 has achieved our internal KPIs. Out of a cohort of 180 students, 81% of Higher National Diploma students achieved a merit or above and 81% achieved a Higher National Certificate also at merit or above. We believe the attainment of our students is excellent.

Table 4 - Classification of first-degree awards 21/22 (Source HESES)

Classification	Percentage of Cohort	Number of Students
First Class	38%	52
Upper Second	45%	61
Lower Second	15%	20

In terms of students achieving their intended award this has risen from just over 77% in 2018/19 to just over 88% in 2020/21 (UCP / ARU, 2021). 9 out of 11 TEF Subject areas have seen improvements in the percentage of students achieving intended award from 2018/19 to 2020/21. While we need to be careful about reading too much into data involving small cohorts, where one student not completing can significantly impact on completion rates, these are clearly positive trends that demonstrate that students are well supported to achieve their goals. In regard to students achieving a first, this has risen from 29.5% in 2018/19 to 37.5% in 2020/21. Given that this improvement coincides with the impact of Covid, we take this to be in large part due to the success of our blended approaches to teaching and delivery and the outstanding support we provide for our students.

UCP provides outstanding rates of progression
The TEF dashboard has one year of progression data and indicates that our progression rate is above benchmark. As a widening participation provider and in a geographical area with low proportions of graduate employment this is a strong result.

Our success in progressing our students into graduate level employment is due in part to the funding we received to extend and develop our relationships with employers in the region, especially SMEs. Funding from the OfS Challenge Fund from 2019 - 2022 enabled us to set up the Employability Hub to broker relationships between students and local employers, create an online Career and Employer Ready Course and embed Employability modules across our provision at level 5. While the project was impacted by Covid the outcomes were significant and unquestionably contributed to our above sector progression rates.

In 2020-21 The UCP Graduate survey was sent to 537 graduating students in July which included HNC/Ds, diplomas, FDAs and degrees. This information was sent to both 2020 and 2021 graduates and collected at graduation. 152 completed the graduate destination survey and from this we have continued to refine our approach supporting students post-graduation.

- Only 4%   did not yet have a graduate outcome
- 36% had either started or been accepted on further studies
- 59% were in employment (self-employed, part time or full time)

Outcomes against the OfS project targets (keep students in region, increase work with SMEs)

- Of 72 who stated their location of work, only 2 are outside (Cardiff, York) of the 50 mile radius of UCP i.e. 96% stay in the locality
- Of 68 graduates who stated their employers, we believe that 19 are large organisations, with 49 working for SMEs i.e. 72% working with SMEs
- The survey reached a broad demographic of underrepresented students within UCP,

Through the Employability Hub, we have been able to create a long-term, sustainable practice, driven by local evidence and have addressed the labour market changes emerging post Covid. The funding has allowed us to speak to a number of local recruiters regarding what they do and why, capturing their

insights into recruitment and graduate employment. By working with various stakeholders, in conjunction with examining current literature, we feel that we have developed a contextual approach to best support our graduates into local graduate employment.

Engineering and Construction HE provision at UCP responds to the growth and innovation of the Greater Peterborough Area. Peterborough's location provides a hub of expertise in construction, utilities, manufacturing and automation companies e.g., Skanska, Anglia Water, Nestle, and Perkins Engines. Our reputation for developing flexible programmes around employers has drawn interest from other diverse industries e.g. The RPC (Berry) plastics group where we worked closely with HE awarding bodies Pearson to produce bespoke HNC/HND in plastics manufacturing and then aligned with a Level 4 Higher Engineering Apprenticeship from the Dft. UCP recognised the wide range of educational profiles of engineering applicants and developed appropriate diagnostic testing for suitability followed by low cost short foundation courses to prepare for HE. UCP representatives advise on the British Plastics Educational Committee. In the past we have had employees from high profile companies such as Mercedes F1, Rolls Royce and the RAF where our units match their requirements. UCP construction and engineering staff strive to meet all applicants face to face to gauge suitability and make clear the expectations of the course while working full time. Similarly, our teacher training programme has responded to the national and regional demand for qualified teachers and therefore our progression into professional employment from this provision is high.

UCP clearly articulates the range of educational gains it intends its students to achieve and why
UCP considers educational gain to relate to improvement in "knowledge, skills, work readiness and personal development" (McGrath, 2015). As a wider participation provider who is part of an FE college group, UCP is cognisant of the importance of holistically the 'distance travelled' by our students. Alongside the programme specific knowledge and skills, UCP has a clear vision of the wider skills and knowledge that impact on our students' success on their course and their journey outside and beyond UCP expressed as "Graduate Outcomes". With students and staff, UCP developed a bespoke set of 'graduate attributes' that both supported our student needs, that of the community and local and national commerce.

Our Graduate Outcomes are:

- Resilience
- Engagement in and promotion of continuous academic and professional development
- A global perspective and cross –cultural sensitivity and awareness
- Clarity of communication and purpose
- Information and skill expertise
- Intellectual autonomy and enquiry
- Adaptability

These graduate attributes (educational gains) are clearly stated in our HE strategy (UCP, 2022) and are promoted as part of the students and staff induction. It is critical to the success of the institution that our students (existing and prospective) understand the value of the education they receive - particularly the practical, professional and transferable dimension of this education - and how this will equip them for success in the graduate jobs market, further study and wider citizenship.

The attributes are woven into programmes and our quality assurance and improvement monitoring process. For example, during our recent validation these attributes were embedded where appropriate into the programme and module outcomes. In other courses such as Higher Nationals, Annual Monitoring Reviews request course leaders to express how these attributes have been addressed in their students' journey.

As stated earlier, these attributes are first and foremost embedded in our programmes through generic learning outcomes, programme aims and programme learning outcomes such that any student successfully completing their course will have demonstrated these attributes. The principal way in which these attributes are communicated to students, and their acquisition measured, is through course delivery and assessment. Students demonstrate increasing independence and autonomy, for example, through meeting the learning outcomes of particular programmes as they develop through the levels of study. A student demonstrates autonomy, for example, by demonstrating increased reflexive awareness and the capacity to critically evaluate an argument at level 6.

Given the demographic of our students and the baseline from which they start, we need to ensure that they have every opportunity to develop their professional network and profile while they are with us. As mentioned above this is one of the key functions of the Employability Hub. Student engagement with the hub and its activities are carefully monitored to ensure that our students are capitalising on their opportunities while they are with us. Students are supported to undertake a skills audit and to reflect on their career aspirations at an early stage of their academic journey. Skills audits take place in employability modules and inform the research projects that students undertake.

Students are supported in their personal development through the acquisition of soft skills and citizenship skills. Soft skills are embedded in the curriculum in the form of communication and negotiation skills; students develop their citizenship skills in extra-curricular activities. Soft skills play a key part in the curriculum in the form of assessment strategies that focus on group work and group presentations. From an early stage we impress on students the need to respect different perspectives and points of view and become a good team player. The ability to interact well with others is assessed in all of our programmes. Students are therefore able to reflect on their progress in this area.

The Criminology programme piloted the innovative use of reflective podcasting in their tutorial system. Following personal experience of the benefits of reflective podcasting, the Curriculum lead introduced podcasting sessions in the tutorials of the Criminologists. This involved giving the students a list of questions to develop some thoughts about a few weeks beforehand. In a tutorial session she posed these questions to the group, and encouraged them to bounce thoughts and similar feelings off each other. The aim of this was for the students to not only reflect on their current position, but also hopefully gather a collection over their time in university to be able to reflect on their educational gain. Whilst initially hesitant, afterwards students were pleased with the process and the final artefact. As the initiative received very positive feedback from students, the idea was then piloted in other programmes.

The opportunity to develop citizenship skills is offered largely through our partnerships. As stated above UCP was instrumental in setting up Peterborough Citizens. This gives our students access to training from Citizens UK and the opportunity to participate in campaigns on a range of local and national issues. Social science students, for example, supported year 12 students, from a range of partner schools, to convene a summit on young people's mental health. This was attended by the local MP and members of the Clinical Commissioning Group and led to a series of changes in the service for children and young people in the city. Our students tend to be rich in local social capital with families in local schools etc. so they are well placed to undertake this work.

UCP supports its students to achieve these gains through evidenced-based, highly effective and differentiated approaches
UCP continually evaluate the impact the pedagogical approaches, curriculum design and extracurricular activities have on the development of these attributes. As stated previously, UCP is a teaching led institution with innovative and focussed pedagogical approaches that meet the needs of our specific students. UCP staff are pedagogically research active and are all qualified or working towards teaching

qualifications. As with any institution, there are huge demands on lecturer's time and therefore it is imperative that any new strategy is evidence based. For example, cognitive load theory (Sweller, 1998) became a feature of our teacher training and CPD when the overwhelming consensus was of the positive impact on teaching and learning. Ideas around intrinsic, extraneous and germane cognitive load are applied in our teaching and planning to ensure that the cognitive load does not exceed the students processing capacity with the aim to move knowledge to their long-term memory allowing this to inform future learning (Gathercole & Alloway , 2007). The recent validation process allowed UCP to further embed this approach in terms of for example, simple to complex sequencing of the learning and spiral curriculums.

UCP delivers a broad portfolio of programmes and it can be generalised that the different cohorts starting points can be diverse and there is no 'one size fits all'. For example, some courses are designed for those students who are in-service, mature and mostly returning to education after a very long gap. We have found that their learning and support needs are generally different to programmes predominantly of 'young students' who have come to us straight from A-levels or BTEC. Our approaches therefore embody external best practice and research as well as the high-quality pedagogical approaches and knowledge developed by our skilled, experienced and committed staff. One of the many strengths of our FE and HE group means that staff are skilled in differentiating their approaches to enable individual students to reach their full potential and reflect on their journey in achieving this.

UCP evaluates the gains made by its students and demonstrates its students are achieve their intended gains.
Measuring these gains is active but remains an area that UCP is committed to improving. UCP recognise that in order to effectively evaluate (and if necessary course correct on) the intended gains, then this needs to be done at key points in the learner journey from application through to feedback from our alumni. For example, at application, students are encouraged to declare disabilities that are shared with academic and support staff. This might result in meetings with our support team and a Statements of Reasonable Adjustment (SORA). The SORA is a touchstone for both academic and support staff to ensure any potential barriers to a student's learning gain is mitigated or removed. Initial and / or diagnostic assessment is used at different stages of learning to evaluate, for example, the differentiation required or help students need to set and evaluate their own learning.

UCP has other mechanism of evaluating education gains. For example, in terms of educational gains delivered through the curriculum, these are measured through student success metrics, student achievement and module evaluation surveys that provide discussion points in AMR, exam boards and other deliberative bodies. Alumni engagement provides valuable input into the institutional mission and approach as they offer an additional critical lens on the learner journey. Team-working skills, for example, are assessed on all programmes and as such subjected to annual monitoring and review and external checks such as that by external examiners.

Regular tutorials provide a 1-1 opportunity to appraise student education progress more broadly. At its core, the tutorial enables the 'critical interplay between the student's and the tutor's conception of learning' (Palfreyman, 2008). Tutorials can then inform pedagogical interventions, signposting of support or future improvements to programmes. It is of note that UCP class sizes are small and allow for personalised learning to address distinct learning needs, aspirations and the cultural and demographic background of the students.

The development of work readiness is measured through graduate destination data and other metrics, like engagement with the Employability Hub. All final year students, for example, have a one to one meeting with the Employability Hub to develop a post-graduation plan, CV check and LinkedIn profile

check. We are constantly expanding and developing our in-term placement and internship opportunities and the number and range of the opportunities, in addition to student take up is carefully monitored.

As an institution UCP is committed to continual enhancement and would willingly partner with other bodies to further develop our approach to learning gain and its evaluation.

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