



Nelson College London Limited

Teaching Excellence Framework 2023
Provider Submission

Provider Context

Vision

Nelson College London (NCL) aims to become:

A leading provider of high-quality, career-focused higher education in the Greater London area; and an exemplar of alternative university-level provision - well governed, accountable and sustainable.

Mission

Nelson College London offers access to higher education to people from the widest possible range of backgrounds, enabling them to transform their lives and prosper through the acquisition of the knowledge and skills that they need to succeed in their chosen careers.

The Nelson College London motto is “**Learning Brought to Life**”

Values

Nelson College London values:

- The quality of the learning experience it provides, offering education that caters for the individual needs of its students.
- Support for students both professionally and personally as they progress with their studies at the College.
- Creatively engaging students and teachers in reflective thinking, innovation, originality and self-expression.
- The development of independent learning skills, making learning enjoyable as well as meaningful, stimulating and challenging.
- The celebration of its achievements through the success of its students.
- Diversity, achieved through inclusiveness.
- The continual professional development of all members of staff.
- The partnership between staff, students, non-executives, directors and shareholders.

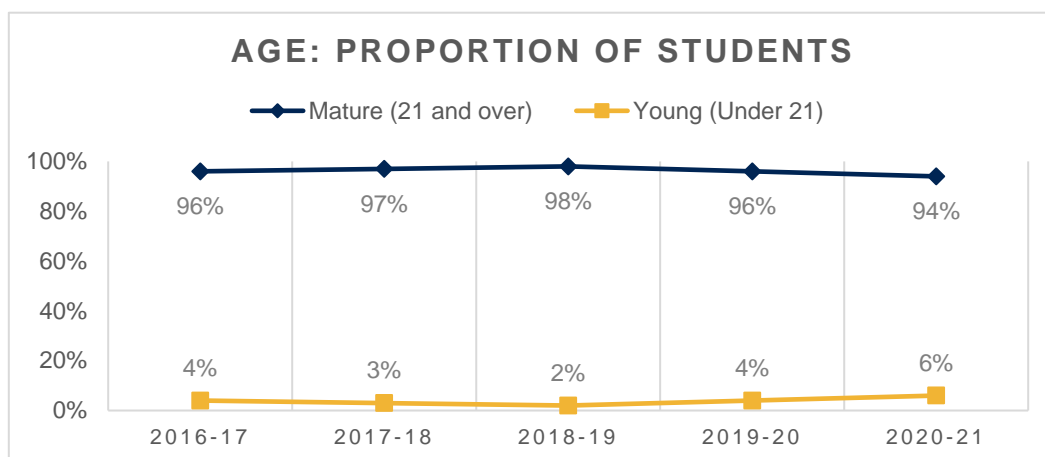
Introduction

Nelson College London was founded in 2009 as an independent college of higher education. It has two campuses, one in Ilford and the other in Gants Hill, both located in East London. The College commenced its journey by offering its programmes to international students. However, we subsequently decided to focus on the UK and EU markets only as the International student market became unfavourable to independent colleges of higher education.

In 2015, the college entered into a partnership with London Metropolitan University to deliver two Foundation Degree courses and two Bachelor Degree top-up courses in Hospitality Management and in Business; from September 2016, the College started delivering these validated courses.

These validated courses provide alternatives to students studying at levels 4 & 5, with progression opportunities for all into a one-year BA Top-up courses. In March 2019, this relationship was extended further, with the addition of two MA International Business Degrees, one in Management and the other in Hospitality Management, to provide a progression route for the undergraduate students. All are validated programmes.

The College had an undergraduate population of 1450 students in the academic year 2020-21. This undergraduate population has increased by 39% since the academic year 2017-18. Over the ensuing four-year period, the average number of students enrolled on the HND (Level 4 and 5 courses) was 87%, whilst the student population on the BA top-up (Level 6 courses) was on average 13% of the total undergraduate student population. The majority of the student population is made up of mature students, however the college is making progress to reach out to young students as a part of its access and participation plan targets and commitments. The table below shows that for the academic year 2020-21, majority (94%) students are mature while the young student form just 6% of the overall student population.



Adopted from Access and participation data dashboard (Office for Students, 2023)

Our provision is full-time and mainly campus-based. However, the college has technology in place to deliver its courses online, which was widely used during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The student body at Nelson College London is diverse and includes students from deprived backgrounds who may not have previously enjoyed access to higher education at Level 4 and above.

The Mission Statement of the College pledges to “offer access to higher education to people from the widest possible range of backgrounds, enabling them to transform their lives and prosper through the acquisition of the knowledge and skills that they need to succeed in their chosen careers”.

To fulfil its mission, Nelson College London has adopted the following strategic aims:

- To provide a varied selection of academic curricula;
- To provide the students with skills which contribute to success in their careers and in their private lives;
- To enable students to become independent and to lead them to self-discovery;
- To strive for and maintain excellence by systematically reviewing classroom facilities, equipment, curricula, and staff;
- To make activities and experiences available to our students which foster personal growth and leadership qualities.

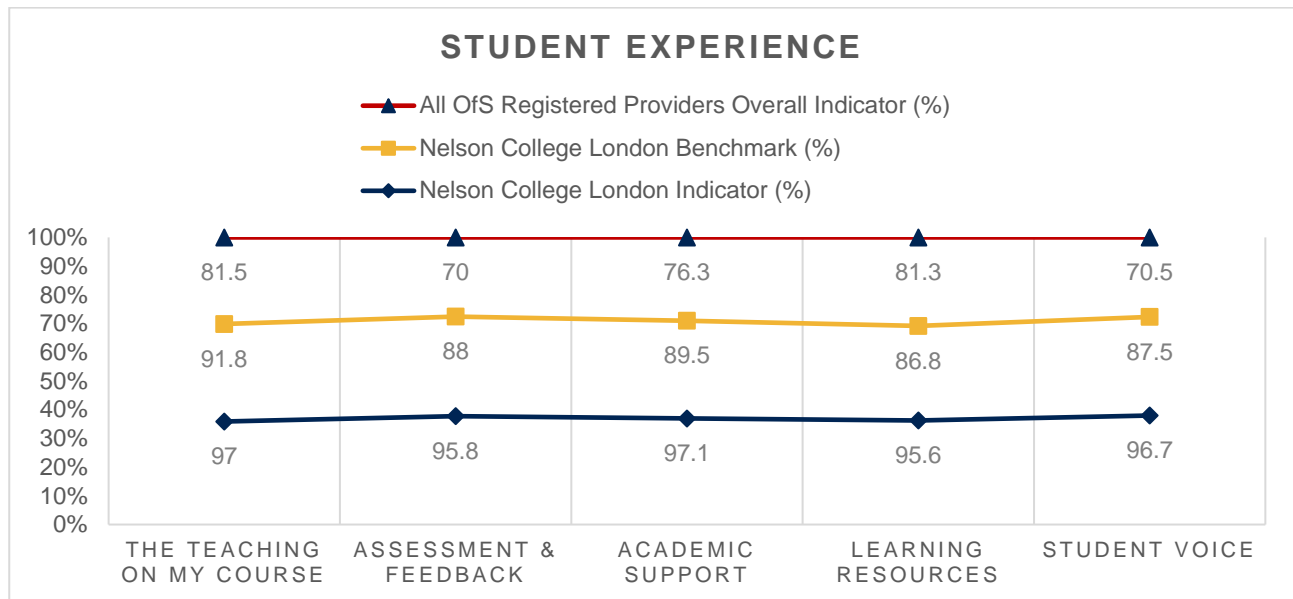
The Academic Board is the principal academic body of the College and is ultimately responsible for its local academically-related regulatory frameworks, policies and procedures, as well as for the management of academic standards and quality. A network of committees and panels report to the Academic Board to support the academic governance at the College, whilst the Principal's Executive Group, made up of the senior management team at the College, provides help and guidance to the Principal, though it is not a decision-making entity per se as it – deliberately - has no executive authority. **College Governance** (Nelson College London, 2022).

The College's Strategic Plan for the period 2020-25 identifies seven key priorities and is closely aligned with our Access and Participation Plan (APP) for 2020-21 to 2024-25. As per the new Office for Student (OfS) approach to equality of opportunities, the plan will cease to exist at the end of the academic year 2023-24. However, the College aims to continue to deliver on its key priorities. **Ethos and Strategic Goals** (Nelson College London, 2022).

The college has very recently acquired a new campus in Broadstairs, Kent. This campus was previously operated by the Canterbury Christ Church University to deliver its provision. NCL aims to utilise approximately 9,843 sq. ft. of one part of the site, known as the Carey Building, to deliver the higher education provision subject to necessary approval from the Office for Students and the awarding body or bodies. This campus will accommodate up to 500 students. The key features include an indoor sports area, cultural space, Lecture Theatre, Lecture Rooms, Staff Room, and Canteen, plus additional facilities to further enhance the student experience.

This addition is illustrative of the commitment NCL has to widening participation and providing its students with an excellent educational experience and outcomes. Additionally, the College has also recently completed the refurbishment of its Gants Hill Campus to enhance the student experience and to provide an enhanced, stimulating learning environment.

2. Student experience



Adopted from **TEF data dashboard** (Office for Students, 2023)

Contextualising performance against TEF Indicators

The figures in the table above are obtained from the TEF data dashboard; this section looks at the per cent point difference against the NCL benchmark and the overall indicator for the “All OfS registered providers” along with brief supporting commentary.

The teaching on my course

The Indicator for “Teaching on my course” is 5.2% above the benchmark of 91.8% and is significantly above the indicator value for “All OfS registered providers”. Our performance is underpinned by working closely with our students as partners. The confidence our students place in the quality of teaching is a direct result of the learning opportunities provided to them and the dedication of our hard-working team of lecturers who are passionate about teaching and making a difference in people’s lives.

Assessment & Feedback

The Indicator for “Assessment and feedback” is 7.8% above the benchmark of 88.0% and is significantly above the indicator value for “All OfS registered providers”. This demonstrates how satisfied our students are with the assessments and feedback provided to them. The students have opportunities to receive formative feedback from their tutors as well as support lecturers who work together to provide guidance to the students. Summative feedback is provided to the students within four weeks of submission. Students can view their feedback on the College Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), which is integrated with the Moodle platform. The College has a clear process in place for academic appeals.

“There is good supportive feedback to students. The comments are constructive, identifying any strengths seen in the student’s work, and noting what had been achieved. There were also comments identifying what the students needed to do to achieve a Pass on re-submission and to some extent, improve future work. The feedback was appropriate, with no evidence of coaching evident”. The External examiner’s report 2020 for HND Business (Pearson, 2020)

Academic Support

The Indicator for Academic Support is 7.6% above the benchmark of 89.5%, and is significantly above the indicator value for “All OfS registered providers”. The College has a dedicated team of Student Support Lecturers who are available to provide additional one-to-one tutorial support, a variety of elective class sessions, and tutorial groups available to all of the students for the duration of their courses.

Learning Resources

The Indicator for Learning Resources is 8.8% above the benchmark of 86.8%, and is significantly above the indicator value for all OfS registered providers. The College has a discrete policy on the funding and acquisition of learning resources, which ensures the continuous enhancement of learning resources to meet the expectations of both students and faculty.

Student Voice

The Indicator for Student Voice is 9.2% above the benchmark of 87.5% and is significantly above the indicator value for all OfS registered providers. The College acknowledges the relevance and significance of the student voice and has taken concerted measures to incorporate it into its forums. Students are represented on the Board of Governance, the Academic Board, and the majority of its subcommittees.

Our approach to the student experience

Student Engagement

Student engagement is central to the development of provision for learning and teaching at the College. Our Engagement Strategy consists of numerous activities that range from recruitment to student progression. Students from all programmes are given the opportunity to elect a representative every year to voice their opinions at committee meetings and other relevant management forums. The QAA Annual Monitoring for Educational Oversight Visit 2018 recognised the students’ involvement in formal feedback discussions with the programme teams and highlighted that the College takes measures to take their ideas into consideration with respect to future academic matters. (QAA, 2018)

In addition to the National Student Survey, the College conducts a quarterly survey to obtain student feedback on their experience. This provides the opportunity to gain feedback on the modules undertaken, college administration, facilities and their overall experience at the College. The results of these surveys are discussed at various committee meetings where any emerging issues are debated and appropriate actions are taken. The results from the student feedback survey for the academic year 2021-22 evidence that on average 91% of our students across all courses are extremely satisfied with the teaching, facilities and their learning experience within the College.

College Review and Enhancement Report (Nelson College London, 2022)

Student Engagement Strategies at Nelson College London consist of numerous activities that range from student recruitment to progression. The College has been organising a challenging Learning, Teaching, Engagement, and Enhancement Conference (LTEEC) since July 2018 on an annual basis. This platform provides a focused opportunity for student engagement and involvement with enhanced learning through creative assessment workshops. These events are becoming very popular among students and staff alike. The feedback from staff and students who participated was very positive. The conference provides a framework for ensuring student engagement is embedded within all College activities. (Nelson College London, 2022)

The College organises free coffee mornings to take a break from studying and work. It's a platform where the students have an opportunity to interact with other students and staff. This provides the opportunity to discuss matters informally and connect with others over a cup of coffee.

In 2022, we developed and introduced the Student Engagement Framework (SEF). The purpose of this Framework is to further enhance the student experience. To ensure the effective delivery of the SEF, the college has recruited two Student Engagement officers to work with the students from the commencement of their academic journey by providing information, advice and guidance. The student engagement officer also helps in cross-collaboration among the various departments of the college, improving student support efficiency and regular engagement with student representatives.

The college has also created an additional position of Student President, which will be supported by two Student Vice-Presidents (one per campus). The election process is underway and by the end of February 2023 the elected students will have assumed their roles.

We are confident that our approach to student engagement will result in enhanced student satisfaction and student experience.

Rigour and Stretch:

The College's programmes are designed to stretch students' abilities beyond their current level to ensure they can comfortably face the challenges of professional life in the future. Every programme in the College is a product of a systematic process which involves contributions from industry experts, employers, students, academics and admin staff.

The College offers two HND programmes accredited by Pearson, namely HND Business and HND Hospitality Management. Units in each programme are selected to offer an appropriate skill set necessary to become entrepreneurs or managers by enhancing communication skills, IT skills, employability, project management skills, research skills and transferability.

The Examiner's Report 2019 for HND Business, "*Effectiveness of Assessment Instruments*" section confirms that the assignment briefs are prepared using the assessment criterion set by the awarding bodies. Various assessment methods are utilised, such as written reports, presentations and self-reflection. Students are assessed on their theoretical knowledge as well as their practical knowledge, communication and presentation skills (Pearson, 2019).

The students' work is verified internally and externally for all programmes. Comments from the external reviewers and examiners are incorporated to strengthen the contents of assignments in order to ensure the validity, reliability and objectivity of each assessment. This is evidenced in College's External Examiner's Report 2022 for HND Hospitality Management under the "*Effectiveness of Assessment Instruments*" section (Pearson, 2022).

The awarding bodies (Pearson and London Metropolitan University) carry out regular academic management reviews to ensure that the College is in compliance with the relevant rules and regulations, and to assess the quality of teaching and learning provision. The College has received positive reports without any essential actions or recommendations, and the good practices in the College's delivery of its programmes are highly appreciated. (Pearson Academic Management Review Report, 2020) and (London Metropolitan University, AQMG, 2019).

Additionally, the College has in place a portfolio of policies and procedures, to ensure that assessments help students demonstrate their achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

Rigorous processes are in place, including internal and external verification, as well as an audit of internal verification to underpin the integrity of the assessments. This integrity is evident from the external examiner's reports for all programmes.

Feedback

Our students have opportunities to receive formative feedback from their tutors and support lecturers who work together to provide guidance. Summative feedback is provided to the students within four weeks of submission. Students can view their feedback on VLE, which is integrated into Moodle. The College naturally has clear processes in place for academic appeals.

The College also has the necessary arrangement to provide further guidance on summative feedback to students on their coursework. The feedback provided covers criteria level feedback, generic feedback about the overall achievement of the assessment criteria, the language of the assignment, the structure of the assignment, and the formatting of the assignment. The markers also identify strengths as well as weaknesses within students' work using constructive language. Students are also provided with developmental feedback to help them to improve their future submissions.

The successful impact of our approach is evidenced by the College's External Examiner's Report 2022 for HND HM, Areas of good practice section, which highlights that the assessors provide positive and constructive performance feedback and that the students feel well-supported by the staff (Pearson, 2022). The above could also be evidenced within the Examiner's Report 2019 for HND Business, "*Student Support and Review*" section (Pearson, 2019).

The academic assessment team reviews the feedback given to the students by assessors to ensure accuracy, relevance and completeness before releasing it to the internal verifier and the students. Feedback is also discussed in Standardisation meetings, in which lecturers are given the opportunity to reflect on their marking process and identify areas of improvement and good practice. The Standardisation Meeting is also used to communicate changes in awarding body regulations in relation to feedback.

Student representatives have confirmed their understanding of the assessment processes and agreed that assessment feedback was constructive and positive across all programmes.

Staff development and recognition

Highly qualified and experienced lecturers teach the programmes offered at the College. Majority of our lecturers are credentialed at the Master's level, some hold a PhD qualification and a few are working towards it. All the lecturers hold a mandatory teaching qualification, such as the Level 3 Award in Education.

The College is a member of AdvanceHE (AdvanceHE, 2023), and it supports its staff members in gaining HEA Fellowship(s). The college organises training sessions to support its staff through the HEA application process, and the associated costs are reimbursed upon the successful achievement of fellowship status. At the end of the academic year 2021-22, there was one member of staff with an associate fellowship, seventeen members who had achieved fellowship, and one member of staff with a Senior Fellowship. A number of staff are currently in the process of completing their applications.

“4.7: The college has a CPD policy and all CPD activities are recorded. The college encourage teachers to attend Pearson Trainings and other external development workshops. The college also support teachers who want to achieve Advance HE fellowships and teacher training qualifications. There are many in-house development activities and attendance is often mandatory. CPD logs are kept for all teaching staff. According to the college Staff Development Policy, all the teachers go through annual performance appraisal.” (Pearson Academic Management Review Report, 2021)

The College also has in place a mandatory policy in respect of continuing professional development. This ensures that the teaching support measures it implements, are in accordance with regulatory body requirements and academic and industrial best practices.

The College encourages and supports continuous personal and professional development. The College offers a flexible timetable to lecturers who are undertaking further education, such as a PhD (*Currently, there is one member of staff who is working towards a postgraduate qualification and another one who is pursuing a PhD qualification*).

Regular training programmes are arranged to keep lecturers updated on developments within relevant industry sectors. We also encourage and support lecturers to attend and participate in research seminars and provide an annual budget for lecturers to conduct research in their teaching specialisms.

To review and enhance the quality of teaching college conducts peer reviews and teaching observations. The purpose of peer reviews is to share good practices among colleagues. Peer reviews are conducted by lecturers every term in a standard format, from which a report is subsequently generated.

This provides an opportunity for academic staff to identify the areas of improvement as well as share the good practice with the academic staff across the college. The senior member of the programme team carries out teaching observations every term. The teacher observation process is mainly focused on class delivery, student engagement and assessing if the learning resources are effectively utilised. Meetings at pre and post-observation stages ensure that the process is smooth with no interruptions to student learning.

The College actively ring-fences appropriate time for course planning, delivery, assessment, verification and evaluation to ensure an effective delivery provision at all levels. To ensure that staffing levels are fit for purpose, the College conducts an annual review of staffing measures.

Teaching excellence is recognised during the annual student graduation ceremony, where the top two lecturers who have consistently scored high in student feedback surveys are presented with teaching excellence awards.

Learning Environment

Resources

The College makes available necessary learning resources to enable students to develop their skills. Every student is provided with a Unit Handbook for each unit taught at the start of each term offering detailed information on unit specification, assessment criteria, learning outcome, and books recommended for further reading. The College also has an annual subscription to Emerald Insight for e-Journals.

The College is registered with Pearson's Higher HN Global online platform. Students undertaking Higher National Degree programmes can access core textbooks, Career Services, Study Skills Modules and a forum to engage in conversation with other students on this platform. The College is also a member of the UK Hospitality (formerly known as the British Hospitality Association). For London Metropolitan University validated programmes, the College has contracted with the e-textbook provider BibliU. Through this arrangement, individual students are licenced to access all their key core textbooks online for a 12-month period from college and home.

To provide students with the experience of practical work in the hospitality industry, the College has subscribed to Oracle Opera PMS Hotel Software. The College schedules dedicated training sessions that are made available to all students enabling them to acquire practical skills and experience with the software that is widely used across large and medium hotel chains.

The students from HND Hospitality and HND Business greatly benefit from this training as it enhances their employability within the Hospitality sector. As part of the College Course Periodic Review (with London Metropolitan University) in March 2019, we recommended the inclusion of Opera PMS as part of the assessment criteria for the Rooms Division Module on the Foundation degree in Hospitality Management programme. This accounts for 40% of the marks. As a result, several students have been employed by major chain hotels in London, including the Hilton, Sheraton and IHG. The Opera training is held every term and is open to all students. The successful students are recognised with a certificate of achievement at the end of the course. **Opera Award Ceremony** (Nelson College London, 2019).

Besides the scheduled lectures, the College also offers learning opportunities through guest speaker sessions, workshops, tutorials, cooking competitions, student quizzes and field trips. The teaching practices encourages students to become independent learners, while summative assessments are used to ensure that students develop their analytical, creative and critical thinking skills.

The teaching, learning and assessment material is prepared using the awarding body's programme specifications and is peer-reviewed before the commencement of each term. Moreover, to facilitate student learning outside of the classroom and to achieve the intended learning outcomes, the College provides Study Manuals for each unit; these are made available in the College library as well as on the VLE. The Study Manuals were complimented in the External Examiner's Report 2018, 'Areas of Good Practice' section, which states that the "Study Manuals provided to complement HN Global are of a high standard and much appreciated by students."

All the relevant teaching material is made available on the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and online library, which is accessible 24/7. It facilitates students' independent learning and research skills. The College also runs its own YouTube channel, which contains videos on different topics useful for students on all programmes. These videos are scripted, designed, directed and produced by the College academics and media team. The videos are accessible not only to Nelson College students but also to the general public. The library at the College has approximately 1200 books and reference-only material available for students.

Additionally, the College provides timely training to students and staff by various means, including presentations uploaded onto the VLE; notice board displays; the College Newsletter and YouTube channels; webinar activity; Knowledge Exchange Centre's publications (such as 24 mini-guides, a Career Planning Journal and an employability book) and website; and a booklet showcasing past and future events and workshops.

As part of its oversight and monitoring of the VLE, termly and annual audits are conducted. Students are invariably enthusiastic about it and the positive contribution it makes to their learning. The review team from the Annual Monitoring for Educational Oversight Visit 2018, stated that the College has continued to effectively manage the VLE, which was identified as good practice (QAA, 2018).

The College has two computer labs as well as libraries which are available to use during hours of operation. The opening times of the library and computer labs are naturally extended during peak hours, such as approaching assessment submission deadlines.

The College's classrooms are fitted with state-of-the-art IT equipment to facilitate teaching and learning. This includes an interactive smart board and the technology to deliver online classes. The technology immensely helped the college to deliver lectures online during the Covid-19 pandemic. The above is also confirmed in the Pearson Academic Management Report 2020-21, Page 15.

"5.1: Nelson College has a wide range of facilities available to students at both campuses that include well equipped classrooms, libraries, and on-line resources with access to computers and the internet. Workshops abound at the Gants Hill campus to resource the HN Hospitality Management programme. The college is well equipped to deliver both programmes. VLE (Moodle) is integrated with Turnitin. The reviewer, during the February 2020 AMR visit viewed several classrooms across both campuses, including the main library facility and E-library. The library facilities are well stocked with requisite learning resources". (Pearson Academic Management Review Report, 2021)

Scholarships, Research and Professional Practice

To ensure that its students are adequately equipped with vocational and research skills to embark on a successful professional career, the College requires them to undertake a mandatory 30-credit research-based module in all of its programmes. This module is taught over two terms (6 months) at Level 4/5 and over a year at Level 6.

To support students' learning as researchers, the College has subscribed to Emerald Insight Journal, which contains over 100 journals and BibliU digital library for recommended and core textbooks.

The College, in line with its Staff Development Policy, encourages staff members to attain a Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. The academic staff promotion policy at the College also gives added advantage to those who are involved in teaching-related academic research as well as to those who can demonstrate excellence in teaching and pedagogy.

In March 2022, the College published a handbook titled “*The Nelson College Experience: A Handbook of Learning and Teaching for Widening Access Mature Students*”¹. The book is available on the Amazon website; it is a thoughtful educational practitioner handbook with original insights, recommendations and teaching approaches to enhance widening participation amongst mature learners. The handbook serves as an extremely valuable aid for educators, filling a fundamental lacuna in this space for those wanting to improve their teaching practice in this area. NCL aims to establish itself as a thought leader in this area and is taking steps to make an essential contribution to Higher Education scholarship.

The College has also written and published an employability book, *Ten Steps to your Dream Job: A Nelson College London Publication*², which is available in printed and Amazon Kindle formats.

The college is in the process of creating a research centre that will allow lecturers and students to work on different research topics to produce publishable work. The following two publications have been funded by the College.

- Agency Costs and Quality of Education in the UK Universities.³
- Agency Costs and Performance of UK Universities.⁴

Personalised Learning and educational gain

The College provides tailor-made learning opportunities to all its students through continuous assessment of their learning needs. At the beginning of the courses, each student is required to complete a Self-assessment survey highlighting their learning needs. Based on the analysis of the survey, the students are referred to workshops (arranged each term), personal tutors and student support lecturers.

Students are required to complete Individual Learning Plans, which help the College, as well as students, track their performance and the alignment of teaching activities to their learning objectives. The students are required to complete the self-assessment at the beginning of the second year as well, the outcomes of which are compared with the outcome of their first year's assessments, and necessary steps are taken if further areas of improvement are identified.

The student support team plays a vital role in creating and enhancing students' personalised learning. The team identifies struggling students by using an analysis of student results from the minutes of the Programme Committee Meeting and Academic Assessment Panels. Students identified as “at risk” are required to complete and undertake Individual Learning Plans and are required to set their own objectives, which the Student Support Lecturers follow up. These students must attend regular meetings with the Support Lecturers in order to address any problems they may face while working on their assessments or objectives set out in individual learning plans.

The College ask students to complete an exit survey at the end of their course as this enables a comparison of the skills level at the beginning and the end of the course

¹ <https://amzn.eu/d/hgcizJ8>

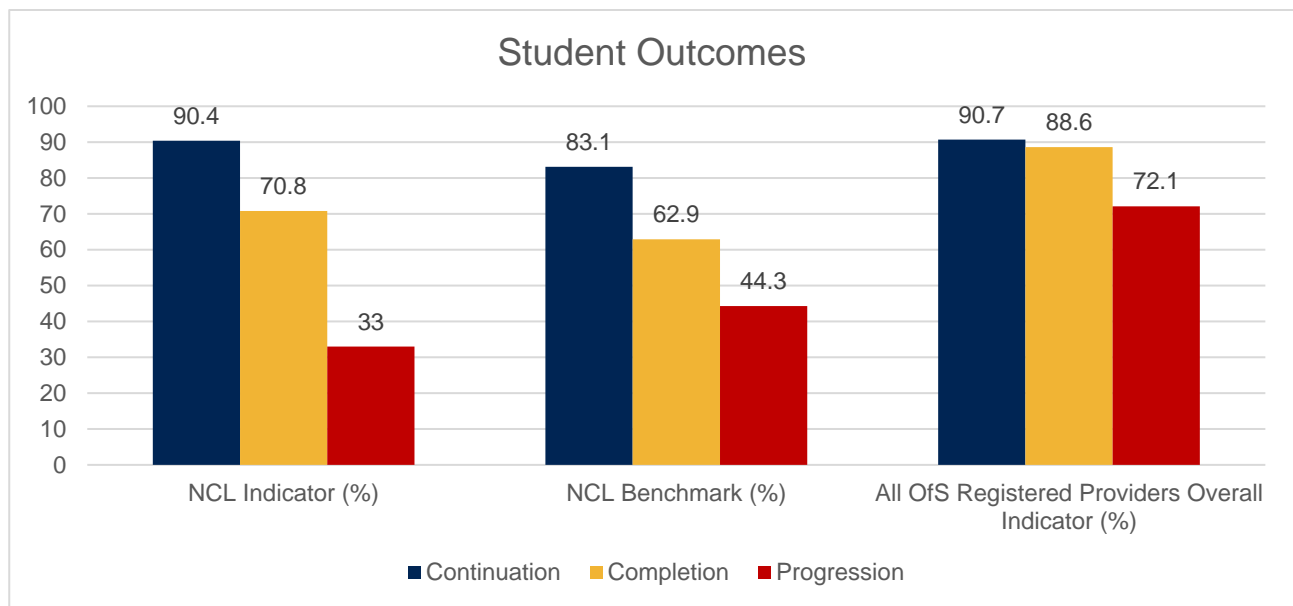
² <https://amzn.eu/d/fTaVbGV>

³ https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-3-319-31816-5_4127-1

⁴ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11115-020-00483-4>

3. Student Outcomes

Contextualising performance against TEF Indicators



Adopted from **TEF data dashboard** (Office for Students, 2023)

Continuation

The indicator for continuation has remained steady over the four-year period, and it is 7.3% above the benchmark and 0.3% below the overall indicator amongst all OfS registered providers. The college has implemented a robust student recruitment and admission policy where prospective students are thoroughly scrutinised to assess their suitability and eligibility to undertake their respective courses.

Our curriculum is career focused. Our pedagogy is based on addressing the diverse learning needs of each student. Therefore, student support is offered on an individual basis. The college provides financial support in the form of a dedicated hardship fund, which is made available to students who are facing hardship in their lives. The NCL Bursary package is specifically targeted at students from disabled, care leaver and care experience backgrounds. Early interventions during the course of study are in line with the aims of the student attendance and progression policy, where students are fully supported to continue and successfully complete their programmes of study. The consistently strong performance over the four-year period is evidence of the effectiveness of the strategies currently in place.

The College recognises excellent attendance (100%) throughout the academic term, across all modules, where recognised students can receive either a Meal or a general Gift Voucher along with a certificate of appreciation. This not only motivates them to attend regularly but also helps them to stay on top of their coursework and ultimately helps them to successfully achieve their qualification.

Completion

The indicator for completion is 7.9% above the benchmark. However, it is 17.8% below the overall indicator amongst all OfS registered providers. Although the performance is above the benchmark holistically, we have identified the areas at the split level indicators, where the performance required improvement, such as the completion rate for the student on BA (Hons) Top-up programmes is 72.0% which is below the respective benchmark of 76.5%. The College started delivering BA (Hons) Top-up courses in September 2016 for the first time. Since then, we have learned key lessons from our experiences, and have incorporated significant improvements. In conjunction with our awarding body, we have strengthened our admissions criteria and incorporated blended learning.

Students under the age of 21 years have a completion rate of 36.8%, which is significantly below the benchmark of 61.2%. Similarly, the free school meal-eligible students have a completion rate of 36.6%, which is well below the benchmark of 56.8%.

The completion rate for young students has been a challenging segment of the student population as they are a small proportion (4% on average) of our student population, due to the small number any slight movement in numbers results in a significant difference. We are committed to improving the progression rate for our young student population and we have put in place additional resources; such as personal tutors, attendance officers and student welfare officers to work in collaboration to engage and support young students. We are confident that enhanced monitoring will help us improve the completion rate for this group.

Progression and educational gain.

Employment and further study

The College monitors market demand proactively and offers courses that are in great demand in the job market. During the curriculum creation planning process, the College collected input from industry experts and local employers to define their expectations. As a result, a programme is created that satisfies not only the expectations of students but also those of employers, considerably improving students' employability opportunities.

For students who wish to continue their education, the College provides a unique progression route that ensures a smooth transition; every student who successfully completes the Level 5 and Level 6 courses can progress to BA and MA courses respectively.

TEF dashboard for the progression data shows the indicator value at 33.0%, which is below the benchmark of 44.3%. We believe this is not a true representation of our student progression as it is marred by the low student response rate of 33.8%.

The college has taken steps to ensure that the student's contact details are up-to-date. We also make students aware of the graduate outcome survey while they are in education at the college. The college has also facilitated the establishment of a student alumni association to ensure that the students are able to connect with each other after completing their studies, as well as have an opportunity to share and learn about the progress the college is making.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has adversely impacted the student employment for our students from HND hospitality, FDA Hospitality and BA Hospitality courses in particular, as the hospitality venues were closed due to national restrictions as well as low customer demand.

Positive Outcome for all

The College has an OfS-approved Access and Participation Plan in place, effective from the academic year 2020-21. The College is continuing to work on its employability strategy to ensure that students from disadvantaged backgrounds have opportunities to progress to further studies and highly skilled employment.

Many students enrolled at Nelson College London have few prior formal qualifications: therefore, understanding and measuring academic outcomes for these students presents its own challenges.

The analysis of graduate outcomes shows performance below the benchmark across all the split indicators, and the average response rate is 33.8%.

We believe these indicators are not a true representation of our student progression to further studies and highly skilled employment, as these are skewed by the consistently low student response rate across the past three years.

As per the TEF 2023 progression indicator, 84% of the survey respondents were aged 31 years and above, 59% were female, and 61.36% were from Asian and Black ethnic backgrounds. The student population from the IMD quintile Q1 and Q2 was 68.18%.

These factors themselves present barriers to highly-paid employment. Therefore, in our judgment, entry to highly skilled employment is not necessarily an appropriate measure of their success. Around 94% of the students at Nelson College London are mature students, and not everyone gets into education for career purposes. This view was also noted in the Parliamentary research briefing: Mature students in England.

“Mature students enter higher education with a wider variety of qualifications than younger students and providers are often more flexible when it comes to admissions criteria. These students often enter higher education for many different reasons and not solely for career purposes” (Parliament. House of Commons, 2021).

We are committed to finding ways to remove barriers for disabled students to participate in the opportunities the College provides. We are making steady progress in reaching out to students with disabilities as a part of our commitment to the access and participation plan 2020-21 to 2024-25. We support disabled students by providing them with additional academic support as well as in the form of financial bursaries.

Employability and Transferable Skills

All programmes offered by the College provide vital employability and transferable skills to prepare students for employment or further education and training. These transferable skills include cognitive and problem-solving skills, interpersonal and intra-personal skills, commercial skills and business skills. The College's primary focus is the provision of active research skills, effective writing skills, analytical skills, critical thinking, creative problem-solving, decision-making, team building, exam preparation skills, and digital literacy. These skills are provided to the students through lectures, workshops, tutorials, seminars and business exhibitions.

The students are encouraged to gain employability skills through voluntary placements and are assisted and guided in finding suitable work placements. The College currently has a voluntary work placement arrangement with NCL Tours Ltd.

The College has embedded a series of practical activities within the student curriculum, such as field trips, workshops, study tours, market research and competitions within the courses it currently

delivers. The College has ensured that the voluntary work placements, workshops and field trips cover the relevant aspects of the curriculum as well as improve students' employability prospects.

The Foundation degree programmes have a Work-Based Learning (WBL) module embedded in the curriculum. All students enrolled on the programmes must complete this year-long module. The aim is to ensure that the students not only meet the learning needs of the employers but also develop their knowledge and skills to meet an organisation's staff development needs.

To cater for any Foundation degree student with disabilities that prevents them from working or makes working unsafe, they can complete a robust research project approved by London Metropolitan University. The scope of the project includes unified communications systems, unique recruitment strategies, reduced working weeks/short days, the impact of the gig economy, and a local industry survey. Students must conduct in-depth research on the topics, document their findings using specific online case studies, and then conduct a survey. This enables them to gain a comprehensive understanding of the industry, new and emerging influences, real-world studies, and local employers.

The College provides opportunities for students to organise field trips and events. The students learn the key skills to work in teams and as an individual on a project. Each team is responsible for planning, executing and managing finances. The details can be found on our college website. Nelson College Workshops & Events (Nelson College London, 2023).

Every year, NCL holds an Employability & Entrepreneurship Forum. This brings together employers, entrepreneurs and students in an open, free-flowing, forum; it affords students the opportunity to pose any questions that they might have to a wide variety of employers, anything from CV-content tips, how to stand out at interviews, all the way through to workplace advice and career pathways.

The College operates its own employability-specific website, the NCL Careers Hub. This site allows students to upload CVs for reading by AI CV Readers (and then work with the Career Advisory Service (CAS) team to improve it, based on the findings). Students may also attend a mock AI Interview (with questions based on their own CV) and access a series of training modules.

The College's Career Advisory Service was launched in 2021. This service enables students to seek one-to-one guidance with employability professionals on matters specific to them as individuals. The service operates hand-in-hand with the NCL Career Planning Journal and the NCL Careers Hub. To provide full flexibility, there are also smartphone applications that support the NCL Careers Hub; these are available directly from both the Apple and Android app stores.

In 2022, the Entrepreneurs' Mentorship Service (EMS) joined the CAS as another significant support tool for our students. Acknowledging that many of our students would prefer to guide their own destiny and set up in business for themselves, this service provides those students with business mentors who have a proven track record of success. The service helps students who may be torn between employment and entrepreneurship to make the decision that is right for them. It also helps with writing business plans, applying for finance, and developing a business strategy alongside any other areas where students wish to receive support.

Educational gain

The college conducted an exit survey to understand the educational gain for its HND Business students. The aim of the survey was to understand the how confident students feel with regards to key employability and professional skills. This study was based on quantitative data collected via survey questionnaire, conducted from November 2020 to January 2021. Out of the 207 students who gained certification in November 2020, a total of 127 students responded to the survey, yielding a 61% response rate. The table below presents the mean scores of responses to six key survey questions to measure employability and professional skills.

Employability and Professional Skills	Average rating of skills before starting the HND programme	Average rating of skills after completing the HND programme	% increase
Communication	3.47	4.39	27%
Planning and Organising	3.61	4.54	26%
Independence	3.91	4.66	19%
Teamwork	3.76	4.51	20%
Analysing & Investing	3.8	4.47	18%
Decision Making	3.87	4.61	19%
Overall	3.74	4.53	21%

HND Business: Exit survey report (Nelson College London, 2021)

The survey participants assess themselves to have improved by 21% overall from the beginning to the end of the course. Communication, planning and organising are consistent areas in which students improved the most, while Analysing and Investing remain the least improved. The survey results helped shape and enhance the approach to learning and teaching.

Conclusion

The demographic mix of our students has its own challenges, in particular the student progression to further studies and highly skilled employment. NCL is committed to delivering an exceptional student experience, supported by its passionate lecturers and effective utilisation of its technological resources, in spite of the challenges at hand. The college recognises the challenges our students encounter, and we actively collaborate with them to personalise and enrich their learning. We believe that our approach to teaching excellence in its broadest sense enables us to give our students a really transformative educational experience.

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Evidence Presented

The evidence referenced within this submission spans from the academic year 2018-19 onwards till the academic year 2021-22. The reports or documents which are not available within the public domain are clearly stated in references as, “unpublished”.

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