

TEF 2023 Provider Submission

1.0 Introduction and Provider Context

Loughborough College is one of the largest providers of college based higher education (HE) in England, with a reputation for placing students at the heart of everything that we do. We provide an excellent student experience and career enhancing learning, leading to positive outcomes. We have a clear mission to widen participation and to support students to realise their full potential, enhancing social mobility and making degree level study available to all.

The college delivers learning programmes to c.10,000 students each year from entry level to level 6, and through our 2020-25 strategy – ‘Shaping Futures’ (Fig 1.), we have a clear set of strategic values and ambitions that underpin our overall vision, mission and culture. As a result of this, the college was graded ‘Outstanding’ for our overall experience and progress of young people under the Social Care common inspection framework (Ofsted, 2021), demonstrating a college-wide approach to providing excellent care and support. Inspectors commented:

‘The college provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the college contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for young people’



Fig 1. Loughborough College 2020-25 strategy – ‘Shaping Futures’

The college was awarded ‘Gold’ in the TEF year 4 exercise in 2019 and student satisfaction, as measured by the National Student Survey, is even higher today. The college has an engaging and vibrant community of over 1,200 HE students (HESES, 2022) studying a diverse range of subjects and is proud to be a teaching-intensive institution, placing pedagogy and student experience at the heart of our practice. An example is the college-wide introduction of Advanced Teaching and Learning Practitioners, focusing on supporting staff to deliver high quality teaching and learning to ensure students reach their full potential. In addition, the dedicated college HE Teaching Excellence Programme (see 2.1.2), which includes lesson observations and sharing of best practice from across the sector, ensures cutting edge teaching and learning practice.

The college has a campus which is contiguous with Loughborough University, with whom it has a shared heritage and works in partnership with, to provide a world class environment for sporting excellence and learning. All of our students benefit directly from this relationship through a joint

Student's Union and a collaborative validating agreement for many of our degree programmes, which are further enhanced by our commitment to innovative teaching and first-class support mechanisms. The institutions have also collaborated in creating a joint Careers and Enterprise Hub which is a flagship partnership supporting social mobility and entrepreneurship, based in Loughborough town centre. Opened by the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment, Mims Davis MP, the Hub offers expert advice, boosting employment and business incubation.

Our excellence in sports education and performance sport, has resulted in a number of Olympians/Paralympians and high-profile sporting athletes achieving their degrees whilst competing at the highest level internationally. Loughborough athletes secured the highest number of Olympic medals than any other institute through their dual student/athlete career. We have continued to grow our reputation for the quality of our Engineering and Business programmes, with both of these areas successfully meeting national skills priorities through the implementation of Higher and Degree apprenticeships. The college is also the lead FE partner in the flagship East Midlands Institute of Technology (EM-IoT), cementing our position as a major provider of vocationally led Engineering programmes.

Loughborough College also offers Blended Learning programmes (see section 1.7) which allow students who would not otherwise have had the opportunity to attend University or college, to study alongside their other commitments, whether as a full-time sports person or in work. Blended learning formed part of the college's strategy long before the global Covid-19 pandemic. The knowledge and expertise of the pedagogies and software associated with this method of delivery, enabled Loughborough College staff to transition online swiftly and effectively when the pandemic forced institutions to close their campuses. This contributed to Loughborough College being one of the few institutions nationally who saw student satisfaction rates climb during the pandemic (NSS 2021; Loughborough College internal Spring Survey 2021).

The college has entered into Exceptional Collaborative Agreements with two other colleges, to deliver Higher National Certificates and Diplomas in subjects related to Sport, Business and Healthcare Practice (see section 1.7) in order to enhance opportunities to study for many students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The college prides itself in providing options such as these, which widen participation and achievement for all.

1.1 Our Educational Mission and Strategic Aims

Created in collaboration with all HE staff and alongside representatives of the student and governing body, our HE Strategy shapes our approach to deliver and has a clear mission:

'To be recognised as the region's higher education college of choice for flexible, career enhancing education and training; providing a first class, supportive undergraduate learning community, which effectively meets the needs of our students and employers, whilst producing employable graduates.'

This mission is supported by three distinct aims:

- Excel** Provide an excellent teaching and learning experience, which adheres to the highest of academic standards within a Higher Education environment, producing above average success rates and highly satisfied and employable graduates.
- Support** Provide outstanding staff development to deliver an excellent undergraduate student experience to support student retention and high student satisfaction. Student satisfaction above national benchmark in the NSS.

Grow Growth in student numbers supported by a range of provision that encourages widening participation and internal progression from Further Education into Higher Education and that meets the needs of prospective students and employers.

In order to deliver these aims the strategy addresses six distinct themes.

1. Our Curriculum Development

Our programmes meet the needs of prospective students and employers, including a well-rounded curriculum which develops employability skills and professional opportunities.

2. Our Student Experience and Satisfaction

We provide a range of services, opportunities and support and integrate the student voice effectively, increasing student satisfaction scores in college surveys and the NSS.

3. Our Employer and Partner Engagement

There are links with industry creating responsive and flexible delivery models that allow the college to respond effectively to government policy and employer needs. Employers are engaged with staff and students to provide relevant experience and opportunities.

4. Our Staff Development and Teaching Excellence

We support staff development to create a first-class teaching and learning experience.

5. Our Marketing, Recruitment and Finances

There is a coordinated approach to local and national marketing and recruitment to support a year on year increase in student numbers, attracting those students from disadvantaged backgrounds and those least likely to access higher education.

6. Our Governance, Reporting and Administration

There are clear processes and procedures in place to ensure accurate and relevant information is available to applicants, students and partners and to ensure timely and precise responses and returns for institutions and government.

The 'Higher Education Strategy' has provided the catalyst for innovation across our provision and has been instrumental in delivering excellent results.

1.2 Our Validating Partners

The college enjoys a long and established partnership with Loughborough University with whom, we not only share facilities and a common Student Union but who also validate our degree level provision in both Sport and Engineering. This relationship has gone from strength-to-strength as the college's provision has grown and the strategic nature of our relationship is evidenced through our governance arrangements and joint investments e.g. Careers and Enterprise Hub and the East Midland IoT. The Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University sits on the college's Corporation Board and the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience is a member of the college's Higher Education Panel (Academic Board) which is part of our Governance structure.

The college's breadth of collaborative partnerships is designed to ensure we meet regional and national skills priorities in areas that our students will progress to employment in, as their educational gain. Our validating and franchising relationships that deliver this educational gain are with Nottingham Trent University (Business and Management, Public Services), the University of Derby (Music, Care and Engineering), the University of Lincoln (Chartered Management Degree Apprenticeship) and Pearson Edexcel (implementing a suite of HN programmes) for the delivery of its HE provision to full-time, part-time, block release and distance (blended) learning students.

The college is the lead FE partner in the East Midlands Institute of Technology (EM-IoT) which is a strategic collaboration focused on enhancing sustainability, net-zero and digital technologies. The EM-IoT is chaired by Baroness Morgan of Cotes, who was the Secretary of State for Education, and is led by the University of Derby (Lead HE institution), Loughborough University and Derby College Group. We have brought together a range of blue-chip employers including, Alstom, Uniper, Toyota Manufacturing UK, Rolls Royce, Fujitsu, National Grid and Bloc Digital. This Government backed centre of excellence combines FE, HE and employers to deliver skills and qualifications to meet regional economic growth plans. A £7.4m capital investment, shared between the college and Loughborough University, will be delivered on our campus and qualifications to over 2,000 learners over the next 5 years.

1.3 Our Provision

Loughborough College has more than 1,200 students enrolled on HE courses (HESES, 2022) spanning a range of vocationally relevant programmes. The majority of our provision is made up of 800 campus-based students taught on a full (580) or part-time (220) basis. The college's sport degree programmes make up c.50% of these students, with the remainder in Engineering, Business and Management, Caring and Public Services and Music programmes.

A culture of HE is well established at Loughborough College with a full HE staffing structure including a Student Registry team, Lecturers, Managers, Researchers, Admissions, Wellbeing and a team of Academic Tutors, all operating under a Head and Dean of Higher Education. Senior Lecturing posts are appointed to oversee department-wide objectives such as teaching and learning and Access and Participation and Enterprise.

The department is further supported by a range of cross-college services and operates its own HE functions such as Examination and Ethics Boards, Extenuating Circumstances and Academic Board. The Dean of Higher Education sits on the College's Executive team which further provides structured and strategic support.

1.4 Our Educational Gains

Loughborough College accepts students from a wide range of backgrounds and academic profiles. Based in the East Midlands, the college is surrounded by a number of high-quality Universities and competition for students is high. Whilst a good number of students enter with exceptionally high grades, the college welcomes a high percentage with low tariff points.

Our aim throughout our provision is to produce highly employable graduates who are confident and have developed a range of personal skills coupled with industry experience, with the ability to demonstrate an awareness and preparedness for the employment of further study that they plan to enter. By successfully achieving these aims we are delivering true social mobility and life changing opportunities to our students in line with the college's mission and values.

A key element of this aim is encapsulated by our 'Be More' student experience agenda (fig 2.) which encourages and signposts students to make their time studying at the college rewarding and fulfilling. We provide a range of opportunities for students to grow personally, academically, professionally, and socially and provide a motivating climate for students to excel. The 'Be More' programme brings together the resources of the college and the Loughborough Students Union with a commitment to providing the environment, resources and support for students to:

- maximise their full potential
- become more employable
- help shape their course and student life
- access a range of experiences and develop a variety of skills beyond academic study

The agenda covers every facet of how the college approaches the educational gains it plans to achieve and was developed alongside our student representatives to provide:



Fig 2. The Loughborough College Undergraduate Student Experience Agenda – 'Be More'

Be More You

- individualised academic support through our academic tutors
- tracking and monitoring progress, providing tailored advice and support
- a wide range of library resources to support studies
- pastoral support, resources and guidance to access mental health, wellbeing and support needs
- equality and diversity screening of all of our policies and procedures
- assistance in evaluating options before arrival, while studying and after graduation
- a peer mentor programme to support managing the academic demands
- an open, inclusive, enriching environment
- a selection of scholarships, bursaries and support funds

Be More Inspired

- a curriculum which is both inspiring and shaped by industry demands;
- innovative teaching techniques, including the embedding of digital technologies
- encouragement to read widely, ask questions, debate difficult concepts and actively contribute
- undertake research at all levels and celebrate student research
- test theories learned in real-life settings by connecting with guest speakers, trips, placement opportunities and links with industry
- ensure all staff are qualified and encouraged to achieve qualifications and undertake ongoing professional development
- assessments are varied and applied to the real-world
- feedback is clear and developmental

Be More Involved

- membership of the Loughborough Student's Union
- participate in a range of sports and physical activity, no matter what level you are
- be a part of over 100 LSU student run societies
- benefit others by volunteering, being part of an ACTION or fundraising project
- becoming a Programme Rep, to express opinions, perspectives and ideas to help shape programmes, the services we provide and student life in Loughborough

- support financially to undertake additional qualifications, experiences, trips and projects to develop skills and attributes

Be More Employable

- the opportunity to be part of the Young Enterprise Start-Up Programme, supporting and mentoring you to develop a business idea from concept to launch
- employability skills are embedded in all courses, including industrial placement
- employer links providing knowledge, experience and employment opportunities
- free and impartial Careers and Employability advice from qualified staff
- an online interactive portal to support with the job application and recruitment 24/7
- an Alumni network to provide industry insights, mentoring support and guidance
- a range of additional qualifications, courses, workshops, trips and work experience

Our courses are designed to positively shape students from the outset. Each programme commences with a Research and Academic skills module which prepares the student for study at this level and makes clear the attributes that are desired/required for high performance (critical thinking, academic writing, analytic reasoning etc.).

Throughout the provision, the traditional 'reading week' has been replaced by a 'student development week' where the focus is on vocational skills and academic achievement. Students can select from a number of activities, which provide them with vocational qualifications and experience and/or catch up/revision sessions for their modules, adding to the value of their degree and to their employability overall. Vocational qualifications on offer are designed to be attractive to employers and cover areas that increase work readiness, which is one of the most desired attributes employers seek from new recruits. These qualifications include; Safeguarding, Working with Children, First Aid in the Workplace, Leadership (ILM), Coaching qualifications in a variety of sports, Gym Instructors Level 2 award and Kinesiology Taping. Academic opportunities include revision sessions, 1:1 appointments with teaching staff and Academic Tutors, mock examinations and study skills workshops delivered by experts.

We also work with our employer network and other academic partners to produce a series of guest speakers to further inform, engage and inspire our students into work or postgraduate study. All degree level programmes delivered at Loughborough College, have vocational relevance built in to them and this is evident in their design and delivery and also in the way they are assessed and the opportunities that students have to engage with employers. Employer engagement is woven in to our degree programmes wherever possible and this is evidenced most clearly by the inclusion of both our Business Enterprise and Employability and Placement modules which feature in many of our degrees.

The Business Enterprise module incorporates and takes advantage of the college's close partnership with Young Enterprise in the development of its approach to entrepreneurship and enterprise initiatives. In 2014, the college introduced an enterprise module (optional initially for all students) which required students to enter the Young Enterprise Start Up competition. The assessment for the module is the business plan, marketing appraisal and business pitch to the judging panel which forms the requirement of the competition. This programme has developed and is currently offered to all higher education students (whether as part of a module in validated provision or as an additional activity for those on franchised programmes). The college is now a centre for regional enterprise competition and has had a team represent the college at the UK national finals in each of the past eight years, winning the competition outright three times (against competition from high profile universities and colleges from across the country) and going on to represent the UK at the European finals. During our involvement with Young Enterprise so far, over 360 students and 80 teams have entered the competition. Our successes within the competition demonstrate our progression and

dedication to entrepreneurship and the gains we aim to achieve. This commitment led to the college finishing as runner up in the national 'UK Entrepreneurial School' awards and where we were commended for:

'The way the college has invested in the development and delivery of enterprise to students and for their passion and enthusiasm resulting in sustained and outstanding success'. (Young Enterprise, 2016)

A former student, who was part of a Young Enterprise team in 2015/16, contacted the college following his successful application for employment stating:

'I can't stress to you enough how much that module has helped me to progress. As soon as I mention it in interviews, employers want to know more. I am now employed doing a similar role at Proctor & Gamble'.

Other feedback from students demonstrating similar enthusiasm for the way employers are engaged

'I believe the Business Enterprise module is a brilliant module to have on the BSc degree. I have found it challenging but rewarding at the same time, with it providing skills that I can use in later life. Overall, I cannot fault the module in any way'.

'I loved the Business Enterprise module. I always wanted to build my own company and I want it even more now that I have tasted what it's like to be a real entrepreneur.'

'I thoroughly enjoyed the Business enterprise day, it was a fantastic opportunity to gain some quality feedback on our product and network with people who have exceptional knowledge of their industry's. In addition, the conversations we had with potential mentors made me have to think fast on my feet which was challenging but also a realistic conversation that may take place with future employers.'

In addition to the Business Enterprise module, students in our second year of study on validated provision are also required to complete an Employability and Placement module. Embedded into the curriculum, students are required to research and plan their career path, whilst also reflecting on their achievements to date and the qualities required to be successful in their chosen area. The innovative assessment process includes a graduate assessment day which has been designed in partnership with employers and industry specialists. Designed to replicate a 'real world' assessment, students are required to research, apply for, present, debate, analyse and be interviewed for one of a number of available positions. The college engages local employers to assist in the assessment of candidates and there have been a number of cases where students have been offered placements and internships as a result, including opportunities to work at the college.

These modules exemplify the insightful curriculum design used to stretch students and develop their skills to their full potential. We are excellent at producing highly employable graduates with progression rates 3.4% above benchmark for full time undergraduates (TEF, 2023).

1.5 Our Quality

The college was successfully added to the register of providers with the OfS in the 'Approved (fee cap)' category with zero additional conditions to meet, other than the general ongoing conditions placed upon all providers. The college has an approved Access and Participation Plan in place for 2020/24 and an effective Student Protection Plan.

The college last underwent inspection from QAA in 2014 and was rated as 'Meets UK standards' in each of the criteria assessed. In addition to this the review team identified strengths in; supporting students; a strong and positive approach to quality management; commitment to the student voice and closing the feedback loop; an institutional culture for engagement and increasing aspirations.

In 2019, having developed and enhanced our programmes over 5 years, the college was awarded TEF Gold (having previously achieved a TEF Silver award in 2017). In making this award, the TEF

assessment panel took particular notice of the college's success in achieving excellent outcomes for students, specifically noting the following findings;

- the highest levels of engagement in learning and study, with students involved in course and module design most highly valued by employers
- an embedded institutional culture that facilitates recognises and rewards excellent teaching, including a review of methods for addressing any disconnect between student expectations of feedback and its timeliness and actual process
- employability skills embedded firmly in the curriculum, with frequent engagement by students in developments from the forefront of scholarship and industry practices
- optimum levels of contact time, including outstanding personalised provision, that secure very high levels of engagement and commitment to learning from students.

Our validating partners have commended our approach to quality and our Governance structure ensures robust test and challenge of our quality assurance processes and quality improvement initiatives. As part of our quality cycle, the college operates a Self-Assessment Report process at the end of each year resulting in a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The QIP is monitored throughout the following year through the Higher Education Panel (a committee of the board) which our HE student Governor is a member of.

1.6 Our Student Voice

Students are at the heart of everything that we do. The college places tremendous importance in collecting and acting upon the student voice which is embedded into decision making at every level. The approach detailed in section 2 has been fundamental in achieving the excellent and sustained student satisfaction (Q.27) results in the National Student Survey (NSS). This is an outstanding achievement that places the experience of students at Loughborough College above the benchmark for every category in the survey, over the past 4 years. The most recent (2022) overall rating for the college of 84% would (if ranked within the list of universities) place the college equal to the 6th placed university in the country.

Students are encouraged to feedback in a number of ways:

Module feedback: Individual module feedback at the mid-point and end so that changes can be made in a timely manner

- **Early Findings survey:** A check in at the start of the semester to gauge the experience of induction, communication and overall experience at the start of the year
- **Spring Survey:** Timed with the NSS for those not in scope, a range of questions designed to gauge satisfaction and elicit responses that can lead to improvement
- **Student Representatives:** A network of reps gather feedback and meet with senior leaders each semester
- **Higher Education Student Governor:** Our students are represented at the highest level on our corporation board
- **Course specific focus groups:** An opportunity for students to feedback on areas directly associated with their course and its delivery

1.7 Our Programmes

The college is dedicated to providing programmes that are vocationally relevant. In a number of instances, in response to student feedback, there has been a shift towards providing full bachelor's degrees rather than foundation degree/HND and top-up degree. Students graduating from the college will have had the opportunity to obtain a broad range of additional qualifications that complement their academic studies, enrich their programme of learning and increase their employability.

In recent years, there has been a focus on developing highly accessible 'Blended Learning' programmes and Higher and Degree Apprenticeships. These are developed in response to demand from the employers we work with and the industries that we serve. For example, the college works with a number of sports clubs and our flexible programmes allow students to continue their sporting aspirations whilst studying. The development of our Ofsted outstanding apprenticeships provision has been a major driver for more meaningful engagement with the employers we work with. The facility to study via these routes, has opened up the possibility of participation to a wider range of entrants than ever before and has enabled the college to maintain its drive towards increasing the number of part-time students accessing HE. The college's Access to HE programmes have also been extended to enable more options and clearer progression routes, congruent with our core belief that study at this level should be available to all.

1.8 Our Exceptional Collaborative Arrangements (ECA)

The college entered into an ECA relationship for the delivery of HND programmes in Sport. This strategic partnership enabled the college to expand the breadth of its sporting offer and reach a range of students who otherwise would not have had the opportunity to study for a degree. Based around their clubs in various locations around the country, high quality teaching and learning is delivered to students alongside a sporting programme, enabling a dual career pathway.

Our mission at the start of the relationship was to ensure that every student studying on the programme, felt part of Loughborough College and that they would have the same access to resources at Loughborough as all other students. In order to ensure that this mission was achieved, Loughborough College has appointed a 'Sub-contract' Quality Assurance Lead to oversee all quality assurance activities and College staff are fully involved in the activities taking place offsite. Other measures include, Loughborough College:

- Being involved in recruitment and induction activities
- Coordinating all student voice activities
- Hosting visits by students to the Loughborough Campus
- Hosting learning materials on the Loughborough College VLE
- Providing full access to the Loughborough College Library resources

During 2021/22 the college entered into a second ECA, focused on the delivery of BTEC Higher National Diploma in Business. Drawn from a background centred around widening participation for underrepresented groups, this partner is well placed to serve the individual needs of their students with additional language and subject specific support built in to their programmes. The number of students enrolled through this arrangement has increased year on year and an additional subject (HNC/D Healthcare) has been introduced. These students are further supported by Loughborough College as per the arrangements set out above.

2.0 Student Experience at Loughborough College

Our student satisfaction is outstanding at 84% overall satisfaction (Q.27 of the NSS 2022) which is 8 percentage points above the sector rate . Loughborough College received the highest student satisfaction rates in the 2022 NSS of any major provider (University or College) in the East Midlands and would (if ranked amongst the list of Universities) place Loughborough College 6th in a table of English HEIs. Furthermore, our internal surveys which include all HE students and ask contextual questions to drive college improvements demonstrate 89% satisfaction for all HE students.

Benchmarking for the TEF exercise is new and differs from the NSS. For a number of years institutions have used NSS data and internal data to drive improvements in student satisfaction. Despite our excellent results obtained in the NSS by the college, supported by our internal survey data which is even higher, the TEF approach shows our satisfaction rates are just on or around the

national benchmark. In seeking to understand this variation in our contextual evidence and the benchmark, Loughborough College has made numerous enquiries with the OfS and been unable to establish a justification or reason for this. Therefore, the benchmark being so high as a starting point, compared to our regional universities, suggests that the types of student that the college accepts are predetermined to be more satisfied with their provision, regardless of the measures put in place by the provider. All of our external and internal evidence shows that our student experience is amongst the best in class nationally. We welcome submitting our contextual data as we feel strongly that this is not a fair reflection of the student experience at Loughborough College and that this represents an unfair comparison to institutions, that have considerably lower bench mark values, and are able to demonstrate higher performance.

Performance in the NSS 2022 was above NSS benchmark in every category (fig 3.) for the third year in a row.

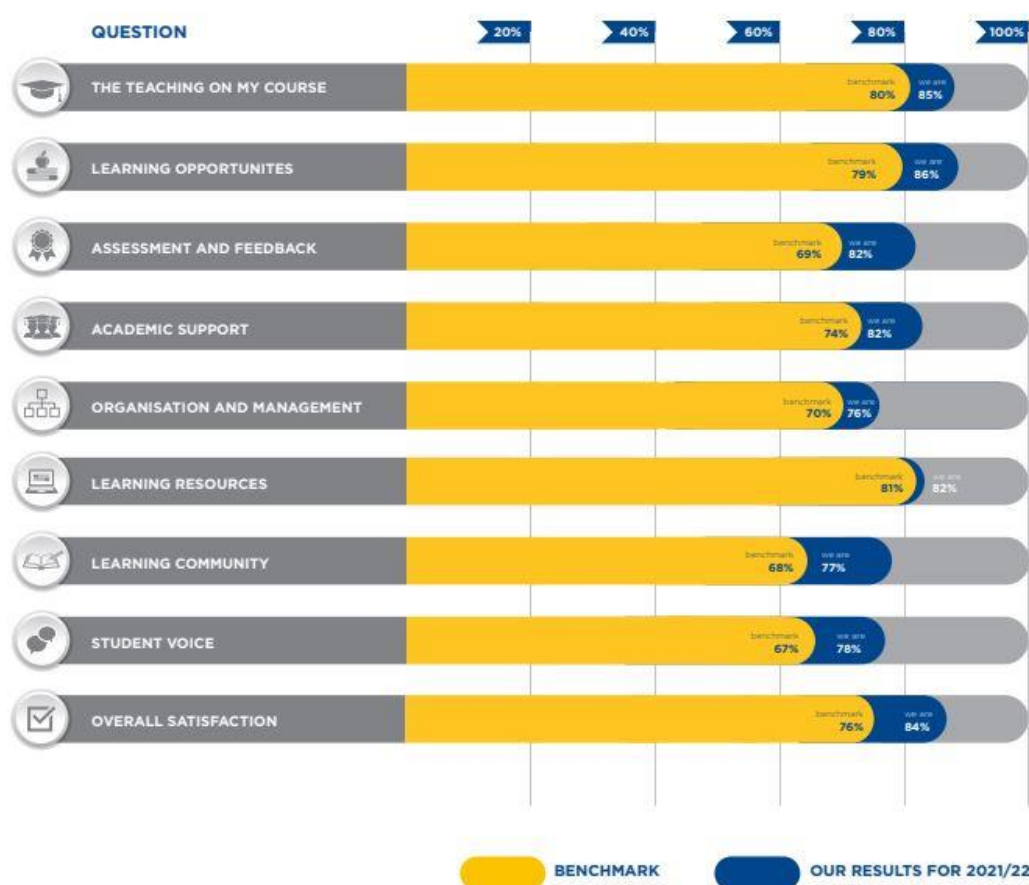


Fig 3. Loughborough College performance against NSS benchmarks 2021/22

The college operates a holistic and institution wide ranging approach to supporting and engaging students, which involves every member of staff from those in support services to lecturers and the senior management team. This is demonstrated by a number of initiatives that have been introduced to ensure students feel welcome and have an environment in which to thrive. We provide:

- A Principal welcome in person at every student induction, supported by our safeguarding lead and therapy dogs.
- We are a trauma informed college and our student welcome each morning, by the college executive team and members of staff, is designed to be empathy led and provide positive engagement.
- Free porridge at breakfast for all students and staff ensures that everyone has access to a hot meal in the morning regardless of financial position
- A free salad option is also available to all at lunchtimes



Fig 4. Loughborough College's Therapy Dogs – Otis and Mylie

Two Therapy Dogs – 'Otis' and 'Mylie' have had an extremely positive impact on many students (and staff) across the college. They provide a neutral conduit for discussion and a safe and friendly ear and face. We have been able evidence therapeutic gains in particular with students experiencing anxiety, uncertainty or a need for reassurance.

The HE strategy has enabled the college to develop its approach and was the catalyst for establishing the HE culture and ethos that is now in place. By looking at the provision as a whole through our six strategic themes, staff have a clear guide and direction for the achievement of our goals. This is supported by an action plan that is regularly monitored and reviewed, with progress reported through the Academic Board to the Governing Body. As a direct result of the strategy and how we engage with and involve students in our decision-making, NSS results have demonstrated the anticipated positive impact in performance. Placing students at the heart of everything we do, has resulted in above benchmark performance for every NSS section since 2018.

Loughborough College students enjoy the unique position of belonging to the top ranked student union in the country - Loughborough Students Union (LSU), the student union for both the college and Loughborough University students. The LSU has been voted the best in the country in a variety of surveys and offers a comprehensive range of support and enrichment activities. Furthermore, those students studying for a degree at the college that is validated by a different institution to Loughborough University enjoy dual SU membership – the LSU and that of the validating partner.

2.1 Academic Experience and Assessment

2.1.1 SE1 – Approach to Teaching

Outstanding quality of teaching and learning is at the heart of our offer and 100% of Loughborough College HE teaching staff hold a teaching qualification or are supported towards one. Senior support for pedagogy, training and mentoring are core to our approach. As a result of a culture of teaching and learning, 'Teaching on my course' is rated 0.8% above TEF benchmark for full-time students and 10.1% above for part-time students. 'Teaching on my course' received an 85% rating in the NSS (5% above NSS benchmark) and 92% for all HE students in our internal Spring Survey 2021-22.

Many of our staff hold a PhD in their subject area and we ensure that we recruit staff who have relevant industry experience to enrich the student learning experience. For example:

- Our Sport and Exercise Therapy lecturers who provide Sports Therapy services to Nottingham Forest Football Club
- Our Strength and Conditioning lecturer provides S&C support to Coventry City Football club
- One of our Coaching lecturers is Head Coach for Rotherham United FC (Women)
- One of our Coaching lecturers works with the FA as lead Futsal tutor and assessor
- One of our Sports Management lecturers provides academic consultancy to Barcelona FC

The college has a specific post of Senior Lecturer for Teaching and Learning working specifically in the Higher Education department to concentrate on embedding the specific pedagogies relevant to this area. This postholder is an experienced and qualified teaching expert with a PGCE and receives remission in order to support and mentor teaching staff within the department through the HE Teaching Excellence Programme (See 2.1.2). New staff and those new to teaching also receive a reduced teaching demand in their first year in order to ensure teaching practice is developed and consistent with the outstanding delivery of experienced staff. These staff are provided with a Personal Induction Plan and have additional developmental observations, supported by manager

feedback during weeks 4, 12 and 24. In addition to this, new staff are encouraged to complete the Academic Practice Apprenticeship through Loughborough University. Upon completion they secure HEA Fellowship (Advance HE) and are supported by the college with full funding, time allowance and a mentor to do this.

All staff teaching on HE programmes are allocated time to engage with scholarly activity and there is a focus of research activity on teaching and learning through the Loughborough College Research Network. There is an expectation for teaching staff to engage with in-house staff development and the monitoring of the research outputs of scholarly activity is carried out through the annual appraisal system. Staff are supported to further develop, as detailed below.

2.1.2 Loughborough College HE Teaching Excellence Programme

Loughborough College HE Teaching Excellence Programme (HE TEP) is designed to support HE teaching staff to develop and understand the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to deliver high quality teaching, learning and assessment for HE students. As part of this unique programme, all staff together across the college have a dedicated hour each week where they are off timetable, to discuss, present, share and practice different teaching initiatives and assessment strategies. These compulsory sessions are based upon collaborative activities between Lecturers, Teaching and Learning Leads and Curriculum Managers. Demonstrating best practice, these sessions include a focus on learner voice and educational gains.

HE staff across multiple disciplines collaborate to share good practice and new teaching ideologies relevant to an HE setting. This initiative has included utilisation of a broad range of guest speakers, including from our partner HEIs. Similarly, opportunities were created to attend lecture series and symposiums at partner institutions. Examples of this include attendance at the '(Nottingham) Trent Institute for Learning and Teaching' symposium and at the teaching and learning lecture series held at Loughborough University. Teaching staff involved with programmes validated by the University of Derby attend and contribute to regular teaching and learning forums specific to their subject area.

The frameworks in which the HE TEP are grounded include Advance HE's 'Enhancing Student Success in Higher Education' (Fig 5) and the UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in HE.

This framework addresses six strategic areas of priority which Advance HE believes are key for change. These are depicted in the middle of the diagram to bring them together. All six are directed towards the achievement of student success at the centre - representing their core purpose. The six priorities addressed through the Advance HE framework series each contribute to student success. Individually, the framework aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Transforming assessment in HE: to maximise student learning from both the process and products of assessment within academic discipline and professional communities.
- Embedding employability in HE: enable successful transitions and contributions for students, benefitting them, their communities and the economy.
- Access, retention, attainment and progression in HE: to foster a culture that promotes and enables the full and equitable participation of all students to, through and beyond HE.

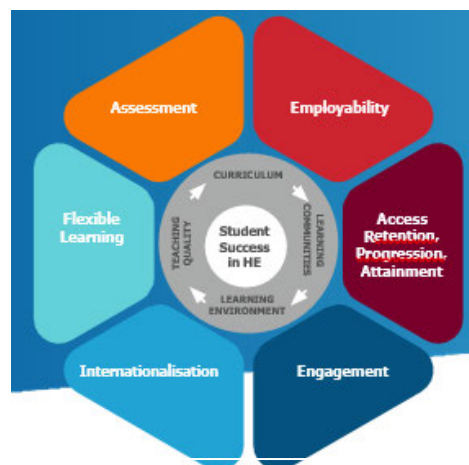


Fig 5. Enhancing student success in higher education – Advance HE

- Student engagement through partnership: to commit to developing open, constructive and continuous dialogue between students and staff, among students, and between institutions and their students' unions, associations or guilds.
- Internationalising HE: to prepare graduates to live in and contribute responsibly to a globally interconnected society.
- Flexible learning in HE: to offer choice in how, what, when and where students learn through flexibility in the pace, place and mode of delivery.

Three key areas have been derived from the Advance HE Framework (Fig. 5.) to drive excellence in teaching, learning and assessment within the HE department:

- Flexible and Technology Enhanced Teaching and Learning
- Student Engagement and Assessment
- Embedding Employability, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

The HE TEP supports staff to drive student success and experience, whilst gaining additional qualifications and recognition for their own personal career development. Evidence gathered on the programme directly supports staff undertaking the Academic Professional Apprenticeship facilitated by the college, as well as those wishing to apply for fellowship of Advance HE.

There is much to learn from our colleagues in the FE sector and links between the two areas of the college are extremely strong. HE teaching staff share ideas with colleagues from FE and embrace the use of technology within the classroom, ensuring they are as up-to-date as possible with new teaching initiatives and better equipped to support the transition to higher education.

2.1.3 Teaching Observation Framework

We operate a best practice model to ensure that our staff are supported to be the best they can possibly be for our students. Observation and evaluation of teaching takes many forms. Staff are observed a minimum of four times per year in the form of a learning walk, observation and peer observation. Staff new to teaching have further observations as part of their induction and probation programme. Peer observations are non-judgmental and developmental in format and take place once per semester. Results of these peer observations are primarily intended for the observer and observee, however an edited version is sent to the Senior Lecturer for Teaching and Learning who collates the information and uses these themes to inform Teaching Learning and Assessment sessions and college wide CPD events. These activities further feed into the sharing of best practice. Over the course of each year 100% of teaching staff will experience developmental observations and be given the opportunity to reflect on practice.

2.2 SE1 - Feedback and Assessment

TEF benchmarking places the college 0.6% above benchmark (77.6%) for full-time students and 9.6% above for part-time students for 'Assessment and Feedback'. In the NSS we were 13% above benchmark at 82% for 'Assessment and Feedback' and our internal Spring Survey for every student in HE scored 87%.

2.2.1 Review of Assessments

Across the department a holistic review of all assessments is undertaken prior to the beginning of each academic year, with five main aims:

1. To ensure students are introduced to as wide a range of assessment methods as possible throughout their studies.
2. To ensure that, wherever possible, assessment content and design are vocationally relevant and provide applied experiences.

3. Limiting formal written examinations unless there is a need to show understanding that other forms of assessment cannot.
4. To ensure that students are not 'over' or 'double' assessed on learning outcomes.
5. Where applicable, employers are consulted on assessment design.

This reflective process enables enhancements in assessments and helps shape vocational relevance, which is dynamic based upon sector developments, and a key area of focus for assessment. An example of change was the removal of a written examination for our nutrition module, replacing the exam with a series of laboratory-based practical exercises, investigating the performance-benefit of selected supplements.

We believe that the assessment guidelines that have been implemented have not only achieved the initial five aims detailed above, but have also improved student satisfaction and have contributed to our educational gains producing impressive results for progression where the college is 3.4% above benchmark. This evidence is supported by External Examiner feedback which stated '*Assessment processes have been adapted in response to previous external examiner feedback and the changes offer a more coherent feedback package for students.*' Assessment design and planning has also facilitated improvements to feedback methods as outlined below and plays a significant part in preparing our students for employment. Our internal Spring Survey highlighted that "Criteria used in marking has been made clear in advance" and "Marking and Assessment has been fair", both scoring 87%.

2.2.2 Review of Feedback Methods

Historically, the feedback that the college provides to students has been universally praised and commended in the highest terms by external examiners, validating institutions, internal quality audit teams and assessors:

'The level of interaction between first and second markers on a piece of assessed work is outstanding. I saw uplifting and warm feedback, rich in encouragement and clarity and offering full support on the student journey.' (External Examiner)

'Quality of the tutor feedback on assignments is exemplary, identifying the strengths and shortcomings of student work, and written advice is very detailed in order to support students in subsequent assessment tasks.' (NTU Validation Panel)

'There is real warmth and encouragement in the feedback provided to students, nurturing a sense of common fellowship and ambition. It is quite a heady mix. There is equality and fairness built in, which I applaud.' (External Examiner)

2.3 SE2 – Course Content and Delivery

We have an institutional commitment to teaching excellence which empowers our staff to be innovative and creative. As a teaching-intensive institution, our teaching methods are continually evaluated and scrutinised and improvements made wherever opportunities are discovered. The result of this is that in our Spring Survey 2021-22, which every HE student completes, "The course is intellectually stimulating" scored 94% and "The course has challenged me to achieve my best" 92%, which is outstanding and evidence of challenging and stimulating course content and delivery.

Through the Higher Education Teaching Excellence Programme our staff are fully supported to develop their teaching which is research led and supported by the latest available pedagogical technologies. Digital Learning Specialists and Digital Learning Champions within the department, support the development of digital literacy. All programmes are evaluated on an annual basis to ensure that they remain current and meet the college's aims to nurture students that are ready to progress. All modules and programmes provide the opportunity for students to feedback into their

design, content and delivery methods chosen through module feedback and focus groups. In addition to this, subject specialists review their own performance and comments made by their peers during teaching observations, to adapt and improve their own practice.

Each programme has an External Examiner appointed via the validating/franchising institution or awarding body. The college takes great care to engage with and facilitate the effectiveness of this process ensuring that teaching staff meet with examiners on a regular basis throughout the year rather than at one annual event. This ensures examiners develop a good understanding of the aims and direction of the programme. Furthermore, teaching staff are able to discuss new ideas and embed examples of good practice. External Examiners have consistently commended the teaching and learning across the college:

'Quality assurance is excellent and meticulously documented. The internal verification is exemplary.' (Hospitality Management External Examiner, 2018)

'You should be very proud of the achievements of both your students and yourselves. There is terrific feedback and truly innovative assessment packages which will improve your students.' (Events Management External Examiner, 2018)

2.4 SE3 Use of Research, Innovation and Employer Engagement

Loughborough College is at the forefront of the skills agenda and has played a leading and convening role regionally and nationally in response to the Skills Bill. From being the first completed Town's Deal project in the country through the launch of our Careers and Enterprise Hub, to leading a Skills Development Fund pilot and being part of the Local Skills Improvement Plan trailblazer, to securing an East Midlands Institute of Technology and partnership with the global NFL Academy, it is clear that supporting students to develop the skills that employers require is central to our approach. Loughborough College works with over 600 employers each year to create opportunities for our students and to showcase innovation across sectors. The HE department operates an employer forum and holds regular breakfast meetings as an opportunity to network and liaise with business over placement opportunities, assessment design, curriculum design, guest lectures and research opportunities. The Ofsted graded 'outstanding work' that we do with employers, is now being extended through our engagement with higher and degree apprenticeships, further fuelling interaction and opportunities from those employers that we work with.

'Working with Loughborough College to assist in the training of our workforce since 2017 we have found their flexible approach to learning extremely beneficial for our organisation. We have students on a range of courses from Level 2, Performing Engineering Operations to Level 5 Mechanical Engineering; all of whom feel fully supported and motivated to achieve. Staff are approachable and accessible and work closely with students to enable them to settle into academic study seamlessly.' (Learning & Development Coordinator, Mercedes AMG HPP, 2021)

In addition to the modules in section 1.4, which demonstrate engagement with employers and innovative practice, students are provided with the opportunity to connect with employers and gain work experience and qualifications as part of their studies. Our Sport students are encouraged to gain experience through the Loughborough College student led Sports Science Hub (SSH). The SSH offers commercial access to physiological lab-based testing, nutritional support, strength and conditioning assessment and body composition analysis, providing the same sports science provision for all individuals from amateur to elite. Students are supervised to carry out tests and consultations and can gain hands on employment experience directly related to their field of study. Similarly, our Sport and Exercise Therapy finalists run an evening clinic open to the public, where they are able to put their learning into practice. This facility is popular in the community and students

log their clinic hours against their placement requirements and use these towards their accreditation with the Society of Sports Therapists – an accolade conferred upon them at graduation.

In our Engineering and our Business-related degree programmes, students are encouraged to work with employers when designing their research projects, often working alongside the employer to help to solve real-world problems being faced within local industry. Examples of this include:

- Our Business students working with companies such as Asda and Tesco looking at management styles and motivation
- Our Engineering students working with Mercedes, Caterpillar and Cavendish Nuclear on a range of design simulations and optimising production techniques.



Staff are funded towards the completion of further postgraduate qualifications, with a number who are research active and have published in academic journals. The ability for students and staff to collaborate is embedded through the Loughborough College Research Network (LCRN).

This initiative is designed to bring together staff and students from across the college to form a community of practice and further embed and celebrate scholarly activity into our culture. The LCRN features two elements:

- Dissemin8 – 4 x yearly research digests with research projects that have taken place during the year within the college community and a review of educational research and policy updates.
- Gener8 – The Practitioner research community of practice who meet on a regular basis and provide support and guidance for current projects.

Students are given the opportunity, funded by the college, to attend academic conferences as delegates and to present their own research. Each year our largest cohort of students on sport degree programmes are able to attend and/or present at the annual British Association of Sport and Exercise Scientists student conference. Final year students are also able to attend the full annual conference for insights into the latest research and practice. This popular initiative provides access to cutting edge research and the opportunity to network with subject specialists and peers.

The college's annual Research Conference provides a further opportunity for students to engage with research and present their own findings via a poster or oral presentation. This helps to prepare students for further study and research. Students producing high level research are encouraged to develop their work further and co-create publishable work alongside their supervisor.

Many programmes also include an element of placement, providing the opportunity to experience professional practice. The assessment within all of the provision is related to vocational practice wherever possible. The college engages with local partners to achieve this and the approach to vocational, practice led programmes and assessment design was commended as an area of good practice in the 2014 QAA review:

'The commitment to developing programmes that are responsive to the needs of learners and employers.' (QAA, 2014)

One of our Applied Sports Science graduates, now employed by Manchester City commented:

'This applied nature, as well as the additional opportunities available, allowed me to develop skills which, after graduating, helped me to land an analyst internship at [redacted] and, ultimately, my current job at [redacted].'

2.5 Resources, Support and Student Engagement

2.5.1 SE4 Outstanding Support for Staff Professional Development

The college supports staff in achieving recognised teaching qualifications. The college runs its own teacher training programme in partnership with City and Guilds. Staff choosing to enter this

programme receive a reduction in teaching load whilst completing this fully funded qualification. HE staff are encouraged to complete the Academic Professional Apprenticeship in conjunction with our validating partner Loughborough University. Loughborough University have developed a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice and mapped this to the Apprenticeship allowing Loughborough College staff to access this via the apprenticeship levy. The college also support staff who choose an alternative route to a teaching qualification, through either financial assistance via a dedicated staff development fund or through their teaching activities.

The Higher Education Teaching Excellence Programme (2.1.2) provides a developmental opportunity for staff to learn from industry professionals, academic experts and their peers. In addition to this a series of CPD events run throughout the year for all teaching staff, with themes including integrating digital technologies, employability skills, flexible learning, and critical thinking.

The college is a member of QAA and provides financial support for staff to obtain membership of Advance HE (HEA Fellowship is condoned on those completing the Academic Professional Apprenticeship). At the revalidation of the college's partnership, Loughborough University, commended the college for its approach to the governance of learning and teaching.

All HE teaching staff are required to hold a qualification at a level above that at which they teach and the college also supports staff both financially and with time to achieve academic and professional qualifications that will benefit their teaching practice. In recent years, this has been utilised to support several staff with funding towards postgraduate study (MSc, MA, PhD), professional accreditations and attendance at conferences and industry related qualifications/workshops. Staff are encouraged to share their research and findings from supported activities at the annual research forum and through the Loughborough College Research Network to ensure students benefit as a result.

Teaching excellence is recognised at an annual awards ceremony where students and colleagues are able to nominate staff for an award. Opportunities for progression are identified through the ongoing appraisal system and where staff show excellence in their teaching, there are opportunities to progress to more senior posts without the need to leave their teaching commitments.

A number of HE teaching staff are engaged in External Examiner positions at other institutions, a practice that is encouraged throughout the department. These posts provide staff with the chance to share their own good practice, but also to experience ideas from the wider academic community. Senior leaders in the department have been supported to complete a MSc in Strategic Leadership.

The college holds an annual CPD conference and further CPD weeks throughout the year. The college is also keen to share the learning and experience that it has developed. Our Principal and CEO and both our Head and Dean of Higher Education have spoken separately at Westminster Higher Education Forum Policy events and at the Association of Colleges Annual and Higher Education Conferences, sharing our successes in creating an excellent student experience and innovative support mechanisms for staff. The department hosted a best practice visit from a number of colleges from across the country following this event to support the sector.

2.5.2 SE5 - Supportive Learning Environment and Outstanding Academic Support

The college introduced academic tutoring to its curriculum offer in 2010, this has developed into a highly organised support network for students, whereby it provides academic tutorials, 1:1 support, study skills sessions and pastoral care. HE students in the college have a Programme Leader whose responsibility it is to monitor their progress, educational attainment and signpost for further support from the Academic Tutor. Our 2021-22 NSS data demonstrates that our Academic Support is highly regarded (82% against a sector rate of 74%) with internal survey data for all HE students scoring academic support at 92%. A year one study skills module is present in the majority of programmes

offered, the delivery of which is supported by our Academic Tutor team and this approach was commended by Loughborough University in their revalidation:

'The students spoke highly of the tutoring model and the support that they received in this way';

'The panel commends the college for its approach to personal tutoring'.

Additionally, the 2014 QAA review commended the college for;

'The introduction of the Academic Tutor role which is effective in improving students' success'.

A former graduate commented;

'Tutors and lecturers put students at the centre of the learning experience, utilising a range of teaching and learning methods to cater for individual needs. I benefitted from small seminar groups and one to one tutor meetings, which provided the essential support I needed to be successful in the academic environment'.

In addition to the academic tutoring and study support, the college has taken a 'whole life cycle' approach to the way it supports its students. Starting with pre-application and application advice, the college employs a dedicated Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach Officer who provides consistent and timely advice for students engaged in the application cycle. Students with additional support needs are identified early (on application where disclosure is made) and the HE Admissions Officer liaises with the college's wider student support team to ensure that additional support needs are put in place. Followed by a personalised induction programme for all new students, including face-to-face staff introductions, subject specific facility tours, library, e-Learning inductions and the ability to meet with existing students. 86% of students in our HE Early Findings survey found that induction helped them to settle into their course. All students are invited to meet with their tutor during the first term to monitor progress, consider future ambitions and discuss any support needs. In addition, the Learning Resource Centre have a series of online study skills resources openly available for students which are intended to support the study skills module and drop in sessions.

The college has achieved Investors in Diversity accreditation through the National Centre for Diversity. The college is ranked in the top 20 of the highest performing 100 companies who hold the accreditation. Our FREDIE values permeate all of our activities and are further enhanced by our equality and diversity leads. Furthermore, our Principal and CEO sits on the WorldSkills UK's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion advisory group. We are also one of the first colleges in the country adopting a 'Trauma Informed' approach with Trauma Informed Schools UK. All of our senior leaders and staff have been trained in adverse childhood experiences and trauma informed practice, allowing us to raise awareness and fully support our students.

2.5.3 SE6 – Learning Resources to Support Outstanding Teaching and Learning

Loughborough College is investing over £25m in its estate, with over £10m dedicated to HE. In addition to this, HE students have their own dedicated HE Centre, complete with open access computer suite and there are dedicated study, computer and presentation rooms available throughout the campus for students. The HE Centre has undergone a series of refurbishments with the introduction of self-service laptops available for students and further computer suites for study. Learning Resource Centre investment has, following learner voice feedback, focused on electronic resources (e-books/e-journal access) alongside significant investment in the availability to students of computers on a temporary loan basis. The quality of facilities available led one recent graduate and elite athlete to comment:

'At Loughborough College I've had access to facilities which are second to none, as well as complete understanding when it's come to my training and playing commitments. The team has been brilliant at helping me stay on top of everything and maintain the quality of my work'.

HE students also have their own study space with collaborative working areas, computer suite and silent study area located next to the main library. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the college fitted each HE teaching space with immersive classroom technology, to enable staff to deliver lectures and seminars online synchronously thus allowing students in self-isolation to engage. The success of this project has led to the department integrating this facility post-pandemic. Staff also routinely record lectures and make these available on our Moodle (HE LearnZone), so that students can use these for revision and where appropriate, seminars and practical sessions can be streamed live. Our Moodle has built in accessibility software and houses additional lecture materials, formative assessments and opportunities for feedback. Access and engagement are carefully monitored and students have praised the college for the flexibility that this provides in extenuating circumstances.



Fig 7. Sport and Exercise Therapy Suite

Over the last three years, the college has invested heavily in its learning environment to ensure a fantastic student classroom experience. Significant capital funding has been spent modernising our specialist, industry standard facilities e.g. Golf simulator, immersive classrooms, S&C suite, and two state-of-the-art Sports Therapy labs, enhanced by 360° tracking camera technology, allowing students to follow lecturer instruction from multiple angles. Over the next two years £7.4m will be spent on the EMIoT building to provide modern and sustainable teaching and lab facilities (net zero construction) for our

Engineering and Digital subjects. A new £3.2m Digital Skills Hub will be built alongside this to further enhance our specialist facilities in cyber security and digital technology. Students value being able to access course specific resources when needed and rated it 91% in the Spring Survey and 89% in the NSS (7% above sector rate).

The college invests in digital resources to aid teachers and employs a central and dedicated Digital Learning team who feed into the HE TEP program. The team produce a Digital Learning blog to keep staff up to date with developments of new technologies to enhance teaching, learning and assessment. The use of these technologies is reviewed as part of the annual appraisal process and staff are encouraged to share good examples during the HE TEP sessions. All staff are encouraged to work toward becoming a Microsoft Certified Educator and each staff member is required to achieve the 'Accessibility' badge as a minimum. The college has invested in the latest, industry standard software to enhance its teaching and the relevance of its programmes, some examples of these are:

- Ansys Multiphysics – simulations to help to study the complex interactions between fluid, structural, electromagnetic and thermal forces
- Horizon – A remote access platform to aid access to highly intensive software solutions
- NACSport – Powerful and intuitive suite of sports video analysis tools
- MatLab – Multi paradigm programming language and numeric computing environment
- Quintic – Biomechanics video analysis software
- Foresight Sports – Golf simulation software and motion capture

The college has made a significant commitment to blended learning across its provision over a number of years. Staff expertise within this area has enhanced our campus-based provision by providing additional online resources to complement face-to-face delivery. Furthermore, as the college has a high number of elite athletes, we are able to allow for academic and sporting success

by providing these resources. Our approach to accessibility in this manner was commended by Loughborough University in their 2016 revalidation.

2.5.4 SE7 – Embedding Student Engagement Leading to Continuous Improvement

Students are encouraged to provide feedback on their teaching and student experience regularly. In addition to the NSS for final year students, the college holds its own Early Findings Survey in October, a Spring Survey in March/April and each student supplies module feedback at the mid-point and end of each module studied. Where appropriate, immediate action is taken at the mid-point of the module in order to respond to feedback. In addition to this, the college works closely with LSU to run a comprehensive network of student programme representatives. Each curriculum area holds regular student representative meetings and college wide forums are held each semester. The results of these meetings are fed back to curriculum teams and there are many examples of change to assessments, teaching and delivery mode that have resulted from this process. The feedback loop is completed via a series of 'You said...we did' poster campaigns and regular student newsletters emailed from the Student Registry team. The impact of this is that: 'It is clear on how students' feedback on the course has been acted on' is scored 18% above the NSS benchmark. The Vice Principal for Learner Experience holds regular cross college meetings with students to gain feedback at the highest level. This feeds into decision making by the Executive team and is reported to Governors for further scrutiny and support.

'The panel commended the deliberate steps taken at college level to involve students in the development of all aspects of the student experience...examples of students' involvement in meetings at course and college level; feedback is sought in focus groups, through surveys, and at course meetings; action plans and meeting minutes show the action that is taken in response to student feedback; and changes made as a result of student feedback are communicated through the publication of minutes and of "you said, we did" updates...it was clear from student surveys and focus groups that students feel valued and have opportunities for feedback on a 1:1 basis and through tutorials.' (NTU Centre Review Report)

Students also play an important role in the governance of our programmes and are involved at all levels of decision-making. There is a HE student governor and student representative on the college's Academic Board. Students are consulted on curriculum design, assessment methods and delivery methods. Focus groups are used to involve students in change, an example of this is the re-design and refurbishment of the Undergraduate Centre, including the student common room and learning spaces. Students were consulted at each phase, with many ideas incorporated into the final works.

Including students and alumni in course design itself by involving them in discussions with staff and employers, changes have been made to programmes and modules as well as new modules added. An example is the inclusion of additional optional modules in the second and third year of study to enable students to focus more of their credits in their given area of interest. This has had an additional benefit of opening more pathways for specialised postgraduate programmes. Further examples of student engagement include:

- Each curriculum team has launched their own social media presence, engaging with students via Twitter. Lecturers are encouraged to publish relevant articles with module or course tags, enabling use as a teaching and learning tool.
- Weekly emails from course leaders informing students of any opportunities available, upcoming assessments etc.
- Monthly department wide newsletters distributed in a variety of formats, updating students and staff on department news, progress against targets and notable events.

- Module workshops – drop in or bookable opportunities to meet with lecturers in an informal setting to discuss issues or gain clarification. Easier booking of appointments with staff through ‘Calendly’, an online booking platform giving students direct access to staff calendars.
- Academic Tutor support – engagement with a personal Academic Tutor in group or 1:1 setting for pastoral or study skills support.
- Regular communication from the HE Welfare Coordinator on support options related to mental health, wellbeing and welfare.

3.0 Student Outcomes

3.1 Positive Outcomes

3.1.1 SO1: Provider Approaches That Are Highly Effective in Ensuring Students Succeed and Progress Beyond Their Studies

Loughborough College employs a number of highly effective practices to ensure our students are on track to succeed. This starts with our approach to academic tutoring and the support that students receive from their lecturing team, in their studies. All students have access to their own dedicated Academic Tutor who is able to assist and advise with a range of study and academic skills. These tutors also set targets for the students, designed to challenge and stretch their capabilities and also monitor the progress being made in achieving them. The team also track and monitor attendance and engagement and are the first stage in identifying those students who may potentially fall behind. Students who fail to attend or whom are considered not to be engaging fully, are actively contacted so that remedial measures can be put in place early enough to be effective.

All programmes have been reviewed for student contact time, with a minimum expectation of 15 hours per week contact during the first year. All courses now include ‘feed in’ sessions with the module lead, an approach that requires students to attend a taught session that feeds into their assignment. The feed in sessions were implemented to develop engagement and facilitate timely completion of assessments. Staff use a personalised learning approach and use group profiles of student learning needs to aid them to achieve this.

First year students are required to complete a Skills Audit to identify the starting point that the students believe that they are at. Results of these are analysed both individually and by group so that they can be used in individual target setting and as a basis for 1:1 support meetings, but also by lecturers in designing approaches to teaching and areas of focus (e.g. for the initial academic skills module). We believe that this approach is sector leading and enables the college to achieve a deep understanding of our student body and in line with our trauma informed approach, allows us to tailor support where it is required most. Future goals are also considered, in relation to both employment and postgraduate study. For those looking to enter employment, in addition to the vocational relevance of modules and assessments already outlined, the college provides a range of opportunities to engage and gain experience with employers. Our Employability and Placement modules (detailed in section 1.4) are a perfect example of this and show innovation in our approach. Additionally, the college provides a comprehensive software package hosted on our VLE (CareerZone) to help students to plan, prepare and practice for entering the world of work. Students are supported to find placements, write CVs and covering letters, practice interviews and research opportunities. In addition, the college further develops the employability skills of our students by providing paid employment opportunities, such as: supporting our colleagues in the FE curriculum, working in the Covid testing centre, mentoring, food servers, English and maths support, ambassadors and enrolment support.

We are aspirational and ambitious that each of our students progress and ensure that there are practical experiences and opportunities built in to our programmes. The skills identified for entry to

and progression within professional employment, are embedded into all taught sessions and assessment briefs as part of the annual review process.

3.1.2 SO2: Rates of Continuation and Completion

Loughborough College has a strong record in completion and was above benchmark in three of the four TEF reporting years by up to 3.7%. This performance has been particularly strong for our first-degree students in Engineering and Business, our black students, for those students reporting a disability and for our international students. Performance in the most recent reporting year (entrants 2016-17) for completion of full-time students is below benchmark and upon interrogating this data it is clear that the Accountancy level 4 qualification, which we ceased delivery on two years ago, is impacting this data. The particular cohort had staffing challenges which were exceptional, unforeseen and ultimately resulted in the decision to stop delivery. Apprenticeship completion is 11.1% above benchmark.

Non-continuation data has been impacted by Covid-19 and been compounded by cost of living challenges, in particular for Blended Learning Higher National students and Engineering Higher National students. The reasons for this non-continuation are threefold:

1. A high proportion of the students studying on these programmes originate from areas of high deprivation (IMD Q1&2 – 31.9%) or are the least likely to enter higher education (POLAR 4 Q1&2 – 29.6%). For this reason, where opportunities to enter employment arise, these are placed at a premium due to cost-of-living challenges. Those in employment and on Apprenticeships were not released for their off-the job training, due to being key workers and were required by their employers to withdraw from the programme.
2. Some students that have been enrolled onto a two-year HND programme secure jobs, which is fantastic for their progression and exit the programme after one year, achieving a HNC qualification. This qualification is recognised throughout the industries that we serve e.g. engineering, and is of far greater value than a Cert HE that would be conferred after completing level 4 of a bachelor's degree. This allows for continuation of learning at a later date.
3. The students were disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and many lived in tier 3 lockdown areas, making access to their football club (for the Sports Blended programme) unavailable, meaning clubs could not renew their contracts and many players were released and chose to get a full-time job to make up for loss of earnings.

Post-pandemic, strategic changes made to the design of the Blended Learning programmes will further support students to achieve positive outcomes and have already been actioned. This has involved:

- Changed delivery of Pearson Based Higher National programmes to allow:
 - Enrolment onto the HNC as a standalone course to reflect the needs of our student intake, which continues to be diverse and disadvantaged, this also reflects the move across the sector to consider a more modular approach to HE (Augar Review, 2019).
 - A smoother transition for the style of assessment experienced during BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma (the main feed-in qualification for those students joining the programme)
 - A single module delivery method rather than concurrent modules, allowing the students to focus on one module at a time.
 - Smaller 'bitesize' assessments, breaking down the perceived workload.
- Introduction of a 100% interview requirement to better understand barriers to learning and access.
- The introduction of Student Review Boards for early identification of students who are finding their course challenging (see below).

In addition to increased contact time for students, study support sessions and Academic Tutor support, the college takes an all staff approach to supporting students, whether that is to stretch and challenge those most capable or identify and support those not achieving to expectations. As part of the holistic approach to ensure students engage and achieve to their full potential, the introduction of Student Review Boards has allowed students to be considered against 5 criteria at the beginning (first four weeks) of a new term:

- Attendance
- Engagement (during seminars but also with online material through the VLE)
- Timely submission of formative or summative tasks
- Behaviour and attitude
- Completion of Mandatory training

Students in need of additional support receive communication tailored to their issue and reflecting any extenuating circumstances if applicable, to support the learner back to full engagement however, where this is not possible, students are also supported to find an alternative goal. This procedure has proved to be an extremely effective early intervention tool with 60% of those students identified as being of most concern, re-engaged with their studies and back on track at the start of the 2022/23 academic year. Students deemed to need additional support are referred to their Academic Tutor, who provides additional study skills interventions and monitors progress or to the HE Welfare Coordinator for other support needs. The college holds midyear examination boards, at which each student is reviewed individually, allowing early intervention where opportunities for academic stretch or concerns regarding progression are identified.

3.1.3 SO3: Outstanding Rates of Successful Progression

The college has a long history of producing highly employable graduates in line with our aims for educational gains. Our courses are designed in a way that is highly effective in ensuring students' progress, incorporating the skills that employers consider to be invaluable coupled with sound pedagogical methods throughout. Our year 2 TEF dashboard data shows the college performing an outstanding 10.4% above the sector benchmark. This follows 4.2% above benchmark in the previous (earliest) year. Across reporting years of DLHE data 2017-18 to 19-20 progression rates have improved year-on-year culminating in 98% of students progressing to positive destination.

Performance for year 3 of the TEF (2019/20 qualifiers) has been detrimentally affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the national lockdown and the repercussions on the cost of living, opportunities for employment were clearly diminished during this time. The college however, found employment opportunities for our students within our testing centre, on our Reception and in supporting English and maths through the Catch-up fund. We believe that our approach to supporting lower tariff entrants into employment or progression into post graduate study, is sector leading and that this is as a direct result of the strategic measures that we take to prepare our students for this.

Successful progression is at the core of our aims for educational gains (see 1.4). Our approach is strategic and fully embedded through our curriculum, our support networks and our student engagement strategy, we will continue to build on this.

3.2 Educational gains

3.2.1 SO4: The Range of Educational Gains Intended Are Clearly Articulated to Students

Students have a clear understanding of the educational gains that the college intends them to achieve and this is articulated in a number of ways.

- Each assessment brief details the key employability skills that are being developed through each assessment and these are referred to in the feedback provided by staff to ensure students are aware that they are achieving them.
- Module design includes knowledge and skills development via varied assessment methods.

- Through promotional activity and initial advice and guidance with prospective students and their parents/guardians.
- Through positive reinforcement within the learning environment - clear definitions of our aims included in wall art in teaching spaces.
- Each student receives a welcome from our CEO and our Dean at the start of the year, reinforcing our approach.

Our approach to Student Development Week (section 1.4) which focuses on employability and progression, together with the 'BE More' campaign, clearly articulates our aims for students, to be more employable.

3.2.2 SO5: The Approach to Ensuring Students Achieve Their Gains

Our approach to assessment design, Student Development Week and the inclusion of modules such as Business Enterprise and Employability & Placement all feed in to our mission for educational gains. Students' performance is continuously monitored at every stage of the student journey. Starting with the skills audit, we negotiate and agree challenging targets for students at the start of their journey and continue to evaluate progress against these providing stretch and challenge along the way. This whole college approach starts with our lecturing staff but continues with our Academic Tutors, Curriculum Managers and support staff and within our policies and practices. We provide a holistic approach to check, track and intervene that is institution wide. Core to this are a number of strategies that led the QAA review team 2014 to identify the following as an area of good practice:

'The varied range of opportunities available to students to enable them to develop employability skills'. (QAA, 2014)

Holding mid-year examination boards ensures a formal record can be made and a check and balance provided to both staff and students of where each individual is at in their journey. Early intervention is key to identifying students in need of additional support. To this end, the Student Review boards described in section 3.1.2 are designed to enable this early identification and lead to positive interventions. Additionally, regular meetings with Academic Tutors, smaller class sizes (meaning module leaders get to know their students on a more meaningful level) and meetings with module leaders, all feed into this process. External examiners commented:

'The curriculum offer is versatile and offers students the opportunity to showcase their best practice across a range of music curricula. The team are to be commended for what is an excellent programme delivering strong outcomes for students.' (External Examiner, Contemporary Music Performance and Production, 2021)

'The Department clearly has a fantastic, hard-working pool of staff who have done an excellent job in a challenging year. The staff clearly care about, and know, their students and work in their best interests.' (External Examiner BSc Applied Sport and Exercise Science, 2021)

Students are rewarded for high achievement through various student awards such as 'Student of the semester' which is awarded in each curriculum area and 'Dissertation of the Year' and 'Student of the Year' awards which are celebrated at our graduation ceremony. Additionally, student achievement is celebrated through our 'Role Models' campaign as part of the drive to raise the aspirations of students and promote positive career development choices as part of the experience of studying at the college. We actively seek to publicise our success stories directly to students through the Role Model campaign, showcasing for example:

- Our student who is actively campaigning to promote the Free Schools Meal programme.
- studying Events Management who previously had been out of education studies are shared across the site via posters and tele media marketing.

In conjunction with this, the Role Models campaign boasts a repository of alumni graduate interviews and portfolios, which seek to examine their career developments post-graduation, examining their routes from study to working in industry.

3.2.3 SO6: Evaluation of Educational Gains

The college's performance in the DLHE over a number of years (98% progression in 2019-20), has ranked Loughborough College graduates amongst the most employable in the country. The college ensures that aims for educational gains are met in the following ways:

- Tiered qualifications (HNC/HND/BSc) facilitate varied entry and exit points and provide opportunities for employers to tailor education to a specific job role or progression route.
- Careful analysis of Graduate Outcomes Survey data
- Uptake and achievement of students accessing vocational qualifications
- Recording of intended destinations on exit (graduation)

100% of our students complete a skills audit at the start of the student journey which is then repeated each year, showing the journey that students have made. In addition, students are graded at various points in the modules that are designed to develop these skills (Employability and Placement etc.).

4.0 Summary

The college is committed to providing a first class, life changing experience for its students and has developed the infrastructure that is delivering on this vision. Our outstanding teaching and assessment practices have been recognised by peers and students alike and the college continues to excel in providing the skills and vocational relevance to support students to continue and progress. Areas for improvement are robustly addressed and monitored. Student experience is at the heart of what we do and our educational gains are paramount to the success of our students.

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