Weston College of Further and Higher Education / University Centre Weston
UKPRN: 10007459

Weston College of Further and Higher Education TEF Provider Submission

1. PROVIDER CONTEXT

University Centre Weston (UCW) is part of Weston College of Further and Higher Education, referred to hereafter as Weston College. UCW as the higher education (HE) division of Weston College has responsibility for managing courses at Level 4 and above including: undergraduate courses; higher and degree apprenticeships; and professional and technical qualifications, which are often referred to as non-recognised courses. Weston College is set in the heart of the community and within close proximity to some of the most deprived wards in Weston-super-Mare. Meeting the needs of the local community and supporting residents to access education and training at all levels is central to the Weston College's values. The College's mission statement is "Creating Brighter Futures" and it is the only Ofsted Outstanding college in the West of England region.

UCW is led by the HE Directorate which has a management and support infrastructure that is bespoke to HE provision. This is characterised by a governance and committee structure[1] that has defined responsibilities to ensure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; the maintenance of academic standards; and to assure the quality of the student experience including educational gains. The Directorate works closely with other areas of the College to ensure compliance with the regulatory requirements of all courses at Level 4 and above, and to enable engagement with key stakeholders. Two committees to note which are referred to in the Submission are:

Curriculum and Quality Committee (CQC)[2] is a sub-group of the Governing Body and provides corporate oversight of the governance of academic standards, and the quality of FE and HE provision.

Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC)[3] is the HE committee which undertakes the detailed scrutiny of reports that relate to teaching and learning standards and academic quality related activity.

UCW has established mature and effective working relationships with its awarding bodies, resulting in long-term collaborative and strategic partnership agreements. UCW's awarding bodies are Bath Spa University, University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol, Hartpury University and Pearson.

UCW has a track record of delivering outstanding quality in HE, reflected in a successful Higher Education Review (HER) from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in April 2016[4]. The following **good practice** was noted:
- The use of student and employer involvement in design, development and validation, which is particularly effective in ensuring that programmes are focused on their needs.
- The effective processes in place to support higher education teaching practices, which ensure the distinctiveness of the quality of learning opportunities.
- The professional and proactive approach of the higher education support team, which enables student development and achievement.
- The close working relationship with the awarding bodies, which facilitates a reflective and responsive approach to assessment design and practice.

At the Review, the HER team identified no recommendations or affirmations. The Review concluded that the quality of student learning opportunities was **commended,** and the QAA

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[1] UCW Governance Management and Meeting Structure (Document 01)
[2] Curriculum Quality Committee Terms of Reference (Document 02)
[3] Academic Quality and Standards Committee Terms of Reference (Document 03)
[4] Weston College HE Review 2016 (Document 04)

published UCW as exemplar in having "An innovative approach to enabling student development and achievement" in their "Good Practice in Higher Education Review: A Collection of Case Studies 2016".

1.1 Educational Mission and Strategic Aims

UCW's mission statement was developed with key stakeholders and students to encapsulate UCW's priorities; "To deliver an outstanding higher education experience, enabling success and inspiring ambition".

The mission statement has provided a framework for UCW's Strategic Plan[5] which was updated in 2021 in response to the changing landscape of HE nationally, and to reflect the growth and the change in HE provision at UCW. This includes an increase in the number of degree apprenticeships. The Strategic Plan articulates the future direction of UCW and the ambitions for its students. Three of the six aims relate specifically to delivering excellence in teaching, learning and the student experience:

- Building on UCW's quality profile ensuring UCW delivers a high-quality learning experience for all students and maintains its reputation with HEI partners, employer partners and regulatory bodies.
- Create an inclusive institution, promoting participation from students from all backgrounds, and raising the profile of UCW's approach to ensuring positive outcomes for all.
- To provide outstanding support and a vibrant and enriching student experience which nurtures and develops skills, resilience, wellbeing, and personal development supporting the long-term success of students and apprentices.

UCW is steadfast in its approach and commitment to ensuring all students are enabled to succeed and achieve, whatever their background, providing inclusive opportunities for all students to reach their full potential. This is reflected in the values and ethos of Weston College, it is central to the UCW and incorporated in HE strategies, policies and procedures, with implementation and impact measured by key committees.

1.2 Size and Shape of Provision

UCW has experienced growth in HE student numbers, both directly and indirectly funded. UCW currently offers Professional/Technical Qualifications; HNC/HNDs; Foundation Degrees; Honours top-ups; full Honours Degrees and Higher and Degree Apprenticeships. The provision is diverse with subject areas including: Business; Creative and Performing Arts; Digital; Education; Engineering; Health; and Sciences. The number of students on higher and degree apprenticeships has grown significantly over the past four years, now accounting for 46% of the UCW student population in 2022-23. UCW previously offered a significant number of Foundation Degrees with Honours top-ups, but these have largely been converted to three-year full Honours Degrees over the last four years.

UCW now has responsibility for professional and technical courses at Level 4 and above, as this provision is now aligned to the Office for Students (OfS) and is in scope with the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

Weston College leads the highly successful West of England Institute of Technology (WEIoT) with UCW working cross-college, and in collaboration with UWE Bristol, three other Further Education Colleges, and thirteen Anchor Employers to increase the number of people in our local communities accessing higher technical skills in key regional employment sectors. The WEIoT continues to receive national recognition as part of the government's network of Institutes of Technology. Specialising in delivering high-quality Higher Technical Education and training in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects, such as digital, advanced manufacturing and engineering, providing employers with the skilled workforce they need. The

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[5] UCW HE Strategic Plan 2021-2024 (Document 05)

WEIoT has ambitious targets for growth and reaching underrepresented groups within the region. By the end of year three, the WEIoT is currently 130% ahead of student number targets.

Weston-super-Mare is a coastal town in North Somerset with a population of around 77,000. In terms of the Indices of Deprivation 2015[6], North Somerset has 18 areas in the most deprived quartile in the country, all located in Weston-super-Mare. There are areas in North Somerset within the most deprived 1% nationally and within the least deprived 1% nationally. In 2019 Weston-super-Mare was identified as being amongst the 10% of most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. Areas situated closest to UCW experience significant social deprivation with high unemployment, and a large percentage of the population claiming benefits. In addition, Weston-super-Mare has a high number of drug rehabilitation centres providing either treatment or support to individuals with drug and/or alcohol related issues. Many of these individuals settle and raise families locally, which means that the area is put at further risk of intergenerational social decline.

The societal context of Weston-super-Mare is reflected in the student population of UCW. It has a diverse student population, many of whom are from underrepresented target groups identified by the OfS. In the 2021-22 academic year, 25% of students progressed from Participation of Local Areas (POLAR) quintile 1, which reflects those most disadvantaged and least likely to progress to HE. The percentage of students recruited from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 in 2021-22 was 48.39%. The POLAR quintile 1 and 2 recruitment figures have largely remained static for four years[7] and are above the sector average of 28.3% (OfS). Data from the Student Loans Company demonstrates that UCW also recruits well in terms of attracting students from low-income backgrounds. 37% of students on UCW full-time directly-funded courses are from low-income backgrounds with a declared income of £25,000 per year or less in 2021-22.

Weston College is an inclusive institution and is one of only three National SEND Centres of Excellence. This inclusive ethos is embraced by UCW and reflected in the strategic aims. Large numbers of students progress to UCW from non-traditional and vocational pathways, with only 26% progressing from A Level study, the vast majority progress having completed a BTEC National Diploma or Access to Higher Education course.

UCW has 43% of mature students (over the age of 21 years) in the 2021-22 academic year, compared to an average of 33% in the sector. Of these mature students, 22.5% are aged between 21-30 years, and 20.5% are over 31 years old at the start of their course of study[10]. It is worth noting that the percentage of mature students remains significantly above the sector average, again demonstrating UCW's inclusive and diverse learning community.

The percentage of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students attending UCW is low but increasing over the years. In 2021-22 it increased from 4.25% to 5.01%. It is worth noting that the

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[6] NSC Indices of multiple deprivation briefing note November 2015 (Document 06)
[7] UCW Student Achievement, Continuation and Destination Report, 2021-22 (Document 07) Page 8

[9] UCW Universal Design for Learning Framework 2020-2023 (Document 08)
[10] UCW Student Achievement, Continuation and Destination Report, 2021-22 (Document 07) Page 5

2021-22 percentage of BAME students at UCW is higher than that of the North Somerset and Somerset population, with the latest census data reporting a figure of 2.7%[11].

1.3 Context of the Submission

The TEF Main contact provided a presentation to the Student Representative Committee regarding TEF, outlining key aspects of the process and encouraging students to be involved in the Student Written Submission. Once the TEF Student contact was confirmed, the TEF Main contact met with the student to offer support and to provide documentation to help with the Submission. UCW shared the Provider Submission outline and consulted with them regarding the draft document. In addition, the TEF Student contact had the opportunity to present the draft Student Submission at AQSC to reinforce the importance of student input into the TEF process, and to outline key aspects from the student perspective.

2. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

2.1 ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE AND ASSESSMENT
2.1.1 Teaching, learning, assessment and feedback

UCW has a proven track record for delivering outstanding teaching, learning, assessment and feedback that inspires and challenges students. It is focused on enabling all students, regardless of their background, to achieve the intended qualifications or awards to the best of their ability, that they or other stakeholders value. Central to this approach is the HE Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2021-22[12]. The Strategy was developed with reference to the OfS conditions B1 and B2, the Expectations and Core practices for the UK Quality Code, by the Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Working Group and with students. Within the Strategy key performance indicators (KPIs) have been identified and the HE Directorate monitors progress against these KPIs, ensuring outstanding teaching, learning, and assessment across UCW[13]. In addition, good practice that emerges from KPI analysis is shared with staff at HE Continuing Professional Development (HECPD) events and the annual UCW Academic Conference. At the February 2021 HECPD event the focus was on sharing outstanding practice in digital pedagogy; this was led by HE teaching staff where good practice was identified through the observation process[14]. At the annual HE Academic Conference in June 2022 the emphasis was on supporting student wellbeing, understanding the impact on student learning, and building resilience to enable all students to achieve to their potential.

UCW has an established Recruitment Policy which for teaching staff requires involvement of the awarding body and students in the selection process. All new staff are supported and mentored; there is a HE Staff Induction and Mentoring Policy and Procedure[15]. UCW recognises the expertise and value that industry experts can bring to HE teaching and learning and encourages applications from practising professionals. The transition from industry to HE teaching, requires effective mentoring and support to ensure that pedagogical practice is of the highest standard to complement industry expertise.

UCW has developed a Universal Design for Learning Framework (UDLF) to ensure an inclusive approach is embedded throughout teaching, learning and assessment with student-facing resources. This has resulted in a personalised approach to learning, and the design of assessment strategies that are bespoke to individual courses. The UDLF requires course teams to develop a breadth of learning and teaching strategies and a variety of assessment methods, to enable and empower students to fulfil their potential and achieve a successful outcome[16]. The overall UCW NSS data indicates that full-time students are extremely positive about the quality of teaching on their course, with 87.5% of students providing a very positive response; this is 2.9% above the

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[11] UCW Student Achievement, Continuation and Destination Report, 2021-22 (Document 07) Page 4
[12] HE Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2021-22 (Document 09)
[13] HE LTA KPI Progress Monitoring 2021-22 (Document 10)
[14] HECPD Agenda February 2021 (Document 11)
[15] HE Staff Induction and Mentoring Policy and Procedure (Document 12)
[16] UCW Universal Design for Learning Framework 2020-2023 (Document 08) Page 5

benchmark of 84.6%. The effectiveness and impact of the UDLF is measured through a range of internal and external information and feedback evidenced in Enhancement Reviews and External Examiner (EE) reports. For example, the Counselling Quintennial Enhancement Review Report highlights the range of assessment as an area of good practice: "Range of assessment types within and across years which allows students to showcase and develop their skills" [BSU and UCW][17]

In addition, the BSc (Hons) Digital and Technology Solutions EE Report 2021-22 stated "The course implements an excellent blend of theoretical underpinning alongside practical application which ensures all students have the opportunity to achieve"[18].

UCW's Guaranteed Levels of Information (GLI) Policy and Procedure outlines expectations in relation to information that is provided to students in assessment briefs, assessment schedules, course handbooks, module handbooks and the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The aim is to ensure that students are provided with information to excel with their learning, and to complete assessments to their full potential, as well as equipping staff with comprehensive guidance for providing students with complete and accessible resources[19]. This also enables student success and progression by ensuring students have the information they need to plan, manage their time and develop as independent and autonomous learners. Student access to these key documents is also confirmed through Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLC) and other feedback mechanisms[20]. NSS data demonstrates that UCW's approach to assessment and feedback is outstanding, and students recognise this. The overall NSS indicator for assessment and feedback for full-time students is 85.3% against a benchmark of 78.8%. All years are above benchmark, with Year 4 for full time students being 5.7% above benchmark. Students are also encouraged to complete internal module evaluations for every module of study in each academic year, the average response rate is 50%, although on some courses it is lower than this[21]. The aggregate percentage over the last four years of students that agreed "the criteria used for marking have been made clear in advance of an assessment" was 85%[22].

The HE Directorate, monitor, check and approve all course and module handbooks, assessment briefs, and assessment plans, and review all course VLEs to ensure compliance with the GLI, the accessibility of course content and resources. This is reported through the UCW Quality and Compliance Tracker[23], which provides a detailed RAG rated system at course level, ensuring there is transparency to monitor and provide support where required. This tracker is also used to inform the UCW Health Check, where courses are risk rated using a RAG system, which is presented and monitored by AQSC[24].

As part of the GLI process, UCW samples assessment feedback across all courses to ensure that feedback is constructive, with grades and comments aligning to assessment criteria and learning outcomes, with a feedforward approach. The monitoring of GLIs and their impact on student learning, enables UCW to support course teams to develop their feedback practices, and to disseminate good practice through HECPD activity. For example, at a HECPD event in December 2018 the Early Years team delivered a session on approaches to assessment feedback, including the use of feedforward outlining areas of strength, and areas for development. Students then develop an assessment action plan which forms part of their next assessment, and outlines how they have integrated key development areas into their assessment response. This provides an opportunity for additional feedback on their development, alongside summative assessment feedback. This approach has been consistently recognised as good practice by the EE for Early Years including in the 2021-22 Report:

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[17] BSU Counselling Quintennial Enhancement Report 2021 (Document 13)
[18] EE Report DTS 2021-22 (Document 14) Page 7
[19] UCW Guaranteed Levels of Information Policy and Procedure (Document 15)
[20] SSLC Meeting Agenda (Document 16) Page 1
[21] Student Engagement Report Oct 2022 (Document 17) Page 4
[22] HE LTA Impact Report 2021-22 (Document 18) Page 8
[23] UCW Quality and Compliance Tracker (Document 19)
[24] AQSC Minutes June 2022 (Document 20)

"Good and explicit feedback to students which celebrates the strengths of work. Tutors consider the technical proficiency in written English in their feedback and gave specific examples to students of how to improve their work. In the areas of development, the tutor refers to specific points giving examples to students to understand fully how they can improve their work next time."[25]

The HECPD session resulted in other courses adopting this approach and was recognised within the FdSc Biological Laboratory Sciences EE Report in 2020-21, demonstrating the impact of both feedforward and HECPD across UCW:

"A particular commendation to the course team on the quality and clarity of their feedback: it is specific, developmental and clearly tied to LOs. Student benefit from really good feedforward too, to help them improve – excellent practice"[26].

Teaching, learning, assessment and feedback has been recognised as a strength by EEs across UCW provision. The following comments from EE reports, evidence very high-quality practice and the impact that this has on the student learning experience:

"An area of excellence is the thoroughness and consistency in marking and assessment feedback. Individual developmental feedback is extensive and feeds forward to support students learning. The assessors' individual commentaries are exemplar in terms of the level of detail, the supportive critique and how best an individual can improve further. The quality of Marking and Assessment is distinctive when compared to other HEIs that I am familiar with. Student support from the course team and central services at UCW is also excellent in supporting learning." EE report BA (Hons) Hair, Make-up and Prosthetics for Production 2021-22[27].

"I like the way staff give positive feedback, encouraging students in their endeavours. Feedback is helpful and supportive, forward thinking to allow students to learn and develop as they progress…. The programme goes from strength to strength, and this has been an especially good year in terms of retention, quality of work, grades and number of students set to graduate. These positives all arise from the quality of teaching and the learning opportunities available in the classroom and while out on placement." EE report FdSc/BSc (Hons) Counselling 2021-22[28].

"The students learning is consistently developed through high-quality practical learning opportunities, predominantly focusing on performance, artistic expression, public speaking and reflective practice. In addition, the students' critical understanding of the cultural, historical and professional context of commercial dance is also a key area of focus, which yields very good outcomes". EE Report BA (Hons) Professional and Commercial Dance 2019-20[29]

External examining and the use of information and feedback provided by EEs is viewed as being an integral part of quality assurance. In order to share best practice UCW produces an External Examiner Overview Report to identify cross-UCW themes, and to track actions from previous reports. The Overview Report provides intelligence to inform the content of HECPD events[30].

UCW has recognised the importance of, and demonstrates embedded approaches to, providing a personalised academic experience developing content that is targeted towards students learning needs, reflecting on their starting points and scaffolding their learning. One-to-one module level tutorials with students provide personalised formative feedback, as well as reflecting further on summative feedback to ensure students are provided a feedforward approach. This enables discussions on progression, wider skills developments, and areas for improvement. Students value this approach, evidenced by the four-year trend of module evaluation which indicates that 82% of

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[25] EE Report Early Years 2021-22 (Document 21) Page 6
[26] EE Report Biological and Laboratory Sciences 2020-21 (Document 22) Page 8
[27] EE Report Hair, Make-up and Prosthetics for Production (HMPP) 2021-22 (Document 23) Page 4
[28] EE Report Counselling 2021-22 (Document 24) Pages 4 and 6
[29] EE Report Professional and Commercial Dance 2019-20 (Document 25) Page 3
[30] UCW EE Overview Report 2021-22 (Document 26)

students agree "feedback on my work helped to identify areas of development to improve future grades"[31].

UCW provides course teams with an Enhancement Budget, to enrich the course and the student learning experience and opportunities. The Budget ensures that students have access to specialist guest lectures and workshops, and can also be used to subsidise residentials, exposure to industry settings and field trips, and in the purchase of specialist resources. The impact of the Enhancement Budget on the student academic experience is monitored through the Higher Education Learning, Teaching and Assessment Impact Report 2021-22. Examples of impact are evidenced below[32]:

Programme Area	Enhancement Topic	Impact
Performing Arts/Musical Theatre and Dance (along with HEART)	"The Human Brain"	An interactive guest lecture on how the brain works and the effects of this on performance and anxiety. This enabled students to reflect on their own performance and anxiety, supporting them to develop strategies to support their practice.
Public and Environmental Health (PEH)	Online training day	Students were required to resolve a health and safety at work incident which involved reading papers, interviewing suspects, and determining a course of action. The scenario was based on an actual incident and so students were introduced to a plausible real-life situation. There was plenary discussion on the appropriateness of different interventions and the use of different powers within different areas of legislation.
Film and Photography	Short Film Production	The hiring of accommodation enabled students to complete a Year 2 Short Film Production module residential, as a collaborative filming project. This provides students with a collaborative experience and ensures increased industry readiness and therefore employability.
Biological and Laboratory Sciences	Wessex Water sampling and educational visit	Engagement with the year one module Environmental Sciences, with the sampling forming part of the assessment within the module. This provides real-world context supported by educational talks.

UCW has an established model of developmental observation, outlined in the HE Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy and Procedure[33]. As part of the observation process, HE staff are required to engage in faculty-based learning walks, as well as HE Directorate developmental observations, which ensures that developmental feedback is provided on subject knowledge and pedagogic practice. This approach to observation ensures that the UCW's ethos and strategic aims are met within the learning environment, with a focus on the student academic experience. Students are encouraged to contribute to the observation where and when appropriate. Students value the approach to observation, as demonstrated by the four-year trend of module evaluation data. This supports and confirms outstanding practice with 89% of students agreeing that "My understanding of the subject has increased as a result of taking this module" and 84% of students agreeing that "The teaching methods were effective in helping me to learn"[34].

2.1.2 Course design
The expectation that courses are well designed is clearly articulated in the HE Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy[35]; the fundamentals of learning, teaching and assessment begins with

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[31] HE LTA Impact Report (Document 18) Page 8
[32] HE LTA Impact Report (Document 18) Page 19-23
[33] UCW LTA Policy & Procedure 2022-25 (Document 27)
[34] HE LTA Impact Report (Document 18) Page 8
[35] UCW LTA Strategy 2021-22 (Document 09) Page 5

course design, as outlined within the UCW Course Development Policy and Procedure. UCW's approach to course design is robust, as new courses must meet all aspects of UCW's internal quality processes along with adhering to the awarding body requirements. The process ensures a coherent development of knowledge and skills throughout the levels of study with a clear focus on teaching, learning and assessment. Consideration is given to the UDLF, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and QAA Subject Benchmark statements throughout the design stages[36].

A student-centred approach to course design is required, where staff, students, employers and key stakeholders collaboratively design and create courses that are industry relevant, valid and enable students to develop the skills required for success and future employment. In addition, effective course design is fundamental to supporting positive outcomes for all students. Along with inspiring students in their discipline, course content embeds employability and entrepreneurship which encourages engagement and supports retention and progression. EE comments reflect UCW's robust approach to ensuring that course content is inspiring, engaging and stretches students in their development of knowledge and skill. The EE Report in 2021-22 states: "The design and flexibility of the programme allows students to specialise, which is extremely positive. Students are able to focus and develop in line with their potential career aspirations allowing them to take clear ownership of their performance'"[37].

2.1.3 Research, scholarship and employer engagement

UCW recognises that an outstanding student academic experience is underpinned by research and scholarly activity (RSA) by HE teaching staff. The UCW Strategic Plan articulates the recognised link between RSA and high-quality teaching and learning, where *"Staff are required to engage in continuous professional development and scholarly activity to ensure currency of pedagogy, along with subject and industry knowledge. Staff will be actively encouraged to return to industry in addition to engaging with higher level qualifications"*[38].

UCW has a long-standing commitment and approach to RSA, it is embedded in HE culture and provides a planned and structured approach to supporting staff in their professional and academic development. It enables staff to remain current with their subject knowledge, it ensures continued engagement with industry practice, whilst developing academic pedagogy. The HE Staff Development Policy and Procedure ensures all HE teaching staff undertake RSA that is designed to have a positive impact on the curriculum and enhance learning, teaching and assessment[39]. The impact and effectiveness of this approach is reported to AQSC annually as part of the HE Learning, Teaching and Assessment Impact Report 2021-22[40].

Through these evaluative measures, UCW has recently enhanced its approach to RSA, moving from fixed allocations for staff, to a model of course allocation to allow for greater flexibility, and further meet the strategic objectives of UCW, to ensure wider engagement in subject discipline upskilling, industry/employer engagement, and professional memberships.

All HE courses are provided with a RSA allocation, which is used to provide remission for staff, and/or support the funding of accessing scholarly opportunities. Faculty and Programme Leads work in collaboration with their course teams, creating a course scholarship and staff development plan. Course teams outline their intent, proposed outcomes and evaluate impact in relation to the student academic experience.

UCW's approach to RSA has enabled staff engagement in a range of opportunities to further develop professional practice and pedagogy. The HE Learning, Teaching and Assessment Impact

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[36] UCW Course Development Policy & Procedure 2021-24 (Document 28)
[37] EE Report Professional Music Performance and Production 2021-22 (Document 29)
[38] UCW HE Strategic Plan (Document 5) Page 8
[39] UCW Staff Development Policy and Procedure 2021-24 (Document 30)
[40] HE LTA Impact Report (Document 18) Page 12-16

Report 2021-22 indicates that whilst UCW continues to support staff to obtain teaching and higher-level qualifications, a large percentage of staff are now engaged with industry practice and upskilling. This combination has resulted in a positive influence on staff pedagogy and updating curricula to reflect current industry developments, which benefits the student academic experience and progression to managerial or professional employment, or further study.

The positive impact of RSA is evidenced by the examples provided within the HE Learning, Teaching and Assessment Impact Report 2021-22:[41]

Inclusive Practice: Staff have engaged with children and young people with SEND, parent/carers, employers across the sector, SEND practitioners and organisations such as the Autism Education Trust and the three national SEND centres for excellence, including internal and external colleagues to develop the new BA Hons in SEND and Inclusive Practice that has now been approved by Bath Spa University and the first cohort recruited in 2022. In addition to this, four 40 credit modular stand-alone programmes have been specified for Bath Spa University approval and three have been developed for delivery as stand-alone modules for the 2022-23 academic year.

Advanced HE Fellowship programme: staff across the organisation have formed a focus group and are working towards Fellow and Senior Fellow membership of Advanced HE. As part of the application process, staff have been supported through Advanced HE bespoke workshops, where the group have reflected and collaborated on their research regarding teaching practice and its development. This sharing of practice model supports the improvement of teaching and learning and impacts positively on the student experience.

Public and Environmental Health: Course lecturers have maintained constant engagement with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH). This has included meetings, webinars, and regular contact. The CIEH is the Professional, Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) for environmental health and is also an accrediting body for professional qualification/registration beyond first degree; making this relationship essential. Students have been invited to meetings with the CIEH and have been advised of the three professional continuation routes available to them post qualification. Students have also been able to take part in CIEH CPD activities, further enhancing their industry skills and insights.

Film, Media, and Photography: have targeted industry engagement to ensure student experience is current, supporting progression into the sector. Examples include working and filming a documentary for Bristol Refugee Festival, and a Brigstow awarded short film, part of a wider research project into the study of grief, funded by Bristol University and the Brigstow Trust, which fed directly into level 4 and 5 modules. This was both from the perspective of practical, production-based experience and facilitating global cultural awareness.

In addition, one of the photography tutors has published and marketed a book based on research into the work of 19th Century amateur Palaeontologist, Mary Anning. The work has been presented globally online through several forums and a touring exhibition of the work will start with the local museum and move onto Cambridge University. This research has fed directly into the Public Presentation area of Professional Development in Context module, providing work-based experience for students along with providing an example of action research.

2.2 RESOURCES, SUPPORT AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
2.2.1 Staff professional development

UCW organises bespoke HECPD days, and an end of year HE Academic Conference. The focus remains on teaching strategies and developing a range of learning styles to provide an outstanding academic experience to students. This has led to the use of acclaimed guest speakers with

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[41] HE LTA Impact Report (Document 18) Page 13-16

specific expertise in learning, teaching and assessment[42]. Staff feedback and observations influence HECPD planning, identifying opportunities for collaboration and peer support, as well as sharing good practice across UCW to inform HE practice.

Approaches to inclusive learning and the use of technology to enhance learning are key strategic priorities and have featured extensively in HECPD activity. The approach to HECPD reflects the UCW Strategic Plan 2021-24 strategic aim; "Building on UCW's quality profile ensuring UCW delivers a high-quality learning experience for all students and maintains its reputation with HEI partners, employer partners and regulatory bodies"[43].

2.2.2 Supporting student development and achievement
2.2.2.1 Specialist Support
UCW has a strategic and planned approach to supporting students and enabling achievement which is established and proven. UCW adopts the social model of disability and is committed to removing barriers to create equality, promoting inclusion, and ensuring that policies and procedures are communicated in a clear and accessible manner to students.

The HE Directorate has a dedicated team of staff, the Higher Education Academic Registry Team (HEART) that provides highly effective welfare, wellbeing and financial support to enable positive outcomes for all students. UCW has made a significant investment in specialist staff to ensure that students have access to targeted specialist support; this is provided in person or online as required. Specialist support staff are focussed on empowering students, providing strategies for success that can be replicated in both their working and personal lives, supporting their long-term independence, resilience, confidence and achievements. Specialist support is highly effective and is reflected in NSS data over the four-year period, 87% of students felt supported with their academic studies, which is 4.9% above the benchmark. This is also replicated with the split indicators. Students in the 21 to 30 years category and students from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 were the most positive about the support received, being 9.2% and 6.9% above benchmark respectively. Apprentices are also in agreement with regards to academic support, with 86.5% feeling supported which is 12.1% above the benchmark.

The induction programme at UCW celebrates diversity and encourages students to disclose any additional support needs, ensuring that students are identified at an early stage so that additional support can be implemented promptly. An integral part of the induction process is the initial diagnostic screening, QuickScan, which flags traits support requirements. This information is shared with HE teaching staff should reasonable adjustments be needed regarding learning and teaching strategies. Students in receipt of a Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) are supported through the Specialist Support team; support is provided as soon as possible, and often before the DSA funding has been approved. When supporting apprentices, the team also works with assessors and employers to ensure that any reasonable adjustments can be replicated in the workplace.

The Specialist Support team, the Academic Development Team (ADT) and HEART regularly meet to discuss students and their support needs. This ensures that a wide range of support staff can then have input into supporting an individual student, and appropriate referrals can be made, for example to the wellbeing team. It also ensures any concerns can be highlighted at an early stage and appropriate intervention implemented. This holistic and personalised approach was identified as Good Practice with HER and stated that "the professional and proactive approach of the higher education support team, which enables student development and achievement, is good practice"[44].

2.2.2.3 Tutorial support
The specialist support teams are integrated into the tutorial process; joint tutorials with support and HE teaching staff occur regularly to support and enable student success. To ensure that students

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[42] HE Annual Academic Conference Programme (Document 31)
[43] UCW HE Strategic Plan 2021-24 (Document 5) Page 8
[44] HER Report 2016 (Document 04) Page 2

are enabled to reach their potential, UCW has developed a Guaranteed Tutorial Entitlement (GTE) Policy and Procedure. This is central to ensuring students have access to very high-quality academic support which is tailored to their individual needs and enables students to achieve. The GTE outlines UCWs commitment to provide all students with a comprehensive tutorial support programme[45].

All students are assigned a personal tutor at the start of the academic year and receive a minimum of three formal individual tutorials which are recorded. This enables academic progress to be monitored and any concerns to be discussed, supporting students to identify personal and academic targets. Whilst the GTE ensures students receive a minimum requirement for one-to-one tutorials to monitor their academic progress, in practice, due to UCW's smaller class sizes, students have high levels of contact with HE teaching staff and opportunities for regular informal discussions. This enhances the support provided to students and enables areas for development to be identified and achievements highlighted to stretch and challenge students. Adherence to the GTE is monitored and reported at key management committees using the UCW Quality and Compliance Tracker[46] and feedback is sought from students on the occurrence and quality of tutorials at SSLCs[47].

The tutorial process, both informal and formal, can result in students being referred to additional support services at UCW. This support primarily provided by the ADT and HEART and can be accessed by students in timetabled sessions, or students are able to pre-book appointments online via the Student Zone, or drop-in for support as and when needed including evenings to fit around work and caring responsibilities.

2.2.2.4 Academic Development Team
The ADT delivers the HE.LP programme which provides support and resources to all students, assisting transition and progression, enhancing study skills and encouraging autonomous learning. The ADT provide one-to-one sessions for students as well as a range of workshops embedded and tailored to the curriculum, addressing such skills as research, academic writing, critical and reflective thinking, citing and referencing. Participation is monitored at Higher Education Management Team (HEMT) to ensure all courses are fully engaged with these workshops. The group sessions are tailored and designed to meet the requirements of each individual course, they are assignment focused and support the development of the academic skills outlined in assessment briefs. These workshops are monitored and evaluated with students and HE teaching staff to bring about continuous enhancement.

StudyHub workshops are also offered by the ADT and are optional; these active and informal academic workshops are also designed to enhance academic skills and encourage peer learning. Students can access StudyHub through in person drop-ins or online, providing accessible and quick resolution to queries or ongoing support. They are becoming a popular way for students to practice digital skills and the numbers of students accessing StudyHub has continued to increase year-on-year.

Module evaluations demonstrate that support delivered by the ADT is highly valued by students, with a positive two-year trend (2020-21 and 2021-22). Within the 2020-2021 academic year, 91% of students agreed that "HE.LP workshops have been generally useful and have refreshed my existing academic skills knowledge", or "HE.LP workshops have been very beneficial, have made me more aware of and improved the academic skills needed for my research and assignments". With a positive increase to 94% in 2021-2022[48].

The ADT also supports HE transition activity, primarily through the Headstart programme, which is run in collaboration with HEART. UCW understands the importance of ensuring all students are

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[45] UCW GTE Policy and Procedure 2020-2023 (Document 32)
[46] UCW Quality and Compliance Tracker (Document 19)
[47] SSLC Meeting Agenda (Document 16) Pages 1-2
[48] HE Student Engagement Report Oct 2022 (Document 17) Page 11

provided with an equal start to accessing their course of study, helping them address their own anxieties relating to progressing or returning to education, self-assess capabilities, and develop behaviours and attributes required for success. This programme includes sessions related to academic skills, confidence and wellbeing, supporting student continuation, completion and achievement. During the BA (Hons) Games and Animation Production validation event in July 2019, the course approval panel identified the support offered by the ADT as good practice: "The programme team are commended for the support offered to students including the Headstart programme and HE.LP"[49].

Students recognise and value the high levels of support provided by UCW, 86% of students agreed that they had sufficient advice and support during their studies through internal module evaluations reflecting the overall NSS data of 87% for academic support, which is 4.9% above benchmark[50].

2.2.3 Learning resources
2.2.3.1 Physical resources
UCW has made a significant investment in the learning environment offered to HE students, ensuring all campuses offer high quality and industry relevant resources and facilities. UCW has three main campuses offering specialist facilities: Loxton Campus is home to the art, media, design and music provision, and the Health and Active Living Centre where the health simulation wards are installed; Knightstone Campus which includes the Winter Gardens, has a HE library and support hub, dedicated performing arts spaces, science laboratories, and hair and prosthetics studios; and the South West Skills Campus which accommodates Engineering and Construction. All these campuses have had significant investment to meet the needs of the students, key external stakeholders, and the local community. This is reflected in the overall NSS data, with 82% of full-time students agreeing that UCW's learning resources have supported their learning, which is 6.3% above benchmark. Apprentices are also positive about this aspect of their experience, with 88.1% responding favourably, which is 9.9% above the benchmark.

UCW opened University Centre within the Winter Gardens in the centre of Weston-super-Mare in 2017 at a cost of £11 million. It is a state-of-the-art higher education facility, which includes the HE Library and independent digitally enabled learning zones. Views of students and teaching staff helped shape the design, providing a space which encourages a blended approach to learning, with the capacity for formal and informal approaches. This supportive environment empowers students to function as autonomous learners and enables student collaboration. In 2018-19 UCW identified the need for a bespoke HE science-based course. At advanced technician level there was a national need for scientists who can follow and carry out a range of technical, laboratory-based investigations. The University of the West of England supported the development and approval of a Foundation Degree in Biological Laboratory Sciences, predicated on the creation of a new industry standard science laboratory; which was created within the Knightstone Campus at the cost of £166,889.

Following the strategic decision to offer higher technical Engineering Apprenticeships, the College invested £3.4 million into the refurbishment of the South West Skill Campus. This included installing welding, composite and machining workshops, a wind tunnel, electrical and robotics laboratories, virtual/augmented reality in welding and engineering, along with specialist and dedicated HE collaborative teaching spaces.

2.2.3.2 Virtual Learning Environment
UCW uses the Microsoft (MS) Teams platform in a highly effective manner to ensure that all courses, and its students, have the benefits of a digital learning community. Through this platform, all students have a Teams site for their course, with module specific channels that ensure accessibility to module content, assessments, plagiarism checking, and digital learning tools that support and enhance student learning experiences.

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[49] BA Games and Animation Production University Validation Panel Report July 2019 (Document 33) Page 1
[50] HE LTA Impact Report 2021-22 (Document 18) Page 8

Through using Microsoft Teams, UCW was able to rapidly adapt to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, moving learning, teaching, and assessment online, taking advantage of MS Team's meetings, recording sessions with transcripts, and developing module session libraries through MS Stream. Although UCW has now returned to face-to-face delivery, the usage of MS Teams, meetings, recordings, and libraries has continued to form part of the digital pedagogy expectations, as outlined in the UDLF.

Course teams are now able to provide students with remote access to sessions that they are not able to attend, enabling them to engage in their learning, and remain part of their student peer group. This is important to UCW as it allows students facing potential barriers to learning to access learning easily and engage fully with their course. All HE teaching spaces have lecture capture equipment to ensure that a diverse approach to learning and teaching is provided to meet the needs of students. Through MS Teams, staff have access to a range of applications that can be embedded to enhance student learning experiences, which includes virtual booking platforms for one-to-ones, dissertation and group project reviews, breakout rooms to support group working, virtual whiteboards, polling systems, and access to wider online resources such as LinkedIn Learning, and bespoke Microsoft and Cisco qualifications to support curriculum enhancement ND further develop digital skills. Digital pedagogy forms part of UCW's HECPD strategy, where staff have access to bespoke opportunities to develop their digital skills through working with digital technologists and Digital Coaches. Following the HECPD in February 2021 digital pedagogy was enhanced across the organisation, which has resulted in new courses being designed with blended and remote delivery options, enabling students geographically remote to access courses, widening participation and meeting sector skills shortage areas in Environmental Health and Digital.

2.2.4 Student engagement and collaboration
UCW has an effective and embedded Student Engagement Strategy whereby all students are recognised and treated as equal partners in their own learning, and are given the opportunity to contribute to quality improvement and enhancement [51]. The involvement of students in all aspects of their learning is well-established and understood. There is student representation at all levels of the organisation's management and decision-making structures. This is integral to the culture of UCW and widely owned by students, and academic and support staff. 81.6% of full-time students responded positively to NSS questions regarding Student Voice, which is 6.6% above the benchmark. 75.4% of apprentices responded positively, 8.5% above benchmark. All years and all the split indicators are consistently above benchmarks demonstrating very high quality in this area.

UCW has a dedicated Student Engagement Manager who leads with all aspects of student engagement, providing key reports to AQSC and Governors. The post holder also chairs key student committees, which the Assistant Principal Higher Education also attends, demonstrating UCW's commitment to partnering with students to enhance their experience.

Each course elects student representatives annually, who attend the Student Representative Committee. Students who share the responsibility to represent the whole student body across Quality Assurance panels and College Governance, including AQSC and the Curriculum Quality Committee (CQC) and Corporation, are elected from this group.

Each course is required to run three Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) meetings per academic year. These are an effective forum for all students to provide feedback on their course, having an operational and quality enhancement focus. Previously these were only attended by the student representatives, but following student feedback, these meetings now are open to all students on their course and attendance is actively encouraged to ensure that feedback is obtained. Key actions are identified, agreed, and monitored, ensuring accountability, and appropriately closing the feedback loop.

UCW has invested significantly in resources and capital expenditure as a response to student feedback. This expenditure includes the investment in practical laboratory equipment for both the

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[51] UCW Student Engagement Strategy 2021-24 (Document 34)

FdSc Animal Management and FdSc Biological Laboratory Sciences. There was also significant investment in the practical resources for the BSc (Hons) Applied Computing and BSc (Hons) Digital and Technology Solutions for students and apprentices, providing a new cyber and networking laboratory, with an independent internet connection to allow students and apprentices the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills, applying theory to practice, and to emulate industry requirements. Both the newly developed BSc (Hons) Applied Computing and the investment in physical resources had led to positive outcomes in both continuation and completion in these areas. In 2020-21 within the Art and Design SSLC, the students requested support in using the full functionality of Teams, and support was provided by the Digital Coaches and the ADT. The Art and Design academic staff were also provided with a bespoke HECPD session with the Learning Technologists and the Digital Coaches to support their digital pedagogy, standardising their practice and ensuring consistency in resource availability.

The UCW Course Development Policy and Procedure articulates how students are involved in many stages throughout the design process. Working alongside employers and academic staff; current students and alumni are empowered to contribute towards the sequencing and scaffolding of their learning, reflecting on course content, subject specific resources, and assessment design to ensure innovative new provision. During the BA (Hons) Business and Sustainability approval event in March 2021; student engagement in the course design process was highlighted as good practice by UWE and they commented upon "the open and extensive consultation with employers and students" which was effective throughout the development of the new course[52]. This is further evidenced in the feedback from UWE following the BSc (Hons) Applied Computing approval, where UCW was commended for "acting on the requests of students to develop a full BSc programme, providing a strong rationale for this new programme"[53].

In response to student feedback additional support has been made available; for example, in 2019-20 the FdA Inclusive Practice students raised in a SSLC that they would appreciate additional support with their academic writing. The ADT were then asked to deliver additional sessions in this area to these students. This led to an improvement in the achievement in this area, with over half of the students being awarded a Distinction.

2.2.5 Context to student experience data
The importance of the National Student Survey (NSS) is emphasised to all students and participation is encouraged, resulting in a high response rate of 78.8%. The NSS is a standard agenda item on the Student Representative Committee meetings, to enable students to consider the outcome of the survey and to contribute towards developments in teaching, learning, assessment, student support and learning resources.

NSS data is only provided for full-time students and apprentices as part-time numbers do not meet the required thresholds.

2.2.5.1 Teaching on my course
Full-time: The NSS overall indicator at 87.5% is materially above the benchmark by 2.9% and confirms that students are very positive about the teaching on their course. Although the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the NSS response in Year 2 (2019-20), in Years 3 and 4, UCW remained above benchmark. With the split indicators, students in all age groups agree that teaching is of high quality, with those in the 21-30 years category being particularly positive with the data being 7.1% above benchmark. Similarly, the data for students with, or without a disability, and those in all five quintiles are above benchmark in all areas.
Apprenticeships: The NSS overall indicator at 82.2% is above benchmark by 3.3% and reflects the innovative and high-quality teaching that occurs with apprenticeships. For both full-time and apprenticeship provision, the data demonstrates the high quality and inclusive approach to teaching that enables all students to achieve to their full potential.

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[52] BA (Hons) Business and Sustainability Approval Outcome April 21 (Document 35) Page 1
[53] BSc (Hons) Applied Computing UVP Outcome May 2020 (Document 36) Page 1

Assessment and feedback
2.2.5.2 Assessment and feedback
Full-time: NSS data demonstrates that the approach to assessment and feedback is outstanding, and students recognise this. The overall NSS indicator for assessment and feedback at 85.3% is 6.5% above benchmark. All four years individually are above benchmark, with Year 4 data being 5.7% above benchmark. Students aged between 21-30 years were particularly positive with overall NSS data being 9.7% above benchmark, and similarly the response from students in quintiles 1 and 2 is 9.2% above benchmark. With regards to the split indicators, all students regardless of age, disability or deprivation quintile agreed that assessment and feedback is outstanding.
Apprenticeships: The NSS data indicates that 74.7% of apprentices value assessment and feedback processes, which is 1.9% above benchmark. However, UCW does recognise that the Year 4 NSS data for teaching on my course is 3.7% below benchmark, and assessment and feedback is 3.1% below benchmark. Some concerns were raised by apprentices on two course areas, Health and Digital. Full action plans have been developed with the students and teaching staff, with monitoring carried out by the HE Directorate and AQSC. These areas have also been subject to Ofsted preparatory deep dives during the 2022-23 Autumn term; the outcome of which show improvements from a student academic experience and quality perspective.

2.2.5.3 Academic support
Supporting students is at the very heart of UCW and enabling student success underpins UCW's core values, influencing UCW's infrastructure, course design, and policy and procedures. This is further evidenced though UCW's Access and Participation Plan, which focuses much of its resource and activity around supporting student success[54].
Full-time: The NSS data is outstanding for academic support and internal student feedback through the Student Representative Committee continually identifies support as a deciding factor in students' choosing UCW for HE study. The overall NSS indicator at 87% is 4.9% above benchmark and is replicated in the split indicators. With students in the 21-30 years category the data is 2.9% above benchmark and those from quintiles 1 and 2 the data is 6.9% above benchmark reflecting the high-quality support students receive.
Apprenticeships: Apprentices are also extremely positive about the academic support they receive, with 86.5% agreeing that the support is highly effective which is 12% above the benchmark. Internal UCW module evaluations also reflect this outstanding data; 86% of students agreed that they had sufficient advice and support during their studies.

2.2.5.4 Learning resources
Full-time: 82% of students agreed that UCW's learning resources have supported their learning, which is materially above the benchmark by 6.3%. Split indicators indicate positive responses with all areas above benchmark, many by more than 5%. Where at course level the NSS outcome for learning resources has been below the national benchmark, consultation with students has identified that they prefer hard copies of resources in the library, whereas UCW has taken the decision primarily to invest in e-books and e-journals as this provides better access and flexibility for students. Library staff continue to work with students to ensure a hard copy library stock is still available, whilst further investment in flexible resources is prioritised.
Apprenticeships: Apprentices regard learning resources as being outstanding, with 88.1% responding positively, which is 9.9% above benchmark.

2.2.5.5 Student Voice
UCW regards students as equal partners in their learning and aligned its Student Engagement Strategy with the UK Quality Code.
Full-time: Overall, 81.6% of students responded very positively to NSS questions regarding Student Voice, with the data being above benchmark by 6.6%. All years and all the split indicators are also above benchmarks, demonstrating that UCW has an outstanding approach to student voice.

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[54] UCW Access and Participation 2020-25 (Document 37)

Apprenticeships: Apprentices agree that the approach to student voice is highly effective, with 75.4% of apprentices responding positively, which is 8.5% above benchmark.

In addition to NSS, all students are also encouraged to complete internal module evaluations, the outcome of which is included in Student Engagement Reports (SER) that are monitored by AQSC. The findings of the SERs also feed into the annual module and course monitoring reports, which include action plans and modifications.

In summary NSS data for full-time students and apprentices is excellent and is replicated by internal module evaluations, demonstrating high levels of satisfaction, and that students value the mechanisms put in place by UCW to support and enhance the student experience.

3. STUDENT OUTCOMES

3.1 POSITIVE OUTCOMES
3.1.1 Tailored approaches to ensure that students succeed
UCW demonstrates a considered and strategic approach to supporting students that is tailored to individual needs, to enable and empower students to realise their potential as independent and autonomous learners. A myriad of approaches are embedded to ensure pre-programme support, on-programme support and development, and preparation for transition to managerial or professional employment, or further study, is highly effective. This includes: the UDLF; the GTE Policy and Procedure; HE.LP; ADT; the UCW Retention Strategy 2021-24[55]; and the UCW Careers Coaching Service. These complement the HE Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and ensure an inclusive and tailored approach to student learning, and assessment that is highly effective and valued by students. Many of these approaches and their impact have been outlined within the Student Experience section, but are also relevant to the impact on student outcomes.

The approach to enabling students to succeed and reach their potential commences before enrolment. A range of support sessions are offered to raise awareness of the type of academic and pastoral support that will be available to students. This includes a range of workshops as part of the Headstart Study Skills programme[56]. This programme provides an introduction to higher-level study, managing expectations and for some students helps to address anxiety or confidence issues. Prior to commencing their studies, students are provided with an online booklet "Supporting Your Success" which outlines the support available to all students, whilst on course, and in relation to progression[57].

Once the student is on-programme, the support mechanisms also include an extensive induction for students at the start of their course of study. This includes diagnostic screening, using QuickScan. This gives an indication if a student has particular additional learning needs relating to dyslexia, dyspraxia or dyscalculia, and identifies students' preferred learning styles. The student receives a copy of their screening outcome (which includes study suggestions for that particular student) as does the personal tutor and the additional support team. Where additional support is required, the Specialist Support team will make an appointment with the student to discuss the support. This comprehensive approach ensures that bespoke support for individual students is recognised and put in place swiftly and effectively, often prior to a DSA being approved.

The approach to additional support is monitored and evaluated. A report which considers data related to the success and impact of the support is submitted to AQSC, and compares student continuation and completion for those who have received support and those who have not. The data indicates that additional support is successful and effective[58].

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[55] UCW Retention Strategy 2021-24 (Document 38)
[56] Headstart Programme 2021 (Document 39)
[57] Supporting Your Success 2022 (Document 40)
[58] UCW Student Achievement, Continuation and Destination Report, 2021-22 (Document 07) Page 18

3.1.2 Impact of course design on student outcomes

Effective course design is fundamental to supporting positive outcomes for all students. As well as inspiring students in their discipline, employability and entrepreneurship are embedded in the course, to encourage student engagement which supports student continuation and completion, and progression to managerial or professional employment, or further study.

External Examiner (EE) comments and course validation reports reflect UCW's robust approach to course design, ensuring that the content is inspiring, engaging and stretches students in their development of knowledge and skills:

"The course implements an excellent blend of theoretical underpinning alongside practical application which ensures all students have the opportunity to achieve. All assessments have rigorous marking schemes and are clearly linked to module and course learning outcomes. Assessments are designed to build upon tasks and each task is well structured to ensure the students know what they need to do. In addition to the core content of modules, legislative, ethical, security and communication elements are built appropriately into assessments in a way that makes them more relevant and contextualised." EE Report f

in 2021-22 .

In addition, the BA (Hons) Games and Animation Production validation event in July 2019 stated there was "Strong evidence of programmatic design. The strong focus on student aspirations and empowering individuals to achieve" [60].

3.1.3 Student continuation and completion

UCW has an established and well understood Retention Strategy which supports student continuation and completion. The Retention Strategy aims to develop a culture focused on two elements, student belonging and student engagement[61]. Much research has been carried out into the importance of student belonging and its impact on both retention and achievement. Engagement is seen a central to creating a deep sense of belonging, which is why UCW has taken an embedded approach through all stages of the student learning cycle. The Retention Strategy articulates UCW's commitment to engage with students pre-entry, to support transition, through to graduation and employment. This strategy aligns with the Guaranteed Tutorial Entitlement (GTE)[62] which supports retention and the student experience.

Following a review of the Retention Strategy with students in 2018, attendance monitoring is now central to the approach to retention as it identifies students at risk of leaving at an early stage, enabling intervention and support to be implemented. This is led by HEART, who ensure automated emails are sent to students where attendance drops below 75%, highlighting the academic and pastoral support available to them. If attendance does not improve students are contacted personally by HEART, and a joint tutorial is organised with both HE teaching staff and support staff in attendance. Over the last three years UCW has seen the number of these joint tutorials increase by over 50%, with 67% of students who attended a combined tutorial in 2021-22, were retained on course despite initial poor attendance and other factors that were potentially impacting on their academic success.

As UCW has high numbers of students who have additional barriers to learning, additional targeted activities have been implemented in recent years to support engagement, a sense of belonging, continuation and achievement. During 2020-21 links with partner universities were strengthened with regards to Reasonable Adjustments and the UCW Reasonable Adjustments process was improved, streamlining the process, and this is having a positive effect on the achievement of students with learning differences and disabilities. The percentage of disabled students at UCW that achieved a Good Degree   is in line with the achievement of students without a disability.

This has

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[60] BA Games and Animation Production University Validation Panel Report July 2019 (Document 33) Page 1
[61] UCW Retention Strategy 2021-24 (Document 38)
[62] UCW GTE Policy and Procedure 2020-2023 (Document 32)

led to the additional benefit where students have also received peer support (facilitated by HEART), further strengthening the autism community at UCW.

The support and intervention provided by HEART is highly valued by students, confirmed by the latest HEART evaluation, whereby 73% of students felt that their resilience and wellbeing has been improved by the support provided by HEART, and 75% found HEART to be helpful .

In addition, staff from Specialist Support, Welfare and Finance teams along with the ADT meet monthly to discuss students, ensuring that there is a holistic approach to support. Individual support strategies are discussed to ensure that best practice is shared between practitioners; where concerns are raised, a consistent approach to supporting students is adopted. This also provides a forum for staff to refer individuals to other services, or to ensure that all support mechanisms are in place including options for flexible study, reasonable adjustment or mitigating / extenuating circumstances.

An anonymised At-Risk Report is presented monthly at HE Managemnt Team so that HE teaching, support and management staff are aware of students who may need additional support and intervention. In-year retention data is also included in the Student Achievement, Continuation and Destination Report, which is monitored and considered by CQC and AQSC to ensure that this is a key focus at UCW. The combination of retention and continuation strategies adopted by UCW has had a positive impact on continuation and completion.

3.1.4 Student progression

UCW is committed to the long-term success of students as articulated in the UCW HE Strategic Plan. There is a HE KPI that includes progression to managerial, professional employment or further study outcomes[64]. In recognition of the background of UCW students, their low confidence levels and limited professional connections, UCW has partnered with UWE to offer a Careers service to all students. UCW has a Careers Consultant who is seconded from UWE to UCW, benefiting from the expertise and knowledge of a wider team of professionals along with specialist Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) CPD.

Careers support is both embedded within the curriculum and is offered through individualised and bespoke advice sessions for students seeking one-to-one support. The Careers Consultant leads Careers Week and Careers Development Month for all students, offering sessions that include graduate schemes, funding for further study, routes into teaching and self-employment among others. Many of these sessions are led by external professionals involved in recruitment and selection within their own organisations. Online support is also available regarding interviews, CVs and job applications to ensures all students have flexible access to CEIAG.[65].

Students have tailored sessions supported by both the Careers Consultant and curriculum leads. Work-based learning activities and the use of professional industry practitioners are a feature of all courses, enabling students to actively and successfully engage in, or be exposed to, current professional practice developments relevant to their discipline. All students have access to industry experts via guest lecturers or workshops and will have modules related to work-based learning or professional development enabling them to undertake placement or 'live' project opportunities to enhance their employability skills and career prospects. This approach has resulted in UCW's overall full-time data for progression to managerial or professional employment, or further study being above benchmark at 61.2%.

Weston College's links with over 2,000 regional employers and close partnership working ensures opportunities can be offered to all UCW students. This can take different forms based on the needs of individual students and courses which can be supported by the Enhancement Budget. The approach to 'live' practice allows staff to focus on course specific educational gains, wider skills

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[64] UCW HE Strategic Plan 2021-24 (Document 5) Page 13
[65] UCW Careers Service Report 2021-22 (Document 42)

development, and industry insights that ensures students develop employability and industry ready skills.

UCW supports students to engage in external professional activity that enhances progression. This has included Musical Theatre students performing in Theatres in London; Film students curating an international Film Festival; Graphic Design students exhibiting at New Designers; Public and Environmental Heath students working with the CIEH and being nominated for Excellence Awards; Hair, Make-up and Prosthetics for Production (HMPP) students appointed to the hair and make-up team for the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham; Applied Computing and Digital and Technology Solutions students competing and judging the National World Skills Competitions; and a BSc (Hons) Counselling student presenting work at British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Research Conference.

UCW's approach to employability has been recognised as being exemplary by EEs. EE Reports confirm that UCW's approach prepares students for progression to managerial or professional employment, or further study. EEs comment that UCW has evidence of outstanding practice, enhancement and engagement with employers, real-world experiences, and access to subject specific opportunities to stretch student learning.
The EE Report
        states: "I commend the team for developing excellent examples of best practice around employability. All students are taught to think about their practice from a professional point of view from Level 4 onwards, with opportunities developed for students to work with clients, as well as supporting each other as crew members across cohorts. Filmmaking and associated media careers are reliant on good communication, adaptability and flexibility of approach. The Level 4 and 5 residentials are excellent opportunities for students to engage in collaborative filmmaking outside of their comfort zone, with people they may not choose to work with. These are very valuable experiences for the students, and highlight the teaching team's dedication to the student experience"[67].

The EE Report for BA (Hons) Business with Sustainability top-up for 2020-21 recognises "Employability and industry engagement opportunities embedded within the programme and in specific modules such for example project management continue to be relevant and positively impact students' development of critical knowledge and skills relevant to employment"[68].

The EE Report for BA (Hons) HMPP for 2021-22 commented that "following the pandemic the course team are now able to promote student engagement with national make-up competitions, visiting speakers and external collaboration who support students in developing professional competences, networking skills, personal growth and confidence[69].'

UCW's approach to employer engagement has been recognised through course design. UCW consults with employers through the design phase regarding course content and collaboratively creates courses that develop the knowledge and skills required by the industry. At the course approval event for BSc (Hons) Applied Computing in 2020, the approval panel commended "The clear evidence of thorough engagement with and use of feedback from key regional employers"[70].

At the BA (Hons) Business Management with Sustainability approval event in April 2021, the panel commented on: "The open and extensive consultation with employers and students that the team had undertaken, and which had effectively been used to develop this new programme"[71].

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[67] EE Report FdA Film and BA Lens Based Media 2019-20 (Document 44)
[68] EE Report BA Top up Business with Sustainability (Document 45)
[69] EE Report HMPP 2021-22 (Document 23) Page 5
[70] BSc (Hons) Applied Computing UVP Outcome May 2020 (Document 36) Page 1
[71] BA (Hons) Business and Sustainability Approval Outcome April 21 (Document 35)

With BSc (Hons) Digital User Experience (UX) UVP approval event in June 2022, the panel commended: "the extensive network of employers already positively engaged" and "the clear plans to utilise that network and ensuring that professional development is integral to the programme within and across all levels."[72]

Within the Bath Spa University Counselling Quintennial Enhancement Review the final report also highlights how the curriculum supports employability as an area of good practice:
"Strong commitment to embed employability for example, assessment tasks that link to and prepare students for professional practice [BSU and UCW]"[73]

In addition, working with the Learning and Development Manager for Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust has commented that UCW mental health graduates have the employability, skills and knowledge to support successful careers in mental health:
"For our staffing requirements, we know the Foundation Degree in Integrated Mental Health and Social Care will provide our senior clinical support staff with the knowledge and skills they require to prepare them for a successful career in secondary mental health services. We also utilise the programme as part of a progressive clinical career pathway towards registered professions very much needed within our workforce"[74].

3.2 Context to student outcomes data
There is a need to contextualise the student outcomes data to understand the success of UCW in working with students from a broad and diverse range of backgrounds. Many are progressing from underrepresented groups, including areas with low progression rates to HE, students with a declared disability or learning difference and those progressing from non-traditional backgrounds. For example, the Counselling course attracts students that have been through alcohol and/or drug recovery. The number of students progressing from vocational programmes has consistently been over 70% since 2019-20, the includes the BTEC National Diploma, Access to HE courses, NVQs and other non-traditional pathways.

Student Outcomes data reflects the strategic and planned approach that UCW adopts in recruiting and supporting students from under-represented groups, and from non-traditional backgrounds, and represents excellence in practice. It highlights the holistic and inclusive support provided to all students at UCW which has impacted positively on continuation, completion, progression and student results.

Overall continuation data for full-time students is 1.4% above benchmark at 84.6%. This is similar across many of the split indicators, including students in Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 which is 1.8% above benchmark. Overall completion data is materially above the benchmark at 81.4%, and again this is similar within the majority of split indicators. First Degree completion is 6.4% above benchmark at 92.2%, and completion data for POLAR quintile 1 is 3.4% above benchmark.

However, the continuation rate within the Natural and Built Environment subject split is materially below benchmark at 53.2%. Although the denominator is relatively low at 60 these students are primarily on one course, FdSc Animal Management. This course has been reviewed and it has been identified that it is not providing seamless progression for students studying the BTEC qualification, the main feeder course. Consequently, a new course has been designed, working with the industry, that will provide seamless progression from the BTEC course. The new course will be introduced from September 2023 and UCW believes this will have a positive impact on student continuation.

Apprenticeship data overall is outstanding for continuation and completion with both indicators being materially above the benchmark, again with many of the split indicators also being at or

[72] BSc (Hons) Digital User Experience UVP Outcome June 2022 (Document 46)
[73] BSU Counselling Quintennial Enhancement Report 2021 (Document 13)
[74] Employer Letter AWP (Document 47)

above benchmark. Overall continuation is 2.8% above benchmark at 88.7%, particularly noteworthy is the continuation rate for students with a disability which is 5% above benchmark at 92.5% and those from POLAR quintile 1 which is 2.9% above benchmark at 87.8%. In terms of completion the overall indicator is significantly above benchmark at 77%, 5.2% above benchmark.

The continuation and completion metric for full-time 'Other Undergraduate Level 4' is an area for development as it is materially below benchmark. This can be attributed to historical part-time data being reported incorrectly, with some inaccuracies relating to part-time provision being returned as full-time; this was highlighted during an OfS Audit in 2021. The Teaching Training qualification was one of the courses that was returned incorrectly as full-time with UCW's Individualised Learner Record (ILR) in 2017. However, there is still a need for full-time and part-time data for continuation and completion on the Teacher Training course to improve. The students are teaching staff who are predominantly working full-time and are often new to teaching; this has resulted in intervention and several changes being implemented. Course leaders now review when these students start the teaching course to allow some time for them to settle into their new teaching role before embarking on the course. The fast-track Level 5 course has also been challenging for students, who now start on a Level 4 teaching qualification before progressing onto Level 5 in the subsequent year. UCW is confident that these interventions will have a positive impact on the continuation and completion data for this course.

Continuation and completion data for part-time students is another area for development. Overall part-time continuation data is 63%, overall part-time completion data is 65.2%, both of which are below benchmark. As has been stated, the UCW population is rich and varied and reflects the ethos at UCW in being an inclusive institution that celebrates diversity. This inclusive approach is articulated in the UCW Strategic Plan through the following aim:
"UCW is committed to widening participation and providing opportunities for all applicants with potential, regardless of background, to access higher education, achieve their qualification and progress into employment"[75].
Adopting this ethos does bring an element of risk in terms of student continuation and completion. However, for many students the outcome is very positive, with life chances and opportunities being enhanced, which UCW believes justifies the approach. It should be noted that the supportive ethos of UCW allows students who are struggling full-time, often through a change in personal circumstances, to easily move to part-time study. While this is appreciated by students, this can result in students still not being able to continue or complete their studies,

However, students are always given advice as to how they can re-engage with their studies at UCW or elsewhere in the future. It is of note that the part-time continuation data is improving and in Year 4 is at 83.9%, 5.4% above the benchmark. Since the change with Level 4 and 5 professional and technical courses (non-recognised), now being in scope with the OfS and TEF 2023, this provision has transferred to the HE Directorate to provide assurance of a consistency of approach for all provision at Level 4 and above.

The progression data overall for UCW for full and part time study is above benchmark; which is also the case with the majority of the split indicators. Overall full-time progression data is 61.2%, and overall part-time is 83.4%. This data reflects the involvement of employers in the design of courses ensuring they are industry relevant and the use of work-based projects and experience to enhance learning, which ensures graduates are highly employable.

Considering the significant barriers to learning that many UCW students face, achievement data is exceptional and exceeds the data published by HESA in 2020 for First Class Honours and Upper Second Degrees (Good Degrees). 83% of UCW students achieved good degrees, 37% with a First-Class Honours in 2021-22.

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[75] UCW HE Strategic Plan 2021-2024 (Document 05) Page 10

disabled students at UCW that achieved a Good Degree

The percentage of was 83%, which is in line with the achievement of students without a disability.

3.3 EDUCATIONAL GAINS
3.3.1 Range of Educational Gains
UCW has always been committed to ensuring students benefit from an outstanding learning experience that goes beyond the minimum standards that are required. To enable all students to achieve to their full potential and to progress to managerial or professional employment, or further study, students need to develop a range of academic, personal and employability skills to support their ambitions. This was identified and articulated as a strategic aim within UCW's current Strategic Plan:
"To provide outstanding support and a vibrant and enriching student experience which nurtures and develops skills, resilience, wellbeing and personal development supporting the long-term success of students and apprentices"[77].

This strategic aim forms the basis of UCW's definition of Educational Gains, and the aspirations it holds for students. UCW wants all its students to achieve outstanding outcomes and is committed to ensuring students remain on course and complete their studies and they develop the skills, strategies and resilience to pursue a rewarding career, develop personally, building their skills towards an enriching career or further study. This has formed the basis of UCW's Educational Gains Policy and Procedure, which has been approved at AQSC in December 2022[78].

UCW has reflected on the local labour market priority skills, the impact of lost learning through COVID-19 and UCW's student population to identify the key skills all students require for long-term success. These were proposed to the Student Representative Committee, Student Governor, and TEF Lead Student for consultation and feedback, and there is now student and institutional agreement regarding the skills, ambitions and approach to Educational Gains. These skills are summarised below:

- **Academic development:**
  Academic writing, referencing skills, written and verbal communication skills, including effective presentation skills.
- **Personal development:**
  Resilience, motivation, time management, and confidence
- **Employability skills:**
  Teamworking, digital literacy, problem solving, communication and interpersonal skills.

UCW has a multifaceted approach to educational gains, embedded within the curriculum and delivered through academic support services, to enable students to develop the identified skills which will support their success in and beyond higher education. The ADT will lead UCW's approach to educational gains. Whilst academic skills development is the remit of this team, there will now be a focus on the wider development of student skills. The team will conduct a thorough skills audit within the first workshop with students to identify starting points and areas for development which will inform a tailored programme to enhance the academic, personal and employability skills of students. The Jisc Digital Insight Survey and Discovery Tool will support this process and students will then be advised to access additional courses and workshops relevant to

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[77] UCW HE Strategic Plan 2021-2024 (Document 05) Page 11
[78] Educational Gains Policy and Procedure 2023-25 (Document 48)

the skills they would like to develop. Students will review and monitor progress against the identified skills throughout their course of study.

Tutorial support will also be central to this approach, the identified skills will be reviewed along with the student's personal ambitions and a SMART target agreed and recorded to monitor progress and impact. Careers support will also be more embedded within the curriculum and form part of the ADT, with additional activities tailored to the course being offered to students, to make informed decisions about their future progression and building their skills towards an enriching career or further study. Due to the numbers of students who progress into self-employment and freelance work post-graduation, there will also be a range of workshops and additional bespoke courses which provide key information and support students to develop the skills required to pursue this option.

As communication, interpersonal skills and teamwork have been identified as crucial skills, additional opportunities for collaboration between student groups will be further embedded within the curriculum. A recent example of this is the FdSc Laboratory and Biological Sciences and BA (Hons) HMPP students having a joint laboratory session with cross-curricular learning through experiential experience. The experiment involved investigating the efficacy of sanitisers and disinfectants used in beauty studios. Feedback from students and staff was extremely positive, with one HMPP student commenting that:
"I really enjoyed attending the microbiology sessions and testing the cleaning solutions that we use in our makeup studios. It was great to have a go at doing the experiment. Learning that Barbicide disinfectant killed 100% of cells was so interesting, something that I will always remember throughout my career!"[79].

Collaborative working is well established in the Creative Arts, with staff and students reporting that these enrich the learning with students benefitting from such opportunities. These collaborations inform formative and summative assessments, where students across courses are required to collaborate with final projects, requiring students to emulate professional requirements, such as actors auditioning for key roles within the film and media student led productions, and musicians performing for musical theatre shows. This provides opportunities for students to network cross-course, to mirror the workplace and understand a wider range of industry roles, and participate in residential trips and visits, both in the UK and internationally. Best practice will continue to be shared at HECPD.

As part of UCW's COVID-19 response a strategic decision was taken to highlight the importance of resilience and wellbeing to all first-year cohorts; by making a workshop in this area compulsory. These workshops are delivered by HEART, and while they are not compulsory in subsequent years, many courses do embed the workshops into schemes of work for second- and third-year students. Wellbeing and Resilience workshop will be expanded and supported by activities in the open student zone in the Winter Gardens campus and delivered by the ADT to include Skills Development Weeks. These, along with a formalised programme of wellbeing events, which promote positive mental health and resilience, build community and a sense of belonging, will be delivered to enable students to collaborate, build networks and learn to manage their own mental health.

3.3.2 Evidenced-based approach to monitoring student success in achieving educational gains

In terms of measuring impact, UCW will implement a range of internal and external measures to provide feedback regarding the impact of educational gains on the student experience and student outcomes. Additional questions that relate to educational gains will be added to module evaluations and educational gain will be added to the Student Representative Committee and Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) standard agendas.

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[79] Students Collab in the Lab – University Centre Weston (ucw.ac.uk)

In addition, UCW has started discussions with Advance HE about introducing the UK Engagement Survey to assess students' confidence in their skills and record progress over time. Further demonstration meetings have been organised with Advance HE to explore if the HE Engagement Survey can be modified to meet UCW requirements with regards to reporting the impact of educational gains.

The intention is to develop an Educational Gains Impact Report which will be considered at AQSC and the sub-group of Governing Body to provide assurance that educational gains are having a positive impact on the student experience and student outcomes. The Report will include an action plan, with progress being monitored by HE Directorate and regular updates provided to AQSC.

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