

PROVIDER CONTEXT

North East Surrey College of Technology (Nescot) is a large General and Further and Higher Education College based in Epsom and Ewell in Surrey.

Nescot's vision is to be "The College of Choice for Students, Staff and Employers". The institute's strategic plan identifies six key priorities as below:

1. Outstanding teaching and learning and assessment in an innovative and safe environment. Continuing financial stability and growth.
2. Helping our students to develop the skills, attitudes and qualifications they need to succeed at work.
3. Engaged with employers and other organisations to offer courses and qualifications that are innovative, relevant and in demand.
4. Developing strong relationships with schools and community groups to give clear information, advice and guidance.
5. We are an employer of choice

Nescot has a series of sub-strategies supporting the Nescot Strategic Vision 2025 and key priorities and the *Higher Education Sub-Strategy* is one of these. It is structured to provide a link between national policy and Nescot's vision for Higher Education (HE) with the following objectives:

1. Offer outstanding student experience in a safe environment.
2. Meet employer led demand based on extensive employer engagement and market intelligence.
3. Extend and widen the offer to provide clear progression routes into and within HE and to employment, to existing and new students.
4. Provide a bespoke approach to higher level and professional skills development.
5. Establish and grow flexible and inclusive modes of teaching, learning and assessment that meet student and employer demand.

Develop strong beneficial collaborative relationships with other providers. The College works closely with Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) and economic/skills development partnerships such as the Surrey Forum (former Employment & Skills Board) and Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) (led by Surrey Chamber of Commerce) which brings together businesses, schools, local authorities, colleges, universities, third sector organisations and other stakeholders across Surrey to focus on key skills and economic development priorities. These are driven by the emerging LSIP, Local Authority Priorities (Surrey Skills Plan) and Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) Gatwick 360 Skills Plan. A key part of this includes the development of new flexible and innovative progression pathways to higher level skills. The College is linked into widening participation and access networks through the Higher Education Outreach Project (HEON) project based at the University of Surrey which has served as a highly beneficial collaborative partnership in highlighting intelligence about successful widening participation strategies across the sector. The College's participation in the Sussex and Surrey Institute of Technology (commencing September 2023) will also link Nescot to work on widening participation being led by the Universities of Sussex and Brighton alongside Chichester College Group.

The current and proposed provision has been developed with the LEP and emerging LSIP priorities in mind and also to address predicted skills shortages for the next 5 years (as identified by RCU, VECTOR and LMI). Informing the shape of curriculum are the following factors:

- Coast to Capital is the college's LEP (East Surrey and West Sussex) with the Enterprise M3 LEP covering West Surrey and Hampshire. The LEPs have some overlapping priorities, in

particular healthcare, education, business, creative, digital and ICT subjects. Nescot's Acting Principal and CEO is Chair of Coast to Capital LEP and Catalyst South – a consortium of 6 LEPs covering the South East of England.

- The emerging work on the Surrey (and Hampshire) LSIP and the Strategic Development Fund collaboration.
- The Surrey Skills Plan (led by Surrey County Council) and plans for a County Deal.
- The UK Education, Professional Studies, Health and Social Care sectors which are worth over £360bn a year and employ more than 10% of the total UK workforce.

These sectors are identified by Skills for Jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth *White Paper (Jan 2021)* as key areas in the UK's recovery post COVID-19. These sectors have shown growth and will continue to grow over the next 3 years RCU data shows a 3% growth and 27% of employers can't fill skilled vacancies (*RCU Vector Data projections 2022-2025*). The focus is shifting to a model where providers and employers contribute to development and delivery of curriculum; this is not exclusive to apprenticeships.

The College's close involvement with a wide range of employer forums (Coast to Capital Growth Hub, Surrey Chamber, IoD, Gatwick Diamond Business and FSB) means that the curriculum is properly informed by current and future skills needs. Curriculum planning panels invite external representatives from industry and the LEP as part of the panel process to ensure correct alignment between offer proposed and requirements of the sector. In 2023 this will be further driven by involvement of the LSIP and our partners in the Institute of Technology (University of Sussex, University of Brighton and Chichester College Group).

HE contains a range of provision including FE feeder routes to the level 4 and above programmes offered. Strategically the college is continuing to work towards producing an effective pipeline of internal progression routes in order to grow our own HE students where possible. The planning of these in year allows for admissions requirements to be met as swiftly as possible, providing attractive means for career changing adults to enter higher education a good example of which is the counselling qualifications.

In summary as seen from the *TEF data Dashboard (Provider Shape)* Nescot had a total of 560 full time students in 2017/18 growing to 1,220 in 2020/21. Of these students the growth in undergraduate provision over the four years has doubled from 490 to 1,210. Part time numbers have remained relatively static with total students in 2017/18 at 170 showing a slight decline to 130 (2020/21) and undergraduates showing the same trend with 100 total students (2017/18) declining slightly to 90 (2020/21).

A key aspect of this is the increase in numbers in the other undergraduate L5 population (rising from 260 2017/18) to 1,070 (2020/21). This illustrates the College's HE Sub Strategy objective to develop and increase flexible inclusive curriculum delivery modes; in this case, taking the form of a two plus one mode of Foundation Degree/HND and a Top up in the key subject areas such as health education business and digital. This is primarily aimed at mature learners and a significant increase in 2 year programmes may be seen with 53.0% (260 entrants) in 2017/18 rising to 70.0% (860 entrants) in 2020/21. Alongside this is the increase in the overall proportion of mature students (over 21 years) over this time frame which has risen from 79.5% (2017/18) to 88.6%(2020/21). Within this the 31+ age group has almost doubled increasing from 38.8% to 63.4% (*Evidenced from TEF Provider Context Dashboard*).

Nescot is located within East Surrey and has a County level ranking of 150 out of 152, whereby 1 is the most deprived county according to Index of Multiple Deprivation. Most of Surrey's 709 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are in the least deprived deciles (ranges 8 – 10). However 4 are in decile 2 in areas local to the college; Merstham & Netherne ward in Reigate & Banstead

Borough. Alongside this ethnic minority groups within Surrey are currently at 9%. This presents a limited opportunity for widening participation and access local to the college and as a result Nescot worked to develop satellite campuses taking HE into communities where there had been a traditionally a lower uptake

The increased numbers of students drawn from less affluent communities stem from increasing Nescot's provision and footprint to include locations such as Oldham in 2016/17 and Aldgate East and Hounslow in 2018/19. This has increased historical low levels of participations within higher education amongst these regions.

This change in provision shape and location is also seen reflected in the ethnic breakdown over the four years, which sees Asian learner numbers rising from 170 (34.9%) to 310 (25.4%); black from 20 (4.1%) to 80 (6.7%) and white from 210 (43.3%) to 770.(64.0%) The final statistic reflects the predominant Eastern European population recruited to the London satellite centres *Evidenced from TEF Provider Context Dashboard*).

Range of provision- subjects and levels and rationale

The overall mix of subjects offered at Nescot reflects a mix of specialist niche provision and the key subject area priorities for growth;

- **Allied health and life sciences** including Bachelor and Integrated Masters degrees in Osteopathy, Foundation Degree and degree apprenticeships in Healthcare Play specialism, Foundation Degree and Degree Top Up in Counselling (carrying professional accreditation by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, (BACP), Foundation Degree and Top Up degree qualifications in Animal Care and HNC/D in Social and Community Work.
- **Teacher training and education** offering a full range of initial teacher training programmes; full and part time from Foundation Degree and Diploma in Education and Training to the BA (Hons) Education (Top up) and PGCE. This offer sits alongside the alternative routes to teacher training offered by the recently validated Foundation Degree in Early Years Pedagogy and the BA(Hons) Professional Practice (years 0-18) (Top up).
- **Finance and business** including a suite of qualifications incorporating HND Business and Entrepreneurship, BA(Hons) Business and Entrepreneurship (Top up), MA Applied Management and AAT Level 4 - day and evening routes. Much of the delivery mode of the provision above extends into twilight, evenings and weekends.
- HND and UAL Diploma qualifications in **creative and digital media and IT**, with a focus on development of skills in data analysis and cyber security.
- Other part-time provision and apprenticeship provision including Diploma in Food Premises Inspection, CMI degree apprenticeships, Diploma in Leadership, TAQA assessing and internal verification qualifications.

The college currently has validating partnerships with five major UK Universities including the Open University, University of Greenwich, Kingston University, London Southbank University and University of West London as well as working with a range of other awarding bodies such as Pearson, City & Guilds, CMI, University of the Arts London, NCFE, AAT and Chartered Institute of Environmental Health

Over the last three years there has been considerable development of FE adult entry routes to these programmes to promote access for career change applicants. This includes courses such as L2 and L3 Counselling, the L3 Award in Education and Training, L2 and L3 AAT, ITEC L3 Massage and extension of the Access to Healthcare and Nursing programmes.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

We are proud that measures of student experience as available on the TEF data dashboard; *Student Experience top line indicators aggregate over the 4 years in scope (2019-2022)* highlight a very positive overall picture of student experience, which resonates with our own internal metrics and Student Voice. For full time students, who make up 93% of the sample for these measures, the majority of indicators are mostly materially above benchmark, and there is no measure for which Nescot is materially below benchmark. This illustrates the overall outstanding experience provided for students at Nescot.

Learning environment and tailoring of academic support; Inclusivity of Practice

As part of Nescot's strategic plan, there is a considerable emphasis on offering qualifications for mature learners looking at career change. The key to effective support of students and teaching and assessment is the knowledge of student needs and requirements as early as possible, we have found this process particularly challenging for those who may not have previously had a support need identified or be aware of the range of mechanisms and strategies available. To this end, Nescot supports students before and during the application and enrolment processes in order to gather as much information as possible about personal circumstances and ensure applicants have a clear and comprehensive knowledge about the course and what is involved. This has meant that we can be confident that learners are selecting a suitable product, which has translated to consistently high satisfaction rates in the Nescot Induction Survey results for the last four years "I feel I am on the right programme" 97% agree (2018/19 Nescot Induction Survey) and 93% agree (2021/22 Induction Survey)

Student support requirements are assessed at all points of the student journey into a programme; in initial interactions (Open Events, Careers work with schools, Taster Days), during phone conversations prior to application, at application and interview and subsequently during induction over the first term as part of the tutorial process.

At all points, information is gathered and fed into the Student Support team, notably the Specialist Support Tutors and the Special Education Needs/Disability Team Lead who coordinate the overall provision of support working closely with curriculum. Support teams are introduced at the college wide induction and again at programme level and then subsequently later in the term as a reminder (*Induction programme and checklist; Student Council Minutes 2018/19*). This prominent visibility of support staff was as a result of student feedback and is now built into the longer view taken of induction, allowing for students to discover what their needs might be having undertaken work and be reminded of potential support available. Key to this is the fact that all the support team staff are viewed by the teaching teams and students as an integral part of the programme team- they attend HE related meetings including team discussions, and are integrated into classes. Assessments are co-designed, particularly the early formative ones, to support the information literacy skills sessions and the individual feedback received from the Librarian on this. This approach has recently been acknowledged in the October 2022 *GOSc review of osteopathy by Mott MacDonald*. In the report it was noted that "The proactive learning support team combined with the well-resourced Learning Resource Centre (LRC) and the engendered holistic approach to student learning."

The recent *July 2022 validation of the B.Ost and M.Ost by London South Bank University* cited the following commendation: "Nescot were commended on their comprehensive student support giving easy access to the necessary resources and clear pathways to broader themes such as wellbeing support."

A ground floor area has recently been refurbished to provide a fully accessible welfare/safeguarding hub comprising of a number of Student wellbeing. These staff report directly to the Director of Personal Behaviour, Development and Welfare. Supplementing this team has

been the addition of Mental Health First Aiders in the wider staff base, including those specifically trained for adults and covering week end and twilight.

By the time of the *Induction Survey 2021/22*, 91% said they knew who to ask about help for wellbeing and safeguarding support and 90% were clear about procedures regarding Extenuating Circumstances. The Learning Support team are also based accessibly close by and managed by the Director of Learner Services. This team comprises of the Learning Support Team Leader; College Mentors and the College Nurse. In addition are three Specialist Support Tutors (SST) two of whom are qualified to L7 in Exams Access assessment and one who is the key HE link.

Students are asked about support they receive and would wish for across the range of student engagement mechanisms including the *Staff Student Consultative Committees (SSCCs)* *Student Councils*, focus groups, *LRC Surveys* and during lesson visits as well as during external scrutiny such as validation events. Students have reported positively that they are aware of these mechanisms and how to access them.

This learning support team are based in the Learning Resource Centre in a quiet area to facilitate confidential discussion on potentially sensitive learning strategies. All HE students can access the SSTs either as a result of initial information received, subsequent referral from curriculum following discussion with students, or students themselves, who may self-refer.

This year there has been a change in the emphasis of the role of HE SST with the change of title to Academic Support Mentor to reflect this. This alongside an increase in resource to a full-time post has meant provision of a wider support over twilight and week end provision. This post is now managed within the LRC team by the Director of HE and so an integrated support alongside the LRC and E Learning Development Manager is facilitated.

The support provided may begin at any point of the student journey as needs are identified. This means that the curriculum and support staff teams work very closely to share information as appropriate to ensure this happens in a timely fashion. The Personal Development Planning (PDP) tutorial is a key part of this. Students are entitled to a minimum of three formal tutorials across the year, in addition to discussions on specific assessment and feedback. These are coordinated by the programme teams but the documentation on the student record system allows for collaborative action from all involved parties including the support team if appropriate. In 2021/22 a set of questions were added to the initial tutorial slot. The timing of these was after the half term when it was hoped rapport would have been built with the relevant tutor. It also meant that early formative assessment work would help inform discussion. These questions sought to help frame discussion of external support needs that may not have been disclosed or considered by students at the point of application and enrolment. They related to caring activities, previous receipt of school meals or any other additional academic support.

Students may either have individual or a series of slots with the SSTs. In the main, eight slots is the initial period allocated to allow development, trial and review of strategies by the students themselves. By having a fixed initial number of slots with SSTs the intention is to develop confidence and independence. The SSTs serve as translators to identify needs, strategies to help and the impact of these for students. This is especially useful where there are more complex presentations and a series of support needs are identified, for example mental health support, financial support and literacy needs.

In the July 2022, *validation for the Healthcare Play Specialist Foundation Degree with the University of West London* the following commendation was included "The comprehensive system of student support as evidence in the Tutorial and Personal Development Planning Policy and the manner in which this is appropriately delivered to students by course teams"

As a part of the strategic digital developments a cross-college HE Student Support Hub on Google Classroom has been developed, starting in 2020. This has resulted in a single point to access links to all support services information and external support links as well as sections on academic and study support materials including ESOL. This wraparound set of resources is always embedded to all programme Google Classrooms and so accessible for all students and staff. Lecturers integrate reference and materials from this to delivery and to PDPs for example in research skills and developing proposals and can set additional specific independent work tailored to individual students. This helps ensure we are meeting the diverse access and support needs of our student population.

In addition to the Student Support services there are LRC services team in the LRC. This team is led by the Head of Learning Resources and the Academic Librarian, both of whom are members of the HE Board and Teaching and Learning Groups allowing for close work with curriculum managers and practitioners.

The team in the LRC are viewed for all programmes as an integral part of the delivery process and support of study skills with the HE Support Assistant and are on hand for advice and guidance throughout the opening times. The HE Area in the LRC and quiet study areas provide suitable places for HE students to study and also to meet with the SSTs in a more informal drop in manner, on the ground floor; both in person and remotely. Collaboration between this team and curriculum during design of programmes, validation events and delivery has meant that study skills development was rated 18% above the national satisfaction rates in the *2018/19 Nescot Induction survey*. This continued impact and evolution of this initiative will be revisited in the section on Educational Gains. This was the result of a carefully rolled out and subject specific Research Skills package which provided developmental feedback on citation for students linked to their first assessments and evidence of the impact of this initiative supporting development of research skills is the positive feedback in the *2018/19 Nescot Induction Survey* on all new starts (17%pts above sector comparisons with provider QDP)

Also easily accessible and based within the Learning Resource area are the experienced Student Finance team who can assist with queries relating to student bursaries, student loans and offer direction to other governmental financial support services where applicable. The Director of Learning Support and the Manager of the LRC are both members of the HE Board and Student Council and report in and on all related matters and join programme teams in classes regularly. This emphasises the visibility and integration of the support services as part of the programme delivery.

In addition to subject specific support and guidance there are a range of generic study support sessions provided by the LRC team who work closely with curriculum to tailor as required such as generic HE induction to the LRC facilities at NESCOL campuses, support in the use of Info Skills, guidance to the relevant University electronic resources where relevant, referencing protocols (reinforcing guidance from academic team information) and academic report writing. Again, the responsive tailored nature of support is assisted by the LRC Manager being a member of HE Board, Student Council and Teaching and Learning groups. Recent *LRC annual survey data (2021/22)* illustrates that of the 130 students surveyed, 83 used the referencing guides produced by the LRC team (64%), whilst 59% (77 learners) used the databases and e-journals subscribed to for their programmes to access relevant content. This further illustrates the positive impacts of co-ordination between subject areas and LRC staff in tailoring resources to ensure relevance, currency and accessibility. Data from the survey also highlights outstanding satisfaction with knowledge, expertise and support from LRC staff, with a 96% satisfaction rate.

Recent validations have given a variety of commendations around this such as *University of West London (June 2022 for Healthcare Play Specialists)* noted “The individualised and group academic support provided to students by the staff in the LRC”. *The Open University (OU) 2021 validation for the MA Applied Management* noted “The nurturing ethos of the College provided by support services particularly the LRC”. At risk students are discussed at the HE Board, with interventions noted and shared and outcomes followed through. The early risk indicators include decreases in attendance and engagement. The central log of at-risk students is routinely discussed at the *HE Board (Minutes 2020/21 and 2021/22 and 2022/23)* to allow for sharing of practice and also further interventions such as Fitness to Practice or Mitigating Circumstances discussions to be had as early as possible with all relevant parties. *Induction Surveys* for all new students showed that 90% (2021/22) had knowledge of mitigating circumstances procedures. This follows a campaign where previous high rates (93% 2018/19;90% 2019/20) had dipped slightly to 86% in 2020/21. Alongside this there have been staff training sessions throughout the year and the discussions at the HE Board to ensure staff flag and have conversations earlier with all relevant stakeholders. In the first year of these at-risk interventions for students and programmes (2019/20), overall retention rose to 96.9%. Feedback from the *Open University on the 2021/22 Annual Institutional Review (IAR)* submitted was positive on the development of the HE Board agenda, refinement of the reporting and discussions at a programme level particularly with respect to at risk students.

The *Accountability Framework* (internal quality assurance vehicle /SED equivalent) outcomes 2020/21 note a specific example: “_____ students of concern identified on the Risk register regarding engagement were put on learning contracts with short targets towards deadlines to help organize and re-engage”. These learners were directed to access to wellbeing services and offered weekly tutorial review sessions to assist with this process. The final outcome for _____ these students was positive and they have achieved and progressed. The support for students and the impact in terms of retention and achievement was noted by the *Animal Management External Examiner in 2020/21* who noted: “Tutor commitment is also to be commended with regards to student support. Tutors work extremely hard to support students which is reflected in high retention and achievement.”

Being a smaller provider setting with programme teams situated local to delivery (where the support services are seen to be an integral part of this), one of Nescot’s most positive features is the accessibility of staff. Many external partners have recognised this as illustrated by the feedback below:

The recent *General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) review by _____ (18/20th October 2022)* reported “The ‘open door’ policy is evident which enables regular effective informal channels of communication between the various levels of management, faculty and students and lends an immediacy to action”. Also reported by students; “the osteopathy programme staff are very accessible, supportive and enable a questioning culture”.

Animal Management validation panel members (Validation Report 2022) commend the team on their “student focused approach”. The *External Examiner for Animal Management also noted 2021*: “Tutor commitment is also to be commended with regards to student support. Tutors work extremely hard to support students which is reflected in high retention and achievement.”, whilst the *MA Applied Management validation (2021)* commended “the personalised support for student disabilities”

Finally, in terms of an HE specific space, there is not only the HE LRC study space but the HE Common room/zone which has been adapted following feedback from students. This provides a dedicated space for HE students with facilities to make drinks, heat meals, as well a comfortable seating, tables and computer study pod points. This allows students travelling in from work needing

hot food to have facilities to hand as required in addition to the later opening café (8pm opening times again as a result of student feedback).

In summary, the *TEF Data Dashboard* indicates the outstanding quality of academic support with many split indicators materially above benchmark (year 3 99.6%, 21-30 year old students 93.6%, business students 83.8%). The lower responses seen for a few smaller subject areas (creative media 75.2% materially below, performing arts 83% below and social and community work (SCW) 90.87% below) may be largely attributed to the particular impact of the pandemic and two lockdowns on practical work and placements in these subject areas. This is particularly so with the SCW based in Manchester, which was an infection hot spot and subject to a series of local lockdowns. To mitigate this alternative placement activity in the form of phone support work was sought. Overall, the 4-year aggregate indicators highlight 99% of data is of extremely high quality and at least in line with or above benchmark.

Design and delivery of Programmes and Enhancement Services to Stretch and Challenge

Nescot takes care to involve employers, employer representative bodies and civic skills boards (e.g. LEP, Local Authority and LSIP) in both strategic curriculum planning processes and the design of new programmes. External examiners contribute to discussions on the suitability of the programmes to promote positive destination outcomes, for example to employment and/or further studies, for example:

“The team have worked hard to prepare their students for either industry or further continuation of their studies. The use of live briefs was effective” *HND Creative Media 2018/19 EE report*

“Assessments include elements of industry practice and are written to prepare learners for progression onto higher level education or work in industry” *Animal Management FdSc 2018/19 EE Report*

Shifting the emphasis of curriculum design in recent years to promote employability may be seen in the continued improving picture shown in the DLHE data where there has been a clear improvement on positive destinations and average wages. (see progression section below).

Many External Examiner comments reflect the professional skills developed as below from 2020/21:

“The Clinical Logbooks to record clinical activity are an area of good practice, which set the students up for the ongoing CPD requirements of the PSRB. Excellent clinical logbook assessment, this makes it easy for student to understand the value in reflective practice” (*Osteopathy EE 20/21*)

“It is good to see a variety of vendor qualifications embedded in modules eg CISCO certification.” (*HND Computing EE 20/21*)

External examiners not only comment on the teaching learning and assessment practices and resulting student outcomes and experience, but also in the suitability of the programme to promote positive destination outcomes, for example to employment and/or further studies:

“The team have worked hard to prepare their students for either industry or further continuation of their studies. The use of live briefs was effective” (*HND Creative Media 2018/19*)

“Assessments include elements of industry practice and are written to prepare learners for progression onto higher level education or work in industry” *Animal Management FdSc 2018/19*

The development of professional and personal skills is an integral part of many of the programmes offered because of the Professional Statutory Regulatory Body, (PSRB) or Healthcare

Regulator sign offs to professional standards with programme specifically designed to incorporate this key employability aspect. These professional behaviours and their sign off is an integral part of achieving many programmes and gives the students (and subsequently employers) confidence in the dual professional qualities of academic rigor and practical professional skills. Examples include the General Osteopathy Council (GOsC), the British Association Counselling and Psychotherapists (BACP), Sports Therapy Organisation (STO), Healthcare Play Specialists (HPS) and the Department for Education (DfE) and the Chartered Institute Environmental Health (CIEH).

The dual professional status of many of the HE lecturers means that they can reference current practice constantly and so ensure professional behaviours and standards are woven into lessons whether theory or practical. This is evidenced in *learning walk feedback* such as these below taken from across 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years.

- Good use of questioning and silence, to promote student reflection and consideration of how a concept fits a practical situation. (Counselling).
- Excellent engagement and critical discussions occurring in whole group and small group activities allowing for students to work and build their thinking and share this with peers (ITT).
- Good skills development for this point of the course, with respect to evaluation and debate of the merits of different approaches (Business Entrepreneurship).
- Autonomy- exploring concepts independently and use of peer learning and assessment (Early Years).
- Students were able to identify and cite relevant pieces of research and current government reports and current issues such as the pandemic influence to evidence their thinking and conclusions (Healthcare Play Specialism).

External Examiner feedback 2020/21 with some examples of good practice below:

In Osteopathy the pandemic presented some excellent experience in risk assessment and consideration of how to mitigate risk e.g. use of protective equipment and also measures to contain spread of infection. This was well managed by the Osteopathy students in clinic who worked during the lockdown in January 2021 as a listed profession. The students evaluated the risk assessments and procedures put in place by staff for protocol and felt better prepared for professional practice; they recommended that the contingency measure should remain in place as best practice.

The *EE for Sport BSc and FDEg 2020/21* said “A broad range of assessment modes are used. This not only assesses the students in a range of different ways but develops a range of skills in the students beyond academic writing. There is a good use of assignments that deal with real world topics or scenarios.”

As well as teaching practice, involvement of industry specialists in delivery and assessment enhances the relevance of curriculum concepts.

In media and performing arts, a producer at ILM who has worked on films such as: Star Wars, James Bond and Aladdin has been involved this year in working as a guest lecturer giving insight to the industry standards as well as professional behaviours such as punctuality and respect.

Students are also prepared for the world of life by giving them as many real-life work experience with clients as possible including working briefs for assessments and Switchboard / Children's Trust work as well as taking them on trips when this is possible. For example, Creative Media and Animal Management and Sport students.

Rather than simulated experiences, Media students were involved in planning and managing a domestic film shoot with an external venue and actors. They were required to demonstrate industry

standard behaviours to achieve their outcomes and to this end got real work experiences which enhanced their confidence and employability. As a result, students reported that they felt more assured about their next steps into jobs.

In addition, the new Level 4 UAL Diploma in Creative Enterprise (Pinpoint Productions) provided learners with immersive creative opportunities alongside their academic studies by allowing them to autonomously conduct marketing activities for Nescot. This was considered a huge success as not only did all students complete, but 50% progressed to a top up at university with the remaining half moving on to jobs in the industry.

Commendations from validation events provide further evidence of the focus of programme design and delivery on employment and the fulfilment of personal aspirations, for example:

- *OU MA Applied Management* “The raising of career aspirations and providing good progression opportunities for students”
- *OU Professional Practice Working with Children and Young People (0-19)* “The College’s innovative responses to meet the diverse needs of students and employers representing a wide range of professional disciplines”
- *London Southbank Bost and MOst* “The new courses have a strong employability focus and link well with the university agenda of developing courses that are professionally and technically focused” and “The introduction of a part time route and the difference levels of qualifications which aligns to the widening participation agenda. These give students the opportunity to access or take up a different career”

The Teacher Education team also train and support the subject specific mentors needed to work with their trainees, again building capacity and additional expertise in employer workforces.

As from 2020/21, Nescot has offered individual full cost modules from ITT programmes which are delivered at no additional cost and give schools the chance to offer expert CPD to school staff, especially in the area of classroom assistant support. Additionally, during visits to schools and colleges the teacher education team are able to operate in a consultative capacity, offering advice in specialist areas such as SEN strategies. In a recent observation a member of staff was able to discuss how to make support mechanisms in place more effective for a pupil. Senior leaders at schools report that these activities are of great value and strengthen relationships and add to staff expertise.

Delivery – teaching, learning assessment and feedback as supported by staff professional development

The College has a variety of means to assess the quality of teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) supported by the *Teaching, Learning and Assessment Improvement Policy*.

These include:

- Making full use of the student's voice (Student Consultative Committees, Student Council, internal and external surveys).
- Formal and informal assessments of TLA using the College observation process and supplementing this with regular learner walks, the outcomes of which are fed into staff development and appraisal; informing the themes and targets.
- Internal audits -looking at programme organisation and quality mechanisms
- External Examiner and HEI/Awarding body feedback.

Ultimately, the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Improvement Policy serves to help link together the strands of support information, staff CPD and scholastic activity. It helps to assess the use of the individual information from support teams to address students’ needs and adaptations

required, and the implementation pedagogical skills and subject specific expertise to develop academic skills and to address learning outcomes and assessment of current practice.

Academic staff continue to develop their knowledge in their subject areas by frequently attending conferences, seminars, networking events and research dissemination events. This allows staff to build relationships with other academics and local employers, which can assist when planning field trips for students and shaping curriculum and assessment. Staff provide detailed reports to their peer for each conference or networking event attended and during weekly meetings discuss how these can be adopted into developing their pedagogy further. These reports feed into the cross-college Teaching and Learning Group which meets half termly to share and develop practice at practitioner level.

Membership and affiliation of relevant organisations and quality assurance agencies (highlighted in page 1) will provide Nescot with wide range of fora to discuss issues related to policy and practice, qualifications and training and the professional role. This will ensure that when reviewing and developing taught content any adaptations made are current and relevant to the demands of the sector and support the development of evidence-based practice. Engagement in the Sussex and Surrey IoT consortium will also be key to this.

Final commentary/report from External Examiners from current programmes feed into the development of assessment practice and provides useful feedback both positive areas and to develop.

The focus for CPD in 2020/21 was primarily on addressing the lower NSS scores from 2019/20 on organisation and academic challenge for students. Delivery took the form of a variety of in year events to impact on change during the year including a series of workshops provided by entitled "Making Remote Learning Engaging". The impact of this project has been an increased confidence in less didactic methods- break out and discussions, focused Q&A, startup activities, use of Jam Board and quiz options.

Other CPD included projects from the Teaching Group: development of critical thinking, support and tutorial interventions, applications of remote learning such as break out group in TEAMS, Jamboard, flipped learning, reflective frameworks and log books/portfolios.

These projects informed the CPD activities identified above with the emphasis being peer to peer. The focus this year was around promoting the sharing of existing good practice and also allowing the trial and reflection and discussion of new techniques.

One key CPD mechanism was a Critical Thinking action research project that involved staff trialling a variety of tools and self-reflection with students – this project was completed by Easter and formed one of the sharing practice sessions at summer CPD. This has stimulated teachers to review practice on how to challenge students' thinking. As a result of trialling this model in their first year, the *Greenwich Link tutor (UoG Programme Assessment Board Minutes 2020/21)* said of the teaching team after the Programme Assessment Board: "I think the results were outstanding and reflected your true diligence and professionalism on both programmes".

The high grades seen this first year in 2020/21 appear to support an increased development of higher order thinking – the proportion of higher classifications (First and 2:1 and Merits and Distinctions on Foundation Degrees in particular). In addition, this is supported by the *NSS scores (20/21)* particularly on the challenge provided (96% -15%pt increase on 2019/20 and 20%pt above sector), provide further evidence of this development of evaluative thinking.

Additional CPD occurring throughout the year had a focus on assessment practice and covered the following: formative and developmental feedback, citation and paraphrasing; summative

assessment design; scholastic activity; use of peer assessment and challenge at level 6 & 7; live attendance tracking; and Google Classroom trouble shooting. This was to build on the assessment and feedback and the earlier CPD put in place in 2019/20 to address a decline in NSS scores; output this year on student feedback and External Examiner commentary is very positive.

Awarding body CPD updates included: validation preparation; programme specification updates; course evaluation and critical improvement planning; and new Programme Lead briefings.

The continuing programme of staff development has had a significant impact on the quality of student experience which may be seen in EE Comments from 2020/21.

The *External Examiner for Sport 2020/21* noted that “the development seen was clear and included very detailed breakdown of individualised feedback given in a nice, clear language set at a level that is understandable for a student.; a moderation process to ensure fairness of assessment and post assessment review was outlined really clearly”

External Examiner comments for Performing Arts (HND) noted positively on developmental feedback and the quality of staff and physical resources supporting outcomes and professional preparations and “students were extremely appreciative of the programme content and structure. They understood the assessment processes and felt fully supported by staff, with access to resources being good, with feedback to students is good giving useful developmental advice. They also noted that documents and approaches show that the expertise of teaching staff is high and physical resources are good”.

The fuller impact of the staff development activities over the course of time may be seen in *the overall data for Assessment and feedback metric (TEF dashboard)* which indicates excellent quality of assessment and feedback with higher than benchmark outcomes for full time students with some notable positive variance for indicators with larger sample sizes. Again, year 3 students' outcomes were materially above benchmark (98.7%) as were business management outcomes at 91.2%. Satisfaction results for 21-30 year old student results were also excellent at 93.9% materially above benchmark for this indicator and students on teaching and learning programmes also scored NESOT higher on this metric at 79.2% materially above benchmark. As with *teaching on my course*, some indicators illustrate more negative outcomes, but these are again subject specific and focus on areas with very low sample numbers (performing arts 87.4% below and social and community work 97.2% materially below benchmark). Again, each represents less than 5% of the total sample size.

Tailoring of Resources

According to the TEF dashboard the commentary from students on the teaching and assessment on their programmes is as follows;

The overall 4-year aggregate indicator for full time students highlights very high quality of teaching and assessment where 88.7% of outcomes fall in line with benchmark data with an overall value of 89.4%. Key areas of significance for this indicator illustrate more positive outcomes for year 3 students who experience the initial COVID Lockdown period who were taught and assessed through this period. These students represent 37% of the sample and are 96.3% materially above benchmark. On a subject split, of note are the business students (52% of the sample), of which outcomes were excellent (79.3% materially above benchmark). Less positive outcomes were seen for creative media and social and community work students where data was materially below (at 84.9% and 87% respectively), however in each instance the number of learners represents only a small percentage of the sample (less than 5% of the total numbers).

It is worth noting that the outcomes of the 2020/21 NSS (Year 3 TEF Dashboard), were particularly positive for Nescot. Overall satisfaction was 93.0% which was 7%pts up on previous year. This

was 17.5%pts above the sector which had declined to 75.5%. This extremely positive trend extended to all metrics and questions.

The outcomes for this year may in part be attributed to the return to face-to-face teaching in September 2020 where many other institutions opted to deliver courses exclusively online. There were also adaptations to allow concurrent remote and face to face supporting those self-isolating and so minimising loss of learning due to infection. This practice has been retained to some degree based on the positive feedback from students.

Last year, 2021/22, Nescot continued to perform well in relation to national sector average data, with all but one question scoring above sector average and satisfaction rates overall are 6.4% above national averages. (NSS 2021/22)

The data relating to Learning resources on the TEF dashboard demonstrates excellent quality of provision, with the majority of measurable indicators significantly materially above benchmark. This is mirrored by the overall satisfaction rate of 84.7%, 4.1%pts above benchmark. In contrast, there are just three indicators for which data is materially below benchmark, which include subject specific outcomes for creative media (88.3% below) and social and community work (89.4% below). Year 1 students were also materially below benchmark at 79.1%, which is in stark contrast to subsequent years. It is likely that this reflects the impact of a Malware incident in the autumn term which caused some disruption to access for a brief period of time.

During 2020/21, Nescot worked towards a move to Google classroom from Weblearn for HE students which was implemented in September 2021. The newly appointed Digital Advocate was also tasked with focusing on working with teams and students in the preceding year to help with the initial set up for Google Classroom. The shift to Google Classroom has allowed for the development of a Student Support Hub which provides learners with easy access to wider study and academic skills resources, research methodologies as well as links to financial and LRC support pages- see earlier commentary in support.

Student Voice: eliciting, confirming and responding

The success of student feedback mechanisms is key to how the college tailors' provision and support in a responsive manner to best meet its populations of students. Many examples have already been cited and woven into the earlier narrative in terms of garnering and responding to student voice. Key activities taken in response include: later LRC opening to include weekends; later opening of refreshment outlets to 8pm evenings; a review leading to a change of catering contract and the redesign of the HE Common Room. In this section the aim is to emphasise the development of a community of learning.

The student representation system at Nescot consists of Student Representatives, elected by their peers, and trained by the quality team. These are not sabbatical posts and are undertaken alongside the programme and external placements/work. The programmes offered cover a range of delivery and attendance modes and so to ensure as full a representation and participation as possible from the student body to accommodate this a range of tools are used to elicit and respond to feedback- both formal and informal. This includes Student Council; Staff Student Consultative Committees and Boards of Study; internal and external surveys and discussion during learning walks.

We have strived to develop a stronger sense of community and cohesion across a very diverse range of students, programmes and delivery modes. Part of this has been the stronger presence of managers talking to students formally in the engagement mechanisms and informally in social areas such as the HE Common Room and in class visits. This initiative to try and emphasise integration to the college began in 2018 and overall satisfaction from students as seen in the

2018/19 NSS rose to 74.1% by 7.03% from 67.11% in the 2017-18. This was coupled with a 9%pt improvement in satisfaction associated with the Learning Community, which included feeling part of a community of staff and students and having opportunities to work with other students as part of the course. By maintaining the focus clearly on student experience and engagement, the college has continued to show an improving picture as seen in the 2019/20 NSS which showed an 81% satisfaction with Student Voice (10%pt increase and 7% above sector average)

This continued positive trend was particularly strong in the year 2020/21 following the pandemic and an additional Spring lockdown. The college returned to 100% face to face learning in the autumn 2020, but with social distancing and health and safety measures in place for all classes. Students were fully briefed prior to return. This allowed students to be confident about the steps taken to mitigate risks; all classes had seating 2m apart; had protocol for entry and exit (gel and wipes of all desks) masks worn at all times. There were also staggered refreshment timings and grouping into bubbles to contain potential cross contamination and wider infection.

To maximise attendance, teachers implemented hybrid teaching, (dual face to face and remote) where necessary to ensure as many students could participate despite any positive testing. This was part of the college's digital initiative and this practice has continued to current day.

For the 2020/21 academic year the NSS Overall satisfaction was 93% which is 7%pts up on previous year - this is 17.5% above the sector which declined to 75.5%

Significantly, the Learning Community was rated 94% satisfied 14% up on 2019/20 and 27% above sector average; the Student Voice 92% satisfied 11% up on 2019/20 and 25% above the sector rates and Student Union at 83% satisfaction was 26%pt improved on 2019/20 and 30% above sector score. It is worth noting that NESOT has only a voluntary representative system, not a formal Student Union and so these results were particularly pleasing.

General themes from feedback at the end of 2019/20 (*Board of Study minutes 2019/20*), collected from Student Representatives and Programme Leads for all programmes and years of study at the final Boards of Study meetings included the following:

- Student engagement in tutorial sessions worked well remotely. Students said they felt very confident to discuss matters and that they felt supported by staff during a challenging time. Many students thought that the flexibility to work in small groups and then recombine worked well.
- The additional support and contact outside standard classes was much appreciated by students with cake and coffee socials set up on TEAMS and ZOOM.
- Osteopathy students felt well supported preparing for the changed practical assessments, which were commended by the External Examiner as good practice.

In 2020/21 the *EE for the Foundation Degree and apprentices in Health Play Specialism* commented that the 87% progression rate which is very strong for part time adults (*EE Report Healthcare Play Specialism, 2020/21*); 94% satisfaction following induction with special reference to support for academic and placement activities. The team are very responsive to emails which has been much appreciated, in particular during the lockdown. Students reported in module evaluations that they felt listened to and that their comment were acted upon e.g. longer opening hours of the LRC in the autumn term.

Data for student voice outcomes for full time learners illustrate areas of excellence for year 3 students (99.8% materially above benchmark), 21-30 year olds (97% above), business students (97.4% above) and teacher training students (83.3% above and IMD quintiles 1&2 (83.8% materially above benchmark). Overall, student voice outcomes highlight excellent quality of provision at 3% above national benchmark. Social and community work again is contrary with

contrastingly less positive outcomes (88.2% materially below) and less than positive outcomes for performing arts and creative media. The particular influence of the pandemic on these subject areas has already been noted. The overall trends are outstandingly positive and reinforced by student feedback from other internal sources such as induction surveys.

The *HE Induction Survey* window is generally in teaching weeks 8–10, between the end of October and November for those starting in a traditional academic year and participation rates are constantly high averaging 87% over the past 5 years. Students at satellite centres are included separately with atypical start dates being accommodated to the same time frame for quality assurance and student voice processes.

Over the four years in scope, the survey has shown a high positive stable satisfaction rate with the early student experience satisfaction of 94%, 88%, 88% and 89% respectively for 2018/19-2021/22. The same high satisfaction applies to partner students – Business in the nineties and the Diploma in Education and Training averaging similar over the three initial cohorts in 2020/21/22.

Key aspects of particular satisfaction were academic referencing and awareness of plagiarism (94/91/95/95% awareness of this) and feeling safe (in the 90% over the four years in scope for all programmes). Where particular areas have been identified as areas for improvement such as awareness of policies and procedures, action has been taken through various channels to ensure enhanced visibility, such as more signposting and easier access through channels such as VLE.

Student commentary reflects positively on the outcomes of communication across the pandemic period (88% students felt that the teaching was delivered without substantial changes and 89% felt any changes were clearly communicated to them) (from the *OfS mid-Year survey for condition C1 and CMA compliance internal report/Quality SharePoint*)

Student Enhancement and Educational Gains

Nescot integrates the development of a range of skills and behaviours as a part of programme design. These inform not only generic graduate attributes and personal skills but also subject specific requirements, some informed by the Professional Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and Healthcare Regulators and all use current employer intelligence. This intelligence is used for both initial design and to ensure courses evolve and stay relevant and current within the validated period.

These skills and behaviours are articulated in HE Strategy and also as graduate attributes (as defined by Advanced HE these relate to the mastery of subject-specific knowledge study skills, digital literacies and other 21st century skills.)

Key in HE strategy are the objectives to:

- Meet Employer led demand
- Extend offer to provide clear progression routes and employment
- Provide a bespoke approach to higher level professional skills development

These objectives shape the design and delivery of programmes and are informed by labour market intelligence (LMI) and student and employer focus groups. This is supported by sector-based evidence from LMI and RCU/Vector data bases which are used as an integral part of the curriculum planning process to identify local and regional skills gaps and ensure the relevance of both academic and skills objectives within programmes and also the college as a whole.

This allows college-wide strategic approaches to building academic development and the integration of work readiness and personal skills through collective initiatives and projects e.g. LRC initiative, critical thinking; academic writing; digital literacy, resilience; student support,

development of reflective practitioners and employer engagement. These are underpinned by student voice, pedagogy and staff development.

This direct influence of the labour market on the initial design and intended delivery extends to the subsequent changes which might be required to remain relevant and future proof, allowing adaptations to be made during the validated life of a programme. The choice of External Examiner is crucial in this and ensures that the critical friend can advise with nuances to minor modifications in programmes. The Open University is a key validating authority for- NESCOL and the model of a Process Panel Member (PPM) as a critical friend has been hugely beneficial in helping with the fine tuning of programmes being validated.

In short, this wider development of skills and relevant knowledge is achieved through the curriculum design process, assessment, the use of student voice and maintained as a result of the quality processes (including student voice) to allow monitoring and responsiveness in the delivery as new needs emerge.

There are some key themes which illustrate this series of educational gains and student enhancement in practice which are employability, personal and professional skills, digital skills and critical thinking.

Employer Engagement and employability skills

The involvement of employers in validation preparations means that the needs of the local area employers can be addressed. This is not only the skills gaps but ensuring that modes of delivery make the courses accessible for release of employees to study. Ultimately this means that the programmes are designed to suit an existing and future market.

Commendations from validating panels 2020/21/22 with a range of validating authorities, which demonstrate that the college is identifying needs/skills requirements and designing programmes to meet these. include:

- Strong partnership work
- Alignment with current and professional practice
- An inclusive delivery mode and meeting the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) agenda with accessibility
- Support for students-in a wrap-around manner (including the weekend)
- Personalised support for students
- Increasing careers aspirations and opportunities
- A nurturing ethos in the college, especially the LRC

The employers worked with cover a broad range of professional areas and cover a large geographical footprint. Relationships are based on strong partnerships that benefit the learner and employer – and college. They include 15 Early Years settings primarily based in Surrey and Greater London; 45 schools and colleges mostly within the Surrey and Greater London area; 25 hospitals across the country including the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Trusts, Bedfordshire Hospitals Foundation Trust as well as prestigious hospitals such as St Thomas and Great Ormond Street; University College London Hospital (UCLH) and the Royal Marsden. There are 23 approved counselling agencies who offer approved psychodynamic supervision to students in placements with them, and finally a range of local authorities across the country with Food Premises inspectors trained by and being trained by Nescot.

This work is complemented by the design of many programmes to include recognition by Professional Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) such as the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy; Health Play Specialists; Chartered Institute for Environmental Health and the Department for Education and the Healthcare Regulator General Osteopathic Council (GOsC)

The delivery is further supplemented by the dual professionalism of many staff. Many staff teaching on the HE programmes are themselves dual professionals (osteopathy, counselling, teacher trainers, healthcare play specialists and early years practitioners). This means that they can speak from both the subject profession and teaching viewpoints adding insight to the life of a working practitioner in the relevant field. This currency of professional practice was noted as a commendation in *recent validations for osteopathy, business and early years (2020/21 and 2021/22)*:

The *Annual GOsC report submitted* (December 2021) had very favourable feedback on the programme features, and in the *recent review (Oct 2022) by* *of Recognised Qualifications (RQ)* for the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) final year students report that they feel the programme is steadily preparing them for autonomous practice.

The most recent example of this proactive work with employers and stakeholders involves Nescot working with the Business Development Unit, (BDU) of the Open University to deliver the Nursing Apprenticeship to local and national trusts and private providers. This is an innovative business model new to the OU has been supported by the development of a set of employer focus groups. There have been a number of meetings with local NHS Trusts, Health Education England and also private providers to ensure design of the programme deliver and support meets needs and is competitive. This is especially important in the London region where there are established HEIs offering the service and it is key to know how Nescot can design a product to have the edge. The bonus of this market is the government set targets for the numbers of Nursing Associates required to be trained in a year; the addition of Nescot as another provider will help trusts to make their targets.

Collaborative relationships with employers are strengthened by the sharing of skills by college staff, such as the Health Play Specialist programme lead training mentors in the sector. This was noted on a best practice by West London University and has built capacity in the workplace as total of 42 new mentors have been trained by the lead in the last 4 years. The Programme Lead for HCPS was invited to speak at the National Conference based in Japan last year and has also led the recent re validation of the University of West London Foundation Degree-coordinating the other partner colleges involved.

The Teacher Education team also train and support the subject specific mentors needed to work with their trainees, again building capacity and additional expertise into employer workforces. In 2021/22, the offer of individual full cost modules has met with some success; these are delivered at no additional cost and give schools the chance to offer expert CPD to staff, especially in classroom assistant support initiatives.

Additionally, during visits to schools and colleges, the teacher education team are able to operate in a consultative capacity- offering advice in specialist areas such as SEN strategies; in a recent observation a member of staff was able to discuss how to make support mechanisms in place more effective for a pupil.

The close work with employers and carefully chosen EEs at the programme design stages and their subsequent involvement in delivery and assessment means that transferable skills are developed and addressed through formative and summative opportunities during the programmes; eg transferable skills; communication; presentation to stakeholders; report writing; risk analysis reflective practice.

This means that skills development is woven into programmes and kept up to date as a result of feedback so delivery is constantly evolving process.

Healthcare Play Specialists: job vacancies were sent directly to the students completing their final year. All of the 26 students enrolled in the 2021/22 cohort gained employment in a relevant setting.

Recent interviews in 2021/22 for national appointment of Health Play Specialist included Nescot graduates as candidates as well as forming part of the senior interview team. A member of Nescot staff also took part in the interview panel, which serves as a recognition of their exemplary professional practice and impact at a national level.

Employers also offer the benefit of refresher days for teaching teams to enable them to remain abreast with current practices.

Guest lectures include representatives from a counselling agency who spoke about how counselling was working in the lockdown and pandemic situation and how these can work in practice. This gave students an insight into the adaptations required in professions and was reflected in the alternative clinical hours permitted by the professional body: online or phone counselling as opposed to face to face; modifications to clinical consultations and risk assessments in osteopathy; the recognition of alternative telephone work for placements in Social and Community Work.

Performing Arts students have an industry and careers week which includes guests talking about how to get an agency what constitutes a good agent, how to complete self-assessment tax returns and the associated admin and organization needed as a self-employed actor. This approach is enhanced in the delivery and assessment of the programme this year which has trialled holistic assessment to good effect.

Development of Personal and Professional skills

The development of a broad range of skills outside of the specific knowledge base is an integral consideration on all programmes at Nescot. These not only cover employability skills both general and specific to industry, but also a range of personal skills that can help learners to develop confidence, resilience and time management skills which will aid them in becoming more successful and autonomous learners. In line with the more recent digital strategy, there has also been more emphasis placed in recent years on the development of digital literacy of learners as a core life and work skill.

The development of autonomous independent students is a key aim to all of our programmes. A key message to applicants during recruitment and induction is that we will support students to develop this independence and do not expect them to come fully formed; the end level of the programme is not their starting point. To this end a wide variety of activities have been integrated as part of the expectations of programmes; the personal development planning (PDP) process helps to support self-referral to services supporting either academic or well-being; with questioning, journals clubs; the clear expectation of preparation and self-study out of class in terms of reading viewing of clips and links. This all serves to emphasise that study is more than just for a summative assessment but for a way of life.

One comment from *NSS 2017/18* said "Nescot has been the best place for learning and has set me up for a world of unlimited possibilities. Without the tutors, resources and opportunities at the college I would not be where I am today."

In 2020/21 a number of External Examiners commented on the development of personal and professional skills at Nescot –

- The Clinical Log Books to record clinical activity are an area of good practice, which set the students up for the ongoing CPD requirements of the PSRB. (*Osteopathy and Sport*).
- Excellent clinical logbook assessment, this makes it easy for student to understand the value in reflective practice (*Osteopathy*).
- There has been significant improvement in the level of academic writing (*Animal Management*).

- The team is to be commended on their innovative idea of running a journal club to improve referencing skills across the programme (*Animal Management*).

These have continued to be a focus in 2021/22 and recent validations have commented upon the close links with employers and PSRBs to build relevant skills. In addition there have been commendations on the currency and relevance of professional skills being addressed in the following programmes- BSc(Hons) Osteopath (Top up) MA Applied Management, BA (Hons) Professional Practice (Hons) (*2021/22 validation reports*)

Input from employers to deliver as guest speakers helps to emphasise the softer professional skills required such as punctuality, codes of behaviour, written and verbal communication, record keeping.

The Media team have been asked by NexGen to be part of a working group setting up a Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) ready for 2023 approval and delivery.

Recent initiatives have included the pilot rollout of Coursera Campus, a platform that has enabled learners to access a range of free short courses to supplement their core study requirements. These courses are designed by well-known universities and employers around the world and help to deliver technical courses, modernise the curriculum and improve employability skills gap which are identified by a variety of international companies. The core aim of the courses is to develop learners' ability to work independently and manage their own personal circumstances and deadlines more effectively with the tools available. They also aim to aid the development of digital literacy, with learners working through courses at their own pace.

Feedback of this initiative has been very positive from students, with one education student stating "they are very useful, informative and helped me to realise where I may have been wasting useful time that could be spent more wisely. From starting the other courses, it has made me realise what's more important to complete and finishing the most important jobs first, including when it comes to my essays. These course (sic) have also helped me to become more resilient when trying to complete rather than telling myself that I can not do it." (Student email, 30 Sep 2022)

Alongside this is then integration of the academic modules available on Coursera Campus to priority subject areas such as allied health and those relevant to the Institute of Technology curriculum around digital skills. Modules supporting this include cloud computing, cybersecurity, the internet of things.

Critical Skills and features of academic excellence

Following external feedback from a range of EE's and validation panels, a lot of work has been done developing students' academic skills and levels of criticality. As mentioned earlier, this has included:

- action research pilots by staff with subsequent CPD engagement sessions with interdepartmental HE peers.
- initiatives between the LRC and programme teams to develop study skills earlier in the learner journey.
- Enhanced critical reflection for healthcare play specialism learners.

The development of research skills starting in 2018/19 is an example of a change implemented across the College in response to external examiners' comments. This involved the LRC team working closely with curriculum staff to design a phased approach to developing research skills which is based upon an early assignment due in the first term. This consists of a series of sessions activities and feedback and responses from students in both local LRC evaluations and

the recent College Induction survey are very positive - 17%pts above the national average for the question associated. This is further supported by external feedback; "There has been significant improvement in the level of academic writing" (*EE Bost Most Osteopathy 20/21*)

The initiative launched by the LRC outlined above involved teams working closely with to design a phased approach to developing research skills, based upon an early assignment due in the first term. This consists of a series of sessions activities and feedback and responses from students in both local LRC evaluations and the recent College Induction survey are very positive – 17.9% pts above the national average for the question associated.

Progressing students reported that they felt they would have benefited from the assessment based model and developmental feedback trialled in 2018/19 for first year students. As a result, refresher sessions were delivered in 2019/20 to progressing students working to a similar format.

In 2019/20 further developments were made in response to student feedback to the interface of the online LRC catalogue and resources. These make the interface easier to use and directly link relevant resources to each module on the programme.

Student feedback, particularly the *2020/21 NSS* scores reflects the improvement in critical skills development of learners: Learning opportunities scoring 95% satisfaction (15% above sector average and 10% improvement on 19/20) and Academic Support scoring 92% satisfaction, (19%pt above sector and 9%pt improvement on 2019/20). Within these sections are the areas of 'exploration of concepts in detail-95% satisfaction (14% improvement on 2019/20 and 15%pt above sector).

The level of challenge is also evidenced in the response to "the course is intellectually stimulating" which scored 94% satisfaction 17% improvement compared to 2019/20 and 13%pts above sector average.

Digital Literacy

Nescot has worked hard to introduce an organisation wide strategy promoting educational gains and one example of this is the Digital Strategy which drove the move to Google Classroom and the development of a digitally literate staff and student base. A new E Learning Coordinator was appointed in 2020 and they were placed within the LRC student support zone; part of the increasing centralisation of support for staff and students.

The implementation of the new Digital Strategy started in the 2019/20 academic year with the roll out of Google Classroom and the appointment of Digital Advocates to support both staff and students in the use of technology for delivery and assessment. This meant that remote delivery was well prepared for come the March 2020 Lockdown.

The impact of digital poverty was magnified during the pandemic with the need for technology to access learning. This is especially the case where households need multiple devices to support children home schooling. To offset this college made full use of the Office for Students Hardship fund allocation spending all £64,000 to support students. The spend supported those students struggling financially and those requiring IT devices to access learning. This included a laptop loan scheme for learners without access which was subsequently extended throughout various stages of the pandemic. Student feedback at the *Boards of Study* reported that many students felt they had benefitted from the Hardship Fund allocations and were able to succeed with their education where the otherwise would not be able.

A large proportion of the Hardship Fund spend was to satellite campuses which were situated in areas experiencing multiple local lockdowns and higher than national average rates of COVID infection. These areas included the business and social and community work students and the above benchmark completion rates (+13%pt) of these students was particularly pleasing

Remote delivery meant that a greater flexibility to the teaching delivery has been possible. This means that where students are not able to physically attend, they were still able to participate in learning by remote access with concurrent face to face and remote delivery. Teams in Osteopathy, Teacher Education, Healthcare Play Specialism, Early Years, Animal Management, Performing Arts and Media made particularly good use of this. Where groupwork is required, students are still able to go into break out groups in TEAMS and participate as fully as possible in small and large group debates and activities. This means that learning is accessible for all.

The hybrid model of concurrent face to face and remote teaching which evolved in the post pandemic return in 2020 has continued and allowed increased accessibility to learning-HE attendance is high with the latest report being 89% in 2022 (SMT Data Pack).

Observation of clinical practice in Osteopathy has evolved positively because of the lockdown restrictions. There is now live streaming to a whole class and lecturer from the consultation room. This allows a much larger range of students to be involved in observing the session (formerly only one was possible) and also allows for the facilitating tutor in the class to question on the consultation and history taking in situ. As a result, more students are exposed to a wider range of clinical presentations and the questioning ensures full consideration of clinical applications and deep critical evaluation of strategies. Overall feedback on the management of the adaptations for this programme was particularly well received by external commentators, such as the *EE (2020/21)* stating “with its issues the programme team have worked well together to find the most suitable outcomes and solutions for the students and to ensure the educational continuity and meet the relevant Osteopathic Practice Standards as part of the PSRB requirements”.

The *External Examiner in Teacher Education (2020/21)* commented on the excellent remote delivery they observed by a trainee, which is equipping them with skills for the current and future of teaching.

As a continuation from the March 2020 Lockdown, the support for students offered in informal meetings has continued with remote access increasing flexibility and allowing students easier access to curriculum and the student voice mechanisms. A hybrid model for meetings such as Student Council means that although the majority of participants are encouraged to attend in person, those unable to make it or not in college on this day, can still access the meeting remotely and participate as normal. This is especially important given the range of attendance modes and the geographical spread, also acknowledging that many students have external commitments or external elements to their studies. As a result, participation rates for these meetings have increased, meaning a broader representation across the student body.

The *NSS 2020/21 survey results* reflected this with a 27%pt increase from 2019/20 to 83% satisfied with the Student Union/Student Council. This is 29% above sector benchmark. (QDP survey provider benchmarking). Additional evidence comes from the minutes of the Boards of Study where Student Representatives feedback that there was a great appreciation of the online support, especially that offered on an individual basis.

Pedagogical practice in remote delivery was supported by a rolling programme for staff catering to strategies to engage students when delivering remotely. Learning walks and lesson visits continued during the lockdowns with conversations with the students as normal to help inform feedback. applications of remote learning such as break out groups, Jamboard, flipped learning, reflective frameworks and log books; lessons learned from remote learning.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Continuation

Summative overall continuation rates over the four years of TEF data for full time

learners illustrate very high quality of provision with 81.8% of learners continuing with their studies, compared to a benchmark value of 81.1% (with 98.3% of outcomes broadly in line with benchmark). With the exception of the data for the most recent year (year 4), outcomes were very high quality and in line with or materially above benchmark for most years. This decline in year 4 correlates to an increased number of learners at satellite centres opting to exit their studies early, receiving level 4 outcomes for HND qualifications. Other indicative data such as specific ethnic groups (black and Asian learners) and ABCS quintiles (Q1) for which outcomes are materially below benchmark align with this narrative, as numbers of BAME learners are proportionately higher at these centres due to their geographic locations and levels of deprivation. In contrast, continuation rates for white, mixed and other ethnic groups were higher than benchmark on the main Surrey campus, where these ethnic groups are more reflective of the local population. As all learners at these satellite centres (890 learners) were enrolled on HND business where benchmark continuation rates were significantly lower than other subject areas, Nescot continuation rates by subject split for business were broadly in line with benchmark. However, with a 78.5% continuation rate for business learners (representing 55% of the sample) where overall benchmarks were 81.8%, this did have a significant impact on the overall direction of travel for year-on-year continuation. Continuation rates for female learners are not only statistically higher than males, but are more significant in their variation from benchmarks. This can be attributed to the higher rate of mature female learners than males on programmes such as Early Years Pedagogy, Animal Management, Teacher Training and Counselling where this is reflective of the industry populations.

As with full-time provision, part time continuation rates are outstanding and above benchmark (3 percentage points) with similar patterns of more significant positive rates of continuation for female learners, particularly from ABCS quintiles 2 or 3.

Completion and learner outcomes

Statistically, overall completion rates for full time learners at Nescot indicate a very high quality of provision which is broadly in line with benchmark data with a wide range of statistical variation between indicators. Notable positive variations include 86.6% completion for other undergraduate level 4 programmes (17% percentage points above benchmark), 79.6% completion for business learners (13%pt above benchmark) and 88.5% completion for performing arts (11%pt above benchmark). In contrast, the largest negative variations from benchmark were mostly subject specific, highlighting creative arts, computing and allied health as areas significantly below benchmark. In the most recent academic year (2021/22), these areas have shown significant improvement to completion rates, with computing at 100%, creative media at 79%, Osteopathy at 77%. In year 1 (2013/14) completion rates were notably lower than in subsequent years, where completion rates are above or on benchmark.

Overall completion rates in the TEF data illustrate a year-on-year increase in completion rates, despite a significant growth in student numbers in year 4.

Statistical uncertainty distribution for part time learners is more widely spread across all indicators, with almost all having an overall continuation percentage rate which is similar to benchmark.

It is worthwhile noting that the vast majority of students entering programmes at NESCOL come with non-traditional entry qualifications; notably level 3 BTECs (animal management, performing arts, computing media), City and Guilds (early years), NCFE (counselling), ATHE (business) and Access to HE (a whole range of subjects but mainly healthcare) as well as relevant industry

experience. Despite the high incidence of non-traditional entry qualifications, there have been some excellent outcomes from learners at NESCOL.

The overall completion and achievement for our students demonstrates tangible distance travelled as a whole and the high grades seen alongside this. Contributing to this are many factors surrounding the design and delivery of our programmes tailored to supporting our students in and through higher education, developing a range of personal and academic skills. The strategies include; small class sizes, personalised support, choice of qualifications where employer/community engagement is pivotal (e.g. Early Years, Healthcare Play, Counselling). Business outcomes are particularly high and the tailoring of the programme to the entrepreneurship pathway has helped many students realise their aim of developing a business.

In 2020/21, one Osteopathy graduate achieved first class honours degree and is now taking a lead as a member of the GOsC Equality Representation. This student contributed to the student submission for the development of the revised 2020-2023 Access and Participation Plan.

Grades for Food Premises were high in 2021/22 and the BA (Hons) Education (Top up) with first class honours degrees BA (Hons) Counselling Studies (Top-up) first class honours degrees. Also, in 2021/22 four Performing Arts students have gained places at prestigious drama schools/conservatoires

Many External Examiner comments reflect the professional skills developed such as reflective practice and academic skills; the EE for Counselling (2021/22) noted that the standards of work were extremely high.

Progression

Sample sizes for the progression data on the TEF data dashboard are quite limited (total of 270 over three years for full-time and for part-time) with many of the specific split indicators not reaching the required threshold for data publications. Overall figures for full-time learners are slightly below benchmark (52.6% compared with benchmark of 56.4%), but this data is only represents 30% of the students invited to participate in the Graduate Outcomes survey. For part-time learners, progression outcomes were slightly higher than benchmark (86.2% compared with benchmark of 82.8%).

With so many gaps in the data, it is difficult to draw conclusive patterns about results. However other undergraduate level 5 programmes had a high denominator compared to other indicators and less positive outcomes (90.4% materially below benchmark). It is believed that the growth of satellite provision at this time in the field of business entrepreneurship contributed to the lack of entrepreneurial opportunities during the COVID period.

Other split indicator where outcomes are notably above or below benchmark had very small sample sizes in relation to the overall student population, but outcomes were particularly positive for learners with reported disabilities (10%pt above benchmark) and those from geography of employment quintile 1. For part-time learners, progression outcomes were above benchmark for female learners which can be attributed to the fact that most part-time provision has very close employer links from the outset.

Less favourable progression outcomes were identified for young learners (under 21) (91% materially below benchmark) which is in line with outcomes for student experience data where HND qualifications (which attract more direct entries from level 3) such as creative media and performing arts were identified as areas of concern.

To supplement the gaps in the data above, some of our internal data can provide a clearer picture of learner destination outcomes.

Graduate Outcomes for 2016/17 leavers (*Curriculum & Quality HE assurance statement autumn 2018/19*) show that the number of students employed in 'professional' or 'associate professional or technical' roles increased from 60% to 65% between 2015/16 and 2016/17. 86% of students responding were working or studying full time and of these 83.2% of students were in full or part time work (+3%pts) and 56.2% of students self – employed (+12%pts), with 26.6% are in full-time further study and 5.6% are in part-time further study.

There was a pleasing decrease of 6%pts in the number unemployed to 4.3% with the median salary up by £800 from the previous year. This was noteworthy as the shape of provision includes many subject which are historically lower paid or result in self-employment and so may not fall into the professional categorisation, for example Early Years, Animal Management, Counselling and Osteopathy.

This DLHE data for 2017/18 showed the start of a positive trend in terms of the students' experience and the improving value of the course for employment and study, with 56.2% of respondents reporting that the qualification made them well prepared for self-employment this was 11.9%pts up on previously reported data. The continued positive impact of curriculum design and delivery to promote employability may be seen in the continued improving picture shown in the destination data seen in internal surveys to follow. This aspect was also commented on favourably by External Examiners since (see earlier section on professional and personal skills).

The continuation of students in education seen here underlines the development of appropriate skills and in many instances the provision of relevant higher education courses within Nescot.

An internal destination survey (*SMT DATA PACK January 2021*) was used to capture the immediate outcomes and intentions of higher education students on completion of their programmes. The outcomes for higher education (for all 500 leavers in scope) for actual sustained destinations for 2020 leavers was published in January 2021. Of these 72% of destinations were obtained and positive destinations (continuing in full/part time education or entering employment was seen for 83%. This represented a 7%pt increase in positive destinations as compared to 2018/19.

In 2021, leavers this positive destination picture was sustained, remaining at 83% positive destinations. New questions for this year illustrated that 98% agreed the course was relevant to their future career path; thus, emphasising the impact of programme design and alignment to current industry sector skills requirements. 92% of respondents in 2021 agreed that the careers advice given by tutors and other college staff such as the careers team helped them to identify their goals and 93% agreed that this advice helped them to understand the different paths they could take to achieve these goals.

As part of a more detailed breakdown, it was be seen that in the subject area of education 83% had gone into a relevant job; Public Services 65%; Arts and Media 50%.

It is worthwhile noting that these surveys are carried out four months post completion and so the full positive impact of programme on employment and progression may not be apparent at such an early sampling point. As a result, a survey of destination has been instigated at graduation events, to allow a mid-term view which is generally 12 months post completion.

The use of LMI and the involvement of employers and key stakeholders throughout programme design and delivery means that the curriculum and skills developed are constantly evolving to best meet skills needs and this enhances employability. This, coupled with the overarching contribution of educational gain to produce a rounded self-aware independent student who leaves with an improved efficacy in communication and confidence, means that NESLOT students are as a result better able to access progression to further study, linked employment and progress and promotion in their chosen area.

REFERENCES

Internal evidence – available on NESCOT Quality Sharepoint site

Nescot HE Induction Survey 2018/19, 2021/22	External Examiner Reports: Animal Management (2018/19, 2020/21), HND Creative Media (2018/19), Osteopathy (2020/21), HND Computing (2020/21), HND Performing Arts (2020/21), Initial Teacher Training (20/21), Food Premises Inspection (2021/22), Sport (2020/21), Healthcare Play Specialist (2020/21)
Induction Programme and Induction Checklist	
Student Council Minutes 2018/19	
London Southbank University Bost MOst validation report 2022	
University of West London Healthcare Play Specialist Validation Report 2022	HE Board Minutes 2020-21 – 2022/23
Open University Applied Management Validation Report 2021	LRC annual survey data (2021/22)
Open University Professional Practice Working with Young People (0-19) Validation Report	Staff Student Consultative Minutes (SSCC) Minutes
Open University Animal Management Validation Report 2022	Student Council Minutes
GOSC Review of Osteopathy Provision, 2022, Mott MacDonald	LRC Surveys
Open University Annual Institutional Review 2021/22	NESCOT Teaching, Learning and Assessment Handbook (includes Improvement Policy) (2022/23)
HE Sub Strategy (June 2022)	UoG Programme Assessment Board Minutes 2020/21
Accountability Framework 2020-21	NSS Final Outcome Data (2017/18 – 2021/22)
OfS mid-Year survey for condition C1 and CMA compliance internal report	Curriculum & Quality HE assurance statement autumn 2018/19)
SMT Data Pack Jan 2020, Jan 2021 & Jan 2022	Learning Walk Feedback 2020/21 & 2021/22
	Student email. 30 Sep 2022

External evidence

TEF data dashboard (<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/tef-data-dashboard/>)

Skills for Jobs; lifelong learning for opportunity and growth: White Paper ([Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/white-papers/skills-for-jobs-lifelong-learning-for-opportunity-and-growth))

RCU Vector Data projections 2022-2025 ([RCU | Market Intelligence & Research in Further Education](https://www.rcu.ac.uk/market-intelligence-research-in-further-education))