

1. PROVIDER CONTEXT

Falmouth University is a small, specialist creative university located in Cornwall, in the far South West of the UK.

Growing out of the Falmouth School of Art, which was founded in 1902, the institution gained university status in 2012, and was rated Gold in the first Teaching Excellence Framework in 2017.

We have around 8,000 students undertaking higher education across a range of undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications, either on our campuses in Cornwall, studying fully online, or studying at partner organisations around the world.

The Times and Sunday Times ranked Falmouth as **the number one arts university in the UK** for 2023. Our subject specialisms reflect our strategic mission, harnessing the fusion of creativity and technology as foundations of the future economy. From fine art, illustration & graphic design, through the performing arts, to fashion and textiles, the built environment, business and entrepreneurship, disciplines encompassing the screen industries such as film, television and animation, through to games, computer science and robotics. Together, creativity and technology can unlock innovation and enable us to find solutions to global challenges. This fusion is what engages people to think, act and feel differently, generating positive and sustainable opportunities for all.

Our industry connections, professional-standard facilities and creative contextual learning approach mean our students are learning real-world skills from the moment they join the University. Whether it is via live industry-facing briefs, paid opportunities through our in-house agency (*see Mayn Creative, below*), international placements, or our programme of guest lectures, we empower our students to carve out successful, entrepreneurial careers by giving them a head start in their chosen industry.

We are proud that many of our lecturers are some of the finest minds in their respective creative fields, many of whom remain active in their practice. Integral to approach, is that our students get to work with them, and our outstanding guest lecturers, both in the classroom and on real projects.

While a relatively new venture, the institution has quickly established itself as a market leader in the provision of online creative courses. Our first online course launched in 2016 and we currently offer 22 undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. The portfolio is designed to be taught and learned remotely through carefully scaffolded combinations of knowledge acquisition, learning activities, lectures, webinars, collaboration, peer and tutor feedback. Students are encouraged to push their limits, explore creativity, develop professional skills and expertise without needing to relocate to Cornwall; a truly flexible and accessible Falmouth experience. ^(SE1; SE2)

EXEMPLAR IMPACT CASE STUDY: LANDINGS

Landings is an annual online exhibition organised, curated and designed by Falmouth Online Photography students, incorporating a 'pop up' exhibition as part of the optional face-to-face workshops on campus in the summer. The project is most impactful for those who volunteer to curate the show or get involved with the technical design and development, and is a great example of inter-disciplinary working, developing collaborative competencies. ^(SE3)

OUR LOCATION

Falmouth University is Cornwall's university and its history and heritage mean that it is deeply rooted in its place. Building on Cornwall's renowned reputation for culture and innovation, we are committed to establishing it as the County for Creative Learning, using innovative and open pedagogies as an integral part of the region's education and business eco-system.

We have deliberately positioned ourselves to provide a key contribution to the economic regeneration and growth of our region; an area that faces many of the challenges of other rural, coastal communities, including low productivity, social deprivation and low educational attainment.

Headline figures for the South West often obscure the realities of Cornwall's economy, which has a productivity rate of 76% of the national average. With an economy dominated by low wage, seasonal sectors, Cornwall's challenges include insufficient numbers with higher-level qualifications; significant pockets of deprivation; and a business sector with low research and development investment levels.

Not only do Falmouth's subject specialisms align well with Cornwall's burgeoning creative industries, but also its nascent but exciting digital sector. Through the recruitment of local students, as well as the recruitment and retention of talent into Cornwall, the University is supporting development of new businesses and jobs. HESA data illustrates a higher proportion of graduates are retained in Cornwall than are recruited from Cornwall.

HESA data shows that 11% of students were recruited to Falmouth from TR postcodes (the 27 districts in closest proximity to our campuses) and the GOS suggests that 13% of graduates surveyed were working in TR postcodes, representing a 2% local retention.

"Falmouth University is integral to the fabric of Cornwall's business community, offering support, expertise, and opportunities for collaboration across many different sectors. Open channels of communication and a willingness to make things happen for the good of Cornwall has meant the relationship between the University and business community has become two-way, with students benefiting from industry experience and creating a network for themselves as well as joining the workforce and adding their expertise and entrepreneurialism to Cornwall's economy."


Cornwall Chamber of Commerce (SE3, SO1)

EXEMPLAR CASE STUDY: NATIONAL SATURDAY CLUBS

A key initiative includes our National Saturday clubs in Art & Design, Fashion & Business and Film & Media for pre-HE level students (13 to 16 years of age, from nine different high schools across Cornwall and home-schooled members). The Film & Media Club is sponsored by the British Film Industry, the Fashion & Business Club is sponsored by the British Fashion Council and the Art & Design Club is sponsored by the Arts Council England. Feedback from participants shows that 77% of club members are from WP backgrounds; 38% have neither a parent / guardian having been in HE; 8% are care experienced. 100% of participants report that they developed practical skills, 92% said that they have an enhanced passion for the subject and 82% said that they had enhanced their confidence. (SE2)

Spread across our two campuses, our facilities and spaces are carefully designed and developed with industry consultation and ongoing investment to ensure that our students have access to both cutting-edge technologies, as well as traditional tools to support their creative practice. Working in these professional-standard environments, with access to the breadth of our equipment and resources, our students develop the confidence and competence to excel in the workplace after they graduate.

OUR STUDENTS

Our peripheral location has an impact on our student mix; according to the 2021 census, 96.8% of people in Cornwall identified their ethnic group within the “White” category. We are pleased that we are attracting an increasingly diverse student population, with 9.5% of our students now either describing themselves as ‘Non-White’, or unknown. Our Access & Participation Plan seeks to continue to improve this imbalance.

Falmouth University also has a higher-than-average population of students who identify as LGBTQ+: In 2021/22, 29% of our students identify as something other than heterosexual, suggesting an inclusive and safe environment for our community to learn and thrive within.

In addition, more than double the national average of disabled students enrol at Falmouth: 36% compared with 17% across all UK universities. We are in the top two of all providers with over 5000 students for the number of students with disabilities. In the OfS Completion data, Falmouth is ranked as 57th overall which is an indicator of our excellent student experience, however, our Progression data does not match this success: 64.5% against a sector benchmark of 67%. We believe that this reflects the challenges that students with disabilities face when they enter the world of work. We reflect on this below in the section on Student Outcomes.

OUR PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL RESOURCES

Falmouth University is proud of its outstanding physical and digital resources and facilities, evidenced by our NSS feedback, which is 1.5% above the benchmark in ‘Learning Resources’ metric.

From our light-filled workshops, studios and print facilities to the traditional looms and modern industrial technologies of the Fashion and Textiles Institute, we offer outstanding environments for art and design. Our purpose-built live performance venue is not only an exceptional learning environment, but it also offers a public venue for touring artists from all over the world. Falmouth is also home to one of the largest dedicated game development studio spaces of any UK university and offers a multi-million-pound photographic centre equipped with dark rooms, post-production suites, full professional studios and gallery, film and TV production studios including an industry-standard cinema and a purpose-built radio room for broadcast radio production and podcast recordings. [\(SE6; SO6\)](#)

Our Workshops Festival was initiated in September 2017 following requests from students to explore our world class technical facilities more informally and beyond the requirements of their course, allowing them to stretch themselves and to develop their knowledge and skills to their fullest potential. Taking place twice each year (2-4 weeks, in January and May), each festival offers over approximately 220 workshops and 4800 places for our students to immerse themselves in. In a great example of transferable learning in action, our students are bringing the skills developed during the Workshops Festival to enhance their academic work. [\(SE2, SE6\)](#)

The events were so popular, we developed the concept into a more frequent version we call Wednesday Open Workshops (WOW) in 2018/19. Through drop-in and timetabled sessions, students can access the entire suite of professional-standard technical facilities (as well as the expertise of experienced technical staff) to expand and explore what they have learned as vital ancillary learning. Each year, the WOWs offer around 180 workshops with 2000 spaces for students to book onto. [\(SE2, SE6\)](#)

To ensure our digital learning environments deliver an excellent student experience we engage our Digital Experience Student Consultants, our own students who engage with us in co-creative and cyclical user testing on all our institutional digital projects. We particularly like to innovate and discover tools of a more visual nature to suit our learner and staff preferences. We also work in

partnership with small start-ups or new entrants to the digital learning tool market to help shape their products and ensures our student's learning needs are being met. ^(SE6)

A significant example of this ethos in action is our development of our **Student App & Portal**, as the single-entry point for all our students to access their learning and support materials. Through a focus on data-informed user interface design and user experience design it enables inclusive and student-facing content to be offered in the most effective way, with all information at the learners' fingertips. This includes bringing asynchronous induction and onboarding content into the app and portal to give one holistic welcome/returner experience for all our students, new and returning. ^(SE5; SO1)

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Falmouth University may be relatively small and specialist, but we punch above our weight in terms of research impact and influence.

We are proud that in the REF2021, 78% of our overall submission was rated as world-leading or internationally excellent. The ranking of our Impact Case Studies positioned us joint 12th and the rating of our research environment 11th out of 129 universities. Testament to the talent, creativity, and hard work of staff across the university, this result led to us more than tripling our annual core research income from Research England to £1.15m.

As a small institution, we can fully integrate our research and knowledge exchange activities into our teaching. The idea of research informed teaching is integral to our vision. Students benefit from being able to be a part of cutting-edge research, whether it is in film, creative writing, or the visual arts: staff and students work together at the vanguard of creativity and technology. ^(SE1)

EXEMPLAR CASE STUDY: **SOUND IMAGE CINEMA LAB**

Sound Image Cinema Lab is our film teaching and research project that works with national and international partners including the BFI, FilmFour, and Creative UK to provide world-class career opportunities for students, as well as resource support to professional short and feature film productions in Cornwall. Students and graduates crewed on writer and director Mark Jenkins' BAIT, which won a BAFTA in 2020 and his latest film Enys Men that premiered at Cannes earlier last year and has been released in cinemas in January. Among other opportunities, students have also worked on Wilderness, which showed at film festivals worldwide in 2017, 2018's Songbird, which starred Hollywood actress Cobie Smulders, and Make Up which was called "British film of 2020 so far" by Robbie Collins in the Telegraph. ^(SE3)

EXEMPLAR CASE STUDY: **VR SPACE EXPERIENCE**

For 18 months until the launch of Virgin Orbit's Cosmic Girl from Cornish soil in January 2023, students from Falmouth's BA Creative Virtual Reality course worked with the university's Immersive Business research project, supported by Spaceport Cornwall, Goonhilly, UK Space Agency and The South West Centre of Excellence in Satellite Communications to create a VR space exploration experience that will be available to download from Meta's Quest store for individuals, schools, colleges and universities all over the UK. ^(SE3, SO1)

STUDENT FEEDBACK AND SECTOR AWARDS

Falmouth has been seeing steady increases in our performance in the National Student Survey (NSS) over the last four years, progressively lifting our scores to now sit above both the sector average and our direct competitors. In 2022 Falmouth's overall satisfaction score (Q27) for courses we teach was 76.77% while the sector is at 76.29%.^(SE1)

Our upward trajectory in the NSS continues to be an institutional priority, exemplifying our commitment to offering excellent student experience and impactful student development opportunities.

Within the individual themes scores, Falmouth outperforms the sector on 7 of the 8 themes, with only Organisation and Management lagging, although the gap has narrowed in the last two years. We take our longitudinal Organisation and Management underperformance seriously, not least because, critically, low performance in Course Organisation and Management is known to have impact on other NSS themes. As such, we are systematically addressing key areas of improvement, iteratively interpreting it with our students to help understand the issues and gain better insight into the core areas for improvement. We are working cross-institutionally to share good practice, ensure continuous improvement and deliver academic development activities as we look at what works in different disciplinary contexts, seeking to transfer, adapt and adopt.^(SE7)

We were delighted that in the 2022 WhatUni Student Choice Awards our students ranked us **17th of 95** institutions for Lecturers and Teaching Quality and **7th of 95** for Facilities. Falmouth was also shortlisted for the 2022 WhatUni Student Choice Awards in the submission category, Outreach and Widening Participation.

At the time of writing, we have been awarded bronze in the international QS-Wharton Reimagine Education Awards "Power of Partnerships" Award for the Sound/Image Cinema Lab and we are therefore in the running for the overall prize. We were also shortlisted in the Innovation in Business Education category for our Micro-Internships at Student Start-ups (MASS) scheme.

Falmouth won the Employability and Entrepreneurship Guardian University Award in both 2017 (*Launchpad*) and 2018 (*Mayn Creative*).^(SE3; SO4)

In November 2022, Falmouth won the prestigious [Green Gown Award](#) in the Reporting for Excellence category. This prestigious award was welcome recognition of our efforts to engage our community in our work on sustainability.^(SE3)

Other success metrics see particular strength in our Games Academy. Computer Science at Falmouth ranked 7th of 111 provider for "Teaching Quality" in the Times Good University Guide (16/09/2022). Falmouth University currently ranks 1st in England, 2nd in the UK and 32rd in the world for Game Design in the Princeton Review 2022 league table, competing alongside US-based heavy hitters including New York University and University of Southern California. Additionally, Falmouth University students have scooped the UK Games Fund "Tranzfuser Enterprise Pathway" [Award](#) for the last three consecutive years, emphasising the power of our commitment to student industry-linked development.^(SE3; SO1; SO4)

EXEMPLAR IMPACT CASE STUDY: **GAMES EXPO**

At the end of the academic year, the Games Academy holds its own version of the summer shows. A huge celebration of its final-year students' work, where peers, staff and members of the public can view and play games made by students. It's also a conference style event, with inspiring talks and workshops hosted by representatives from high-profile game studios, where students and graduands can network and pick up tips from key industry contacts.^(SE3)

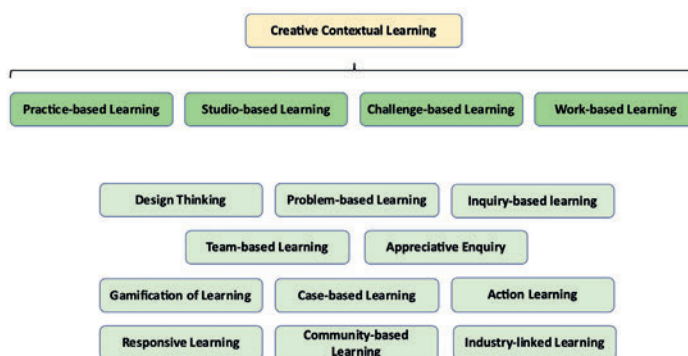
EXEMPLAR IMPACT CASE STUDY: SENSORY PRODUCTS FOR SENSORY BEINGS

From 2017 to 2019, Sustainable Product Development students have worked with special educational needs consultant, Joanna Grace, to directly engage with children living with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) and develop sensory educational products. In 2019, this project won a National Award from the Creative Learning Guild in Visual Arts and Design, and student work was presented in the Design Research for Change showcase and catalogue as part of the London Design Festival. ^(SE7)

2. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

OUR LEARNING AND TEACHING ETHOS

Falmouth Learning and Teaching is versatile, creative at its core and dynamic. We follow a clear creative contextual learning epistemology, underpinning four core pedagogies (dark green) through which we apply a diverse spectrum of learning and teaching (light green).



The key aspect of our L&T philosophy is the ability to gain knowledge and skills in a practice-relevant contextual learning environment; be that workplace, studio, or industry. This means that Falmouth L&T exemplifies active, student-directed learning, closely linked to the environmental contexts in which learning happens. This approach establishes within our students intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for their creative practice, encouraging and enabling them to build diverse learning communities that are underpinned by a culture of personal and creative respect. ^(SE1; SO1)

Assessment that mirrors industry practice is therefore also integral to the student experience at Falmouth, setting up our students to both succeed in and progress beyond their studies. Live briefs, that are set to mimic the real world or are in fact developed and delivered with industry partners are a key element of this. Cross-institutionally, 47% of all undergraduate level assessment are “live” or industry-linked assessments, meaning our students are exposed to practice-relevant assessment at every level of study and is a consistent theme cross-curriculum. To establish this statistic, we compared the total number of assessments (as per our approved course documentation) with the number (parts or whole) of assessments representing “live project” or industry-linked project briefs as a reflective representation of the ratio of industry-linked assessment across the entire institute (i.e, this data includes all assessments at Levels 4 – 6). ^(SE2)

“Very well run and professional. Often academic programmes can be a little awkward or underwhelming when engaging with “the corporate world”, but you got the level right. Well done. It felt like you understood the level of involvement we could commit to, made everything easy and were flexible to our schedules.”

Sky, in relation to a live 2021/22 assessment brief. ^(SE3)

"It was so inspiring to see the creative work from the students, who had worked so hard on the brief"

Depop, in relation to a live 2021/22 assessment brief ^(SE3)

EXEMPLAR IMPACT CASE STUDY:

LIVE PROJECT WITH BANG CREATIONS AND POSTURITE

Bang Creations is a product design consultancy based in Surrey and an industry partner for the BA Sustainable Product Design course. For the past two years we have worked collaboratively with one of their clients, Posturite, a manufacturer of office products and ergonomic seating. This has given Falmouth students a unique insight into the demands of working at a design consultancy, as well as a good perspective on in-house design roles at a manufacturer. In Nov 2021, shortlisted students presented their design concepts to Posturite CEO, Ian Fletcher Price, and shared a £1000 prize fund. The company are currently exploring opportunities to commercialise the students' designs. ^(SE3; SO4)

ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

Our assessment and feedback practices form the core of our curriculum design at Falmouth. We are committed to ensuring that at Falmouth, there is a clear focus on student wellbeing and their transitions between home and university, between study levels, and onwards into employment. Our assessment and feedback practices are designed to support the educational growth of our students through our pedagogic decisions. ^(SE1)

Our **Hitchhikers' Guide to Curriculum Design** (*more below*) has dedicated sub-sections on assessment and feedback and we have been pleased to share this well-developed L&T practice that offers impactful and transformative feedback to learners - 'the Falmouth Formative Feedback Cycle' - via [external peer-review](#). ^(SE2; SO5)

We continually share our pedagogic innovations externally with the HE sector. Two recent examples are our pedagogic work on collaboration and detecting sustainability embedded across our curriculum:

- Our educational scholarship research has defined [9 Domains of Collaboration](#) which we disseminated in collaboration with Advance HE. The approach enables the measurement of "Collaboration" as a skill in a benchmarked and uniquely algorithmic way to applying educational gain. It is being used in creating marking criteria to collaboration in a cross-disciplinary way. This research-informed educational work is novel and highly relevant to employability and student academic development. ^(SE5)
- Our ["Falmouth Curriculum Ladder"](#) (FCL), adopts a "design thinking" approach to impactful pedagogy in the form of a novel evaluation and mapping that functions to both scaffold the embedding of sustainability education into curricula, and to provide a way of measuring the degree of sustainability education embedded as an indicator of success. Our FCL allows us to consolidate and measure the degree of embeddedness of sustainability-linked learning across the range of disciplines and subjects at Falmouth. Where the FCL impacts on student experience is that it offers a simple, effective way to visually represent and cross-compare sustainability embeddedness at micro, meso and macro levels, depending on its application. ^(SE5; SO4)

Our innovative assessment and feedback practices, such as our work on piloting Synoptic Assessment and our approach to measuring educational gains, are referred to elsewhere in the document.

EXEMPLAR IMPACT CASE STUDY: **EDEN PROJECT COURSE COLLABORATION**

In 2020, together with the Eden Project, Falmouth developed two undergraduate degree courses focussed on the increasingly important subject of sustainability and environmental impact: BA Sustainable Tourism Management BA and BA Sustainable Festival Management BA. Based in Cornwall, a major tourist destination and home to several of the UK's most exciting festivals, this partnership provides students with the opportunity to get real, hands-on experience in the industry, benefiting from the experience of industry professionals, as they learn from Falmouth and Eden staff. The courses are also accredited by industry leaders, A Greener Festival and Attitude is everything, ensuring that industry best practice is at the forefront of students' learning. ^(SE3; SE5)

We dedicate 22.5% of our total timetabled sessions across the student's duration of study, to one-to-one tutorials and sign-up type learning and teaching practices. This means approximately a quarter of our academic provision is tailored to the individual learner and their attainment. In the final year of undergraduate study, 44.6% of timetabled sessions are one-to-one tutorials or sign-ups to support student's final major project. ^(SE2; SE5; SO1; SO5)

DATA-INFORMED INTERVENTIONS: UNDERSTANDING, CAPTURE, COLLATION, AND ANALYSIS DATA

Falmouth has made significant progress in data-driven improvements to teaching, student welfare and student experience since 2014. This has been enabled by several projects to strengthen data relating to equality, attendance, evaluation, feedback, diversity and inclusion. This work is a result of significant investment in an in-house business intelligence system, RaDAR (Reporting and Data Analytics Repository). ^(SE4)

The real-time information recorded in this system enables timely interventions. For example, a range of data dashboards (learner analytics) for student engagement monitoring are now used in academic departments and professional services, with report-back/response mechanisms in place to close the loop. ^(SE4)

The data used includes retention, attendance, student engagement with the VLE and attainment outcomes at the course, module and learner level, matched to student attributes. This data is nuanced and immediate, supporting a move from reactive data analysis towards data-informed proactive and preventative early interventions for students deemed at risk. This includes the ability for students to self-monitor, as they also have access to their data in a co-creative approach to sharing and understanding how data informs success. ^(SE5; SO5)

As part of our strategic use of data to inform curriculum and wider decision-making, a key tool is our **Student Information Dashboard**. This bespoke dashboard allows academic and professional services colleagues access to, for example, information regarding students' learning need(s) or disabilities that might inform how they are supported to succeed in study, to check on student academic achievement status. It can also inform us of access to library and virtual learning environments etc, providing a broad overview of a students' wider academic engagement, beyond the classroom. For us, this is an authentic approach to meaningful learner analytics as we strive to personalise the student journey using rigorous data-informed rationale metrics for timely intervention and effective forward planning for outstanding quality academic support tailored to the student need. ^(SE5)

ESTABLISHING BELONGING

We understand that, increasingly, a sense of belonging is intrinsic to student success. That's why Falmouth has evolved its pre-induction and induction programmes to focus on fostering a sense of community among its new students.

Step Into Falmouth (SIF): our pre-induction programme, runs in the six weeks leading up to Welcome Week for students new to Falmouth. It is designed to help new first year students feel equipped with the information that will allow them to settle in quickly and support them to feel they are already part of the university. This year our data showed that approximately a third of new students engaged with at least one SIF session. 49 live synchronous online sessions were offered by academic, pastoral, and professional service staff. 16 of the 49 sessions were offered by peers; student mentors, student ambassadors and Students' Union representatives. We routinely find that sessions lead by our own students are the best attended pre-induction events, supporting the view that new students are most interested in talking with peers. [\(SE5\)](#)

Induction: once semester starts, Falmouth offers a joined-up and extended induction across the first three weeks of study, designed using well-reported transition pedagogic theory, to cover both transition into Falmouth *for new students* and most critically, transition between Levels 4 and 5, which includes our students returning to study after any period of intermittance.

Our induction philosophy is based on creating an early sense of belonging (both institutional and disciplinary) through practical-focussed academic inductions that enthuse students for their chosen discipline. It is underpinned with enhanced personal tutor, student advisor and peer student mentor support aimed at bolstering both wellbeing and belonging. [\(SE5; SO5\)](#)

Student Mentors: our Mentors fulfil a key role in the pastoral student support provided to our students. Every new learner at Falmouth is allocated a Mentor before they join the institution, meaning we have around 400 mentors supporting around 1600 new students each year. Key deliverables are community building, signposting, feedback gathering, and promoting better academic and social wellbeing. Our Student Mentors maintain close working relationships with our Student Support teams, the Students' Union and our Student Advisors as well as other pastoral stakeholders in academic departments. Strong emphasis is placed on social support to safeguard the mentees and ensure the Student Mentors themselves are not taking on too much in a mutually supportive ethos of student peer support in action and critically, at scale. [\(SE5\)](#)

The Student Mentors have strong relationships with Level 4 personal tutors and academic subject heads to create layered and effective feedback loops as well as flexible outreach. Within the Student Mentor team are a separate stream of specially trained Student Mentors, who offer peer-to-peer academic support. These are our *PASS* (Peer Assisted Study Session) *leaders*, who stimulate immersive discussion of subject matter between peers in a low-pressure environment by offering weekly workshops to enhance student academic performance, strengthen our student learning communities, offer a different style of feedback and facilitate deeper understanding of course content through discursive peer support. This unique offer is targeted as needed and offers an accessible way for our learners to gain academic input from other students, which in turn we find significantly enhances the quality and impact of their contact time with staff. [\(SE7; SO6\)](#)

EXEMPLAR IMPACT CASE STUDY: THE SOCIAL INDUCTION FRAMEWORK

The Social Induction Framework is a high-profile QAA funded collaborative innovation project (awarded 2021/22) that uses playful learning pedagogy to underpin an induction tool to familiarise new and returning students with their VLE and other diverse learning environments. Working as collaborators, Falmouth, Edinburgh, and Glasgow Universities co-created the “social induction framework”, designed to be deployable in any digital and/or physical learning environment and thereby provide a scaffold to aid learners familiarising themselves with new platforms and tools. This project is currently being showcased by the QAA at their national conference and represents an action research-based application of our induction ethos that locates wellbeing and belonging at the core of new or returning student experience. What this project achieved is creation and implementation of a novel research-informed pedagogic intervention that was designed to improve student experience and belonging from their first day in higher education. (SE3; SE5)

We are committed institutionally to embedding wellbeing and EDI within the curriculum. To achieve this, we have allocated 20 credits of our Level 4 provision to a bespoke ‘Belonging’ module, which is being piloted in 2022/23 within our Fashion & Textiles Institute with a view to rolling it out across all courses once evaluated. The module provides a platform for developing a working knowledge of “bias”, and therefore the creative practitioner’s responsibility to approach creative practice and communication, with recognition of the power to challenge dominant culture mindsets. This module is an exemplar of our ethos of co-creation between our academics and students from marginalised groups, with the module content having been actively designed to ensure that academics from minoritized groups are involved with the delivery of its teaching. (SE2; SE3)

Across its 15-week delivery, “Belonging” cultivates diverse, inclusive, resilient, confident, and conscious approaches to creative practice, engaging students with international histories, cultures, and politics to understand how ‘belonging’ plays a role in the global creative industries. (SE1; SE3)

‘Fashion Communication is changing – students are the future and have grown up with digital culture so will embrace the changes we’re all experiencing. Excellent to see a progressive and stimulating response to digital space, new technologies and augmented realities.’

Baron and Baroness magazines (SE3)

OUR STUDENT SUPPORT ECOSYSTEM

Our student support ecosystem goes beyond the typical HE support offer. Our core Student Services provision includes short-term and solution-focused in-depth assessment, advice, and liaison (internally/externally) to ensure that students understand their options and receive effective practical welfare support. In addition, our central Student Support team responds to welfare and behaviour issues within the student community, providing specialist support for student mental health and wellbeing, including self-help resources, assessment and advice, psychosocial interventions, and a range of psychological therapies (including CBT and counselling). (SE1; SO1)

Our data-led approach has enabled us to identify mental health concerns as a key factor affecting student continuation and completion at Falmouth (e.g., 71% of health-related study breaks or withdrawals were connected to mental health in 2021-22). As the top-line heading ('mental health') includes a wide range of personal health, social and environmental issues and impacts, we have invested heavily in improving our student support ecosystem, as well as developing a range of proactive interventions to improve students' experiences and outcomes. [\(SO1\)](#)

The support for all students has been enhanced in response to student requests to make services simpler and faster to access. Innovations include daily drop-in appointments (in-person and online); a 24/7 Student Helpline and access to increased online talking therapies delivered through an external partner, Spectrum Life. The Helpline assists students to address small issues quickly, and self-referral for therapy is reducing wait times and enabling the in-house team to co-ordinate care for those most in need. In the [\(SE4\)](#), around 5 students/day attended drop-ins, and an average of 2.2 calls/day were made to the Helpline with 15 students using the online therapy service concurrently ([\(SE4\)](#)), ensuring they received the earliest intervention through same-day access. [\(SE4\)](#)

To support a proactive and holistic approach to supporting the mental health of all students, the University joined the national University Mental Health Charter programme in September 2022. The project ensures we are addressing the social and environmental, as well as personal, factors which influence students' mental wellbeing. We had already initiated a wide range of improvements, including improvements to student welcome and transition support; a pre-enrolment diagnostic tool to enable the identification of learning differences and therefore tailored teaching approaches; a Suicide Safer University Plan; as well as student voice (e.g., a student Wellbeing Opinion Panel) and staff training (e.g., training needs analysis and 40 in-house Mental Health training sessions) improvements. [\(SO1; SO2\)](#)

We also liaise closely with a range of NHS Services on individual cases (including GPs, Psychiatric Liaison, Crisis Hub, Community MH Team, Eating Disorders Service, Emergency Department, Ambulance Service, etc) because we take the position that wellbeing and learning are reciprocal in nature and that you cannot have one without the other. [\(SE5\)](#)

Personal tutoring at Falmouth has been under iterative review since 2018 to authentically frame and reframe for suitability and impact. Predominantly, our personal tutors have an academic focus which links with our other student support provisions to provide clarity for our students' academic and pastoral support needs and a joined-up student experience. Personal tutors work to a set of benchmarks which have our diverse student learning communities in mind, comprising: [\(SE5\)](#)

- Providing a stable point of contact within the University;
- Providing guidance on higher education processes and procedures and expectations;
- Providing academic feedback and development aimed at orientation of new students to academic demands;
- Providing personal welfare support (*typically in the form of onward referral*);
- Providing referral to sources of further information;
- Building the institutional relationship and the sense of belonging.

Our Inclusive Learning team offers neurodiversity screening (*via* the online Do-IT Profiler tool) to on-campus undergraduates. Follow-up 1:1 screening chats and advice about assessment routes are available on request and supported by online information and guidance to help them develop their study skills and compensatory strategies, as well as advice on assessment to aid our academic staff in delivering the best teaching in the most accessible ways. [\(SE5; SO5\)](#)

Our Accessibility team provides advice and assistance for students with disabilities, long-term health conditions, and neurodiversity (including dyslexia, dyspraxia, and ADHD). The Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is a document that we use to ensure our course teams are aware of any reasonable adjustments our students come to their learning with. Whether the reasonable adjustment is a disability, a health condition or a specific learning difference ([under the Equality Act 2010](#)), ILPs at

Falmouth are an important part of providing an environment where students can achieve, because they recommend a plethora of reasonable adjustments that minimise or remove barriers that otherwise prevent our learners from taking part in university life and studies.^(S02)

Student Advisors work alongside academic staff and use robust engagement monitoring data to identify students at risk as early as possible, initiating proactive contact and offering an academic/pastoral hybrid support. They act as a bridge between academic teams and the range of specialist support services, acting almost in triage to monitor student engagement and ensure students are connected to the support and advice they need, when they need it. This also includes a highly intensive and integrated approach to information sharing and close co-working on more complex and higher risk cases.^(SE3, S01)

MENTAL HEALTH AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Falmouth has a set of *Healthy Curriculum* principles underpinning formal course approval processes as well as our general curriculum design.^(SE1) Within these principles, we articulate our commitment to the development of student social competency skills, self-compassion and resilience, all of which contribute to Falmouth students' academic success. Within the taught curriculum we acknowledge and value diversity and cultural difference, which is key, particularly given our geographical context, so that students' diverse identities can be celebrated, and their stories shared, to enhance our academic community's understanding of diverse perspectives of higher education life and study.^(SE3)

Also integral to our interpretation of a healthy curriculum is embedding a truly inclusive approach to assessment within our course structures so that assessment-linked workload can be considered as part of our design.

Falmouth has developed a central guidance text - our *Hitchhikers' Guide to Curriculum Design* – that takes drivers such as sustainability, employability and a healthy curriculum and incorporates them authentically in holistic curriculum design throughout the Falmouth student journey. What this means is that our curricula cultivate fully developed human beings, rather than just confer a discipline or degree award.^(SE3, S05)

EXEMPLAR IMPACT CASE STUDY: **SPRINGBOARD STUDIOS**

A program of free, guided creative activities to help students destress and find confidence these sessions are conducted in group scenarios in conjunction with traditional models of wellbeing provision to ease the pressure and resources required for a high demand, under-resourced current student mental health service provision. Based on literature highlighting the gaps in knowledge from important studies assessing the provision of student mental health in UK higher education. The program is economically viable at scale for many institutions and participants' feedback; 'it is definitely a source for creative freedom, and expression, and inspiration'.^(SE2, S01)

"With sustainability being such an urgent prerogative for all of society, and events increasingly rising to the challenge of climate change, it is essential that we have events professionals trained in sustainable practices to create a positive future for festivals. What a fantastic course (sustainable festival management)"

, Festival Republic ^(SE3)

*"Sustainability and Climate Change is now firmly on society's agenda around the globe and for new event professionals it is no longer an add on but an essential part of their education and practice. Well done to Falmouth University for creating this brilliant new degree course."
(sustainable festival management)*

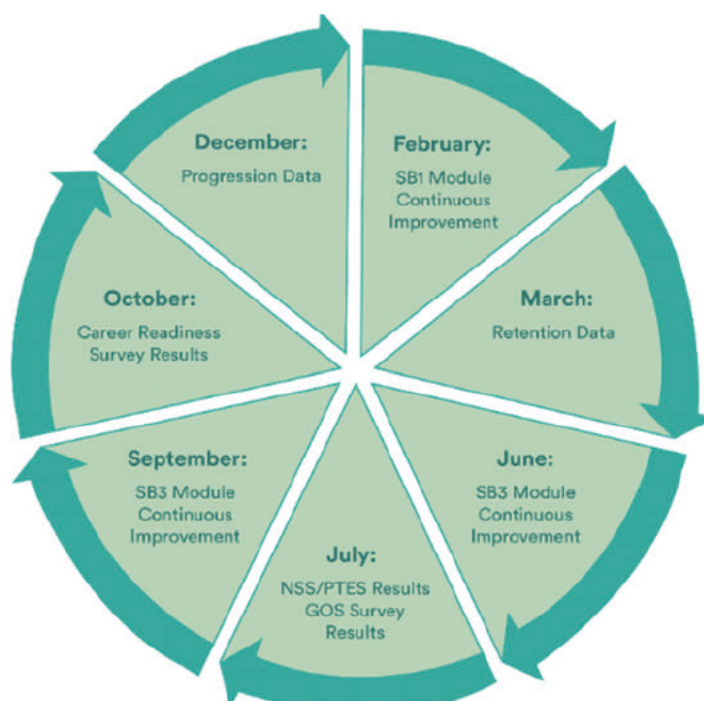
A Greener Festival (SE3)

MONITORING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

We have rigorous continuous improvement procedures in place (both at course and module level), designed to enhance quality and maintain high standards. (SO1)

Our continuous improvement cycle (diagram on next page) offers our students clarity on how courses are measured to facilitate clear, meaningful student-led enhancement year-on-year. (SO5)

Our approach to module evaluation has evolved since we reinvented it at scale in 2015 into a cyclical model of collection and analysis. Most recently, in 2019 a significant consultative review was completed where the outcome was the adoption of a bespoke in-house digital Module Evaluation survey. Every module in the institution completes the survey annually, with students responding to a set of core questions corresponding to the NSS, supplemented with key internally relevant contextual questions. (SE7)



Historically we have excellent participation in our module evaluation, typically seeing 100% of modules receiving feedback, with an average of 85% of the total institutional module evaluation completion coming from our undergraduate students (31,792 questions answered in total: 27,034 responses from UG students in 2021/21). Our students use their module evaluation to take greater agency and offer their valuable feedback so we can act upon this and close the loop in a "you said, we did" approach informed by data. This "you said, we did" loop is central to all our module evaluation and SSLG processes, ensuring student voice is at the core of our discussions on improvements which allows us to coordinate student voice, student experience and student representation through our SSLGs and the discussions taking place. In this way, our approach to SSLGs positively impact the student experiences and underpin development of continuous improvements). (SO6; SE7)

STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our Core Academic and Technical Training (CATT) is our annual in-house learning and teaching convention for staff professional development that has steadily evolved each year and includes our partner institutes. This convention is a centre for exploring all that we offer and all we are developing to enhance the student experience and outcomes. Crucially, not only does this engage academic

staff, but also technical and professional services, exemplifying Falmouth University's commitment to improving our student experience, promoting consistency and good practice across the breadth of its staff body. [\(SE4; SE5\)](#)

Recent CATT themes included blended learning; inclusive learning; assessment practice; feedback practice; personal tutoring; embedded employability and Scholarship of Learning and Teaching.

As Falmouth grows its CPD and Scholarship of L&T ambitions, we have linked CATT to supporting colleagues in gaining Advance HE recognition, thereby tactically committing significant time within the busy academic cycle for all academic and technical Falmouth staff to engage in refining L&T, investing in the prestige of L&T and encouraging evaluation of teaching practice in a supportive environment. [\(SE4\)](#)

3. STUDENT OUTCOMES

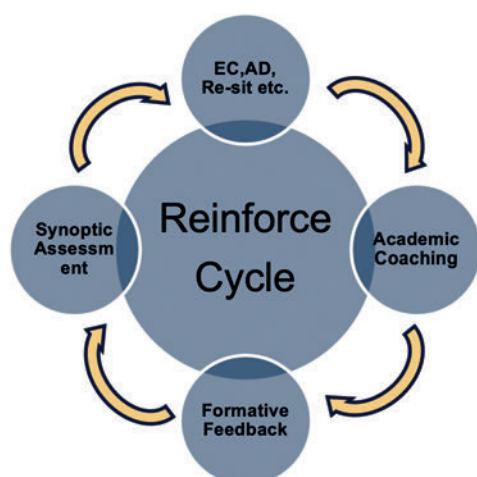
Our Triple Intervention to aid student outcomes and success:

Intervention 1 - Steadying the pace / intensity of learning to enhance outcomes

Since 2020, we emerged from the pandemic with a clearer vision of what our students need to succeed and collectively developed a plan to implement three parallel inter-connected interventions at the same time across our student journey. These interventions were designed to facilitate self-directed learning and preparation for assessment and practice with the main objective of increasing student academic attainment and continuation. [\(SO2\)](#)

Extensive staff and student consultation resulted in an overhaul of our existing study block (semester) model, moving from 12 teaching weeks with 3 assessment weeks to teaching across all 15 weeks to allow for better spreading of study intensity. This created space for healthy curriculum design decision-making, co-created with our students, leading to more manageable workloads, better mental health, and inclusive creative practice. [\(SE2; SE5; SO5\)](#)

Intervention 2 – Inclusion of Universal Academic Enhancement weeks



A universal period of enhancement in the three weeks leading up to re-assessment, we call the “Reinforce Cycle”, was made available to any student who found themselves in a failing or re-sitting position in 2020/21. Students were scaffolded through a short, focused period of enhanced academic coaching to work collaboratively towards their re-assessment opportunity encompassing their failed course level learning outcomes, thereby allowing those who completed the cycle to be supported to regain their academic position and successfully progress with their studies. [\(SE5; SO5\)](#)

These weeks were implemented within academic departments to provide targeted academic support for the most impactful student engagement. The volume of students with a clean “progress” outcome jumped from

37.75% in 2020/21 to 59.5% in 2021/22, where the enhancement weeks had positive impact on re-assessment board outcomes for all Level 4, 5 and 6 students. The average positive improvement across all academic departments was 23.8%, also presenting many good practice sharing opportunities within our learning community as departments compared their local arrangements as part of ongoing staff teaching CPD enhancement planning. [\(SE1; SO4\)](#)

Intervention 3 - Synoptic assessment: A pilot study

Synoptic assessment is defined as combining two or more modules of study into a one assessment, giving students the opportunity to show that they can transfer knowledge and skills learned in one context towards another. Building on this clear foundation of “Transition Pedagogy”, in 2021/22 Falmouth piloted synoptic assessment during the key re-assessment period to give students a unique way to demonstrate attainment of their learning outcomes across multiple different elements of their course, playing to our approach of encouraging “deep” learning. Being aware synoptic can make this style of assessment both challenging but also reliable in terms of learning outcome achievement, rather than just adopt at scale, we wanted to pilot its effectiveness to be sure it would work for our students. The pilot revealed that synoptic assessment (*adopted for Level 4 students only in this pilot*) as an initiative to aid continuation and success enjoyed a 92% success rate for those students who undertook that assessment mode in 2021/22. Synoptic assessment therefore remains a viable assessment mode for Falmouth post-pilot and moving forward, as we next invest greater time and institution-level training to align this approach to our wider curriculum design developments and regulatory landscape. (SE7; SO5)

EXEMPLAR IMPACT CASE STUDY: **FEEDBACK FRUITS**

Our Games Academy has partnered with educational technology company Feedback Fruits to explore peer assessment and teamwork pedagogy at scale. Working in multidisciplinary teams on year-long projects which comprise most of their credit-bearing work, Games Academy students needed a robust way to operate regular peer-review which contributed to a holistic assessment of their team-working and Agile product management methodology skills. Feedback Fruits provided this first in a pilot for 123 final year students during 2019/20. Making use of their peer assessment and anonymous team feedback tools, the Games Academy was able to evolve a system which had previously relied upon direct staff input, into one which operated autonomously. This gradually built-up student trust in a process which had the potential to contain bias and favouritism. Peer-review is a critical activity which is designed to build resilience, and was not always popular with students, but a digital framework built around it in the online VLE space emphasised the value of the process. The rolling out of the pilot to the full Games Academy cohort of circa 850 students for academic cycle 22/23 cemented the tools’ value at scale and allowed the course team to shift focus from the role of peer-review into the way they mentor, assess, and supervise teams, using the established system as a reliable baseline and a place which data and patterns can be drawn from. The course team have engaged in scholarly dissemination at conferences regarding the use of this tool and the value of peer-review and peer feedback in their teaching model. (SE1; SE3; SO1)

The University is a member of the Specialist Evidence, Research & Evaluation (SEER)_external evaluation and research project group. During 2022, there are three research and evaluation projects underway including ‘students with disabilities: experiences and outcomes’; ‘student services and racial equality’; and ‘the impact of remote learning on accessibility’. Our recent SEER report on attainment showed: (SE3; SO2)

- **Overall attainment** rate for 19/20 was 77%, rising to 81% in 20/21
- Attainment for students from **POLAR4 Q1+Q2** was at 77% in 19/20 rising 1 pp. in 20/21 to 78%.
- Attainment for **disabled students** rose 6pp. between 19/20 and 20/21 from 73% to 79%
- Both **mature and non-mature students** attained at a rate of 77% in 19/20. This was slightly higher in 20/21 for mature students (to 80%) and for non-mature students (81%)

FALMOUTH AND PARTNERSHIP

Falmouth University engages in a range of collaborative provision partnerships, both franchise and validation: 7 franchise and 4 validation. These include Academy of Multimedia Design and Technology; Bodmin College; dBs Institute; Fourth Monkey; Fashion Retail Academy; Sharpe Academy and Waterbear. ^(SE3)

We monitor and support our partners to ensure excellent student experience and outcomes. We engage an Academic Partnership Manager model supported by dedicated link tutors on a department-by-department basis, who undertake regular communication, site visits and enhancement events throughout the year. We also run an annual Partnership [Symposium](#) where we share best practice and showcase innovation and excellence. Additionally, partnership quality and standards monitoring takes place quarterly via a dedicated Collaborative Provision Committee, with positive student outcomes (including retention and B3 compliance) being at the centre of every jointly agreed action. ^(SE1; SE4)

In terms of NSS performance, while several of our franchise partners are too small or the provision has not yet been running long enough to return in the 2022 NSS, those who do (dBs Institute (75%); Fourth Monkey (76%) and WaterBear (76%)) each perform at or close to the sector average of 76%. Only the Fashion Retail Academic falls below the sector average, returning 68%, this figure being an amalgam of FRA's raft of courses, where they individually returned: BA(Hons) Business Management for Fashion - 100%; BA(Hons) Buying & Merchandising - 73% and BA(Hons) Marketing & Communication for Fashion - 56%.

Our enhancement and support infrastructures are clearly aimed at aiding our partners to improve their NSS scores through collaboration, sharing of best practice and academic development. ^(SE3)

Falmouth's franchise partnership TEF data shows outstanding student outcomes in relation to completion and progression compared to sector benchmarks (table below). ^(SO3; SO6)

Student Outcomes	Type of Partnership; Registered - BENCHMARK	Type of Partnership; Registered - FALMOUTH	Materially Different?
Continuation	85.7%	81.6%	-4.1ppt below benchmark
Completion	80.5%	93.3%	+12.8 above benchmark
Progression	65%	68%	+3.2 above benchmark

Falmouth aids our partners in supporting and developing their academic rigor and they leverage their highly current industry and employability networks to ensure their students are highly sought-after and therefore, highly employable post-study. ^(SO6)

EXEMPLAR IMPACT CASE STUDY: **BODMIN COLLEGE**

Our partnership with Bodmin College is an exemplar of a key facet of our TEF narrative which is to excel in offering inclusive and accessible Higher Education for all students. The College offers a small range of higher education courses; FdA Digital Media; BA(Hons) Digital Media Level 6 Top Up and a newly approved BA(Hons) Creative & Professional Writing (from Sep 2023) and covers POLAR4 areas of Quintile 1, 2 and 3 deprivation with Bodmin Town, itself, having a concentration of Quintile 1 and 2. Through this partnership, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who are local to Bodmin (and who otherwise would not enter higher education or “go away” to university) can now study close to home for a degree qualification, thereby widening opportunities and access for many students from the most deprived backgrounds (S03, S05)

“We couldn’t be prouder to now offer a degree-level education right here in Bodmin. It has taken years of hard work from our school community so achieving the accolade is just fantastic. It is the first of its kind in the South West.”

[REDACTED], BA (Hons) and FdA Digital Media, [REDACTED] (S04; S05)

“It’s absolutely fantastic to offer degree provision to students in Bodmin – offering flexibility and support for students who may not have even considered going to University.”

[REDACTED]
School of Communication Design ([REDACTED]) (S04; S05)

EXEMPLAR IMPACT CASE STUDY: **WATERBEAR**

Waterbear’s 360° Artist Service is an example of how our partners excel in providing students with the tools they need to succeed in their chosen industry. The 360° Artist Service is structured in 5 phases: (SE3; S01)

1. In-class Masterclasses: guest speakers are invited to deliver as part of timetable classes
2. 1:1 Mentoring: fortnightly mentoring with professional creatives
3. The A&R loop: pro-active support for students to develop musical output to industry quality
4. Consultation: provide higher level connections to industry and high-profile artists connected to a student’s career path/artistic specialism
5. Work Experience: WaterBear careers department proactively finds appropriate jobs for students to apply for.

"The link to employability is one of the highlights of the course. At all stages, students are encouraged to think and act to support themselves not only in a difficult industry, but also beyond in terms of wider employability skills."

External Examiner, (SO3)

"Having now had a chance to see all three study blocks, I can confirm that this is a unique approach to developing career musicians whereby many types of music industry professional and performance artists can be integrated into one overarching course. This fosters creativity within an educational framework, enabling students to develop vocationally appropriate skills but within a larger academic perspective to provide excellent general employability skills."

Institutional EE report (AY 2021-22) (SO2; SO3)

"This aspect [extent to which the award addresses/promotes student employability] remains a highlight of the course and, to my mind, far outshines the majority of other MA music courses. The mentorship programme offers insight and guidance that is industry and field specific."

Institutional EE report (AY 2021-22) (SO3)

"The online resources are excellent. Each module is delivered via short videos that manage to combine sharing practical information with inspiring words. Additionally, the modules are now structured with learning milestones, and a roadmap for the dissertation have been developed. Each module is also presented in Chapter form. Together I think these resources really help students not to feel overwhelmed and to see that, step-by-step, they can achieve their artistic goals within an academic framework."

Institutional EE reports (AY 2021-22) (SE1; SE6)

EDUCATIONAL GAIN

Our working definition of educational gain at Falmouth is *"distance travelled in terms of knowledge and skill development"*. We have several exemplars and case studies that collectively demonstrate how educational gain at Falmouth underpins student experience and outcomes. (SE3)

To offer an informative measure of **distance travelled**, each of our nine academic departments nominated one course from their course portfolio and randomly selected samples from both Level 4 and Level 6 work. These works were evaluated by a senior member of staff in each department against two discrete dimensions (*knowledge - how well does this work convey disciplinary knowledge?* and *skill - Does the work display academic and/or technical skill and if so, to what degree?*) on a standardised 1 – 10 scale. At scale, we institutionally show an average of **29% knowledge gain** and **31% skill gain** between these two levels. It is also worth noting that this gain would be even more pronounced if it had been possible to use students' pre-entry portfolio work, but this was not possible at this time for a variety of reasons, including ethical considerations. (SE2; SE3)

Taken in context with our commitment to a holistic student educational experience and given the incoming profile of our students with respect to learning or other disabilities, these demonstrable knowledge and skills gains are the bedrock upon which Falmouth students build their identities as practitioners and creatives. (SO5)

Career Readiness: The other side of the educational gain coin

Falmouth University uses Career Readiness data to assess educational gain in our students, as a proactive and informed way to aid their progression through their time with us. This is of such importance to our post-pandemic strategic thinking, it was reworked in the 2021/2022 academic year, having two full years of educational gain data in hand. Our in-house datasets were modelled on the national learning gain [project](#). We have adjusted and improved our question set to allow

for in-year, direct work with students and academic staff to pivot and adjust learning and teaching according to the needs of our students based on these data in several ways: ^(SO2; SO3)

- To understand students' preparation for work, further study or entrepreneurship and their levels of confidence. This can be viewed at university, department or course levels
- To utilise this data for in-year learning and teaching: understand levels of confidence and ensure that learning and teaching is pivoted to address this
- To understand student movement/gain. By using a final-year registration point and benchmarking this against earlier years we are able to see whether interventions are having an impact on cohorts
- Individual, personalised emails to students with tailored support, advice and recommended next steps based on their responses
- Access to personalised data for use by personal tutors

EXEMPLAR IMPACT CASE STUDY: **ENVY ACADEMY**

<https://www.envypost.co.uk/careers/envy-academy/>

A strong relationship between our School of Film & Television and a leading postproduction facility has created opportunities including annual visits from recruiting staff, graduate masterclasses, fast tracked placements, and graduate hire. These are embedded in the 'edit' and 'sound' pathways within the department. ^(SE3; SO1)

EMPLOYABILITY: OUR MYRIAD OUTCOMES

"Falmouth University is proud of its outstanding student experience and its outstanding completion metrics. However, we recognise that our progression data does not represent the positive outcomes that we believe our students achieve."

As prefaced in our introduction section, one of Falmouth's core strengths is that it attracts more than double the national average of disabled students and we are proud that their student experience meets or exceeds benchmark across all metrics. ^(SE2; SE5)

Student Experience	Benchmark Value	Falmouth	National Average	Falmouth Gap Disabled to Non-Disabled	National Gap Disabled to Non-Disabled
Teaching on my Course - reported	78.6%	79.3%	80.5%	1.1%	1.2%
Assessment and Feedback - reported	70.7%	71.9%	68.2%	1.8%	2.1%
Academic Support - reported	75.6%	76.4%	74.0%	1.4%	2.7%
Learning Resources - reported	76.5%	79.8%	78.0%	0.7%	3.9%
Student Voice - reported	67.7%	71.2%	67.3%	1.0%	3.8%
Teaching on my Course - unreported	80.3%	80.4%	81.7%		
Assessment and Feedback - unreported	73.2%	73.7%	70.3%		
Academic Support - unreported	78.3%	77.8%	76.7%		
Learning Resources - unreported	79.6%	80.5%	81.9%		
Student Voice - unreported	71.1%	72.2%	71.1%		

Table: NSS 2021/22 data

We are proud to accept and support students with disabilities who might otherwise not enter HE and that they graduate from Falmouth outcomes in line with the sector benchmarks. ^(SO1)

However, as our progression metrics do not mirror this success, we reflect on the literature which highlights the significant challenges for these learners in transitioning into employment (Shaw, 2021).

Our work with employers will bridge the gaps between the ideals of inclusive learning and the reality that movement out of HE and into employment is still clearly a challenge for the sector and for us (Cheatham and Randolph, 2022).^(SE3; SO1)

This bridging means becoming more effective in employment support at the transition, due to the highly personal nature of the challenges faced by our disabled students when entering the market after their time achieving with us. We cannot control an employer's readiness to receive a student with a disability, but we can look to enhance our influence through industry relationships and the tools and the industry connectedness we provide to students throughout their studies.^(SO3)

Falmouth is not a generalist institution but offer courses in a specialist creative arts vein. Although across all subject areas, our outcomes are below average, in our specialisms we perform strongly against other institutions. For example, in the latest GOS data Falmouth out-performs UK averages in CAH25-01-49 (Cinematics and photography) by 1%, our single biggest subject area. Additionally, Falmouth outperforms UK averages for CAH-02-03 (Music) by 1% nationally.^(SO1; SO2)

In terms of our progression metrics, our local Cornish context is also significant. The sub-regional labour-market does not sustain high volumes of graduates; in the year to April 2022, Cornwall had the lowest number of available jobs in any unitary council in the South-West, over five-times fewer than Bristol. When look at roles for graduates (Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral levels); the gap widens more considerably, with only 3865 opportunities in Cornwall versus 27,170 unique opportunities in Bristol. Source: Lightcast (EMSI/Burning Glass) Regional salaries in Cornwall are also significantly below the national average. National median weekly pay for full-time employees was £640 in April 2022, while in Cornwall it was £425.^(SO2; SO3)

Falmouth University has always been committed to creating the skills and knowledge that will drive economic growth in the county. Across the UK, SMEs account for 99.9% of the business population and 75% of companies do not employ anyone aside from the owner. New business owners and job creators are a vital part of the local and regional economy.^(SO4)

When considering the Falmouth student, we are clear that Student Entrepreneurship is a core part of the learning experience for all of our students, an integral part of their institutional identity as well a philosophy at the core of what it means to be a "Falmouth student". This is evidenced in our Graduate Outcomes data, where we have one of the highest self-employment rates in the UK, increasing year-on-year over the last three years, showing 27% of our graduates are primarily in self-employment, and that 40% of our graduates are involved in some sort of self-employment as part of their employment mix.^(SO3; SO4)

These statistics very accurately reflect the Falmouth student mindset, where their entrepreneurial spirit and passion is driving post-HE behaviours that do not necessarily reflect well in the "standard" progression metrics but instead, show our graduates' passion to pursue their creative and artistic practice with a single-minded determination.^(SO3; SO4)

EXEMPLAR IMPACT CASE STUDY: RESPONSIBLE INNOVATION PLASTICS PROJECT FOR LIFE AND ENVIRONMENT (RIPPLE)

This British Council funded project partnered the Biji-biji Initiative with our School of Architecture, Design & Interiors in a knowledge and skills transfer programme to innovate new product and communications opportunities based on an ongoing small-scale plastic recycling project in Malaysia. Sustainable Product Design and Graphics students worked in collaborative teams to empathise, ideate and innovate new opportunities that leverage the existing waste processing and material strategies utilised by Biji-biji as part of their social enterprise initiatives.^(SO1; SO4)

External independent reports also highlight our success in this, even when looking at raw numbers of start-ups, Falmouth sits within the top three UK universities and it must be noted that, given our relative size, this performance is world leading.^(SE3; SO3)

- Hitachi Capital Study – Falmouth University Second in UK for start-ups: <https://www.hitachicapital.co.uk/business-finance/invoice-finance/invoice-finance-blog/uk-university-s-students-most-likely-to-start-or-manage-a-business/>
- Tide Start-Up League Table: Falmouth University Graduates 3rd in UK for graduate start-ups with 1135 graduate start-ups since 2014-15. <https://www.tide.co/blog/tide-update/university-start-up-league/>

“The university with the most grad start-ups outside of London is Falmouth, located in Cornwall, which saw 1,135 businesses started by its alumni since 2014/15.”

[The Tide Report](#)

A FOCUS ON EMPLOYABILITY FROM DAY 1



Falmouth's Learning and Teaching is predicated on the embeddedness of industry-facing knowledge and skills throughout the curriculum and placed in a practice-relevant contextual learning environment. This encourages students to stretch themselves to acquire professional-standard skills and knowledge ready for industry.^(SE2)

Complementing this academic approach is an agile, future-focussed employability service. In 2020, forged in the crucible of Covid-lockdowns, Falmouth invested in a brand-new employability service to support partners to deliver improved outcomes for Falmouth students and graduates.^(SO5)

“For such a small team, the breadth of impact Falmouth has managed to achieve across the institution is significant and impressive. The strong buy-in from key stakeholders and the clear alignment of the project with the strategic implementation focus of this category is what made them stand out amongst tough competition.”

AGCAS, June 2021 ^(SE1; SE6)

Employability is an integral part of every Falmouth course. The University's innovative 'REAL' model of student employability (*diagram below*) helps guide students through each step of their professional development, repeated, reinforced and iteratively developed each time. This model was developed informed by sector best practice and tailored to the University's strategic objectives. This model was recognised when it won the AGCAS award for Best Strategy in 2021, competing against shortlisted universities such as Oxford University. In December 2021 we achieved the national Quality Standard, evidencing high standards of professional delivery.^(SO5; SO6)

REALISE: Understand and assess your strengths, interests, values, development areas.

EXPLORE: Explore options available; things you can engage with to help you develop. Planning your next-steps.

ACTION: Doing it for real – undertaking experiences, taking calculated risks and expanding your horizons.

LEARN: Reflect on experiences, building your resilience. Be more knowledgeable, prepared and ready.

Our Employability service works with courses at all levels and through all stages of the course life cycle, through curriculum design and delivery in the curriculum, as well as through the latest employability resources and a strong offer present within our curricula. During their time at university, our students have access to a wide range of support to help boost their employability in addition to placements, live-briefs and professional practice components in their course. (SO1; SO5)

With an eye on mitigating our progression metric data, we have introduced specific measures tailored to our student community, their creative aspirations and their positive outcomes. Of note, is our Talent Coaches, who offer dedicated 1-2-1 support. (SO3; SO5)

In the 2021-22 academic year, Falmouth University also pioneered a new micro-internship programme. This internship scheme focusses on providing students with paid work experiences. These short, sharp, focussed internships deliver high value to associated businesses and support economic growth in the local area whilst enhancing the employability of our Widening Participation students. In 2021-22, our students completed >100 micro-internships with >90% of these being undertaken by our WP students. Funding has been agreed year-on-year to maintain this key provision for our students. Of note, this scheme gained 100% positive employer and student feedback in its evaluation. (SO4; SO5)

"The interns we have used have both been diligent in communicating progress with us and liaising on the somewhat unusual brief and being adaptable in making changes along the way"

Beaver Trust 2021/22 (SO1)

Some other key highlights from the most recent academic year include:

- Increased volume and scale of embedded employability delivery in the curriculum; with nearly 400,000 learner-hours* delivered face-to-face. (*Learner Hours = total number of learners x delivery time) (SO5)
- 2421 students attended employability-focussed delivery in their curriculum
- 64 new employability online courses launched for students. (SE6)
- Have grown and developed online systems with increased usage– supporting more students and alumni with their career – over 50,000 career-based activities have been undertaken through these systems during the last year. (SE6)
- Have increased alumni engagement through an improved graduate offer, new alumni newsletter with high-open rates, developed an alumni LinkedIn group with over 2000 members. (SO3; SO5)

Whilst we don't necessarily see the effects of these innovations yet in our core-data, we anticipate significant improvements in our graduate outcomes over-time once the lag-effect of this data starts to materialise over the next few years. (SO6)

Alumni Support and Services

In addition to the usual alumni engagement activity, such as monthly newsletters, ongoing access to employability support, digital employability systems, jobs and opportunities etc, we also run an annual cycle of six-month check-ins every January via a 'How are you doing' campaign to all alumni from the previous year, providing personalised responses to our graduates offering support, where needed. (SO1; SO3)

Industry and Employer Engagement

Direct relationships between the university and employers are crucial to help smooth the transition for our students between continuation to progression.

This is a work in progress for us. Since 2020, and the introduction of a new employability team, the University has built relationships with over 4000 employers and have posted over 13,000 paid opportunities for our students. At Falmouth University, we do not advertise any unpaid opportunities to ensure that all students have access to opportunities. (SE3; SO1)

"Building a close relationship with Falmouth University has opened doors to exciting projects and continues to facilitate our ability to recruit rapidly when it is most needed. They are the link that connects us to the sharpest, rising talent in music business and performance, driving fresh ideas and spirited energy".

[Redacted] RouteNote) 2021/22 <https://routenote.com> (SE3)

EXEMPLAR CASE STUDY: DRAGONS' DEN

Utilising Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) monies, we've developed our own in-house annual Dragons' Den competition providing £6k of funding to innovative start-ups or initiatives that seek solutions to social problems. Utilising senior staff, including our VC and illustrious alumni to judge the student presentations and provide wrap-around support for all students to help turn their ideas, products or services into reality. (SE5; SO5)

"The help I've got from RealWORKS as part of the Dragons Den event was that it really helped me look at my business from a different perspective and put new ideas into it and was really beneficial."

Student participant on Dragons Den (SE5; SO5)

EXEMPLAR CASE STUDY: CULTURAL IMMERSION

Leading the way with the new Turing Fund, Falmouth developed a new cultural immersion programme in the summer of 2022. 60 Falmouth students went to one of three partner Universities: Ringling in Florida, Sunway in Malaysia, Florence University of the Arts, Italy. This short, sharp one month experience was developed to maximise the value of the funding and ensure as many students as possible benefitted. Students were immersed in the culture of their host countries, explored different ways of learning and developed new skills. This programme has a strong widening participation focus and over 80% of the participants were from a WP background, many of whom had never left the country before. (SE5)

"This has changed my life"

Student quote on cultural immersion programme

EXEMPLAR CASE STUDY: NATIONAL TRUST PARTNERSHIP

At the School of Communication, students have an annual opportunity to work with National Trust Publishing on a project. Our Writer-in-Residence writes a novella, and a group of third year students edit the manuscript, typeset it, commission an illustrator and arrange for it to be published, as well as designing and carry out a marketing campaign and manage the launch. Talking about being involved in the collaboration with author student said: "I like that I will be able to gain practical experience working in the publishing world, and learn things I wouldn't have had the opportunity to, like how book printing works. I'm excited to work with and to be part of the process to help create the book." (SE3; SO4)

"The students didn't just think outside the box, they smashed the box up."

NHS representative

"At a strategic level, the University engagement with the Employment and Skills board of the LEP is invaluable to supporting the growth of our local economy through the connection of the voices of industry and Higher Education."

LEP Employment and Skills Board

EXEMPLAR CASE STUDY: MAYN CREATIVE

Named for the Cornish words for "agency" and "mediator", Mayn Creative is a university spin-out agency that bridges education and industry, offering its clients the creative skills and approaches of current and former Falmouth University students which in turn, allows our students to test, enhance and validate their creative and technological skills in the commercial environment. The intention is to support our student contractors in realising their personal value and the value of the skills they have been practicing and developing through their studies. Mayn Creative works with several external and high-profile stakeholders, such as the Eden Project, NHS Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust and Devon and Cornwall Police. From 2019 to current date, Mayn has offered 256 professional assignments for 103 students. (SE4; SO5)

EXEMPLAR IMPACT CASE STUDY: INTERMITTING RETURNERS PROJECT

Intermitting Returners Project, (example of a wider set of initiatives looking at Student Outcomes) is a joint initiative by two professional services teams (SPA and Student Records), launched in time for semester 1 2022, to streamline the return of intermitting student and improve communications relating to outstanding student work. This was process designed to enhance retention and positively impact on student outcome by ensuring that all returning students are immediately reminded of their academic position on their return, along with details of their next available submission point. By ensuring that the student and their support team are informed, and all systems are updated at the point of return, we thereby reduce the possibility of incidental non-submission, failure at assessment board, appeals and complaint, while simultaneously putting the student in the best position to successfully achieve their target outcome. (SO1; SO2)

CONCLUSION

Across the Falmouth TEF narrative statement above, we have mapped the Student Experience and Student Outcomes from Annex A in brackets and superscript where each SE or SO code best applied to our narrative. We approached mapping in this way to consolidate our case for excellence in our own context as clearly as possible without losing the flow of our narrative or having the mapping take priority over our practice, which is as unique to Falmouth as our mission and values. Whether it is in conversation with our partners or in collaboration with our students and employer stakeholder, the ethos and gains we continually make are felt in every case study, through every quote and in every aspect of our curricula.

Learning, teaching, assessment, feedback, support, development, facilitates, resources, engagement and educational gains are not only evidenced, but make up our way of life at Falmouth. We live and breathe our practice-based education and our students take that with them into the wider world and in many cases, bring those back to our facilitates and our community to help us all continually improve so that our students enjoy their own version of success, no matter what that looks like for them individually.

Many thanks for coming on this narrative journey with Falmouth and our learning communities.

4. REFERENCES

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