



Furness College

TEF 2023 PROVIDER SUBMISSION
January 2023



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1. PROVIDER CONTEXT

1.1 BACKGROUND

Furness College is an unincorporated general Further Education (FE) college situated in the industrial and relatively isolated town of Barrow-in-Furness in Cumbria. The College campus comprises of multiple sites with all Higher Education (HE) delivered at the main Channelside campus. The College's Governing Body oversees the College's strategic direction, financial stability and policies, and monitors quality and standards. The executive team, led by the Principal, is responsible for strategic planning and resource allocation at the College. In March 2019 Ofsted judged the College to be Good reporting that the College Leaders and managers use their links with local employers and key stakeholders productively to develop the curriculum so that it meets local and regional needs and priorities and that managers use very effective systems to determine the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

The HE Committee oversees all aspects of delivering HE at Furness College, chaired by the Director of Curriculum for Higher Level Learning and with management representations from Curriculum, Quality, Planning and Performance, Information Systems, Student Services, Marketing and Learning Resources. The Committee meets monthly and ensures a collaborative and consistent approach to quality enhancement across our full HE offer and that the student voice remains central to all improvements. The Committee reports regularly to the Senior Leadership Team and termly to Governors via the Learner Experience Committee.

The Colleges' involvement in a series of projects to increase access to and participation in HE aims to raise aspirations of people in the town. These projects include the College's successful bid as part of the Government funded Town Deal for the Barrow Learning Quarter. This investment will be used to upgrade the College's sixth form campus creating invigorating new spaces within an established building that suit the educational and study needs of our students today and continues to build on our long track record of success in helping students progress into HE and employment. The Barrow Learning Quarter project allows for a further joined-up approach from secondary education into employment, further and higher education.

The College is an integral partner of Hello Future, the Cumbrian hub of the national Uni Connect Programme, with representation at an executive and operational level. The Hello Future team for Barrow are based out of the Channelside campus and work to ensure that every student, whatever their background, has a fulfilling experience of higher education that enriches their lives and careers.

VISION

Inspiring people and changing lives through excellence in education & training

VALUES

Excellence in everything we do



Respect for individuals, enabling equality, diversity and inclusivity



Innovation in how we work, develop and continuously improve



Celebration of the success and achievement of our students and staff



Ambition for the College and its students to be the best they can



Support for students and staff by providing care and promoting well-being and resilience in a safe and protective environment

The focus of College is to provide high-quality vocational education and training for the people and industries of the Furness Peninsula across both Further and Higher Education. The College's vision is **"Inspiring people and changing lives through education and training"** through a set of six key values; **Excellence, Respect, Innovation, Celebration, Ambition and Support** as detailed below from our College Strategy.

Barrow ranks as the fourth largest of Cumbria's six districts, although it is the most densely populated and the most deprived area in Cumbria. Barrow is also the 31st most deprived authority of 326 in England making it in the most deprived 10% of districts in England. Deprivation problems relate, in descending order, to health, employment, income, child poverty and education. Residents often face multiple disadvantages, have specific learning needs and are particularly susceptible to unemployment, Skills for Life deficiencies and social exclusion. Around 49% of residents are male, and the number of ethnic minority residents is 2.9%, which has shown a slight increase in recent years as a result of larger numbers of Eastern Europeans residing in the area. The population profile of HE students at the College is not significantly different to the local profile (98.3% of HE students are white). The TEF hub data dashboard confirms that 41.7% of students studying HE at the College over the last four years are from IMD quintile 1 or quintile 2.

Office for National Statistics (ONS) data shows that when the most recent census was carried out in March 2021, only 24.8% of people in Barrow had a level four or higher qualification, well below the national benchmark at 33.8%. Furness College's HE Provision ensures an equality of opportunity for all potential students within Barrow, allowing them to progress their qualifications without needing to move away from the town.

A strong Student Voice is embedded throughout our HE programmes and students have a pivotal role in reviewing the quality of provision at the College and the direction of the enhancements required. All current and future students have opportunities to access and to succeed in higher education and to progress to successful and rewarding careers. As well as gaining academic knowledge, learners studying HE at Furness College benefit from further educational gains with a key focus on developing employability and professional skills in learners.

Furness College is proud to demonstrate Excellence within its HE offer and recognises the role of students, employers and engagement with partner HEIs and professional bodies in achieving and maintaining these levels. The College uses its links as an FE provider to support learners in accessing and participating in HE, raising aspirations of people in the town and the Student Experience evidence and Student Outcomes demonstrate that students enjoy studying at the college and succeed in their intended outcomes.

1.2 PROVISION OVERVIEW

The HE offer at the College is designed to meet the skills needs and demands of the local area and its people, providing flexible and student focussed modes of delivery. The main economic drivers in the town are within Maritime Defence, including Engineering, Manufacturing and Defence industries as well as the Health Service with a large NHS hospital operating in the town. The programme of HE offered at the College is **designed to meet the economic needs of the area.**

The majority of HE provision at the College is part time, allowing learners to study alongside their other commitments or through day release from their employment, with some small elements of full-time delivery for appropriate programmes. Class sizes are small, considerably smaller than in larger HEIs and allow for a more bespoke, and learner centred delivered. The full breakdown of proportion of HE against each subject area is shown below, highlighting that the focus of provision is within STEM based subjects with the majority of provision across Engineering programmes.

Name	CourseTitle	18/19 (%)	19/20 (%)	20/21(%)	21/22(%)
A201 BUSINESS	UoC Foundation Degree Business Management (Project Management)	16.4	25.3	15.7	3.0
	UoC BA Honours in Business Management with Project Management Studies				
A203 CONSTRUCTION	UoC Foundation Degree Construction Management	1.5	2.5	3.2	2.4
	BTEC L4 Higher National Certificate in Construction and the Built Environment				
A206 EARLY YEARS AND EDUCATION	UCLan Certificate in Education	12.5	12.5	10.6	12.4
	UCLan Foundation Degree in Children, Young People and their Services				
	UCLan BA (Hons) Education & Professional Studies (Top-Up)				
	UCLan Certificate in Education and Training, Preparatory				
A210 HEALTH	UCLan BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care (Top Up)	3.4	4.5	5.9	3.0
	UCLan Foundation Degree in Health & Social Care				
A211 ICT	UoC Foundation Degree in Computing	5.9	5.8	6.9	7.3
	UCLAN BSc (Hons) Degree Computing				
	UoC BSc (Hons) Computer Systems Development				
A213 TECHNICAL ENGINEERING	UCLan HNC in Mechanical & Computer Aided Engineering	56.2	63.7	66.0	66.4
	UCLan HNC in Electrical & Electronic Engineering				
	LANCS BEng (Hons) Degree Electrical & Electronic Engineering				
	LANCS BEng (Hons) Degree Mechanical Engineering				
Grand Total					

Successful and established partnership working and strong relationships with local employers ensures the effectiveness and quality of our HE Curriculum. We have well established partnership relationships with Lancaster University, the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) and the University of Cumbria (UoC) allowing us to offer the variety and breadth of programmes to meet the needs of the local area. At the most recent Periodic Course Review (PCR) in 2021 with UCLan, who validate the majority of our HE offer including Education, Health, ICT and HNC Engineering, they summarised ***"The college was excelling in many areas which greatly enhances the learning experience of the student, ensuring it remains relevant and up to date to the industry which it serves. They are demonstrating good practice across many areas for which they should be commended"***.

In addition to our partner HEIs and employers, our HE Engineering programmes are accredited by the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET). At the latest reaccreditation event held in Spring 2020, which involved students, teaching staff and employers, the Panel commended ***"the very effective engagement that the department achieves with the***

students including high attendance and student satisfaction and excellent progression rates”.

The College aims to grow its accessible HE provision within Barrow and has successfully been awarded two recent grants to support this, the **Higher Technical Education Growth Fund** to develop Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQ) within Health and Digital and more recently, the **Higher Technical Skills Education Injection Fund** to develop our HE offer within Business Management. Through a collaborative **Strategic Development Fund** (SDF) project, Furness College are a key partner working with local FE and HE providers to continue to develop a comprehensive education offer to meet the skills needs of the county. A key workstream within the SDF project for Furness College is to work with the University of Cumbria to develop a level six adult nursing offer within Barrow, meeting the local skills needs by providing a route for school leavers to train to become an adult nurse without needing to leave the town. This collaboration work will further remove barriers and increase access and participation to potential students accessing higher level qualifications within Barrow.

1.3 TEF SUBMISSION

Furness College have chosen to participate in this round of TEF voluntarily, **confident in our case for excellence and recognising the value of a TEF rating for our provision**. This submission covers all HE delivered by Furness College and whilst higher and degree apprenticeship numbers in the College are growing, they are excluded from this submission.

the HE Student Representative and HE Student Governor has compiled a supporting TEF Student Nominee Submission which further supports evidence provided in this submission. has been engaged in the full TEF process and been given access to all quality resources as requested. has reviewed this full submission to ensure a consistent and aligned approach.

The HE Committee, along with the wider student population through the College’s strong Student Voice, have overseen the compilation of this submission ensuring **a whole College approach to demonstrating Excellence** in our HE offer.

2. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

2.1 ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE AND ASSESSMENT

The quality of teaching, learning, feedback and assessment practices across HE Provision at Furness College are excellent and evidenced by a number of internal and external sources. The teaching, learning and assessment strategies used across our HE programmes have been informed by the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education, the QAA Framework for Higher Education (2014), and for Engineering, the AHEP: UKSPEC Third Edition, and the QAA Subject Benchmark for Engineering (2019).

Students have a pivotal role in reviewing the quality of provision at the College and the directions of enhancements required through external surveys (NSS), internal Module

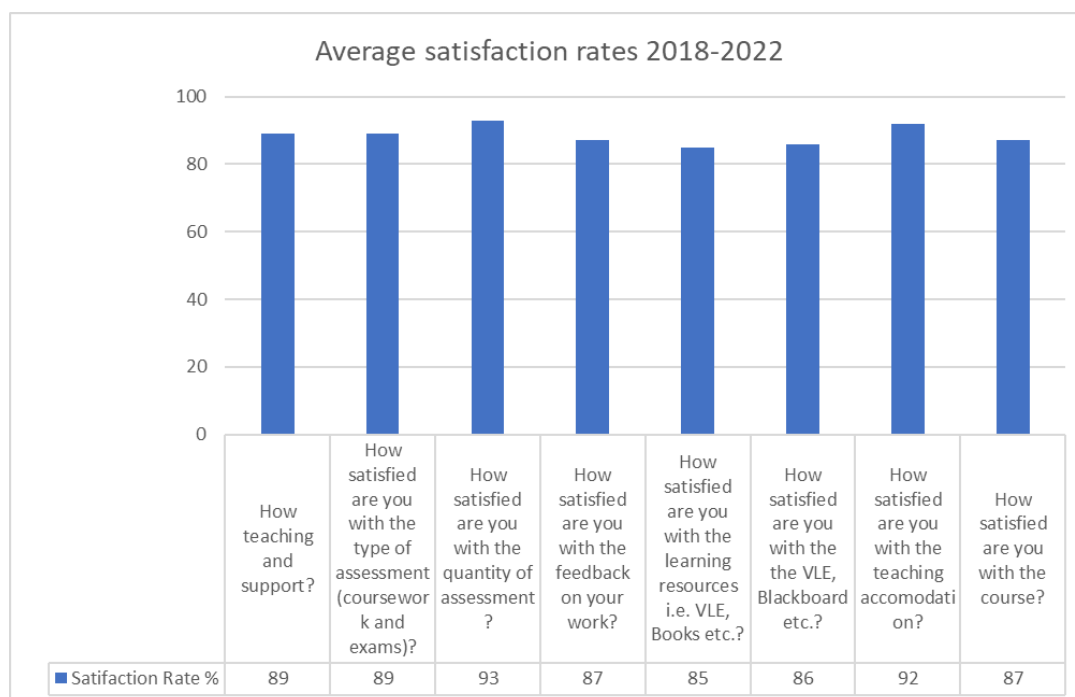
Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs), Staff Student Liaison Meetings each Semester (SSLMs) and through student representation as a HE Rep and Governor, attending the College Learner Experience Committee throughout the year. A comprehensive quality improvement planning process ensures a focus on continual improvements, with Quality a standing agenda item at HE Committees and any actions identified feeding into our College wide Strategic Quality Improvement Plan and monitored as an Executive level.

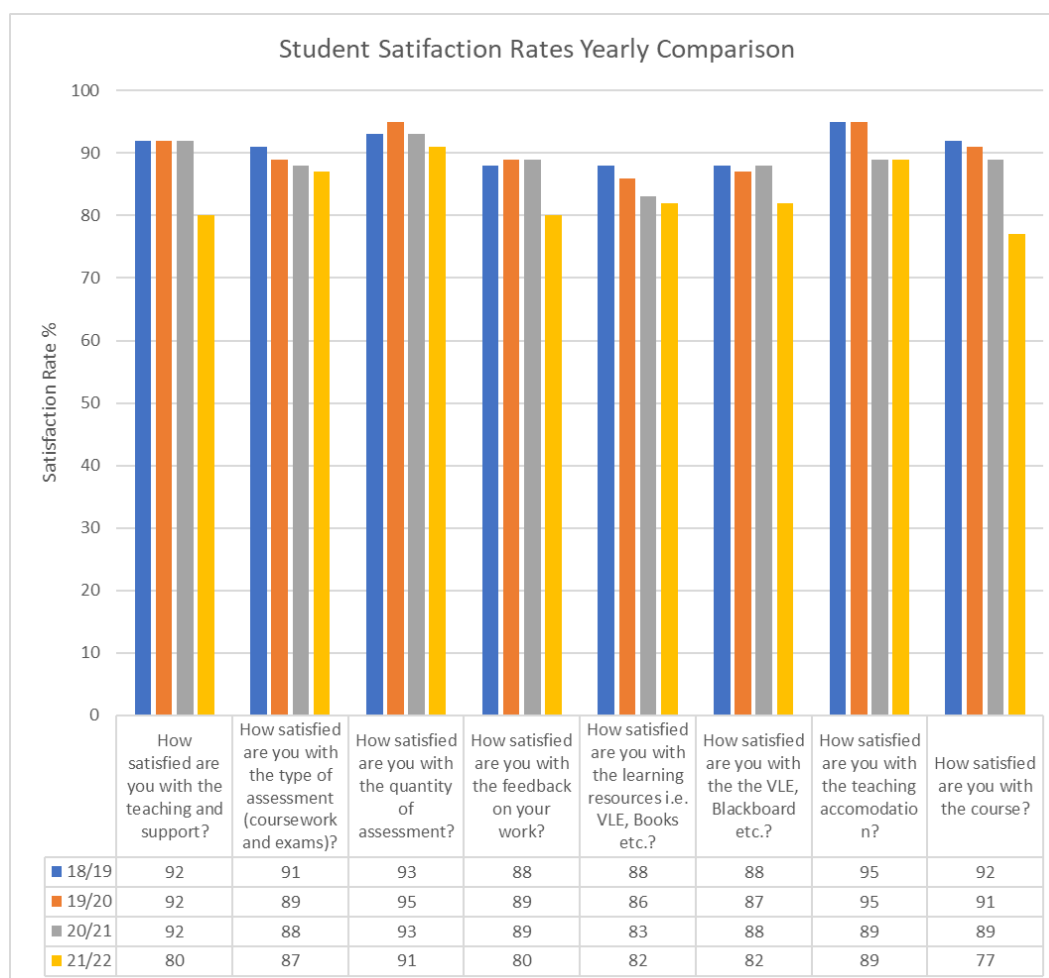
In the 2021-22 NSS the College saw **an increase of 5% in overall student satisfaction** to a rate of 85% against the national benchmark at 77%. The College had **the highest rates of satisfaction** amongst HE Providers in the local travel-to-learn area.

The high levels of satisfaction statistically are reflected in the student comments recorded in the survey such as ***"The organisation of the course is excellent. I have spent 6 years at the college, from an apprenticeship to BEng Hons, and the BEng is far more organised than any of the other courses I have been on. Teaching is of a high quality. The tutors are always available inside and outside of college hours to give support when needed. Tutors treat the students with respect. Having smaller classes is excellent and there is more one-to-one tuition. It is much easier to ask questions in class, which tutors encourage. The manufacturing facilities available are excellent."***

2.1.1 TEACHING, LEARNING, ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

Internal Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs) are carried out across all modules for all programmes on a semester basis and along with SSLMs, they provide essential and targeted feedback on levels of satisfaction across a range of areas. A summary of the consistently high average satisfaction rates over the previous four years is shown below along with a further yearly comparison and analysis.





Internal MEQ data suggests that satisfaction rates around teaching, learning and assessment have **historically been consistently high across all sectors at 92%**, however satisfaction rates fell in 2020-21. Once identified, this was investigated and found to be localised within Engineering. The below table shows the MEQ satisfaction rates by curriculum area for 2021-22, highlighting the significant drop in Engineering satisfaction rates.

	Eligible	Responded	% Res	How would you rate the teaching in this module?	How would you rate the support in this module?	How would you rate the type of assessment (coursework and exams) in this module?	How would you rate the quantity of assessment (s) set by the university in this module?	How would you rate the feedback on your work in helping you to improve in this module?	How would you rate the feedback on your work in helping you to improve in this module?	How would you rate the opportunities you have been given to provide your feedback on this module?	How would you rate the overall management of this module?	Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of this module?	Overall
BUSINESS	16	13	81%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
EARLY YEARS AND EDUCATION	49	33	67%	94%	97%	100%	100%	97%	97%	100%	100%	100%	98%
HEALTH	24	20	83%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
ICT	58	43	74%	98%	98%	95%	98%	98%	98%	100%	98%	95%	97%
ENGINEERING	190	147	77%	63%	67%	78%	85%	66%	71%	71%	62%	61%	69%
Combined Results	337	256	76%	77%	80%	87%	91%	80%	82%	83%	78%	77%	82%

This feedback prompted an immediate response with a series of focus groups led by senior staff and held with student representation from all engineering provision and a college manager from an independent curriculum area. The focus groups, along with MEQ responses and feedback through SSLMs, attributes the reduction in student satisfaction in Engineering in 2020-21 to two key issues

1. Disruption to learning caused by the covid-19 pandemic, specifically those learners who were already part through their programme during the pandemic and were unable to access the Engineering facilities during the lockdown, as well as those new on programme who had studied through the pandemic where adaptations were in place which set their expectations for assessments i.e. remote as opposed to face to face.
2. Significant staff changes due to the retirement of several lecturers and periods of staff absence due to sickness or enforced isolation requirements. These staffing issues were swiftly addressed but this did result in some in-year changes of lecturing staff which affected the student experience.

The student feedback systems that are in place allowed a prompt and appropriate response to this drop in satisfaction and mitigations were immediately put in place. Although out of scope of this submission, MEQ data collected so far for 2022-23 indicates that satisfaction rates with teaching are currently at 93% and the minutes for the Lancaster University BEng student liaison meeting held on 9th January 2023 states ***“Timetable is consistent. Changes in staff caused some minor issues for Electrical students at the beginning of the year – staff and teaching styles changed which caused confusion, but students understand this was a one-off circumstance, and was through no fault of the current staff. Students appreciated that assignment deadlines were amended to compensate for the staffing issues.”***

The TEF dashboard shows the indicator for ‘Teaching on my Course’ at **84.5%, above the benchmark of 81.3%** for the majority of courses with part time provision representing the majority of College provision. Internal MEQ results show on average a satisfaction rate of 89% with the teaching and support on courses **showing students are highly satisfied with the teaching and support** on their course. During the 2019 re-accreditation with the IET, the panel ***‘highly commended the support given to students by tutors, especially for feedback on problem sheets and assignments providing detailed and quick responses.’***

The methods and standardisation of assessment and feedback across all provision is regularly recognised as high quality with 2021 External Examiner comments on the Education programme reporting that ***‘Tutors provide clear feedback and feedforward comments – the ‘your best work was when’ and ‘to improve you need to focus upon’ provide a clear structure for students’***. It is however recognised that through the TEF dashboard, the indicator for assessment and feedback measure at 67.8% is below the benchmark of 79.7% in contrast to internal MEQ results showing much higher levels of satisfaction

Feedback on assignments is provided in a timely fashion and allows learners to identify progress they’ve made and where further input is required. Specifically, areas for development are highlighted allowing the learners themselves to take responsibility for their own learning, and seek the resources they need to improve in a specific area. This is consistent across all

areas and is highly valued by students. A clear example of this is detailed in the following student comment taken from the 2022 NSS survey ***"I think the majority of the tutors that have taught me have been supportive and encouraging. Feedback has been good as part of my self-reflection. I have grown as a person on this course due to the group interactions in lessons and my confidence has improved due to the presentations and group discussions that take place. My computer skills and assignment writing has improved which will be beneficial for future career opportunities."***

2.1.2 EFFECTIVENESS AND CONTENT AND DESIGN OF CURRICULUM

The College curriculum is planned on an annual basis, driven by the skills needs of the local area and feeds into a comprehensive process allowing new courses to be developed and offered. The College works closely with local industry as well as the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership to identify emerging skills needs and forecasts potential training requirements to inform its curriculum planning. The College has recently established a **long-term strategic planning group**, made up of key College Staff including the Principal and College Governors, to look further ahead, allowing us to develop our HE curriculum accordingly.

The Content and Design of our Programmes is excellent, with considered and relevant inputs from learners, employers and in close collaboration with partner representatives feeding into a comprehensive annual curriculum planning process. Lancaster University, our validating partner for all BEng Engineering Programmes, commended **the excellent employer engagement** at the latest revalidation exercise in 2020. They also recognised **'the heavy involvement of students in shaping the new programme design for the 2021 validated programmes as good practice'**.

During the 2020 revalidation of programmes with our partner Lancaster University, they commended the College on ***"A robust quality management and feedback system. This was a multi-faceted approach including informal feedback from students to module leaders on delivery and module content, and also formal feedback"***.

Our Curriculum is planned to acknowledge students' workplaces as a valuable source of learning and enables links to be made between theory and practice. A specific example of this is the on ongoing current development with Siemens PLC. This approach will be a part of their connected curriculum initiative where Siemens are working nationally to inform curriculums of the required skills needed in graduates 'ready for work'. An **agile and responsive curriculum** allowed us to introduce a full time HNC Engineering programme, to compliment our existing part time offer, to meet the skills needs of a local manufacturing employer.

Industrial input and research led teaching and learning is key to the success of our HE programme delivery within Furness College. The majority of our students are employed locally, and we pride ourselves on having established **close working relationships across a range of local businesses**, both SME's and larger firms such as BAE systems, Morecambe Bay NHS Trust and South Cumbria Multi Academy Trust. Through a series of both formal and informal processes **employers are able to contribute and shape course design** and influence module content development including through; Formal Contract Review Meetings with Future Curriculum a standing agenda item, formal consultation in advance of course

changes or development of new facilities, Industry-set coursework and employer influenced projects. For example, within Engineering, a large laundry detergent manufacturer provides project briefs, sample materials and resources as required. An industry representative attends final student presentation where they provide feedback to students in the manner that promotes reflective feedback. Other examples of employer input into curriculum design include informal catch-up sessions, regularly held employer engagement events, operational meetings and employer forums.

"Furness College has an excellent understanding of the higher skill levels we seek and need as a business to be successful and we work closely with them to ensure the qualifications match our business needs throughout all areas. Having a good and strong relationship with a leading college on our doorstep, which is understanding of our employees balance between work and study, has been invaluable."

Students are integral to the planning and design of HE courses and take every opportunity to feedback suggestions for changes and improvements to module design and delivery. They do this via MEQs, SSLMs, course rep meetings and informal feedback from students to module tutors. Suggestions have included improvements around teaching style, content and delivery mechanisms. One such suggestion in the MEQ for a business module read *"Maybe give some examples of real-life companies which failed due to not using the discussed theories"*. This was quickly followed up by the tutor with relevant examples added to the course VLE page for student access and a welcomed student response in the next SSLM.

At our last Periodic Course Review (PCR) with UCLan in 2021, the panel commended the College on ***'A high level of continuing employer involvement informing the curriculum, ensuring it remains relevant. Employer consultative forums advise on pathways, module content, and identify transferrable skills requirements'*** as well as ***'Employer involvement in setting real-work projects for the students and being present at student project presentations'***.

Through the Higher Technical Education Growth Fund, Furness College **has successfully secured funding** to allow its delivery staff to work in partnership with UCLan to work on the alignment and developments of new HTQs as well as allowing the teaching team to contribute to collaborative groups. As part of this project, the Health **lecturing team spent time within industry** in our local NHS trust to build real-life projects into the new curriculum and upskill

on current industry practice, then being able to reflect this in their teaching. The layout, equipment and full design of the College's Clinical Skills Suite is a further example of successful collaboration with industry experts to ensure students benefit from up to date and industry standard training, better equipping them for progressing into the work place.

Close links with employer partners, mandatory work placements or industry standard project modules ensures research and current practice **enriches the content of our curricula** and ensures our lecturers remain up to date in their specialist area. Vocationally trained staff delivering our HE programmes ensures learners are equipped for progressing into the work place with a solid foundation of knowledge, skills and behaviours in their chosen subject.

2.2 RESOURCES, SUPPORT AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

2.2.1 RESOURCES

Staff at Furness College are highly skilled, knowledgeable and engaging and the College has a comprehensive and thorough recruitment process in place for new staff, with students included in the process itself. UCLan cited the involvement of current students in the recruitment of new staff as **'Innovative practice'** at their last PCR in 2021. This is also evidenced via student feedback in surveys with comments such as ***"Tutors have a good variety of knowledge regarding different aspects of the course."*** and ***"The staff are knowledgeable in the subjects that they teach; they are friendly and approachable when guidance is need"***.

UCLAN, through the latest 2021 PCR event, stated that the college has ***"an excellent staff development process focussing on teaching staff acquisition of new skills and staff industrial work placements; the experience gained being passed on to students, providing research led teaching. Through the college's Teacher Training programmes, such as the Cert of Education or PGCE, they are able to source new teaching staff and to provide relevant updating on teaching and learning to existing members of staff."***

The **College invests heavily in the continual professional development of its staff** and understands this investment is critical to both individual satisfaction and academic excellence, ultimately improving the student experience and student outcomes on programmes. The conditions of service for lecturing staff at Furness College include five days per annum to undertake Personal Professional Development. Throughout the year, staff also have the opportunity to carry out CPD in line with College policies to further develop their knowledge and skills to meet a particular need i.e. to develop their ability using CAD software. The cost of this associated training is covered by the College's annual training and development budget which is managed centrally in line with the College CPD Policy. A number of HE staff development events occur each year focussed on various needs as identified including a cross-county HE lecturers' event as a further opportunity for knowledge transfer across other local HEI and disciplines.

The **HE Committee oversees HE staff development** and works strategically to identify future skills needs, allowing opportunity for staff to upskill in advance. Succession planning forms

a key part of this remit, feeding into the annual curriculum planning process. The membership of the Curriculum Lead for Engineering on the Governor led long-term strategic planning group recognises the importance of retaining higher level engineering skills within the teaching teams.

Furness College supports staff membership of associated professional bodies and will cover the cost of the annual associated fees. Furness College will support members of staff in gaining such professional memberships and there is a recognised need to increase the number of staff in all departments who are associated with professional bodies.

The Furness College Performance Review Scheme is a formal appraisal framework for reviewing and raising employee performance across College and for personal and professional development in relation to College aims and objectives. The College's review scheme **empowers managers and employees to have high-quality growth conversations** and set personal development goals supported by clear and motivating action plans. Ultimately, the scheme reinforces continuous performance improvement in support of the achievement of College objectives. It provides an opportunity for recognition, to maintain performance standards and for underperformance issues to be addressed transparently and appropriate support mechanisms and/or development opportunities put in place. Staff contribution should be recognised, and individual achievements acknowledged. In addition, it provides a talent management tool, enabling managers to identify talent and develop staff further reach their potential.

2.2.2 STUDENT SUPPORT

Through our strong student voice, we are able to provide targeted and meaningful student support by first identifying students' needs. **We ask students what support they require**, and work with them to make sure it is provided. This is reflected in the TEF dashboards and internal MEQ data showing that **students feel well supported whilst studying with Furness College**, with part time programme responses showing an indicator of 85.7% well above the benchmark of 78.8%.

In a published case study, _____ who graduated with a BEng in Electrical and Electronic Engineering in July 2021 said the support given from tutors was the main benefit she found when working towards her degree at Furness College.

Student Support across all HE provision is incredibly strong and this is noted as a regular theme through student feedback in surveys and SSLMs. 90% of students who completed the MEQs in 2021-22 agreed that the support from tutors was good. In the 2021 PCR report from UCLan, the College was commended on the fact it was ***“Very clear that the students are the focal point of every decision, they care a lot about their students, and it is very clear to see.”***

All learners studying on HE Programmes at Furness College will have access to:

- An induction programme welcoming students and introducing them to their programme of study and intended educational gains.
- Access to Furness College Student Services Facility and specialist, trained advisors
- Opportunities to attend College events such as career fairs, guest speakers, recruitment events, employer open days
- Course Specific Student Handbook including a comprehensive description of the modules, information on course administration and other key information.
- Unlimited access during opening hours to the Learning Resources Centre (LRC).
- Project Room, Labs, Computer rooms and HE resource hub in the LRC.
- Teaching/Learning materials and dedicated Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).
- Timetabled Tutorials with a focus on pastoral and PDP issues at least once per semester.
- Financial support through the HE Bursary for eligible students/ targeted financial support.
- A HE Learning mentor, a dedicated 0.68FTE post exists as specifically to support learners on HE programmes at the College who benefit from 1:1 support, either on an ongoing basis or for a dedicated and time specific element e.g. support with report writing.

Learners are supported to develop a range of learning and study skills across all HE programmes at Furness College as well as the associated subject knowledge. Across all programmes, specific study skills are built into module content or when further input is required, i.e. how to reference correctly, the weekly tutorial session is utilised to deliver a session. The Learning and Resources Manager along with the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) plays a key role in **supporting learners to develop their approach to their own learning**, offering a facility and specialist support for independent study. The dedicated HE Learning mentor role ensures all learners who require support are able to access it.

The College’s Student Services Team, provides advice and guidance to students relating to all programmes including Higher Education. All staff are qualified to level 6 in advice, guidance and educational counselling. Programmes have clearly identified Programme Leaders and Personal Tutors who act as personal academic tutors to support the students’ progress.

The College has a fully staffed Inclusion & Learning Support Department where students’ needs that have been clearly identified at enrolment and induction are fully supported. This support can take the format of numerous support mechanisms, e.g. individual or group

tutorials on specific areas needing support i.e. academic writing, individual support for dyslexia, special equipment loaned out to students to enable their studies. If a support need is identified in year, referrals can be made to the support unit via the Programme Leader and are acted upon.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, a number of further measures were introduced to further support learners and these included:

- Laptop loans for learners who did not have access to a computer at home
- The opening of the LRC for learners who required it to work in a quiet space and couldn't get this at home, utilising the IT facilities as needed
- Laptop Loans to access specific software remotely e.g. specialist Multi-sim software
- Extra Tutorial sessions via Microsoft Teams around specific content
- Scheduled 1:1 sessions over the phone or Microsoft Teams for those learners identified as lacking engagement or needing further support
- Learners were able to return to campus early for face to face delivery for practical aspects or in key subject areas, as Government regulations allowed.

In a further example of excellence in student support, the College, in partnership with a local employer Ørsted, **have designed and implemented the Ørsted Scholarship** programme which is contributing the meeting the skills needs of the area. The scholarship is designed to encourage more learners to study engineering programmes, removing potential barriers to study. The purpose of this fund is to support people across Furness who would not otherwise be able to finance themselves through engineering qualifications from level three through to degree level with priority given to students who have a declared household income of less than £15,000 and are either unemployed or working within SMEs. The scholarship offers full course fees and is limited to a range of programmes

Ørsted Scholarship

██████████ started on the HNC and has now progressed on to the BEng Hons Mechanical Engineering

"If I was to give any advice to someone thinking of applying for the scholarship it would be just to take the chance and apply. I have to say when I applied I didn't for one second think I would be either eligible or selected. Even once I received the email I still didn't believe it and I had to reply to ask for confirmation. It's what I have always wanted to do - now with this help of the Ørsted scholarship I can achieve my future career plans."

2.2.3 THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Furness College is proud of the **extensive and state of the art facilities** available to students studying HE at the Channelside campus. **Students are highly satisfied** with the learning environment, with an average 92% satisfied with the teaching and learning facilities provided for them in MEQs. HE students studying at Furness College can benefit from a dedicated Advanced Manufacturing and Technology Centre (AMTC) where all HE Engineering programmes are delivered, a Clinical Skills Suite replicating a real hospital ward environment for healthcare programmes, a virtual nursery and classroom for education courses and a comprehensive Learning Resources Centre (LRC) accessible to all learners. Construction learners benefit from the purchase of industry standard civil engineering equipment including electronic surveying equipment, and heavy plant machinery. The IET at its most recent accreditation visit commended the “***the impressive, state of the art mechanical and engineering lab facilities***”.



Our £4m Advanced Manufacturing and Technology Centre was opened in September 2016 and the state-of-the-art training facility is helping to meet the growing demand locally for highly-skilled workers by enabling students to develop skills on real-life projects. Students can gain access to the latest high-tech equipment and machinery, a HE Engineering learning hub, two

CAD classrooms and an industrial-size workshop. The centre houses industry standard equipment including a rapid prototyping machine, the latest five-axis CAD/CAM machines, a high-tech Faro scan arm that uses laser technology to inspect and reverse engineer complex parts and surfaces into a 3D model, a suite of new 3D printers and virtual welding machine. The AMTC was **designed in consultation with industry specialists** who remain consulted in its evolution. The AMTC team are currently working with the Head of Manufacturing for a local large employer to develop manufacturing engineering specific projects into HNC programmes.

The TEF dashboard shows an indicator of 70% against a benchmark of 81% which is not consistent with other evidence sources and following further investigation this can be directly attributed to the frustrations around the impact of Covid-19 where adaptations had to be made in year and learners weren't able to access or use on site facilities i.e. BEng Advanced Manufacturing module would usually involve a large proportion of practical work in the AMTC which had to be adapted to simulation remotely. For learners already on programme, they had experience of the fantastic facilities but during lockdown, when teaching was moved to remote delivery, they weren't able to utilise them.

Recent work within the Health and Social Care team has seen the development of a £70,000 highly spec'd Clinical Skills Suite with associated equipment and resources including VR headset, cardiovascular equipment, blood pressure machines and Covid-19 swab testing training models and an artificial intelligence patient who can see listen and talk – responding to a life-like scenarios on a hospital ward.



University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay (NHS) Foundation Trust chief executive, , officially opened the Clinical Skills Suite. And said “***Facilities like this are absolutely superb, just walking around now and getting a sense of how the students are interacting and the kind of equipment you have got. I absolutely know when you start your healthcare career you will be a jump ahead, so these facilities are fantastic.***”

Our state-of-the-art learning resource centre (LRC) combines traditional library services with outstanding IT facilities and provides a wide range of learning resources and services for students and staff. UCLan, our largest partner university covering the majority of HE provision carried out their latest review of Learning Resources in September 2021 and concluded ***“The Learning Resource Centre is a well-run and user-centred service. Whilst it may not be the best funded or resourced in comparison to other partners, this does not seem to have impacted on the student experience. Particular mention should go to the excellent accommodation of the LRC and the online Learning Resources Hub. In conclusion, Furness College is well placed to support the needs of UCLan’s HE students.”***

Furness College Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is used across all programmes where all Curriculum areas have their own dedicated space with a breakdown by course and module. The VLE is used extensively across all areas both in issuing lesson resources, providing further reading or directed study and as a means to submit work. Each Course has a dedicated area for Course information, Handbooks, Extenuating Circumstances guidance etc. and then each module has its own dedicated area with module specific pages. During induction, learners are shown how to access the VLE and it is the ‘go to place’ for any course queries or module information. Although the pandemic saw an increase in the use of MS Teams, the VLE remains the primary sources of learning material for each module.

The wider Furness College VLE is a useful source of information for student support, student services and wider college information. On their most recent visit in 2019, the IET commended ***‘the College’s comprehensive VLE arrangement including course resources, assignment submission, marking and rapid feedback to students’***. Regular feedback through SSLMs show learners value the VLE and access it regularly.

2.2.4 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

TEF Dashboards show across all programmes, full time or part time, **that satisfaction rates for student voice are significantly higher than benchmark**. Engineering programmes indicate a +10% on benchmark against student voice measures showing learners feel valued and can see that their feedback is acted on. This is fully reflected in internal surveys and recognised by external partners and External Examiners.

We continue to embed opportunities for students to be fully engaged with all aspects of the operation of higher education at the College. It is imperative that the student voice is a key component in the success of HE within the College in order to continually improve the student experience throughout their period of study with us. Students are formally engaged in enhancing and approving College HE policies and procedures such as the Student Protection Plan, the Access and Participation Plan and understanding the TEF and the strategies for meeting stretching targets. This is undertaken, but not limited to, via the activities below:

- Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQ) - a formal opportunity to feedback to module leaders on their experiences so that they can evaluate the modules students

undertake and feedback to students any changes which have been made as a result of their comments.

- Staff Student Liaison Meetings (SSLM) – lead by the Quality Manager these give opportunities for students to feedback about their course and overall student experience, as well as an opportunity to review the course to inform future developments and are carried out with full cohorts.
- Informal student feedback - Module leaders are encouraged to operate an 'open door' policy, which is useful in collating views from students at informal level.
- Course Representatives - Each Course shall have a representative annually elected by their peers within the curriculum area
- Specific Consultation - Staff are encouraged to involve students in decision making processes within the Curriculum Area e.g. College recruitment policy involves students in the appointment of new lecturing staff, revalidation of programmes.
- Representation on College level Committees - The College is committed to ensuring students are represented at all levels within the College
- HE Student Governor - A HE Student Representative is elected to the full Governing Body and represent the HE Student voice on the Learner Experience Committee
- NSS Survey and other ad hoc external surveys

A HE student governor represents the HE student body on the Learner Experience Committee and on the full Governing Board. At committee and board meetings, the governing body undertakes a strategic role in approving, monitoring and evaluating the College's APP. This ensures that the College has a clear focus on achieving its objectives as set out in the APP.

3. STUDENT OUTCOMES

3.1 POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Student Outcomes in HE at Furness College are incredibly high and the majority of students that study with Furness College, achieve their qualifications. The TEF Dashboard shows that for both full time and part time provision, across all Student Outcome measures of Continuation, Completion and Progression indicators are either at, or consistently above benchmark data.

Curriculum teams, overseen by the HE Committee work to ensure clear routes of progression for students on programme, in particular those studying a foundation degree or level four qualification. The College uses its links with local HEIs to **ensure clear progression pathways** through specific routes, for example a recent foundation degree in Computing learner has progressed to UCLan directly to top up their qualification, specialising in programming which isn't an option at the College. The HNC in Construction has been designed to allow learners to progress following successful completion onto a HND in Construction to continue to further build their knowledge, skills and behaviours and be able to gain further employment or progress within their workplace, if already working in the sector.

Progression measures for all provision are particularly high and over 10% above benchmark at 80% against a benchmark of 76.6%. Almost all of the learners that study HE programmes with the College successfully complete their programmes and the table below shows the high rates of successful completion against programmes.

Name	CourseTitle	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
A201 BUSINESS	UoC Foundation Degree Business Management (Project Management)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	UoC BA Honours in Business Management with Project Management Studies	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
A203 CONSTRUCTION	UoC Foundation Degree Construction Management		100.0%		
	BTEC HNC in Construction and the Built Environment			100.0%	100.0%
A206 EARLY YEARS AND EDUCATION	UCLan Certificate in Education	75.0%	100.0%		100.0%
	UCLan Foundation Degree in Children, Young People and their Services	100.0%	83.3%	90.9%	100.0%
	UCLan BA (Hons) Education & Professional Studies (Top-Up)	100.0%	92.9%	100.0%	100.0%
	UCLan Certificate in Education and Training, Preparatory	100.0%	100.0%		100.0%
A210 HEALTH	UoC Foundation Degree in Health & Social Care	100.0%			
	UCLan BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care (Top Up)	100.0%		100.0%	
	UCLAN Foundation Degree in Health & Social Care		100.0%	80.0%	100.0%
A211 ICT	UoC Foundation Degree in Computing	100.0%	100.0%	75.0%	
	UCLAN BSc (Hons) Degree Computing				100.0%
	UoC BSc (Hons) Computer Systems Development	100.0%	100.0%		
A213 TECHNICAL ENGINEERING	UCLan HNC in Mechanical & Computer Aided Engineering	100.0%	95.5%	97.0%	93.9%
	UCLan HNC in Electrical & Electronic Engineering	100.0%	100.0%	96.8%	96.7%
	LANCS BEng (Hons) Degree Electrical & Electronic Engineering	100.0%	100.0%	72.7%	100.0%
	LANCS BEng (Hons) Degree Mechanical Engineering	100.0%	95.8%	90.9%	100.0%
Grand Total		99.4%	95.3%	94.9%	95.5%

The following table details student degree classifications on level six qualifications. Attainment levels have been **consistently high over the last four years with 84% of our students attaining either a First Class or Upper Second-Class degree** in 2021-22. As discussed earlier, a high proportion of our students reside with areas of deprivation and these high levels of attainment demonstrate the impact of the excellent support students receive during their studies.

Classification	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
First Class	58%	32%	56%	43%
Upper second class	12%	14%	18%	41%
Lower second class	26%	36%	18%	11%
Third Class	4%	18%	8%	5%

There is a lack of available external published relevant data due to small cohort sizes however, our internal destinations data demonstrates **that 95.3% of our learners either move into employment, or progress within their organisation** upon graduation. Analysis demonstrates that this is sustained and for the majority of learners highly skilled/management positions.

In line with its strategic aim and values, the College celebrates the success of its students and holds an annual **Celebration of Excellence** evening. This is an opportunity for learners to celebrate with their friends and family, locally within the town they have studied. A series of prizes are awarded on the evening, designed in memory of a well-respected former member of the Colleges' lecturing staff in conjunction with his family. The awards celebrate the outstanding commitment of the recipients, recognising the determination and dedication required to study at a high level on a part time basis. Current lecturing staff are able to nominate students for the award, with the HE Committee and Principal determining the winners each year.

The Celebration of Excellence evening is publicised locally, promoting the opportunity of studying HE locally and uses relatable role models to encourage access to and participation in HE for the wider town. The College has an excellent track record in supporting career development, enhancement and progression for students studying HE Programmes.

3.2 EDUCATIONAL GAINS

Wider than the measures of Continuation, Completion and Progression and in line with the Strategic Vision and Values, Furness College intends its students to achieve further educational gains whilst on programme by developing employability and professional skills as well as personal development, building confidence in their abilities and an increase in their resilience.

- Employability
- Enterprise and Innovation
- Ambition
- Professional Skills

Student feedback demonstrates that students feel strongly that their Furness College learning experience has increased their employability, with a HNC Construction learner commenting '***What I have learnt on my course has allowed me to excel in my role***'. The College has a clear focus on the development of employability skills which are an integral part of all HE programmes. Employability is built into programmes during the development and validation

stages by awarding bodies and students are well prepared for employment. The IET recognised

There is a clear focus on the **development of professional skills through work-based learning**, and students have support from tutors and workplace supervisors. Work experience and personal development modules form the core of the building of employability on the Fd Children Young People and their Services, FD Health and Social Care, BA (Honours) Education. For our Cert Education programme, the standards are all mapped to the Education and Training Foundation Professional standards and trainees must meet all of these in order to succeed on the programme. Teaching placements are required as a mandatory element of the programme, preparing students for their intended employment. Fd CHYPS has a professional practice requirement, and detailed feedback from observation enables the student to develop their professional practice and thus their employability. The External Examiner for Education Programmes reported ***'The professional practice modules result in a robust portfolio of evidence to confirm the standards achieved. These align very well with the framework set out by Ofsted and prepare trainees very well for the reality of the job. And the External Examiner for Health and Social Care recognised 'Learners have opportunities to practice a range of academic skills and consider their strengths and areas of need.'***

The College's excellent links with employers for engineering programmes and the development of key professional and career focused activities are key to accreditation with IET and work-based learning in a practical environment. The project modules on Engineering programmes develop these work-based learning opportunities and career development and the IET commended ***'the industry-based group project which includes most elements otherwise found in Meng group projects.*** With Lancaster University commending the ***'very good module for developing critical thinking and research skills'***.

Whilst a significant proportion of part time learners are already employed, for those who aren't or who are looking to progress in their chosen career, the College holds an annual Jobs and Skills Fair where employers can talk directly to students and to aid their recruitment processes. The curriculum programme teams also invite guest speakers to talk to students to enrich learning and arrange visits to organisations where appropriate, **building ambition in students** to either gain employment or progress within their chosen field.

Students have access to the careers, advice and guidance services where students are able to access one-to-one support in the Learning Centre to develop CVs, job applications, preparation for interview or to explore self-employment opportunities whilst on programme and responding to student feedback, this service has now been extended to 12 months after completing their Furness College programme. The Learning Centre VLE page has comprehensive resources to support application for employment, including a bespoke CV builder for HE students via the newly launched - learning package. Student feedback demonstrates that students feel strongly that their Furness College learning experience has increased their employability.

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