

1. Provider Context

Nottingham College was established in June 2017 as a result of merger of two former Nottingham colleges, New College Nottingham and Central College; it is classified by the OfS as a large level 4/5 type with majority level 4/5 provision (OfS 2022a). As an approved (fee cap) provider since initial registration in 2018, it currently has approximately 350 HE students on 30 courses. The main component is students on validated programmes with partners of Nottingham Trent University (NTU) and The Open University (OU), and awarding body provision of Higher Nationals with Pearson. Levels of study are predominantly 4 and 5 but the portfolio includes four BA top ups at level 6. The College also provides a small number of Higher Apprenticeships at levels 4 and 5.

The context in which the college operates provides an added dimension to its education and training. The college serves a community that faces multiple facets of fundamental disadvantage. Nottingham is the 11th most deprived Local Authority District (out of 317) in England, with challenges across income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training, and housing and crime (Index of Multiple Deprivation from the Indices of Deprivation 2019). Nottingham also performs poorly in the Social Mobility Index and is described as a social mobility cold spot, characterised by poor educational outcomes, scarce opportunities, a weak labour market and high housing costs.

The college provides a first-choice destination for many students and a vital second chance for some who have had limited opportunities or a poor, prior educational experience within the city. Our higher education offer presents a wealth of opportunities for students and can be a key driver for social mobility and development, empowering local people to break the cycle of deprivation and realise their potential. We strive to ensure that underrepresented groups have equality of opportunity to access higher education, to succeed, and to progress from higher education to positive destinations. As the only college in the city, we are the key catalyst for the development of education, skills and training, at all levels within the community, including the provision of opportunities to engage in higher education across the city, to upskill, and to drive social mobility.

Nottingham College's purpose for providing HE is to support access to higher education levels of study for non-traditional students, e.g., those with modest and non-traditional entry profiles and widening participation (WP) backgrounds (i.e., those entering with vocational qualifications and from areas of low participation) to succeed. It champions providing very interactive and dedicated tutor support to students to engage through varied and innovative teaching models.

Our latest HE Strategy asserts that courses are developed in response to regional and national skills priorities in construction, business, engineering, healthcare and science; and most recently in hard to enter subjects such as Forensic Science and Dental Technologies (Nottingham College HE Strategic Plan 2022-25). In 2021/22 and 2022/23, Nottingham College was awarded capital bids of over £2m to create more flexible models of study to improve participation rates of adults and part-timers. This has been invested in physical resources for higher level courses and student facilities. Flexibility and accommodation for severe needs is at the heart of providing learning occasion for students to allow them to balance commitments outside study with a higher qualification.

Group sizes are, on average, nine students – although this varies from six to 15 per group – importantly upholding opportunities for students who wish to undertake study in classroom-based environments. External Examiners (EEs) from partner HEIs have praised the fact that courses are

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run for the benefit of small groups of students where other providers may be unable to do so, thus securing participation for a very admirable reason (see EE Reports 2021-22).

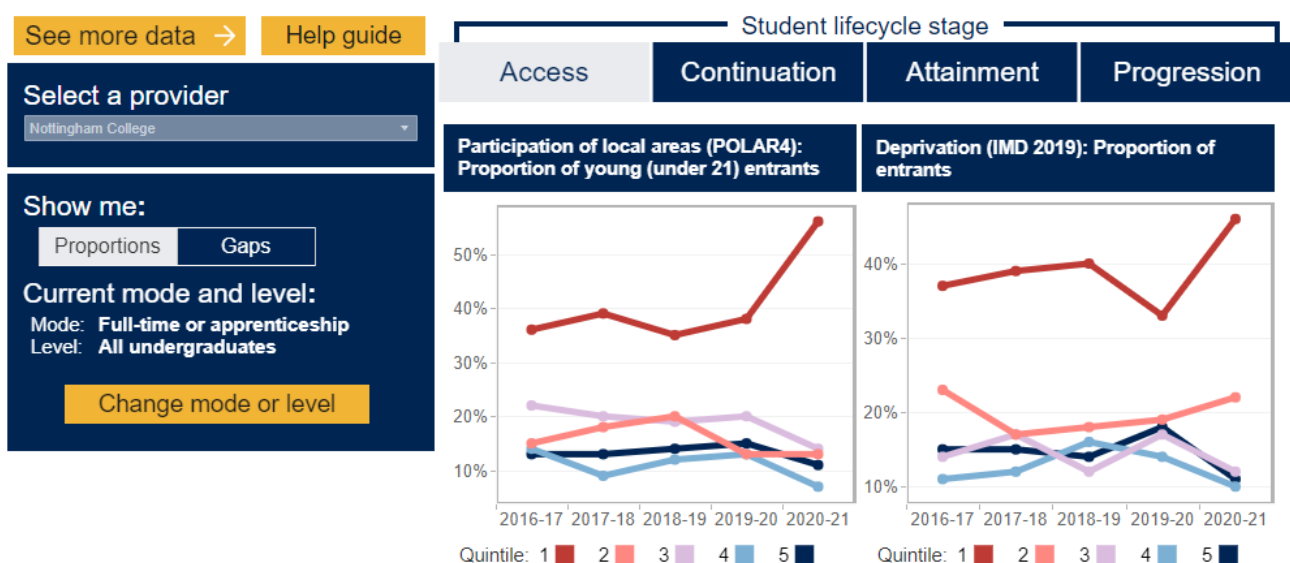
One-to-one support and active interaction with lecturers and course tutors is the stipulated Teaching and Learning and Assessment (TLA) approach; this ensures direct contact and personalised learning plans are in place throughout as the key to successful engagement and completion. All HE lecturers are formally teacher trained in line with wider College expectations and exude technical and industry experience to supplement their delivery methods successfully applying learning curricula to employment routes for students seeking improved career choices.

With such immediacy in dialogue between Course Leaders and their students, all known in person, student feedback is regular, direct, and made with alacrity through structural channels such as Course Committees and student Representatives, but also through specific departmental and in-house surveys and reviews of TLA. This model holds the College in good stead since its continuation, completion and progression rates are of high quality (all at benchmark levels).

As can be seen from OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboards (below), Nottingham College recruits students from non-traditional backgrounds with the following salient characteristics, putting it in a unique position as provider supporting an extensive WP strategy:

- The proportion of younger students from the lowest participation areas (POLAR4, Quintile 1 & 2) has risen to over two-thirds of younger students (69%) in 2020-21 (from 50% in 18-19)
- The proportion of students from the most deprived areas (IMD 2019 Quintile 1) has risen to a high of 46% in 2020-21, and has always accounted for at least one-third (33%) in the reporting period.
- The proportion of entrants with a reported disability has remained above one-quarter (2020-21: 28%) and has done so for the entire reporting period.

This presents acute challenges for maintaining continuation, completion and progression but is addressed with specific and dedicated teaching and learning prowess, the most effective pedagogy, active learning exercises and dedicated academic and pastoral teams to alleviate.



Source: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/> choose 'Select a Provider' then 'Nottingham College'

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Even more compelling are the excellent continuation rates for POLAR4 Quintile1 students (those from the very lowest areas of HE participation) improving year-on-year to a high of 90% in 2019-20 and to 92% for those students from the most deprived areas (IMD 2019 Quintile 1).



Source: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/> choose 'Select a Provider' then 'Nottingham College'

The dashboard highlights continuation rates have progressively improved across different ethnicity groups, across age ranges, and for those with a disability. Successive HE strategies at the College have always identified the purpose and ethos of provision to enable students to enter HE from more modest backgrounds, particularly those where HE was not as readily accessible to them, and in harder to reach areas such as Law and Applied Sciences, as well as vocational and technical routes to serve local and regional employment gaps.

This ethos is instilled by operational tenants such as “...*The most effective teaching, learning and assessment, informed by the scholarship of teaching to aid achievement for all, irrespective of background or familiarity with HE study [,]...Qualified teaching teams that have undisputed pedagogical ability; relevant business, vocational and industry experience; and up-to-date subject knowledge informed by research [and] Interactive and flexible modes of learning, with relatively small group sizes to increase direct and one-to-one support*” (Nottingham College HE Strategy 18-21).

In view of this starting point, Nottingham College’s overall outcomes – as reported by OfS TEF Outcomes data – are very positive. Over the last four years continuation, completion and progression all fall within 2.5% of benchmark indicating very high-quality provision (OfS 2022b).

2. Student Experience

Teaching and Learning Approaches

One measure often utilised to compare student experience across multiple institutions is the National Student Survey (which forms part of the TEF assessment process). At Nottingham College, the NSS target methodology results in a very small survey sample (18%) as a proportion of the total student body. In addition, our NSS results were significantly impacted by Covid-19 lockdown, particularly as a significant proportion of our offer is focussed on subjects that are learning environment and resource dependent (e.g., Art and Design, Performing Arts, Hospitality, Media Production etc).

Due to our local demographic and socio-economic context, there are significant levels of digital poverty across the city. Lockdown significantly impacted our students' ability to work remotely as many did not have access to suitable ICT resources and high-speed broadband. In addition, a larger proportion of our students are also parents and so home schooling became an additional challenge alongside programme study with limited ICT resources. The college addressed this issue with the provision of laptops and other ICT support, including Wi-Fi dongles, and grants for specialist software. Furthermore, support during the pandemic through went well beyond the dedicated support of course staff and included; additional hardship grants, access to in-person support staff (where rules permitted), right through to no detriment policies at examination boards to ensure no student was disadvantaged as a result of the disruption caused by the pandemic.

Whilst NSS student experience metrics suggest areas for development, in particular learning resources and student voice, the college has developed an Internal Student Survey (ISS) that targets 100% of our student body and demonstrates a more holistic, accurate picture of our student experience. This was implemented over the last three years and is intended to supplement NSS feedback. For traditional providers, the NSS captures final year undergraduate students who are typically those in the final year of their undergraduate degree. For Nottingham College, due to the NSS target methodology (final year on a programme >1FTE), this only captures second year HND and Foundation Degree students at the start of term two resulting in a very small sample, and students that are at a comparatively different stage in their higher education journey.

The NSS target methodology therefore excludes many students that participate in our progressive top-up model, including those on a HND top-up, and a BA (Hons) top-up programme. Therefore, the ISS was introduced to capture all higher education students and be much more representative than the very small sample NSS. More meaningfully, the ISS applies to all HE students to ensure validity and appropriateness of data in internal review. In the last three years, Nottingham College has internally surveyed students across our entire HE offer in this way to ascertain satisfaction rates with teaching and learning. Taken as a whole, ISS demonstrates an overwhelmingly high-quality picture.

In 2021-22, ISS student respondents were very positive about their teaching with 89% of students agreeing that "I am satisfied with teaching on my course". In fact, on the two main campuses that provide Business, Art and Design, Media and Performing Arts, including the two largest Faculty areas, satisfaction was even more resounding at 91% from 111 responses (69% of the total sample). Similarly, students' overall satisfaction with their course – agreement with "overall I am satisfied with my course" - was high at 82%. Importantly, this survey was implemented during first

full return to academic year following broken learning during pandemic. At course level, aggregated by Faculty, of 11 areas, 9 demonstrate a satisfaction rating with “teaching on my course” higher than the attributed benchmark (84%) for the last four years’ data.

In terms of ‘integrating’ knowledge and multidisciplinary approaches that are supported by the College through the effective mixing of small groups, this is demonstrably successful since 88% agreed with the statement: “My course has provided me with opportunities to learn new ideas and concepts, to bring information together” (ISS Data 2021). Open ended comments are also highly positive. Out of a total of 58 comments, a majority (32; 55%) presented a view that teaching and direct support from tutors and lecturers was to be commended as the key highlight. Specific staff were often mentioned by name and approaches to teaching and individualised service highly apparent. For example:

- *“We have great tutors who are passionate about what they do, I understand Nottingham College doesn’t have mass amounts of funds for resources but we always get the best we can, and we receive great experience.”* [Fine Art student ISS 2021]
- *“Supportive teachers that look out for you and do their best to help you with whatever you need.”* [Performing Arts student, ISS 2021]
- *“All of the tutors that I have had at the college over the last 4 years have been extremely helpful and have always gone out of their way to do what’s best for the students.”* [Engineering student ISS 2021].

Furthermore, to illustrate that the starting points of many students harbours a lack of confidence to commence HE level study that is overcome by approaches of their tutors:

- *“...the idea of higher education was daunting to me but the tutors have all made me feel comfortable and listened to me when I need to talk or ask a question.”* [Media student ISS 2021]
- *“My tutors are helpful and answer all my questions and don’t make me feel stupid.”* [Graphics Design student ISS 2021]

We have recently completed our latest ISS survey data in term 1 2022-23. Whilst this data is not within the TEF coverage period, it shows continuing improvement in the student experience at the college and our direction of travel:

ISS Survey Term 1	Agree %
My course has provided me with opportunities to explore ideas or concepts in depth	88.8%
Staff are good at explaining things	87.0%
I have received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my course	84.1%
My course has provided me with opportunities to bring information and ideas together from different topics	83.8%
I have been able to contact staff when I needed to	83.4%
My course has challenged me to achieve my best work	83.1%
My course has provided me with opportunities to apply what I have learnt	83.0%
Staff have made the subject interesting	82.7%
Staff value students’ views and opinions about the course	82.2%
Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course	80.9%

Aside from this overall feedback mechanism, all students contribute to Course Committees to evaluate their experiences at three points in the academic year by reporting experiences through their elected HE course Representatives. Main themes in 21-22 are highly praiseworthy of staff

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support and their one-to-one interaction with students across all areas and disciplines, including individualised feedback and dialogue for improvement for students. In addition, the universal tactic of workshops for assignments – that is a specific time and session whereby staff advise students as to *how* they might undertake study tasks - is undertaken, and these increase Students' confidence with the completion of assessment work. Students resoundingly appreciate advice from tutors who build this into timetables.

There are many examples of students directly requesting improvement and this being actioned to respond to specific needs and concerns. For example, through the Course Committee process, we listened to the following concerns on our HNC in Construction:

- There is a need for a more thorough introduction to the course
- Clearer structure required, specifically more detail regarding timetabling and timescales for submission

Our curriculum teams responded to the concerns and made improvements to the course in response to the feedback. This was followed-up in subsequent Course Committees, with the below feedback given through the student representative:

- "Excellent introduction: a huge improvement on last year"
- "New revised course structure, 100% better and hope it continues"
- "New process of handing in assignments via Turn-It-In is much better"

Minutes of such Course Committees also evidence ongoing and specific discussions of students as individuals, to chart their progress and status on their learning journey. Those 'at risk' or of noted concern - due to external reasons resulting in lack of engagement - are identified with actions against each to respond to need. Consequently, this precise and dynamic highlight of students' progression is a positive feature of intervention in the presence of Faculty managers and Heads of Centres, resulting in improvements to targeted support and increased continuation and completion.

One resounding example of this relates to Foundation Degree Sports Coaching students who had their scheduled timetables revised from a three day to a two full-day attendance pattern to help them balance work, outside commitments and reduce travel costs. This was a direct consequence of feedback from students to Course Leaders and managers in their forum of Course Committee (Course Committee Minutes 2021-22: FdSc Sports Coaching).

Significantly, formal external reporting for each of the 21 NTU validated programmes comes from an appointed External Examiner (EE). Their annual reports have demonstrated some particularly strong comments as evidence of very high-quality delivery in each year of consideration. When overall analysis of 21-22 and 20-21 is combined, the salient themes emerge, all relating to innovative experiences in delivery of modules and study programmes.

Approaches and an overall ethos to teaching and learning can be considered, with five key themes characterising the overall methods of Nottingham College teachers. All are evidenced very strongly in EE reporting over the last four years:

1. **Multidisciplinary approaches in delivery** by conjoining groups, levels and peers across disciplines is found in a majority of courses (62%) to create learning that replicates work settings, where professionals from different fields collaborate and share ideas. For example, Creative Media HE students, the largest group in the College with around 200

students per year, routinely 'cross fertilise' on the BA Art and Design Course which houses common units of study for Fashion, Design and Fine Art students (EE Reports 20-21; BA Art and Design). Meanwhile, Film and TV and Photography students on their respective Foundation Degrees work alongside one another to meet industry standards and undertake "blocked learning" allowing students to choose multiple assignment briefs (EE Reports 2019-20: FdA Film and TV; 21-22: FdA Digital Design) and cross disciplinary joint research exhibitions (EE Reports 2021-22: BA Art and Design). In a most highly structured manner, too, Early Years and Supporting Teaching and Learning students share the exact same modules with different assessment topics since this mirrors educational service settings to best effect, through peer mixing and sharing learning, representing approximately 50 students per year (EE Reports 2020-21; FdA EYS). All are celebrated as examples of the "Scholarship of Integration" (Boyer 1990).

2. **Flexibility and responsiveness during pandemic** (and both lockdowns) was overwhelming in the number of EE comments to praise this aspect of delivery. In 2020-21 all reports highlight examples such as: student-centred approaches (EE Reports 2020-21: FdA Dance); a swift and efficient move to blended learning models by changing the nature of resources (EE Reports 20-21: FdA Photography); and meeting the needs of pastoral care from teachers themselves to supplement wellbeing teams (EE reports 20-21: BA Art and Design). Moreover, the alacrity at which the College structurally - and in entirety - moved straight back to face-to-face learning in September 2021 (whilst other providers were unwilling) was noted by several EEs (EE Reports 21-22: FdSc Sport; FdA Photography). This responsiveness and flexibility to meet desires of students to continue in person through one-to-one tutorials remained a mainstay of teacher activity.
3. **Embedding employability in learning** is central to the way in which TLA is framed for students. This has been most effective in: matching actual Learning Outcomes to sector or job skills in course design (EE Reports 2019-20; BA SSM); using industry based online and software platforms for work readiness (EE reports 19-20; BA Digital Media Design); in specific professional development modules that support CV writing, careers advice, and self-employment advice during lockdown; and electronic portfolios for employment progression (All EE Reports 19-20, 20-21, 21-22).
"...[An] integrated holistic assessment mirrors the real world of work" (EE Reports 19-20: BA SSM).
4. **Direct and one-to-one support** from teaching staff is implicit – differentiation for personalised engagement with the subject/ discipline is a central tenant to the ways in which students from non-traditional backgrounds are supported to complete via differentiated support and projects with very individualised feedback to improve (EE Reports 19-20 and 20-21: FdA Film and TV; 2021-22: FdSc Sport). This was resounding during lockdowns whereby all teaching staff remained in personal contact with students throughout using a range of online platforms and personal email to advise and guide remotely (see EE Reports 2020-21: BA SSM).
5. **Scholarly Activity in student work and staff development** is most effective in that it focuses on industry and vocational links with high impact to apply learning and theory to practice (EE Reports 19-20: FdA Film and TV; 20-21: BA SSM; 2021-22: FdA Performing Arts). This is understood as the "Scholarship of Application" (Boyer 1990) but more

orthodoxly, scholarly pursuits are created by staff for themselves and their students as co-partners in learning. Examples abound, such as the Nottingham College Research Group (NCRG) in FdA Photographic Practice, with a series of external guest speakers from a range of backgrounds that has been attended by all those in the Faculty of Creative Media (200 students per year). 'Going public' with produced work in a range of formats is routine in external competitions (EE Reports 20-21 FdA Film and TV); and a long-standing commercial photography company run by its students on FdA Photographic Practice has been commended by EEs for its agency work in the locality (EE Reports 20-21) to give confidence to students to secure employment after graduation. Academic research and its impact on employment practice is evident throughout, too. For example, this is recognised by part time students on FdA Special Education Needs and Disability where the EE recorded that the role of students' own practice is evident in *all* modules of learning (EE Reports 21-22: FdA SEND).

Academic Liaison Tutors (ALTs, formerly University Verifiers until 2018-19) also submit formal reports to NTU, the college's main validating partner. NTU appointed 21 ALTs to support its validated courses and in this role, they act as a critical friend to provide advice and guidance to the course team and ensure the academic standards, quality and student learning opportunities of the validation service provision are maintained. Salient evidence of the acknowledged strength in our teaching and learning approaches is consistently cited in ALT reports, including from annual review of student experiences through student feedback, classroom visits and analysis of outcomes data at exam boards. Their external reviews are a rich source of evidence to demonstrate the ways in which personalised delivery takes place through effective pedagogy across circa three-quarters of our provision (those courses validated by NTU). ALT feedback often makes a favourable comparison to their own, larger HEI approaches and practices and how our tailored, smaller group model works effectively for our cohorts.

More importantly, these types of comments were already evident during lockdown years asserting that, despite challenges to in-person delivery throughout these two academic years, very high quality teaching was maintained as a consequence of the dedication and innovation of lecturers. For example, in 20-21, with lockdown occurring towards end of academic year the following comments have been listed in order of frequency as main area of 'good practice':

Out of a total of 19 submitted reports (since two reports covered more than one course), seven asserted that the chief characteristic of learning was: industry content; staff expertise in industry; and employment fields as key to excellence in the student experience.

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Out of 21 submitted reports for 2021-22, seven commended academic staff support for students including pastoral elements of concern to bridge academic and tutorial advice to aid achievement:

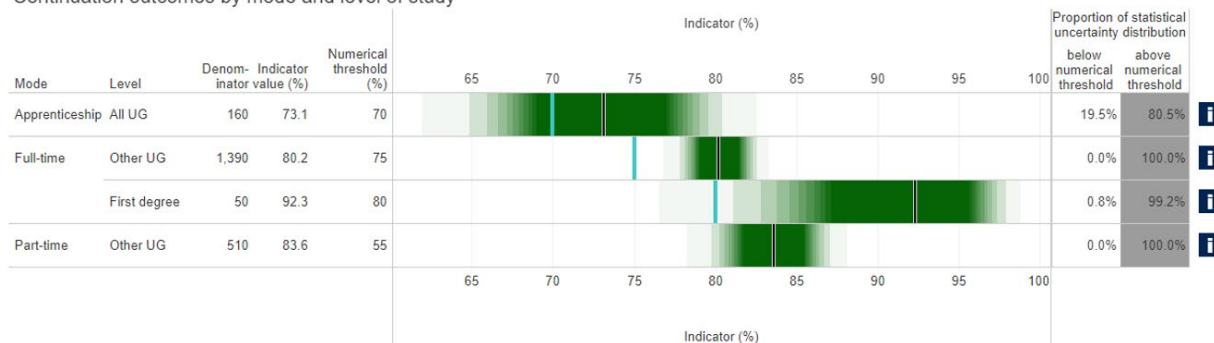
This analysis also presents the view of a very highly vocational and work-like experiences embedded into learning, with reports recording this as the significant focus on programme to ensure theory to practice is explicit in learning, with a highly dedicated and personal support from academics themselves, supplementing wider pastoral care. Even more resounding was an ALT comment during last academic year (2021-22) when it was noted that the dedicated commitment by the College to uphold face to face delivery and in person learning was positively different from sector norms at that time. This was achieved against a backdrop of national student experiences asserting a major desire for more in-person contact (HEPI 2022).

Student Continuation

Our student experience drives higher levels of continuation across our HE offer. As demonstrated below, our continuation rates are significantly above numerical threshold on the OfS student outcomes data dashboard:

Nottingham College (Taught or registered students)

Continuation outcomes by mode and level of study



OfS Student Outcomes Data Dashboard

Teaching and Learning Enhancement

For the last two years the College has operated a Teaching and Learning and Assessment Review (TLA) exercise across all programmes that includes synthesis of student feedback, teaching room observations and outcomes data to evaluate faculty areas and delivery in a uniform way, taking place twice per year. Our TLA Review 2021 evidenced that:

- In marked work, Students are given specific and clear recommendations. Feedback sheets from teachers to Students are in a consistent format throughout their course. Teachers use their technical knowledge of the subject well to provide detailed feedback (Performing Arts and Computing)

- The vast majority of students can explain their progress and how they are achieving towards targets, ensuring students can work towards higher grades and/or expectations (Hospitality)
- Performance Students benefit from a range of external activities including taking part in external performances. They discuss these visits at college so that they can develop their understanding more deeply (Performing Arts)
- Students develop their confidence very well. They learn in a supportive environment in which teachers and Students all cooperate in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Students describe how supportive their teachers and their peers are. Peer feedback is a key component of teaching in performing arts and this contributes to the development of Students' confidence (Performing Arts and Computing)
- Teachers provide effective 1:1 support in lessons that ensures that Students make progress towards their project or end-goal (Media)
- The prevalent teaching model is that Students work independently on projects in lessons, supported by the teacher. This means that Students work (and learn) at their own pace rather than a pace directed by the teacher (Media)

One specific and pedagogical improvement programme that has been consistently in use by the College during the reporting period for its HE staff is the Peer Review of Teaching (PRT) process. This acts as both a developmental programme and an interventional tool when required – a mandatory exercise linking peers across disciplines and within faculties to share best practice and scrutinise one another's delivery in a reflective manner. It has also been particularly useful to support newly appointed HE lecturers as part of their induction and mentoring programmes by generating immediate and personalised review of the actions taken to engage students in the classroom and approaches to TLA.

It is also noteworthy that this Peer Review scheme upholds a majority of the recommendations for PRT schemes as defined by the HEA's literature review of this matter (Scott et al. 2017). As such, the College's commitment to collaborative improvement through horizontal dialogue to improve has strong impact and is the central pillar to self-regard and identity as Scholars of Teaching and Learning, being more effective than managerialist notions of observation 'grading' (Gosling and O'Connor 2009). Annual reporting to synthesise all Peer Reviews is of strong impact. Since 2016/17 when the scheme was introduced, over 90% of HE lecturers have taken part each year and this has often extended to include support staff such as technicians and library teams to reflect on what actually takes place in teaching rooms.

Overall, Peer Reviews of Teaching show the range and breadth of types of sessions that give students the very best experience in a variety of learning scenarios, as opposed to orthodox delivery models where 'lecture and seminar' abound. For example, almost half of all sampled reviews (49%) recorded that an academic or practical 'workshop' was the type of session reviewed, reaffirming the hands-on and interactive engagement of lecturers to support development of wider skills such as essay or report writing, or production of industry standard artefacts for assessment.

Teaching Learning and Assessment (TLA) dominated almost all comments made to appraise the sessions scrutinised by peers, with a high proportion of comments (45%) describing positive traits as: Students leading; high student engagement; and clarity of instructions from tutors (18%, 16%, 11% of all reviewer comments, respectively, as documented in our HE Peer Review Reports 2018-19 to 2021-22).

As a teaching focused institution - and one whereby all delivery staff therefore hold teacher training development and improvement at heart - staff have been encouraged to recognise the value of their typical, routine, ongoing professional development in reflective teaching practice as the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). In fact, when asked to record their developmental pursuits as part of annual scholarly activity records, across around 50 staff per annum, and over 1200 records of scholarship since 2018-19, half (53%) were relating to SoTL and self-classified to celebrate the skills of teachers as opposed to active researchers (Scholarly Activity Logs 2018-19 onwards). Concurrent to this is the overall view that students *themselves* overwhelmingly rate teaching quality at the top when assessing factors of importance during higher level studies (OfS 2019).

Student Wellbeing Support

We have implemented a whole-college approach to mental health and wellbeing that drives and informs a robust Action Plan, monitored by EDI and Wellbeing Committees with representation from students, staff and governors. The Action Plan incorporates our innovative deliverables, designed to support Students in eliminating discrimination, ensuring equal access and fostering positive relations. These include affinity groups of students and colleagues to create an environment that removes stigma of selected experiences by making them part of our everyday conversations. The activities and actions detailed in our application aim to create enabling spaces that continue to bring people together to gain an insight into their personal experience at the college so that we can learn from this to create a culture and reputation for being a truly inclusive college and a great place to learn and work. To ensure we create a supportive and inclusive environment, all Higher Education students have access to:

- StudentNet Wellbeing Hub: an online Wellbeing Hub for students to access support throughout their Student journey. The Hub offers advice and guidance on a range of issues which may impact a Student's mental health and wellbeing (e.g. abuse; addiction; bullying; college work and exams; eating disorders; housing and finance; mental health and online safety), with facilitated connections to internal support and external organisations (e.g. CAMHS, Samaritans, SHOUT and Childline)
- Wellbeing Mentors: We have trained and embedded a team of 36 Wellbeing Mentors that are placed in each of our college campuses and deliver 24 hours per week of direct contact with vulnerable students. These offer support and guidance with any problems or concerns students may have on a day-to-day basis, including mental health, managing stress, thoughts of self-harm and suicide, risk of homelessness, managing personal finances, addictions, all forms of abuse and bullying, sexual health, gender and sexuality and bereavement
- Wellness Cafes: We deliver a series of Wellness Cafes across our campuses that create a 'lunch club' style environment where Students can drop-in, receive information on the support services available, join activities, make friends and have healthy and supportive conversations. Our Cafés actively remove the stigma of challenging experiences by making them part of our everyday conversations. We currently run Cafes for BAME groups, Bereavement, Carers, LGBTQIA+, New Parents and Menopause Support
- Pastoral Tutorials: To support our vision to create a safe environment where Students overcome their difficulties and achieve their goals, we have embedded mental health and wellbeing into each Student's scheduled pastoral tutorial. This includes a range of topics

throughout the year to promote healthy living, raise awareness of issues where intervention is required and highlight support services available

Our outstanding work to support positive mental health and wellbeing was recognised by the Association of Colleges. The college is a national finalist in the 2023 Beacon Award for Mental Health and Wellbeing, with the overall winner due to be announced in February. Our status as a finalist is in recognition of our innovative and diverse offer that supports all students, staff and members of our college community.

Employability

In 2018-19 Nottingham College incorporated a more deliberate understanding of facets of 'employability' on its HE programmes. We carried out an initial audit and repeat surveys in 21-22, which identified that of 30 courses, 18 were rated as holding 'high levels' which typically means employers helping co-design or sponsor live briefs for assessed work; and a majority whereby an employer is included in evaluation of a students work at formative level through feedback of performance.

All courses have held strong industry links through their programme leaders and delivery staff which is an essential criterion when recruiting to lecturing roles. Since a vast majority of lecturers (75%) at HE are also former or current industry employed, they present students with a very pronounced understanding of how theory relates to practice. A more wide-ranging internal evaluation of employability on all HE courses gives overwhelming evidence of this and shows that of 30 HE courses all have strong features of employer input. This is established with an internal survey of employability with each programme plotted against a continuum. Employer feedback also testifies to the highly positive ways in which teaching is focused on application to real world problem solving and employment in the field of industry.

This is highly evident in course documentation and also in the type of assessment briefs students are asked to complete- not just for Final Major Projects or dissertations but throughout as a result of deliberate course design. For example, FdA Fine Art Practice has strong industry links with regional venues, which provide direct experience for students of curatorship, gallery talks, invigilation, logistics and marketing. Each year the students on the programme undertake at least one external exhibition project. These have included 'raised Beds' 2019 at Djanogly Gallery - Lakeside Arts', 'Constraint/restraint' 2020 at The National Justice Museum, 'Mapping Privilege' Power '2021' at The National Justice Museum, 'Lace Legacy' 2022 at Newstead Abbey, and 'Structure' 2023 at The Erewash Museum.

All courses have employer input and over half have assessments being created in line with employers, and one-third being evaluated by employers as part of summative feedback and grading. A recent internal review of employability revealed that of 200 assessments set at HE level, over 65% are set or grounded in industry or vocational world. For example BA Performing Arts students perform their final shows and performances in the company of an audience with talent and casting agents present.

Stretch and challenge had previously been identified by the College as a matter of importance to support stronger and more able students at all levels, as well as inspire others to achieve higher grades and foster independent thinking at all stages. As part of reviews of teaching and mentoring with Advanced Practitioners many tactics are implemented to ensure this is apparent in learning. For example, Media Teams have operated a series of 'Wednesday Workshops' to stretch and

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challenge students at both level 4, 5 and 6 across the Faculty area. The workshop topics are principally in animation, CGI, VFX and 3D. The initial workshops cover documentary film making linked to an international documentary film festival, and links students with peers in South-East Asia and other UK Universities (<https://sdgfilmfest.com/>).

Continuing in 2022/23 this will focus on a CGI film project. There are no specific modules attached to this project, workshop content areas go beyond the course of study and are designed to support and give awareness of a vital and growing part of the digital landscape in terms of future jobs. The workshops cover animation, visual effects, green screen techniques, roto-scoping, camera tracking, and sound FX. Students studying Television and Film, Photography, Digital Design, Graphic Design, and Digital Media Design are invited to participate. These group projects develop teamwork, complex digital techniques, independent thinking, research and application of ideas. The workshops help build up transferable skills, as students can then use what they learn in their module-based projects, and importantly elsewhere in their personal development and employability.

Governance of HE

Whilst operating as a General Further Education institution, Nottingham College upholds all separate and deliberate standing committees to ensure excellence in its independent dedication to teaching and learning. The HE Governance Structure has been in place over the period of this application and has operated to identify, evaluate, and action improvements in learning experiences for students with a strict reporting system from Executive down to programme and student level. This focuses minds on how to achieve excellence in TLA to cover all those involved from academic delivery staff, support staff and resourcing teams.

Course Committees sit at the centre of student evaluation and performance reviews of Faculty based provision with a full governance structure above of an Academic and Quality Standards Committee (ASQC) and an Academic Board (AB) to take informed actions to strategic management levels. This governance channel identifies best practice that can be adopted more universally and make continual enhancement to student experiences. All committees hold focus on teaching and learning and scholarly activity that is demonstrated by both students and staff in module delivery and the creation of assessment artefacts.

The Academic Board has standing agenda items relating to current metrics on continuation, completion and progression as well as those more directly related to live practice such as scholarship and teaching and learning itself. This upholds a strong line of reporting to senior leaders who can ensure teaching and learning is always of highest quality. Wider strategy features in agenda too, with an overview of all provision and a chance to analyse areas of best and worst performance with Heads of Centre and the Dean of HE in the presence of senior HE student representatives.

The Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC) is a forum for faculty area managers to consider all live performance data on courses for which they are responsible and invoke strong scrutiny on the predicted outcomes and successes throughout the year, with power to intervene in student experiences should challenges be presented. This is an opportunity to scrutinise the whole experience of the student, ranging from resources such a rooming and learning areas, additional activities, necessary equipment and regular monitoring for managers and senior leaders to share best practice. It also feeds upwards to Academic Board to ensure dialogue between executives and operational delivery teams.

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Course Committees are the bedrock of the continual review and improvement cycle whilst students are on programme. This is where evaluation of learning experience and approaches for each individual course forms the focus with staff and students sitting together. A standardised agenda (and data) at each period is utilised with a number of improvement actions created if necessary. These are then reviewed at next subsequent meeting and added to a centralised record that is monitored by the Quality Team for compliance in addressal and report back to the ASQC by area.

A Staff Development Forum (SDF) is held every other month and offers internal opportunity for Course Leaders to come together across all campuses and enjoy training, professional development from externals and review provision as part of remitted time for duties outside their own teaching and administrative schedules.

Some actions have been commonly resolved in a very short period of time (under two weeks as per agreement). For example it was agreed by staff that a more efficient acknowledgement of mitigation for assessment extensions was necessary during lockdown, so to save burden on students a standardised extenuation approach was implemented to benefit students at this time.

Learning Environments

Nottingham College allocates its HE delivery rooms and study spaces to Faculties across a range of sites to serve students with the most bespoke resources in relation to their vocational area, commensurate with industry and sector standards. This aligns them with faculties of excellence and staff teams who have a pedagogic craft and experience in the field of study, housed on campuses that deliver specific provision with specialist equipment. These are managed by Heads of Centre through faculty areas and dedicated managers, teachers and Course Leaders. Learning Resource Centres (LRCs) on each campus are managed by a Libraries Manager and respond directly to resourcing needs for students on specific faculty programmes.

The University Centre at the Adams City Campus includes a dedicated HE study lounge and IT resources for all HE students and a breakout teaching space for students and staff to use as part of presentations and delivery; it is also used for assessment boards and events to showcase assessed student work and examples of scholarship. The HE Office, as part of the University Centre, offers a one-stop-shop for all HE students' enquiries relating to their student journey. It provides students with a contact point from application/ enrolment to graduation stages and allows the College to effectively engage with students from a non-curriculum perspective, whether that be concerning personal finances, wellbeing (with our dedicated HE Wellbeing Officer) or relating to ways to complain and raise issues outside the confines of the teaching teams themselves in an independent manner.

Virtual learning environments are of high quality; a Moodle based VLE houses all course information, documentation and assessment resources across all courses as well as non-academic support information and policies that affect student experiences. Course teams then provide supplementary and specific repositories and online platforms to allow specific teaching and learning for their own students.

In recognition of student experience feedback, students on NTU validated awards can now access the NTU Boots Library in the City centre, and more recently students can now access the library at the University of Nottingham to enhance the range of physical resources available to students. (In addition to the VLE etc). We have significantly invested in our e-learning resources for HE students to access 24/7 from any location:

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- Planet E-Stream: which enables students to view a myriad of videos and radio recordings to enhance their resources for their study or teaching. We are constantly adding and updating the plethora of content available for use through requests and suggestions
- CINAHL: which provides over 1300 journals on nursing and allied health literature
- Drama online: access to core collections including play texts, audio plays and scholarly books
- MINTEL: for data analysis, market research, trends and insights
- eBook Central and EBSCO eBooks: both offer an incredibly vast selection of online books for a range of subject matters

Higher Education students who are studying in the arts have a huge catalogue of information spanning several of the online resources we offer through the Learning Resource Centre's Online Resources:

- WGSN: a great source of research work from designers, photographers, stylists and illustrators from all over the world
- VADS: an additional tool for students to access 14,000 images that are free access from over 300 collections in the UK online
- Your Paintings: a catalogue of over 200 thousand paintings owned by the British public, free to access for research and inspiration.

During lockdowns of 2020 and 2021 the alacrity at which shift was made to entirely online modes of delivery, has been highlighted as a key strength, alluded to by students, for example:

"Studying throughout lockdown was an exceedingly challenging time for every student. The learning experience had to change to suit the needs of everyone individually. Teachers/lecturers communicated with the HE students via teams and email when in college interaction was not allowed due to the pandemic. Lessons were prompt, punctuality and attendance remained a point of focus for Nottingham College. All students had access to the materials needed throughout lockdown reducing stress levels dramatically" BA (Hons) Business Student

We actively bid for capital grants to enable us to create training centres that mirror contemporary working environments and empower our students to train on industry standard equipment. This significantly enhances the employability of our students and to date, has included:

- £1.16m to create a Laboratory Science and Innovation Centre to create seamless pathways for our HE Students into Nottingham's thriving Health Sciences sector (the new centre supports HNC/HND Applied Science programmes in Biology, Chemistry and Forensic Science)
- £785,423 to create an Engineering Automation and Innovation Centre to deliver highly labour-market responsive training mapped to current and emerging technologies across our substantial engineering and manufacturing industries (supporting our HNC/HND provision in Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Manufacturing Engineering and Mechanical Engineering)
- £186,364 to invest in market-responsive equipment to drive new provision: Level 4 Modern Methods of Construction and Level 5 IT (HTQs)
- £2.5m to invest in industry standard equipment across our construction, health and social care, engineering and digital provision at all levels, including HE. This includes an immersive AR/VR room and green technologies such as heat pump rigs and solar panels

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The University Centre's HE Laptop Scheme - introduced in 2020 for pandemic mitigation, granting a majority of students a brand-new laptop for use at home or on College premises - has since been made a permanent support feature. Priority groups initially received a laptop, since particular support was made to those more remote from the City Campus sites to secure full access to virtual learning environments. Student focus groups testified to the improvement to their study that the scheme secured; by end of 2021-22 over 100 laptops had been purchased for this purpose.

Student Engagement

The Students' Union elects HE Representatives for all 30 HE courses to form part of student voice mechanisms which then engage with all wider SU events but contribute to the higher education fora, strongly interacting and aided by the HE Office. These channels of ongoing dialogue are healthy and well-received; in fact, the range and number of ways in which students can raise concerns creates a very dynamic and healthy environment drawing upon many sources of feedback. To summarise, students and their representatives can offer views that are recorded and actioned through the following ways:

1. Personal visits to the independent HE Office to register comments at any time, away from curriculum or staff delivery teams which might be the subject of their feedback
2. Speaking directly to tutors and lecturers since all are able to with small average group sizes
3. Reporting feedback to course reps who then comment to the Academic Board through a Faculty Head attending their own course committees or to HE representative meetings
4. Register comments at College wide campus specific Student Union meetings
5. Make comments in confidence through Internal Student Surveys (or if sampled NSS)

Aside from ISS and Course Committees, Student Representatives are assembled three times per academic year for a college-wide HE meeting, chaired by the Dean of HE and Student Union facilitators. In December 2021, to gauge learning experiences in the first full semester of orthodox delivery post pandemic, HE Representatives fed back on themes based on the internal surveys that had already occurred:

- Careers Advice and Guidance to students before application was seen positively to give reassurance of how courses lead to meaningful progression.
- Staff and teaching quality were viewed positively with genuine levels of support deemed strong at an individual level.
- Specific resourcing for some HE includes rooming and library resources was in need of improvement for some courses.
- IT at Adams City Campus was variable, portrayed as slow and difficult to access wifi for students and staff.
- The wish for more discrete HE spaces was raised by some from non-Adams based campuses following continued distanced policies as a consequence of return to in-person in entirety.

Student representation is also made at all levels of the HE Governance Structure with lead representatives attending Academic Board and ASQC to ensure their feedback at all levels. This direct presence and dialogue at Academic Board was vital during pandemic when, online, Representatives were able to present wider views of the student body to help inform of most urgent need for dedicated support and help to secure rapid implementation of the Student Laptop Scheme to uphold continued learning for a large number of students suffering digital poverty. One key

response to the matter of students not having adequate facilities or spaces to study away from college, was to implement a socially-distanced computer study suite in the main City Hub Campus that could be booked onto during closure of main and other buildings for Students with defined high needs.

Scholarship and CPD

From 2018 Nottingham College has been a signatory to the national Scholarship Framework owned by the ETF (ETF 2022). As such, it has committed through structural policy measures to support staff and students to engage in scholarly activity and enhancement in a variety of different forms to improve learning gains and outcomes. The resources available includes toolkits, guidance notes, self-assessment tools and various schemes and procedures to implement and enhance scholarship for lecturers. Nottingham College was a contributing pilot provider to these resources as a lead College in the preceding AoC national project, along with 15 other institutions and over 50 adoptees (ETF 2022).

The Framework contains sections on Curriculum Design (including employer engagement); Quality Enhancement; Students Engagement; and Professional Development (CPD) all drawn upon for ongoing development activities. These resources relate to assessing employer engagement, learning gain, developing a scholarly culture, students as partners, peer observation and review, learning communities, capture and dissemination ("going public"), student induction, research ethics, professional identity and other relevant topics.

Nottingham College's own Scholarship Policy for HE also defines the types of support granted to staff in terms of an annual HE conference and symposia to focus on engaging students in learning who have often faced challenges in previous lower level studies to achieve. It states the importance of defining 'Scholarship' to include "[To] Develop or enhance methodologies for the delivery of a subject or discipline" and "to fully integrate scholarship with learning and teaching" (HE Scholarship Policy 2018-19 to 22-23) with a discrete section on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).

Chiefly, the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) is regarded as the central pillar to improvements in outcomes with all lecturers and managers following reflective models of learning to strengthen student understanding and application of knowledge.

Five main pursuits help achieve continual improvement in teaching methods:

1. Peer Reviews of Teaching (PRT) by staff which are used as developmental and interventional scrutiny of what is happening in the classroom. A specific Peer Review Policy commits all teachers to inclusion with reflective targets and collaborative record of positive and best practice to share with peers. In fact, the HEA's own literature review (Scott et al. 2017) includes 17 recommendations for most effective peer review systems across the sector; Nottingham College's uphold all but two.
2. Teaching and Learning Walks by Faculties involving all wider evidence of teaching review such as observation and metrics with Advanced Practitioners (APs) assigned to specifically raise and enhance the quality of TLA for teams and individuals.
3. Action research projects with students to encourage knowledge creation and establish opportunities for staff and student to collaborate through inquiry and investigation often with pedagogical themes

4. Allocation of budgets and remission for HE lecturers to upskill and update in industry enduring disciplinary prowess integrates learning to the 'real world'.
5. Attendance by all HE teachers on the College's wider teaching and learning professional development events to ensure the most effective pedagogy to engage through active forms of delivery.

Peer Review has been a hugely successful programme, even continuing during pandemic albeit when the immediacy, directness and confidence it brought to deliverers was stifled by the fact that online reviews were only possible in the window of operation. Even so during lockdown, over twenty staff conducted this and appraised one another's sessions in academic year 2020-21, granting advice on how to improve intrigue and check learning throughout sessions. A clear semblance of the scholarship of teaching and learning through the HE Peer Review Process, which evidenced some strong developmental reflection from teaching staff of effective pedagogy, has been intrinsic to delivery and understanding of the value of TLA improvement invested by practitioners.

Students and scholarship

This College's involvement in the Scholarship Framework influences structured opportunities for students to undertake extra-curricular activities to enhance their employability. The helps recognise, accredit and showcase broader forms of scholarly activity to raise student expectation and experience as part of their HE development.

Students from all areas of provision are regularly invited to engage in project work, research inquiry and collaborate with others to develop skills outside their own programme of study. This is seen as the Scholarship of Integration through multidisciplinary approaches to replicate real world working environments more readily. For example, Media and Performing Arts students organise an end of year show with Film and TV recording and live-streaming performances.

As part of this offer, bespoke training and support is delivered in order to elevate student experience in higher forms of academia such as: presenting at local and national conferences; designing projects with students from different subject areas and colleges; and publishing research to demonstrate expertise. Identification of groups of students who may benefit most from this support is to be upheld with recognition that students from non-traditional backgrounds can suffer strongest detachment from higher academic pursuit and engagement. The aim is to help students achieve familiarity and confidence in these areas with dedicated research interns/ambassadors forming key roles to support this policy. The engagement of students in the Project has been positive and encouraged with some taking roles as researchers to produce research surveys outside their programmes of study and to involve them in solving problems around provision (Healy, Flint and Harrington 2014). Students have been trained and supported in all stages of these research processes, culminating in presentations of their work at local conferences. A good example of this is the BA (Hons) Service Sector Management annual conference whereby students select a contemporary theme within the service industry to work with. Students are encouraged to take a critical viewpoint on the topic selected, to achieve a higher level of learning and understanding. Students present their findings at the conference and invite debate during the seminar on all findings. Conference attendees are invited because they are working within the industry, or have knowledge of the subject, and either working or studying within a business environment.

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In the college's largest faculty area, Creative Media, staff have published and contributed to their own journal and showcased work at external events such as Film and TV festivals. In this way, staff and students often present work as entry to national competitions to share knowledge with other providers and industry itself.

Training for scholarship of teaching and learning

Recording Scholarship in its various forms has been a key and significant milestone for staff as part of the ethos of the Scholarship Framework. By adopting Boyer's wider definition of scholarship (1990) the College has trained all HE staff in presenting pursuits outside the teaching room to reflect on how they impact on their own personal development as practitioners and that of their students. Although sector consensus tends to arrive at 'scholarship' being defined as any activity that may enhance staff *expertise*, there are more instructive theoretical underpinnings to the culture at Nottingham College. Boyer's work (1990) informs that different forms of scholarship are of equal significance and should be 'reconsidered' more appropriately as: 'discovery' of new knowledge; 'application' to real world problems; 'integration' of skills across disciplines; and 'teaching' practice. These forms are recognised to encourage strategic attempts to involve a wider range of academic pursuits that offer rigour to provision (as opposed to the preoccupation with original research that is the mainstay of HEI activity and funding).

To create records and evidence of this, the College created a web application in 2018 to allow all staff to dynamically record the scholarly activity and consider how this aligns with the theoretical framework. Understandably, each year since then the following has been evident to affirm the extensive time staff take to continually develop and refresh their teaching and learning techniques.

Scholarly activity records show evidence of pursuits by each member of staff; these are completed at the end of each year as part of appraisal information but also inform of how the HE community engages as a collective. One strong and important mainstay of scholarly activity has been the agreements with our current validating partner whereby several staff have presented at teaching and learning conference search year and course leader groups have been attended, as well as industry specific fora.

It is with pride that all HE teachers engage with industry as part of their scholarly activity and CPD – recognised as the scholarship to improve teaching expertise based on actual performance of career roles (Boyer 1990).

They also liaise with academic tutors from our validating HEI and others from the sector to effect improvements in their understanding of HE delivery. This facilitates meetings with experts from the same field and opportunities to network across regions. Of 40 current HE lecturers, 10 are External Examiners in their own right for other HEIs/ AOs.

Staff Appraisal of Teaching and Learning Approaches

Furthermore, the College's central learning advancement team, through ten dedicated Advanced Practitioners (APs), also offers personalised support for all HE lecturers to include them in all developmental opportunities that other lecturers are mandatorily involved in. These have included

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a range of performance measures derived as part of 'Learning Walks' including observations of lessons, consideration of metrics such as attendance and engagement, and overall outcomes to systematically make comparison with wider TLA. In doing so a culture of harmonising effective higher educational pedagogy and Ofsted approaches is manifest with positive impact. Nottingham College has recently achieved a 'Good' Ofsted rating in October 2022, including teaching and learning aspects of quality of education, behaviour and attitudes and personal development.

Our student focus groups have highlighted that they value how the college offers HE provision through an Further Education style delivery model, with smaller group sizes and frequent 1:1 support. This has proven effective against our demographic and socio-economic context of high-deprivation and poor prior educational achievement.

As a member subscriber to Advance HE, delivery and support staff can apply for fellowships of HEA in addition to their qualifications as teachers. Over the last four academic years, 15 staff have completed and submitted successful fellowship applications. At the end of 21-22, around one-quarter (23%) out of 40 staff who teach on HE hold a fellowship - the scheme is offered with structured financial support and in-house training through the Organisational Development team to increase numbers in a targeted manner. Since all teaching staff are heavily invested in continual improvement of their teaching practice, and reflection on enhancement through scholarship of teaching, applications have been very successful in meeting UK Professional Standards Framework standards without referrals, as reflective practice as examples of strength in TLA are ubiquitous.

3. Student Outcomes

Nottingham College delivers good outcomes for our Students. As demonstrated below, our completion rates are significantly above numerical threshold on the OfS student outcomes data dashboard:

Nottingham College (Taught or registered students)

Completion outcomes by mode and level of study



OfS Student Outcomes Data Dashboard

These outcomes were achieved through our robust approaches to Teaching and Learning. Our offer is founded on a model of small group provision with dedicated one-to-one support, delivered by tutors with substantial industry experience. Our curricula is co-designed with employers, with a clear line-of-sight to work, supported by meaningful work placements and industry-led project briefs. This sits alongside our dedicated academic support to drive progression and achieve positive outcomes.

Dedicated Academic and Personal Support

Strong academic support is vital for students to transition from lower entry levels and throughout their development whilst on programme and for progression. Nottingham College has invested a large resource in academic writing and referencing skills necessary for higher level performance, understanding that this is most necessary from the outset of studies to resolve typical shortcomings in students' initial abilities to source and evidence arguments in their work. As well as personal support from lecturers and study skills modules on all courses, the Libraries team offer a series of interventions to support. These range from one-to-one tutorials to whole group visits.

Those with high needs and declared learning difficulties are further supported by Additional Learning Support teams (ALS) as well as Achievement/Wellbeing Coaches to provide individual learning plans of how barriers to learning might be alleviated. From application stage, ALS staff work with students who declare a disability to apply for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA), and to attend an assessment centre, to identify the full range of support required to enable the student to succeed. ALS staff then facilitate specialist, often one-to-one support, and adapted materials, to ensure full support is place. Examples may include support from our Visual Impairment Team, Deaf Access Team, Physical and Medical Team, Autism and Dyslexia Support Team, or through an external specialist agency. Achievement/Wellbeing Coaches offer dedicated motivational support throughout students' study programmes with one-to-one support available. The college's Wellbeing Team is also available to support with any health, wellbeing or personal matters that may be impacting progression with supported referral to local services where required.

Learning Gains

Nottingham College demonstrates excellence in its approaches to develop students' abilities beyond the content of their studies. This has led to continuation, completion and progression rates for key provision being above the numerical threshold on the OfS student outcomes data dashboard (with many areas meeting the OfS definition of 'compelling'). From the outset these wider skills are identified in programme materials and handbooks so have been written into designed modules such as in Business Management where it is explicit that softer skills development such as confidence, adaptability and problem-solving to replicate world of work are embedded and evaluated alongside knowledge and theory (see BA Business Student Handbook 2021-22).

These skills also form part of assessment to generate confidence and familiarity with presentations that will serve students well in future careers. Other examples from across the provision include:

1. A succession of additional maths seminars for students on Engineering programmes throughout the academic year to support numerical development and apply their wider knowledge.
2. On Hospitality Management and Business modules, a very intensive work placement abroad in hospitality settings with reflective commentary by all students and a live project brief to improve the service area of residence. Naturally, with pandemic preventing travel abroad between 2021 and 2022 this was unavailable and is reflected in the reduction satisfaction rates for these areas.
3. Guest speakers on a majority of courses and programmes such as Photography and Fine Art holding weekly delivery by industry experts to demonstrate application to actual careers, assessment of fitness for work and understanding of industry expertise and projects to inspire scholarly activity as applied to the vocation.

4. Employer involvement in design of assessment instruments including real world problems to solve and formative assessments from employers.
5. Critical thinking and problem-solving case studies to improve application of learning or theory to practice.
6. The classification and recognition of applied learning projects or responses to practice as Scholarship by students under the auspice of Boyer's model (1990) and the HE Scholarship Policy.

To evaluate the gains made by students, qualifications on entry are recorded and compared with overall classifications achieved. This clearly demonstrates that for those with modest educational attainment, the college moves students further from their starting points than many other providers. This follows the WP strategy of the college, with entry requirements set at lower tariffs to allow access and participation to HE study.

In the future, the college will adopt a holistic approach to the measurement of learning gain. We intend to draw on the OfS's research into learning gain to implement a methodology that will capture distance travelled at two points in time for the following: knowledge, skills, work-readiness and personal development. We will utilise a range of tools to assess distance travelled, including standardised tests, grades and self-reporting surveys. We will draw best practice from the OfS learning gain pilot projects and implement them across our offer.

Employability

Our HE strategy is founded on a Board-level commitment to embed employability into all our higher education programmes. All lecturers and tutors enhance learning through direct reference to jobs skills, supported by a highly dynamic industry-based practice. This is largely supported by the fact that over two-thirds of HE lecturers are from industry and a strong number (15) still actively work in the sector alongside teaching roles (as testified by Scholarly Activity records).

This has included art lecturers showcasing their work alongside international artists at the Espacio Gallery in London and a photography tutor who won the prestigious Association for Photography in Higher Education (APHE) teaching practice award (which included speaking at a conference in Ohio, leading to collaboration offers for student-based international projects). Through ensuring our lecturers are actively involved in their respective industries, we ensure our HE offer includes current and competitive embedded employability skills, live employer briefs and projects.

We work with industry and representative bodies to deliver an offer that maximises our Students' opportunities in the labour market. Examples of where we have enhanced employability within our HE programmes include:

- Presentation to our Level 4 accounting students from the AAT President on the skills and competencies required to thrive in the modern financial services sector
- Industry talks to inspire our Art and Design students, including from a locally celebrated artist, who has had work exhibited nationally in a range of galleries
- Project-based tasks for our BA (Hons) Service Sector Management students, who were tasked with researching and presenting their own plans for a business event to a panel which included Industry partners from De Vere Orchard Hotel, Nottingham Conference Centre, Gala Casino Nottingham, Cloud 9 Event Management, Centre Parcs, and East Midlands Airport

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We support employability development through a comprehensive and diverse work experience programme that enriches the studies of our Students and allows for the application of theory in practice, this includes:

- BA (Hons) in Service Sector Management students supporting the City Council in the planned launch of the new Broadmarsh Shopping Centre (including a promotional event to over 100 businesses, politicians, representative groups, residents and other organisations from across Nottingham)
- Restaurant takeovers – including our Level 5 FdA Hospitality students working with the Head Chef and Restaurant Manager of local gourmet restaurant Marco Pierre White. Students were tasked with planning, organising and running their own themed evening
- FdA Photography students exhibiting work at a local 50th anniversary heritage celebration
- Fine Art Degree students exhibiting artwork at Newstead Abbey, a local heritage site
- Curriculum co-design and work experience for our FdA and BA media students with WigWag, a local digital branding company (which has led to full and part-time graduate employment outcomes)
- FdA Fashion students displaying their unique designs in Nottingham's main shopping centre, supported by major local retailers (leading to a catwalk show for the final major project)
- Foundation Degree Fine Art students exhibiting their work at the National Justice Museum

Since average groups sizes are small (circa 9 students), vertical mixing of levels is also implemented to enhance the learning of new students and through a peer mentoring scheme. With first year and second year students sharing the same facilities and timetabled workshops this has had a positive impact on the induction of students to their studies and the variety and range of interest areas in creative arts since specialisms are often niche when alone.

Employers, too, have provided resounding feedback about courses and their students to course leaders when surveyed on these matters. For example, BA Performing Arts students perform their final shows and performances in the company of an audience with talent and casting agents present, who stated:

“Led by a dedicated, industry experienced faculty, students are responsibly introduced to clear, relevant and authentically fruitful pathways towards viable employment within our sector. The standard of talent displayed by the BA students, is synonymous with their graduate peers from the industry's leading drama schools. This makes the college an exciting proposition for aspiring young performers who wish to pursue a commercially led career in the industry”

Progression rates to further educational study are very high - 94% of our graduates were in work or further study 15 months after graduation according to the Graduate Outcomes Survey of 2020. This supplements the rate evidenced by TEF dashboards where overall progression was within 2.5% of benchmark and of very high quality. In greater depth the Graduate Outcomes survey also highlights that:

- Of those in work, almost half (48%) were in highly skilled occupations, and a further one-quarter (26%) were in medium skilled work.
- The average (mean) salary for NC graduates at the point of survey was £24,823.
- Salaries have a large range from under £10,000, including part time work to the highest example salary recorded as £55,000. Diverse employers are revealed but with a

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predominance of Nottingham based, local companies, in line with strategic attempts to support local economic growth.

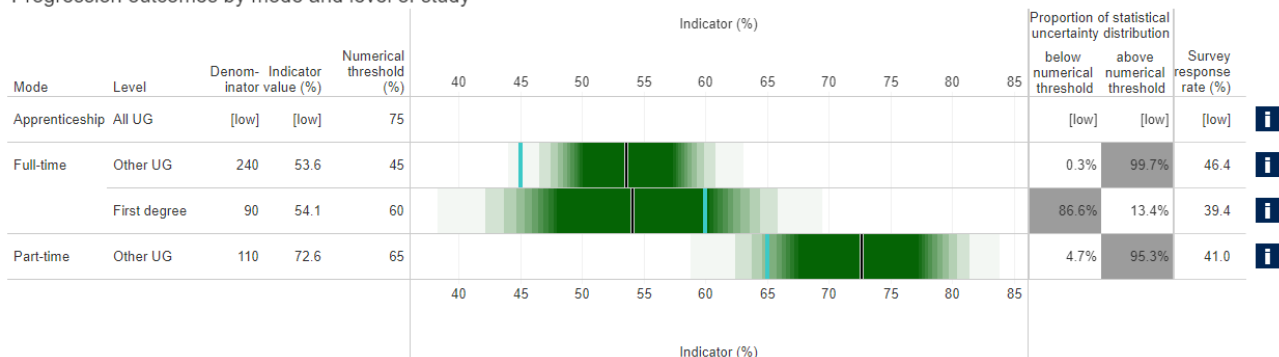
We enhance the employment potential of our HE students through supporting them to enter prestigious national competitions to raise their profile and help them stand out in the labour market.

Progression

The OfS student outcomes data dashboard demonstrates that Nottingham College produces good outcomes for students on 'other undergraduate programmes' (which forms the majority of our provision). The data shows that progression rates for first degree students are an area for enhancement (whilst acknowledging that the progression rate in the dashboard is only reflective of a low response rate of 39.4%).

Nottingham College (Taught or registered students)

Progression outcomes by mode and level of study



To support student with employability further, the College offers a full Matrix accredited careers service. Matrix accreditation provides the international quality standard for the delivery of information, advice and/or guidance (IAG) and allows the College to benchmark its services against best practice. Providing quality IAG to students is essential to ensure that students progress to positive destinations, including employment and/or further study. Work to enhance

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take-up of this support service from first degree students is underway to further enhance progression.

The college has also implemented a number of strategies to support progression to post-graduate study opportunities including dedicated workshops for BA students focussed on finance support, scholarships and local study options.

We are now seeing positive outcomes from this change, with increasing numbers progressing to further study or employment. Despite the economic and labour-market challenges that Nottingham faces, a survey of our leavers (at the beginning of 2020) confirmed that 94% of graduates are in work or further study and of those in work, 48.1% were in highly skilled occupations. Many employment outcomes were with significant local employers such as Rolls Royce, the NHS, Nottingham City Council, Laing O'Rourke, Vodaphone and Bombardier, with others in highly skilled and socially impactful roles such as teaching, childcare management and further education.

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