

The City College Brighton and Hove

Higher Education Strategy

2015 to 2018

Higher Education Strategy

1. Introduction	3
a. Why the College offers Higher Education?	3
b. Institutional and Local Context.....	3
2. Strategic Aims	6
3. Measuring our success	16

1. Introduction

With a long established reputation in both FE and HE we are proud of the crucial contribution we make educationally, economically, socially and culturally to our vibrant city. With clear leadership, professional staff who really care about what they do and how they do it and a responsive culture, we believe we are well placed to drive further growth and excellence.

The College is an accredited partner of University of Brighton; this long-standing relationship is both highly valued and valuable. Our IQER in November 2011 carried out by the Quality Assurance Authority (QAA) confirmed that the academic standards and awards the College offers on behalf of its awarding bodies and the quality of student learning opportunities fully meet UK expectations.

Why the College offers Higher Education?

We understand the vital role of HE as a key driver for economic and social progression, and that it is personally transformational; we continue to have plans to increase the availability and accessibility of vocational HE that will meet the needs of the local and regional population as well as business and industry. Higher Education (HE) should be a transformational experience for the student and have broader aims than the gaining of a qualification. The opportunities for positive, personal change that it can and should produce must underpin every aspect of the design, and realisation of the HE experience. The College recognises the demographic make-up of the locality where it is situated, because while it is a relatively affluent area of the South East equally there are several wards of multiple deprivation including several neighbourhoods of very low participation in HE. While the College does not wish to over-generalise with regard to the choices its students may make, it is aware that increasingly many potential students are likely to be mature, are likely to come from low participation neighbourhoods and that they are likely to want a flexible study pattern. Consequently, the strategic objective of the College is to provide both individuals and employers with a cost effective and efficient means to develop high level skills in addition to making HE provision more accessible to a wider variety of students.

This HE Strategy articulates with the overall CCBH vision for HE. It is informed by the values and mission of the College, the needs of its students and those of their actual, and potential, employers. It is also informed by the wider external environment at local, regional and national level.

Institutional and Local Context

Recent changes to the HE landscape have meant increased competition and a more challenging recruitment environment. We believe that providing high quality, accessible; employment-focused HE remains key to our growth. For our principal stakeholders, our students, we fully recognise that decisions about what and where to study will be crucial; we will continue to provide clear advice, guidance and

information to enable informed choice, and curriculum which meets their needs and adds genuine value. Personalised learning tailored to individual needs will include high quality, targeted support to help all students reach their full potential.

The development of all HE provision involves employers, the College and potential students. External stakeholders are consulted as well as scrutiny of key labour market intelligence published by agencies such as the Local Education Partnerships, UK Commission for Employment and Skills and Labour Market Statistics (nomis). The use of these links and research contributes to a sustained demand for the programmes in addition to ensuring that the provision will meet the multiple needs of both employers and students. The employment pattern of the local area and wider region influences and informs the College's existing and planned curriculum offer, both in terms of FE and HE. For example, employment in Construction and Health and Social Work is expected to grow nationally from 2015-2020¹ which aligns with the College's plans for growth.

Whilst the market adjusts to differing demand for subjects and the emergence of new professions and roles as we advance to 2020. We will proactively engage with a wide range of employers and organisations to address the skills needed by local and regional industries, and provide clear information on progression pathways between skill levels to facilitate planned growth. An enhanced focus on the facilitation of 'learn while you earn models' of study is essential. We will ensure that students are fully supported in order to take advantage of these opportunities.

CCBH is in a county with high economic activity and high participation in HE 2.7%² of residents are in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) well below the South East average of 3.2%. These figures however cannot be allowed to disguise the fact that are several wards of multiple deprivation where based on the Income Domain of the CLG's Indices of Deprivation, 2010, 6 of the 117 lower level Super Output Areas (SOAs) in the area fall within the most deprived in England. The wards in which these SOAs fall are classified within the lowest two POLAR³ 3 quintiles. There is a high figure of working age residents who are educated to degree level, 39.6%⁴; while this is higher than the national average, and it is higher than the UK as a whole, nonetheless there is a significant number level of graduate under employment in the City of Brighton. The student population of the College is significantly more ethnically diverse than the local area in which it is located; 18% of all enrolled students described themselves as originating from an ethnic minority heritage, whereas within the local area 15.2% of the population describe themselves thus. This is estimated to rise to 18.6% by 2018.

This strategy seeks to recognise the needs of those who are effectively excluded from participation in HE, labour as well as issues of graduate underemployment and will seek to construct its HE offer within these parameters. To date the College has

¹ Cambridge Econometrics, MDM Revision 7146, cited in Working Futures 2010-2020, page 68, UKCES, December 2011

² Nomis, official labour market statistics, Out of Work Benefits, October 2013

³ Participation of Local Areas

⁴ Nomis, official labour market statistics, South East.

Higher Education Strategy

developed its HE provision in the disciplinary areas in collaboration with the University of Brighton; this has allowed the College to develop very specific courses that have built on long traditions of engagement with the schools of the university. Going forward the college will seek autonomously to develop an curriculum offer that meets the needs of its FE learners, local employers and those less likely to engage in HE more fully. To this end we will; comprehensively review our existing provision, examine and set out clear and viable progression routes based on our present FE offer giving due consideration to existing provision locally.

2. Strategic Aims

Aim 1: Provide an outstanding learning experience for all students

Vision

CCBH seeks to provide students with the best possible educational experience delivered where and when it is most appropriate to the student need. In keeping with the College mission, Government priorities and the economic and social well-being of the region, we will seek to develop programmes and employ excellent pedagogical practices that are student focussed, based on current research and that promote learning in the workplace as well as on campus.

Context

We have developed a comprehensive Learning and Teaching Strategy that sets out our approach to our pedagogical practice. This encompasses a student-centred learning culture; this may be expressed in different ways depending upon the needs of different students and subjects. The College recognises the relationship between attendance at structured learning events and attainment consequently; the monitoring of attendance will be a key feature of our work.

Actions

1. Use the students' voice to inform and review the quality assurances processes and practices relating to teaching.
2. Implement and review the Learning and Teaching Policy and the Assessment Strategy⁵,
3. Develop, implement and review the Student Success Strategy,
4. Develop, implement and review a comprehensive induction package that ensures that all students understand the expectations of their course and how to seek and use support,
5. Develop and implement systems of student pastoral and academic support and guidance which enhance the student learning experience and help retention,
6. Carefully monitor the attendance and engagement of all learners from the outset of the programme ensuring high completion levels and increased 'good' degrees,
7. Ensure that all courses are fully resourced both in terms of equipment and materials as well as academic learning resources,
8. Encourage appropriate staff to become external examiners and reviewers,
9. Report to Governors⁶ termly of progress of actions.

⁵ This is fully referenced to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education

⁶ Through the work of the HE Strategic Group

Impact

All students will experience an excellent learning experience this leads to very high levels of student satisfaction and positive progression outcomes.

Staff

Vision

Our College staff are critical to the delivery of high quality programmes as such they are seen as our most valuable resource. Staff within the College will have a wide range of valuable current experience and qualifications in order to provide a unique teaching and support resource for students. In order to fully enhance the student learning experience, staff need to be appropriately supported, developed and deployed. The context and mission of FECs are not the same as those in HEIs, and this has important implications for staff that should not be ignored. For example, the nature of scholarly activity is not necessarily the same in both types of institution and nor are the demands placed on staff concerning research. It is different and may require different skills, but difference does not imply a hierarchy. It is important that the diversity of teaching within the College is used as a strength, with good practice from the differing learning contexts informing teaching across the board.

Actions:

1. Ensure that all staff recruited to HE demonstrate the skills, knowledge and values that are in-keeping with the ethos and development needs of the department,
2. Develop a comprehensive staff development plan that;
 - a. Ensures that all staff are equipped to implement the Quality Framework of the College,⁷
 - b. All teaching staff to become members of the HEA
 - c. Ensures that new staff are fully inducted into the operating practices of the College,
 - d. Provide ways in which dissemination of good practice is facilitated,
 - e. Provides targeted staff training and development concerning quality issues,
 - f. Makes best use of staff remission to develop pedagogical practice,
 - g. Ensures that staff knowledge and skills remain current and purposeful to the student learning experience,
 - h. Encourages scholarly activity relevant to the programme portfolio,
 - i. Facilitates the implementation of staff observations based on appropriate aspects of the Quality Code.

⁷ This document ensures that all practices are in keeping with and enhances the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education

Impact:

All students are taught by very well qualified and skilled staff who are committed to the students' learning and who develop the programme portfolio to the greatest levels of currency.

Aim 2 Ensure increased levels of recruitment, sustainability and widening participation

Recruitment and sustainability

Vision

The College will continue to develop a responsive and economically valuable programme portfolio that meets the needs of the economic, employment and development needs of the region and local area. To this end the College will increase its market share across key areas in the forthcoming 3 years. The College will exploit a broader range of post level 3 delivery options using both prescribed and non-prescribed⁸ HE options; these will allow flexibility, responsiveness and a greater range of professional qualifications to complete the programme portfolio. We will seek to develop subject specialisms in specific areas, however this strategy is at its inception and we do not want to limit our potential development by identifying specific areas too early. This been said it is envisaged that we will develop specialisms in areas relating to Digital Media, the Arts, Construction and Engineering as well as Education and Health. These courses will be underpinned by a clear and identifiable speciality ethos. As such the College will also seek to develop speciality in providing programmes that are lead directly to highly skilled employment.

Context

The current HE programme portfolio developed in a period of rapid expansion of HE provision at the College and was driven by a mix of meeting market need and supply side enthusiasm. It is now crucial that the HE provision is reviewed and re-evaluated with both rationalisation and development opportunities identified. This review will be underpinned by a clear focus on developing those courses high level technical courses that fill local and regional skills gaps. The College will undertake the following actions.

Actions:

1. Review existing provision in terms of its efficacy and currency and the extent to which it fulfils its original purpose, identify gaps in our provision particularly those subjects where there is high economic value at Levels 4 - 6 qualifications including;
 - a. Higher Apprenticeships,
 - b. HND/Cs,
 - c. Non-prescribed HE qualifications,

⁸ *Non-prescribed higher education comprises those qualifications not included in the regulations as Prescribed and are situated at level 4 and above. They are not subject to QAA review but would be included in Ofsted Inspections were SAB funding used to fund them. These qualifications remained within the remit of FECs funding bodies and can include for example ILM Level 4 qualifications or Level 5 Registered Managers Awards.*

Higher Education Strategy

- d. Part-time and flexible study options,
 - e. The development of further full Honours degrees will be continued where required.
2. Develop new programmes in popular subject areas primarily building on our existing Level 3 provision⁹ and facilitate internal progression from Level 3 to HE, Central to this activity will be the reintegration of HE programmes into the vocational areas where there is likely to be clear progression routes. Development will include the following areas.
- a. Education and Allied Services,
 - b. Health, Social Care and Services Allied to Health Care,
 - c. Construction and Engineering,
 - d. Graphic Digital Design,
 - e. Digital Media.
3. Make significant improvements to the quality of the student experience leading to;
- a. Improved continuation rates,
 - b. Improved retention.
4. Develop a comprehensive Marketing Plan ensuring that;
- a. Identifies gaps in provision in both the local area and region ensuring that there is a wide range of provision that meets the identified need.
 - b. Identifies the target market for the College courses is clearly and robustly.
 - c. Adopt Digital and Social Media marketing campaigns that clearly focusses on the intended audience.
 - d. Provide clear and appropriate course information to key influencers of potential students e.g. employers, parents and schools.
 - e. Use alumni as advocates for the College provision.
 - f. Use current students as ambassadors for the College at marketing events and visits to local schools.
 - g. There is timely information made available to all potential students and specifically L3 students at the College.
 - h. Offer bursaries to L3 students and apprentices seeking to progress.
 - i. Through our outreach activity work with local and regional agencies to ensure that all hard to reach students are fully supported in their applications.

⁹ See attached Spreadsheet for full details

Impact

The College will flexibly deliver a wider variety of sustainable programmes that meets the needs of the local area and region.

Widening Participation

Vision

Central to our mission is Widening Participation and this is implicit in everything that we do at the College. As indicated in the opening paragraphs of this document the take up of HE in Sussex remains worrying low in some pockets and we have to increase our efforts to work effectively with these areas. Notwithstanding the general recruitment effort, we will continue to have activities specifically aimed at increasing awareness and participation in HE for those who come into widening participation categories.

Actions;

- a. Develop a more interesting and relevant portfolio of economically valuable programmes that meet the needs of a wider range of students.
- b. Deliver courses more flexibly including part-time, and non-prescribed Higher Education Programmes.
- c. Work imaginatively and effectively within the requirements of the College OFFA Agreement to ensure that hard to reach students are targeted and supported effectively.
- d. Improve IAG to POLAR 3 Centile 1 & 2 local areas.
- e. Work with a broader range of employers to ensure that the programme portfolio is relevant to their workforce and their business.

Impact

Students and potential students will have the opportunity to access relevant and well-considered programmes that are delivered flexibly and they will study within a supportive and purposeful learning environment that takes due regard of their learning needs. Engagement in HE will increase locally in Areas of Low Participation. The College will utilise all funding streams to ensure high levels of participation.

Aim 3: Ensure that all students are highly employable graduates and are equipped to move on to further study or employment.

Vision

The College sees student employability as far more than the acquisition of a particular job. It aims to empower our students to reflect on their own individuality within their chosen career, to behave ethically and to strive for excellence and praxis in their profession. Our view of employability and professionalism is based upon the Higher Education Academy's broad definition of employability as: 'a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.' The College will ensure that our graduates stand the very best chance of securing the type of employment they want, and that they are in very high demand by employers. Consequently, helping HE students to be successful in employment is fundamental to the College's approach to Higher Education. This ethos is embedded into programme design, learning, teaching and assessment. Students will gain first-hand experience of work, preparing them for employment and giving them the skills, knowledge and values they will need at work, whilst on programmes and in the future.

Actions;

1. Ensure that the programme portfolio is developed to reflect the nature of the labour market in Brighton and Hove and the local area. This will facilitate the integration of work-based learning into all HE Provision specifically we will ensure that;
 - a. All programmes embed work-based learning as an integral part of the course.
 - b. Employers are involved in the development and design of the programmes.
 - c. All programmes are systematically reviewed to ascertain the currency of practice and content.
 - d. HE staff ensure all students undertake high quality work-based learning.
 - e. Employability is embedded into the pedagogical practice of the programmes.
 - f. Assessment methodologies fully use and exploit work-based learning opportunities.
 - g. Each programme has a designated cohort of visiting speakers from the sector.
2. HE staff will be supported to maintain meaningful contact with their industry or sector, utilise a range of methods to encourage students to learn through, about and for work.

Higher Education Strategy

3. Develop employer fora as advisory bodies for each suite of programmes.
4. Ensure that all students experience a well-informed 'moving on' tutorial from either staff or a relevant employer.

Impact

All students will experience an employment focussed programme and have the opportunity to be highly employable on graduation. They will have the skills and values to make progress in their chosen career and participate in Lifelong Learning.

Aim 4: Develop Collaborations and Partnerships

Vision

The College has one main validating Higher Education Institution (HEI), University of Brighton. This partnership strengthens HE in the College, and while they facilitate the realisation of our HE Strategy, we would wish to develop further collaborations where they best suit the needs of the College.

Actions;

- 1) Maintain the primary funding and validation relationship with UoB insofar as it allows us to achieve our Aims 1, 2 and 3.
- 2) Where appropriate we will seek those validating and Awarding Body partners who enable us to realise this strategy and best facilitate the learning experience of the student. In particular this will be directed towards other HEIs, Pearsons, and Awarding bodies associated with non-prescribed HE as well as Higher Level Apprenticeships. This will include CACHE, CIPD IMI and ILP in order to develop a full programme portfolio.

Impact

The College will be in a position to respond quickly to market need, delivering highly responsive and economically valuable programmes to a wider range of students.

Aim 5: Excellent Estates and Learning Resources will be available to the students

Vision

The College, through its HE management structure, will work to ensure that Higher Education students are provided with resources appropriate to their studies.

Actions;

1. Beyond teaching spaces, resourcing on all College provision is part of the annual Curriculum Review and Operational Planning process.
2. College curriculum leaders will outline their curriculum offer for the following academic year, detailing resource requirements, including staffing.
3. These plans will be subjected to scrutiny by SLT and the College Executive.
4. Regarding programme development and review; following internal approval, the new programme approval process for HE programmes is followed with due consideration again given to resource requirements.
5. The needs of HE will be carefully considered within the new Estates Plan.

Impact

All programmes will be fully and comprehensively resourced ensuring that students have access to an excellent range of resources.

Measuring our success

Aim 1: Provide an outstanding learning experience for all students

a. Teaching quality (NSS)

We will be in the top quartile for overall student satisfaction with teaching. We are already in the top quartile for:

- Staff making the subject interesting
- Staff being enthusiastic about what they teach

Student satisfaction (NSS)

We will be in the top quartile in all categories. Currently we are in the top quartile for:

- Assessment and feedback
- Academic Support
- Personal development

Student Outcomes

- We will work towards in-year retention of 90%.
- We will ensure that the proportion of students achieving a first or 2:1 classification equals that nationally.
- We will raise the attainment of students achieving a merit or distinction to 70%.

Aim 2 Ensure increased levels of recruitment, sustainability and widening participation

a. Growth

- We will meet planned enrolment targets set through the business planning process in 3 years we will have increased the overall student numbers to 400.
- Details of specific programmes and recruitment are outlined in Annex 1 of the implementation plan.

Sustainability

- *All Programmes are fully subscribed to and there is a minimum class size of 20 students.*

Widening participation

We will increase the proportion of students accessing HE at the College from the lowest participation areas by 15% (POLAR 3 quintile 1).

Aim 3: Ensure that all students are highly employable graduates and are equipped to move on to further study or employment.

We will ensure that all graduates will have the opportunity to experience at least two of the following:

- A work placement
- An enrichment opportunity linked to key graduate skills
- A research project

Positive DLHE Data responses are in excess of 75%.

Aim 4: Develop Collaborations and Partnerships

The College will deliver a flexible and wider range of programmes using a variety of Awarding Bodies. Collaboration with employers will be central to our operations.

Aim 5: Excellent Estates and Learning Resources will be available to the students

a. Student satisfaction (NSS)

We will be in the top quartile for access to equipment and resources.