



HE Strategy

Audience	ALL COLLEGE
Requirement	ESSENTIAL
Policy Owner	DP CQI
1st Delegation	SLT
Last Delegation	TSCQ
Review Cycle	Every 3 years
Last Review	Nov 21
Due for Review	Nov 24

Higher Education Strategy

Our Strategic Intent

Delivering excellence in professional and technical education.

Our Culture

Our culture is our personality and character; it's made up of our shared values and describes how our people behave and interact, how decisions are made and how we approach our work. Our culture underpins everything we do.

Our Vision 2020 to 2025

By 2025, we will be the region's leading further education college and professional and technical education provider for choice.

We will:

- be a larger, financially resilient college, able to invest in its people and facilities;
- deliver consistently outstanding teaching, learning and assessment;
- provide consistently outstanding support for our students and ensure their future success is at the heart of all that we do;
- set high ambitions for our students and apprentices, celebrating their progress and employability;
- impact positively on the Solent LEP Economic Recovery Plan and the Solent Skills Action Plan
- enhance our training and our services with sector-leading digital capabilities;
- provide world-class facilities and technologies for all our customers;
- extend our regional reach, capitalising on our excellent transport links, to include the cities of Portsmouth and Southampton;
- ensure we provide first-class apprenticeship training in our region;
- be an employer of choice, valuing the efforts and talents of our people and further developing their skills to impact positively on their careers.
- Promote environmental sustainability, reduce our carbon footprint and educate our students on the causes and effects of climate change.
- Promote, value and celebrate diversity and inclusion in our curriculum, workforce and student body.

This vision will be achieved only with the support and commitment of fully engaged and motivated people who are proud to work for Fareham College.

To deliver this vision, we will:

- inspire our people to be innovative and confident in the teaching they deliver or the services they provide;
- extend the use of digital technology to enhance teaching, learning and assessment and improve the services offered;
- continue to invest in our facilities, resources and IT infrastructure to meet the needs of industry standard training;
- provide strong governance and leadership with clarity of purpose and appropriate levels of support and challenge;
- establish strong and meaningful partnerships and collaborations with a range of stakeholders to add value to our customers;
- embed innovation and teamwork in all the work we do.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Fareham College is a general further education college (GFE) located on the western outskirts of Fareham, offering education and training opportunities from entry to Level 7. It serves a population of almost 200,000 in the boroughs of Fareham and Gosport in south-east Hampshire.

The small amount of higher education provision (approximately 200 students) is important to the College and is designed to meet employer and educational needs, both locally and nationally.

The economic activity rate across the area is higher than the county average and unemployment is relatively low at around 3% in Fareham and Gosport, lower than the national rate of 4.5%. However, there are substantial variations with the highest unemployment in areas with high proportions of young people. Both boroughs have some areas of significant deprivation and relatively low attainment by pupils in secondary schools.

The College's Senior Leadership Team has completed a five-year Strategic Plan for Fareham College for 2020-2025. This plan is underpinned at its core by 6 measurements of success relating to students, staff, stakeholders, skills, systems and study facilities. Much of this work has been consulted on with staff, students, the Corporation and stakeholders, from which, a clear direction, set of aims and curriculum priorities have emerged for the next five years. To increase the profile of higher education, secure its sustainability and economic viability, the College will work to increase the number of higher education students, with a particular focus on part-time, employer-led provision, to support forecasted local demand in areas such as engineering, early years, accountancy, management, teacher training, civil engineering, digital and the creative industries. The College recognises growth in the identified areas will be subject to the Office for Students development policy and allied available resources, whether directly or indirectly funded.

This strategy is updated at an exciting time where the importance of access to good value Higher Education provision in a post covid world is on the government agenda. With the implementation of further T level strands which prepare students for study at the higher levels alongside the forthcoming Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) in digital, health and science and construction routes, Fareham College is well placed to meet the needs of the local and national economy.

Fareham Colleges' involvement in the Strategic Development Funding enables the delivery of a robust and exciting curriculum that incorporates the most current industry standard resources and delivery models. With the curriculum designed to address local priorities and employers having a central role in this, students studying higher education courses at Fareham College can be assured that they have a clear line of sight into skilled careers and better outcomes that will not only influence future earnings but impact positively on the local and national economy.

Fareham College remain committed to growing the Higher Education provision by widening the range of courses available and ensuring that the facilities and delivery continue to be of the highest standard.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE COLLEGE'S MISSION

In the context of the College's mission statement, the general aims of the HE provision are to:

- a. provide a high-quality learning experience through clearly structured, flexible courses and innovative pedagogy.
- b. promote a diverse and stimulating range of experiences, which allow for different backgrounds, learning style, student interests and enable students to realise their potential as educated citizens.
- c. help students gain the maximum benefit from their learning experiences by providing personal and academic reviews, tutorials, CPD and appropriate individual academic and pastoral support.
- d. provide programmes of study that are recognised and valued by employers, national training organisations, professional bodies and universities.
- e. encourage flexibility, knowledge, skills and motivation as a basis for progression into employment, graduate or postgraduate studies.
- f. support the local and national economy by providing relevant higher level technical and professional qualifications, thereby, helping to bridge the skills gap and enable students to overcome barriers to completing their education.

Additionally, specific programmes aim to:

- a. provide students with the relevant knowledge and skills in engineering, early years, accountancy, management, teacher training, civil engineering, digital and the creative industries, plus new programmes to be developed and added to the portfolio.
- b. provide a basis for further choice in more specialised areas of engineering, early years, accountancy, management, teacher training, civil engineering, digital and the creative industries.
- c. provide learning opportunities which develop individual skills and abilities, including learning from private study, which will allow students to produce academic solutions individually and, with others, within given timescales and constraints.
- d. provide students with relevant, high quality feedback which encourages learners to analyse and reflect on their strengths and weaknesses.
- e. develop problem-solving and transferable skills to enhance personal development.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE COLLEGE'S CURRICULUM STRATEGY

The shape and nature of the curriculum also reflects the College's commitment to its stakeholders as outlined elsewhere in the Strategic Plan 2020-2025. The focus throughout this document is to place the needs of students first and the College's Higher Education Strategy has been developed to ensure the realisation of these ambitions.

The proximity of Portsmouth and Southampton Docks and the Ministry of Defence Support services and the area as a tourist and holiday destination, together with their relevant associated businesses, are further factors in the local demand for skills. The area also has strengths in Advanced Engineering and Electronics, Business and Professional Services, Manufacturing, Construction, Infrastructure Projects, Education, Health, Visitor Economy and the Arts. Higher employable skills are required in all these areas.

Fareham College currently works in direct partnership with the Universities of Chichester, Southampton Solent and Portsmouth and has strong links with Winchester, Bournemouth and Southampton.

The Higher Education Board of Studies oversees the strategic direction of HE, quality assurance process for the college and feeds directly into key college management committees, including the Governors' Committee for Teaching, Students, Curriculum and Quality (TSCQ). The Deputy Principal has overall responsibility for Higher Education across the college, with the support of the Director of Quality and Higher Education who oversees the Higher Education Quality Assurance who has responsibility for University Partnerships and supporting Faculty Directors with HE curriculum development which is responsive to evidence-based demand.

HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGIC AIMS

- To develop full and part-time higher level provision, where the College has proven strengths in its further education curriculum and there is evidence of demand.
- To work independently and, via partnerships, to develop suitable full- and part-time provision of sub-degree qualifications for high and medium priority areas in response to local learner and employer needs.
- To ensure progression to Level 4 in priority sectors.
- To ensure high quality provision through quality assurance and enhancement, staffing, CPD (including encouraging scholarly activity), all mapped to the QAA Quality Code.
- To provide a distinctive adult and higher education student ethos, environment and support.
- To pursue a policy of widening participation, through which more students with ability are able to access higher education, regardless of background or the ability to pay.
- To respond to government policy change and economic drivers that influence Higher Education through the development and delivery of Higher Technical Qualifications as they become approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.

Specific Objectives to meet Strategic Aims:

a. To develop full- and part-time higher provision where the College has proven strengths in its further education provision and there is evidence of demand by:

- Working with employers and their representative organisations to ensure higher education provision meets local and regional skills' requirements, both now and in the future.
- Determining the development of Foundation Degrees, BTEC Higher Nationals or Professional Diplomas and Certificates in the priority sectors.
- Developing effective partnerships and formal links with local Higher Education Institutions.
- Establishing bridging or compact arrangements with universities to ensure student progression and enhancing employability prospects.

b. To work independently and, via partnerships, to develop suitable full- and part-time provision of sub-degree qualifications for high and medium priority areas in response to local learner and employer needs by:

- Working with local partner Higher Education Institutions.
- Fostering strong relationships with all the Sector Skills Councils in priority areas.

- Working closely with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) to identify and respond to industrial and commercial need.
- To seek funding opportunities through grant schemes such as OfS Catalyst Funds to further develop the breadth and quality of the Higher Education programmes at the College.

c. To ensure progression to Level 4 in all priority sectors by:

- Mapping existing Level 4 progression opportunities for Level 3 learners at the college, including those on Access to Higher Education courses and Advanced Apprenticeships.
- Developing new Level 4 provision in selected areas of excellence.
- Developing teaching and learning strategies which will encourage increasingly autonomous student learning.
- Ensuring progression to Level 5 or full degrees at local universities, or those with whom bridging arrangements have been established.

d. To ensure high quality provision through quality assurance and enhancement, staffing, CPD (including encouraging scholarly activity), all linked to the QAA Quality Code by:

- Following Fareham College and partner universities' quality assurance policies and procedures and relating them to OfS Quality Assessment Framework.
- Overseeing the strategic direction of higher education in the College, and monitoring and improving the quality of Level 4, and higher, courses in the college through the Higher Education Board of Studies.
- Providing substantive higher education teachers with relevant CPD and the opportunity to pursue scholarly activities through case loading.
- Seeking to achieve the new TEF Silver status at the next awards in 2023.

e. To provide a distinctive adult and higher education student ethos, environment and support by:

- Creating a professional learning environment in areas in the College, where higher education is delivered.
- Offering access to a range of learner support services, both at the college and through the workplace.
- Accessing regular student feedback and responding appropriately.
- Developing remote access to learning and learning resources via educational digital technologies, accessible from home or the workplace.
- Encouraging student involvement with partner university student unions and social groups.

f. To pursue a policy of widening participation, through which more students with ability are able to access higher education, regardless of background or the ability to pay by:

- Facilitating social mobility through access to higher education for those with ability and closing attainment gaps.
- Contributing to greater local, regional and national economic success through the provision of a better educated workforce.
- Providing learning opportunities to enable all with ability to 'get ahead'.

- Collaborating with employers, partners and universities to improve skills shortages and addressing skills gaps leading to sustainable growth and wealth creation.
- Incentivise and empower students to pursue non-traditional routes into higher education.
- Designing curricula which reflect the diverse needs of students in partnerships with, and taking account of, local business and employers' needs.

g. To respond to government policy change and economic drivers that influence Higher Education through the development and delivery of Higher Technical Qualifications as they become approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education by:

- Identifying progression routes from T Levels to Higher Technical Qualifications and ensuring students on T Level programmes have a direct line of sight to L4/L5 Technical Education within Fareham College.
- Identifying key sectors for economic growth which will be supported by the development of Higher Technical Qualifications. E.g. Healthcare, Early Years, Construction, Civil Engineering, Engineering and Digital.
- Developing and nurturing strong employer links to support the development and delivery of the technical content of these new qualifications.
- Establishing progression routes from Higher Technical Qualifications to Level 6 programmes in local Higher Education Institutions.

STAFF CAPACITY AND INVESTMENT

The expansion of Level 4, and higher, provision necessitates investment in terms of development time for the setting up of new courses and working with employers in their design. The College has a strong staffing base, with lecturers who have good connections with employers and who work closely with providers of higher education.

The routes for funded growth are through direct funding from OfS. Investment considerations include the need to develop quantity, quality and other processes specifically for higher education programmes to meet the indicators of sound practice as identified by OfS and the UK Quality Code.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Fareham College Senior Leadership Team assesses the performance of all the College's provision, including higher education and provides high level reports to the Governing body. The College manages risk through a comprehensive risk management process, which is the responsibility of the Principal. For further information about the identified risks refer to the Risk Management Policy and associated Risk Register.

CURRENT PROVISION AND PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

The timeline for the development of a new higher education programme is lengthy compared to FE provision. It is necessary to bid for funding at least 18 months in advance of beginning the course and higher education validation has to meet the requirements of the university/awarding body, as well as internal validation processes and calendars. Part of the development process will also require risk and cost-benefit analysis, as well as further market research if these were needed.