



Halesowen College

HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGY

2015 – 2020

Higher Education Strategy 2015 – 2020

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INTRODUCTION

The Higher Education Strategy 2015-20 builds on and consolidates the achievements and successes in Higher Education over the last 15 years. Serving the local community, raising aspiration and skills, Halesowen College students make a significant contribution to economic and social development.

The HE position has undergone and continues to experience significant change, through external interventions including the introduction of tuition fees, the lifting of the government cap on admissions and the withdrawal of maintenance grants. The Black Country LEP has set out the local economy and employment demands with particular regard to higher skills needs and rapidly changing technologies. This is an opportunity to continue to offer high quality teaching, learning and support and a commitment to continuous enhancement and collaboration.

Higher Education has the potential to transform lives of individuals and local communities and economies. This strategy set the direction underpinning the Strategic Plan 2015-2020 focusing on 6 strategic aims designed to deliver those opportunities.

VISION FOR HE

The provision of high performing HE teaching, learning and support is a key strand within the strategic aim to be a leading centre for education and meet the expectations of the QAA to manage academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. Employers, professional bodies and our university partners will inform the development of an HE curriculum offer, including Higher Apprenticeships, which meets these needs, extend delivery and increase the breadth and volume of provision.

Halesowen College has a key role in the educational, cultural and economic life of the surrounding area through the delivery of employer-focused, cost effective high quality HE learning opportunities within a culture of continuous enhancement. Each year large numbers of successful Level 3 students progress to higher education at local universities. In 2015 this amounted to 87 students with a further 198 progressing to Level 4 and 5 courses at Halesowen.

HE provision will be built around the College core values of :-

- Commitment
- Partnership
- Standards
- Learning
- Respect
- Trust

The HE strategy includes expansion of priority areas with supporting the Local Enterprise Partnership sectors identified as key for Black Country growth, including advanced manufacturing including Advanced Engineering and Business sectors. A clear priority continues to be a focus on higher level apprenticeships and up-skilling opportunities for those who wish to progress further at work.

The College will deliver vocational, academic and professional programmes that enable our students to at least meet and exceed their aspirations, ensuring that each individual achieves to the best of their ability.

A core commitment is to facilitate progression through FE and into HE, raising and meeting aspirations. It is particularly committed to raising progression for those who would not normally access HE. Widening participation and progression pathways is at the heart of the College's FE and HE ethos and operations.

The College strives to be responsive to the voice of business and more actively engage employers in the development and delivery of its HE provision. Alongside increasing access and maintaining cost effectiveness there will be new curriculum development and review existing provision to respond to emerging local and national priorities. An increasing emphasis will be placed on the use of our virtual learning environment to complement our traditional delivery ; ensuring greater accessibility, flexibility and enhancing the learning environment for students.

The staff base will have the skills and training to respond quickly and effectively to future challenges. HE teaching, learning and assessment will be based upon sound pedagogic principles that enhance the individual learners' knowledge and skills essential for their future success. Inspirational teaching and learning approaches will be used to raise students' aspirations and provide an ongoing learning experience.

Customer focus will define the strategy through active student involvement will remain a priority.

HALESOWEN COLLEGE

Halesowen College is a tertiary college located in the Metropolitan Borough of Dudley, eight miles west of Birmingham. It currently operates from three sites close to the centre of Halesowen. The main Whittingham Road campus is primarily where higher education is delivered in the new purpose built HE Centre, but some delivery is still located at Coombs Wood. The college serves the local population from surrounding townships in the boroughs of Dudley and Sandwell plus a significant number from West Birmingham. The area served is primarily urban in character and includes wards with a high index of deprivation. POLAR 3 data indicates that many of the census wards in the surrounding area are in the lowest or second lowest quintile for HE Participation. This includes, Bartley Green (19.5%), Rowley (17.2%), Blackheath (20%), Cradley Heath / Oldhill (24.1%) and Lye (17.9%) www.hefce.ac.uk/analysis/yp/POLAR/Map_of_young_participation_area/ . The Ofsted Inspection Report published in July 2013, graded the college as "good" .At the time of

writing, the college has approximately 5750 students enrolled, 450 of which are studying on programmes of Higher Education. Students study across subject sector areas which deliver over 40 A Levels and over 30 vocational courses. The College has a contract for employer responsive provision to deliver workplace training and apprenticeships. The college's mission is to be "the leading choice for Post 16 Education and Training".

HE provision in 2011 was primarily based as a few part-time programmes in Business and Computing at HNC level, together with programmes offered in partnership with the University of Worcester and Newman University. The expansion of college-based higher education has been through further development of HNC/HND programmes and in partnership with the University of Worcester and Newman University design Top-up programmes.

Higher Education programmes have been designed and delivered at Halesowen based upon a number of key criteria being fulfilled. These include programmes being based in areas where there is strong level 3 provision in terms of both student numbers and quality of teaching staff, programmes fulfilling the requirements of the local community/employers and programmes with clear HE or employment progression routes.

Some of the Higher Education delivered at Halesowen is delivered in partnership with the University of Worcester and Newman University; the partnerships are regulated by Partnership Agreements. These agreements have been drawn up in line with the QAA Quality Code and set out the parameters for the operation of the collaborative arrangements. The agreement is designed to ensure that a robust quality assurance framework is in place which provides a degree of operational autonomy for Halesowen whilst guaranteeing the standards of the University's awards. Due diligence declarations are checked and signed annually. These Higher Education programmes are taught by Halesowen and they are ultimately courses of the Universities as they approve/validate the programmes which are delivered. On completion, students achieve a qualification in the name of the University of Worcester/Newman University, consequently the University is responsible for reviewing and supervising the academic standards of these awards.

Operationally the College is responsible for the day to day management, quality, learner experience and delivery of programmes; the University of Worcester/Newman University provide guidance and structure throughout the learner experience. Halesowen works collaboratively to design the programme content, the amount and form of assessment, the timeliness of assessment feedback and methods to listen to the student voice.

A significant part of provision consists of part-time (some will be full-time from September 2015) provision with Edexcel/Pearson. The College gained centre approval from Edexcel in 2007, and has a range of provision in both further and higher education. The college began with the HNC provision in Business and Computing. Over the past four years the HNC/HND offer has increased as students and employers continue to recognise their appeal and value for money.

COLLEGE MISSION

The College Mission is to be the leading choice for post 16 education and training.

COLLEGE VALUES

The mission provides the foundation for the delivery of fundamental beliefs and values underpinning the conduct of students, staff and partners. These are exemplified within the College Values:-

- Commitment
- Partnership
- Standards
- Learning
- Respect
- Trust

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2015-2020

Core strategies

- Deliver the most extensive range of high quality 14-25 learning and progression opportunities.
- Lead in diverse, inclusive and innovative learning, teaching and assessment.
- Drive strong collaborative learning partnerships in meeting the needs of the economy, education and the community.

Enabling Strategies

- A reputation and brand as the outstanding College of choice that leads local learning.
- Be an exemplary employer and recognised for the most capable, committed and caring staff.
- Ensure financial strength and stability to deliver excellent facilities and resources.

HE STRATEGIC AIMS

1. Enhancement of the HE student experience

To provide an outstanding experience for all HE students which challenges and inspires with an engaging, supportive and inclusive environment, thus increasing students' employability skills and encouraging them in an ethos of lifelong learning.

2. Development of teaching, learning and assessment

To enhance excellence in teaching, learning and assessment, informed by evidence-based and professional practice to impact positively on student success and engagement.

3. Develop our strategic partnerships

To continue to develop strategic relationships with industry, employers, higher education partners, awarding bodies and the wider sector, to enhance external reputation and visibility.

4. Provide regional and employer focussed provision

Through continuous development of a highly responsive, employment and future focussed curriculum to enable students to develop the knowledge and skills which will prepare them with confidence for future success in work and life.

5. Focus on widening participation

To continue to raise aspirations, widen participation and increase progression into and through HE, providing the opportunity for successful participation in HE to all who can benefit from it and building on success and commitment to inclusion.

6. Work in partnership with students.

To further develop partnership with students to learn from their experiences and continually enhance their experience, helping to secure future levels of recruitment and maximising retention and achievement across our HE provision.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Growth

To meet planned enrolment targets set through course planning process.

Student Satisfaction (NSS)

To be in the top quartile in all categories.

Student Achievement

To raise the attainment of students achieving a merit or distinction to 70%.

Student Retention

To work towards an in-year retention of 93%

Teaching Quality

Reviews of HE teaching and learning will be consistently good or outstanding.

Work Ready Graduates

Ensure all HE students will have the opportunity to experience at least one of the following:-

- A work placement
- An international study experience
- An enrichment opportunity
- A research project

Academic Portfolio

Conduct a full review of the academic portfolio, consulting all key stakeholders to ensure the curriculum is fully employment focussed.

Delivery

Over the life of the strategy, all HE will be available for a blended mix of face to face and interactive on-line modes.

Reviewed/Approved	By	Date
Updated by	Joanne Williams	July 2017
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