

Curriculum Strategy 2021-2025

This curriculum strategy has been developed to recognise the future context and considers both local and national economic and skills requirements. The strategy is not exhaustive and the curriculum offer will adapt and reflect emerging priorities over the four year period.

■ Rationale

Halesowen College has a Strategic Plan 2021-25 which states that our purpose is...

‘to provide the exceptional education, training and support that will transform life chances and equip our community to flourish in a changing world’.

This will be achieved through preparing students with the skills to be successful in the future workforce. Our aim is to provide learners with a high quality education which develops relevant skills, knowledge and behaviours leading to sustained positive destinations and improved life chances.

Our six strategic priorities are:

1. A Broad, Inclusive, Responsive and Purposeful Curriculum

- We will offer a curriculum with breadth and depth, to meet a very wide range of needs and ambitions, and with clear progression routes from Level 1 to Level 3 and beyond, in order to meet current and future labour market demands.
- We will build on key specialisms, where our expertise will equip learners with the skills to work in priority sectors.
- We will be creative, flexible and responsive in our curriculum design.
- We will develop meaningful and productive partnerships with employers and other stakeholders, to make sure our curriculum is relevant and a route to employment / further study.
- We will develop our learners as people, with the skills they need to succeed and thrive in life and employment.

2. Exceptional Teaching, Learning and Outcomes

- We will provide consistently excellent education and training that inspires learners and builds their confidence and curiosity.
- Our students will achieve results and outcomes that will enable them to compete with their peers both nationally and globally.
- Our students will receive exceptional individualised support to achieve outcomes.

3. Learning Environments That Make A Difference

- Our learning environments will be inspiring and will benefit from industry standard equipment.

4. A Diverse, Empowered, Supportive and Accountable Community

- Our staff will be experts, motivators and role models.

5. Finance and Resources: Sound Finances To Allow Investment And Keep Us Ahead Of The Game

- We will invest purposefully for the college and students' future.

6. Reputation As The Go-To College

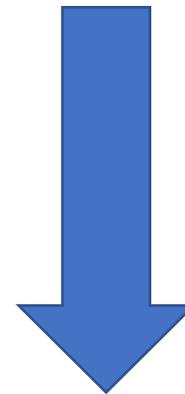
- We will influence key regional and national agendas.

This curriculum strategy document will provide the framework to ensure we meet the strategic aims and deliver our vision.

■ Implementation

We view our curriculum as a progression model. The content of the curriculum is understood to be an academically and vocationally ambitious curriculum that enables all students to realise success.

YR 12	A Level or vocational study commences
YR 13	Completion of A Level or vocational study and preparation for: higher education, apprenticeship, further training or employment.



- Leaders have a clear understanding of how assessment is constructed to support all students to build their knowledge and apply that knowledge.
- Leaders review the framework of the curriculum regularly to ensure that the narrative for the curriculum within their subject area is coherent and fluent especially at transition points.
- Leaders ensure that teams have a secure understanding of what a highly successful learner looks like at the end of Key Stage 5.

■ Impact

- Headline data.
- Destinations.

The College Provides Opportunities For The Following Main Groups:

Education Programmes for Young People

In 2020/21 Halesowen College had 4222 16-18 learners (5950 enrolments). There were 718 (17%) on A Level programmes and 3504 (83%) predominantly on vocational study programmes, with nearly 63% (2218) of learning aims completed at Level 3.

Adult Learning Programmes

Halesowen College has 1774 adult enrolments in 2020/21, the great majority on part time and short courses although 316 adults follow full time Diploma courses, including 290 at Level 3 including 276 on Access to Higher Education courses mainly in Health (Nursing, Midwifery, Health Professionals), STEM (Science, Computer Science) and Business and Education related subjects. A number of adults completed ESOL (470) and Basic Skills (464) qualifications.

Apprenticeships

There were 118 new apprentices supported by Halesowen College during 2020-21 with 184 on programme of the 100 2020-21 leavers 12% (12) were 24+ and on Advanced Apprenticeships. There were 26 at Level 2 (26%), 52 (52%) at Level 3.

Higher Education

Halesowen College offers Higher Education (HE) courses including Higher National Certificates and Diplomas and Foundation Degrees in partnership with University of Worcester. In 2020/21 learners were enrolled on these programmes in 15 subject areas ranging from Teacher Education, Early Years, Learning Support, Health and Social Care, Creative Media, Photography, Animal Management, Applied Chemistry and Biology, Computing, Engineering and Business and Counselling. Achievement rates are high on the vast majority of courses.

Provision for Learners with High Needs

Halesowen College supported 75 high needs learners (82 enrolments) in 2020-21 of which 33 were on supported learning programmes and a further 42 were within mainstream provision.

14-16 year olds

Provision for 14-16 year olds is part time through our Inspire: Elective Home educated programme. This programme delivers English, Maths and Science and a limited number of vocational options for 93 young people.

Curriculum Strategic Drivers

There are a number of strategic drivers that impact on the curriculum and they have longer term implications for our organisation. The following is a summary of the strategic drivers for Halesowen College.

Strategic Driver 1: Labour Market Conditions

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to significant disruption in the labour market with retail, hospitality and the creative sector most significantly affected.

The current situation of jobs by sector in the Black Country is as follows:

	Dudley	Sandwell	Walsall	Wolverhampton	Black Country
Advanced Manufacturing	17685	21765	14225	13515	67805
Building Technologies	7550	6500	5100	4150	23500
Business Services	17860	20100	23645	176958	80185
Environmental Technologies	925	2180	1355	1650	6050
Health	17750	16700	13100	18200	64800
Public Sector	15900	15500	14500	15500	63000
Retail	23000	23000	19500	18500	86000
Sports	1400	1600	1700	2200	7000
Transport Technologies	3030	9850	9505	5405	29160
Visitor Economy	5900	5440	4665	5625	216000
TOTAL	111,000	122,635	107,285	102,440	449,100

Sector Trends

Sector	Global Industry Trend	Impact on Employment
Advanced Manufacturing	3D Printing (Additive Manufacturing)	Jobs requiring different skills e.g. design / creative skills. More collaborative environments.
Health	Advances in technology are transforming life sciences and HSC delivery.	Higher Level jobs that involve developing, using and working alongside technology in HSC.
Retail	Advances in technology will offer retail lots of opportunities to enhance their products, services and operations for consumers.	Jobs that involve working alongside the best use of new technology (e.g. the Internet of Things, Virtual Reality, Robots, Driverless Vehicles, Artificial Intelligence)
Health	Ageing society globally	Increased demand for HSC jobs requiring more people to work in the sector.
Advanced Manufacturing	Automation and Digitisation	Jobs requiring higher level of skills; more use of technology and working with robots.
Environmental Technology	Brownfield land regeneration	More technical specialist skills for the land remediation process.
Transport Technologies	Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAV)	Jobs requiring higher level of skills; more use of technology and working with data/computing.
Environmental Technology	De-carbonised, circular economy	Environmentally focussed jobs, combining technical skills with development of new ideas to reduce emissions.
Building Technology	Digitisation (BIM, Virtual Reality and Drones)	Higher skilled jobs using technology, digital and data to drive performance.
Advanced Manufacturing	Digitisation of industrial sectors like manufacturing, transport and construction	Jobs requiring higher level of skills; more use of technology and working with

		robots, artificial intelligence and big data.
Health	Digitalisation of life sciences and HSC delivery.	Higher level jobs that involve developing using and working alongside technology in HSC roles.
Business Services	Digitalisation of professional services sector such as business services, retail and public sector.	Professional services jobs that involve working alongside and making the best use of new technology, such as machine learning and AI.
Advanced Manufacturing	Electrification (of cars, aircraft, rail)	Different types of skills to traditional car/aircraft manufacturing with a focus on electrics/batteries.
Environmental Technologies	Energy storage and wider energy innovations	Jobs requiring higher level of technical skills: more use of technology and working with data/computing.
Business Services	Financial Technology (FinTech)	Technology/computing focus with skills required in coding, programming, cyber security etc.
Business Services	Increased demand for online shopping	Shift of jobs from in-shop to supporting online operations (customer service, operations, communications)
Retail	Increased demand for online shopping	Shift of jobs from in-shop to supporting online operations (customer service, operations, communications)
Visitor Economy	Increased wealth across the globe raises demand for leisure activities like tourism.	More of a range of new job opportunities in the sector within new attractions.
Environmental Technology	Increasing demand for enhancing the crops productivity and cultivation.	Investment in research and development will require new researchers.
Building Technology	Low / zero carbon buildings	Design and build processes more geared towards environmental impact of construction and energy efficiency.

Environmental Technology	Low-carbon transport, including electric vehicles	Different types of skills to traditional vehicle manufacturing and maintenance, with a focus on electrics/batteries.
Building Technology	Offsite construction	Shift of jobs from building site to factories; working with robots/automation; more design-based work.
Sports	Continued evolution of e-sports	More and more sporting arenas are opening up online; it can be very lucrative for competitors of league organisers.
Public Sector	The increased use of digital technology in education / teaching	Teachers now and in the future will need to be more 'tech-savvy', using digital techniques to teach.
Public Sector	The public sector offers a range of different careers, all of which will evolve in different ways.	More technology-based job requiring a variety of skills and flexibility.
Sports	The rise of women's sports	The momentum around women's sports has also opened unparalleled opportunities for the creation of new professional leagues, franchises, corporate sponsorships and increased ticket sales.
Public Sector	Use of new technology in professional roles such as AI and Machine Learning.	Public sector jobs that involve working alongside and making the best use of new technology.
Business Services	Use of new technology such as AI and Machine Learning.	Professional service jobs that involve working alongside and making the best use of new technology.
Transport Technology	Use of new technology such as digital and drones.	Higher skilled jobs, using technology, digital and data to drive performance.
Environmental Technology	Use of robotics, remote sensing and satellite imagery and drones.	Shift in skill sets to digital skills and a reduction in the number of employees.

Health	Widespread focus on maintaining good mental health and the treatment of mental health disorders.	More jobs within mental health and new approaches across all job types, taking into account the importance of mental health.
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Although there are decreasing volumes of lower skill level jobs available, it is still important that Halesowen College continues to offer sector entry level job qualifications as a 'starting point', although there should always provide progression to higher qualifications where larger volumes of more well-paid jobs are available for highly skilled workers.

The emergence of Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) will be a significant influencer in the curriculum offer in the future as Halesowen College meets the skills demands of local employers.

Building on the Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth white paper published in January 2021, the college intends to develop stronger links in the following sectors: Hospitality and Culinary Arts; Rail and Engineering; Digital and Technology; Healthcare and Associated Sciences; Business and Finance; and Creative Arts Industry which are key priority areas for the West Midlands. These stronger links are intended to support close employer and stakeholder partnership working and to strive for innovation in delivering skills and employment.

'Ensuring a free, flexible and local 'step on, step off' Level 1 and Level 2 curriculum for lifelong learning is a core aim of the college in its curriculum design and development in the next five years.'

West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) adult education flexibilities and National Skills Fund (NSF) have all contributed to allow the expansion of this model of free education. Our strategy is to continue to broaden this 'free education' ethos at Level 3 where new funding flexibilities allow as we are clear that cost is the most significant barrier to lifelong learning. Linked with this we will continue to deliver all qualifications up to Level 2 at no cost to the end user and rely on core funding streams.

'Halesowen College will continue to offer a local and broad ranging curriculum offer up to Level 3 to support progression to entry level jobs and progression to Level 4+ qualifications.'

We also have a significant ESOL provision and both ESOL and learners with English as an Additional Language (EAL) barriers to education are a key focus for our continued development. Consequently we have developed our range of ESOL linked vocational courses as ESOL+ packages delivered across the college. This range of programmes will enable ESOL learners to continue to develop their English and subject specific skills concurrently.

Strategic Driver 2: The 4th Industrial Revolution

We are currently in a 4th industrial revolution driven by technology. The evidence from current experience of a rapidly changing technology indicates that we will continue to be in an ever changing environment. The population of the West Midlands need new skills to enable them to thrive in this environment of constant change. New technology will enable more remote working, leading to a global marketplace.

The educational revolution which will be required is expected to involve; anywhere/anytime teaching; personalised flexible self-paced delivery; digital skills at a common baseline for both staff and students.

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK in March 2020 and proceeding six-month lockdown meant that Halesowen College was forced to move to 100% online remote delivery from March 2020 until the end of the academic year and then again in January to March 2021.

Halesowen College transitioned quickly and within a week of the first lockdown to online delivery using MS Teams as the core platform for online face-to-face lessons.

Staff development was organised rapidly to develop teachers' skills in online delivery and the college provided in excess of 500 laptops to learners along with laptops for all staff. It became increasingly evident through this period that online learning is a less desirable delivery model in comparison to face-to-face classroom delivery and that the vast majority of learners preferred classroom-based face-to-face rather than remote online delivery.

There are a small number of adult courses where the convenience of online remote delivery outweighs the compromises of this delivery model. This is the case for some ACCESS to H.E. courses. These course are likely to continue to have components delivered remotely in the future.

We know now, however, that learning will always have digital approaches. The curriculum intent and delivery mode will be bespoke to the sector, level, qualification, content and learners. The lockdown and period of remote learning in 2020/21 has lifted the expectations of learners in what they expect to be available online as a minimum and the quality of online resources available to them on all courses.

The new Digital Strategy will enable this strategic driver.

Strategic Driver 3: Higher Education

The current competitive environment is generally not conducive to college-based H.E. delivery. There is high regulatory demand via the Office for Students (OfS) along with a self-funded funding mechanism delivered via a guaranteed loans system.

Halesowen College has limited H.E. provision and will only operate in this space where there are clear specialist needs driven by employer demand or low progression to H.E. from F.E.

Higher Apprenticeship demand has continued to significantly increase and we will follow this demand in areas where Halesowen College has a strong curriculum base and there are prospects for high volumes of delivery and thus economically viable returns.

Areas of specialism currently include: Counselling; Accounting; EYE; Health & Social Care; Applied Science; Healthcare Science and Business.

We will continue to grow and expand our relationship with universities as an associate college or through cadetship programmes.

Strategic Driver 4: National and Regional Policy

Halesowen College operates in tough economic conditions as with all those in the F.E. sector currently. This, in part, drives curriculum decision making to ensure delivery is efficient and self-sustaining in its operation.

Regional Policy

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) has devolved responsibility for the regions Adult Education Budget (AEB) in both setting spending priorities and the allocations made to providers.

The WMCA has worked with its partners to develop the Regional Skills Plan with the clear aims of:

- More people to move into employment.
- More people to move into higher skilled jobs.
- More skilled employees available to support business growth and productivity.
- All communities to benefit from the regions economic growth.
- An agile and responsive skills system that is more aligned to the needs of business and individuals.

Key actions from this plan which impact upon our curriculum are as follows:

- Support the introduction of new T-Level routes and work experience openings to improve the work-readiness of young people.
- Lead a regional campaign to promote the benefits of apprenticeships to employers, young people, employees and key stakeholders.
- Support more young people to access pre-apprenticeship provision and to progress into high quality apprenticeships.
- Target skills provision to address areas of high need with a particular focus on youth unemployment.
- Improve our focus on upskilling low paid and low skilled residents, to improve their long term career and income prospects.
- Promote the concept of a skills eco-system for the West Midlands which recognises the interdependence of schools, Further Education (F.E.), Higher Education (H.E.), Adult and Community Learning and private and voluntary training providers and facilitates stronger collaboration with employers, to address regional skills needs.

Priority actions include:

- New manufacturing economy
- Creative and digital
- Environmental Technologies
- Medical and Life Sciences
- Building Technologies
- HS2 growth
- Skills for growth
- Employment for all

‘Halesowen College remains directly aligned to the WMCA priorities for AEB spending in the region. This is an important factor in the curriculum development over the next 5 years and it is important there is no divergence.’

National Policy

The UK Industrial Strategy first presented in November 2017 forms a key part of policy affecting Halesowen College’s curriculum developments. Educational priorities and policies much heavily influence the education sector include:

- The employers Apprenticeship Levy and introduction of employer developed standards, as cited in the 2012 Richard review of apprenticeships.
- The introduction of 24+ and then 19+ learner loans for adult level 3 qualifications in 2013 led to decreasing numbers of adults on Level 3 courses nationally.
- The development and introduction of T Levels at Level 3 for 16-19s from 2020 due to the 2016 Sainsbury Review of Technical Education.
- The 2016 removal of the H.E. student number controls which had a profound impact on the volume of H.E. enrolments in F.E.
- The 2019 Augur review of Post 18 education and funding has yet to impact due to little being yet transcribed into policy.

However, following the pandemic the Government has announced new funding policies in education to support all adults to achieve a full Level 3 qualification. The ‘National Skills Fund’ although this is limited in the qualifications it supports.

In January 2021 the Government also produce a F.E. white paper ‘Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth.’ It sets out under five key themes:

- Putting employers at the heart of post-16 skills.
- Providing advanced technical and higher technical skills.
- A flexible Lifetime Skills Guarantee.
- More responsive and accountable providers.
- Supporting ‘outstanding’ teaching.

The F.E. white paper followed very closely in developing many of the recommendations of the Independent Commission Report on ‘The College of the Future’ published in October 2020 where the following 10 recommendations were made.

Introduce national strategies for education and skills to support economic growth, industrial change and lifelong learning.

- Introduce college network strategies to meet local priorities across the tertiary education system.
- Colleges as anchor institutions within the wider local and regional ecosystem.
- A statutory right to lifelong learning.

- Skills guarantee for a post-covid economy and future labour market changes.
- A new strategic partnership with employers.
- A new support service to employers.
- Stable funding and accountability frameworks for colleges.
- A strategic relationship with governments and simplified process.
- Diverse and representative systems leaders.

Strategic Driver 5: Young People 16-18 at Level 3

The college operates an extensive and increasing A Level offer. Funding for 16 to 18 continues to be centrally administered via the ESFA and aligned directly to recruitment, based on the lagged funding methodology.

Current demographic trends suggests increases in demand over the next 5 years will occur provided there is a fit for purpose curriculum that meets the needs of learners.

Creating an A Level Centre identity remains a core curriculum intention for Halesowen College.

Level 3 Technical and Applied General Offer

The introduction of Level 3 T Level qualifications from 2020/21 which are a 3 A Level equivalence, will significantly change the technical qualification landscape at Level 3 and the possibility of fully converting to a new suite of qualifications over the next 5 years will be a significant curriculum development across the college.

Level 3 qualifications are primarily focussed on progression to university and employment and form and coherent progression route for all sector areas.

‘Halesowen College will deliver T Level programmes in selected subject areas from September 2021 and will transition from applied general qualifications to Technicals where appropriate.’

It has been predicted that 65% of today’s school children will eventually be employed in jobs that have yet to be created. This leaves the college with a responsibility to develop meta-cognitive skills in all our learners to enable them to be adaptable, creative and resilient.

Strategic Driver 6: Essential Digital Skills

There is a significant digital skills gap in England and this is limiting our workforce productivity. The WMCA has identified digital skills as a key priority for the adult education budget. Digital skills will be included in all courses along with a significant offer to adults in short bite sized qualifications and digital skills improvement opportunities.

Strategic Driver 7: Meeting Employer Skills Needs and Apprenticeships

The pandemic has significantly impacted on Halesowen College's ability to grow or maintain its apprenticeship numbers.

Halesowen College has reduced its offer concentrating on areas where there are reasonable returns and a critical mass can be realised.

The introduction of standards and the employers Apprenticeship Levy Fund have significantly changed the funding and delivery landscape in the last few years. Regulatory costs and complicated delivery and assessment mechanisms have led to a narrowing of returns and viability.

The impact of the pandemic on apprenticeship starts in England has reduced the number of providers as their businesses become unviable. As post-pandemic recovery begins we are likely to see many small specialist providers and a few very large providers emerge placing significant risk into the sector.

Apprenticeship provision will continue to grow focussing specifically on our core specialist areas.

Strategic Driver 8: Support for learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Post 16 SEND demand rises year on year. People with a disability are far less likely to have a job than the general population:

- 53.2 % of people with disabilities were in employment, up from 51.2% a year previously. The employment rate for people without disabilities was 81.8%, up from 81.4% (Commons Briefing Papers CBP – 7540, January 2020).

'Halesowen College will continue to develop the SEND provision, and significantly grow the volume of Supported Internships which provide progression to employment for SEND learners.'

Reviewed / Approved	By	Date
Reviewed by	Joanne Williams	March 2022
Approved	SCQC	
CLT approved	N/A	
Website	No	
Next Review date		March 2023