



1. Introduction

Our Mission Statement:

Walsall College is uniquely and proudly vocational. Delivering technical, professional and community education. Our greatest passion is unleashing the potential of individuals, communities and businesses; our greatest legacy is the talent of our students: skilled, professional and enterprising.

Walsall College's *Mission Statement and Shared Values* position the College as an agent for social inclusion and social change and one that welcomes students from all backgrounds, including those not traditionally well represented in higher education. This mission is the core of everything we do; and is underpinned by our ambition to close the gaps of participation within the college environment.

This strategy outlines the current position and future direction of Higher Education (HE) provision at Walsall College. It has been produced in conjunction with the College's 'Corporate Strategy 2021–2024'. The Higher Education strategy is one of assuring high quality student experience, attainment and progression, together with one of HE growth that outlines our wider commitment in supporting people into higher levels of study and jobs. Career readiness and growth, we know does not always follow a specified lane of study. Many people who are enjoying career success, can look back on a multitude of experiences, training and development throughout their journey to date. If the corporate ladder represents how people *used* to think about professional growth, the *career lattice* is its successor. A lattice of opportunity allows for vertical, horizontal, and diagonal movement across training programmes and different 'types' of study (and at different modes).

We aspire to continue to revisit the makeup of the College's HE provisions in order take full advantage of wider range of opportunities available and emerging and to adapt to local and regional need whilst also valuing student choice and the potential for social mobility. We intend to help to address the government's demand for more high-quality degree alternatives to boost adult skills and job prospects. With national multi-million-pound investments to allow more people to gain higher level technical skills, the College is set to explore opportunities as they emerge in skill areas to be covered by the new approved Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs).

Across the cycle of this strategy, the College will continue to explore opportunities to work with partners to offer Higher Apprenticeships and Degree level Apprenticeships (such as our partnership with University of Worcester delivering the CMDA) as well as to expand our Level 6 top-up degrees (as with Birmingham City University). For September 2021 we are able to deliver the first of a future wave of Level 6 top-up programmes with Staffordshire University, building on our well-established suite of undergraduate provision made up from Pearson, BTEC Higher National qualifications.

Our Shared Values

Passion

The student is at the heart of everything we do. We create and deliver opportunities for prosperity to students, employers and our communities.

Integrity

We value professionalism, dedication, quality and excellence in our staff. We practice and promote respect, wellbeing and empowerment for the individual.

Innovation

We are committed to the needs of the modern economy and champion innovation, creativity and enterprise.

Equity

We are committed to an environment where we purposefully focus on fairness in our policies and management of the issues of diversity, equality and inclusion, in our college society and community.

Collaboration

We develop strategic partnerships with employers and wider stakeholders to ensure we lead and shape the education and skills landscape. We work positively with and value our partners.

Sustainability

We promote personal development and build confidence and ambition in our staff and students. We manage our resources responsibly for the benefit of our college community.

2. Our 7 Strategic Pledges

The Walsall College Corporate Strategy 2021 – 2024 provides 7 strategic pledges; which display the future objectives and vision the college has set itself over the next 3 years. They will be the strategy taken to ensure that the college is at the forefront of providing innovative, high quality education and skills for a modern Britain.

Our 7 Strategic Pledges

We are committed to 7 Strategic Pledges, which outlines our intent to ensure Walsall College is at the forefront of providing innovative, high quality education and skills for a modern Britain.

Our vision for the Walsall College of the future is of a college that truly meets the needs of all our students whilst delivering the skills needed for digitalised and greener economy drivers nationally, regionally and locally.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Work with an employer and business connection in every curriculum area to endorse and enhance provision and provide a line of sight to work.	Build a culture that celebrates and prioritises excellence and innovation in T, L&A.	Develop the maths, English and digital skills of all our students in order to prepare them for the world of work by embedding skills seamlessly into every programme.	Become a truly innovative digital college.	Proactively engage to upskill the regional workforce by helping people learn throughout their lives.	Create a high quality and seamless experience for all stakeholders, which is sustainable and accelerates the way to a greener future.	Promote rapid progression between levels and settings with an aim to increase numbers at Levels 3, 4 and 5.

Pledge 1

Work with an employer and business connection in every curriculum area to endorse and enhance the provision and provide a line of sight to work.

Pledge 2

Build a culture that celebrates and priorities excellence and innovation in Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

Pledge 3

Develop the maths, English and digital skills of all our students in order to prepare them for the world of work by embedding skills seamlessly into every programme.

Pledge 4

Become a truly innovative digital college.

Pledge 5

Proactively engage and upskill the regional workforce by helping people learn throughout their lives.

Pledge 6

Create a high quality and seamless experience for all stakeholders, which is sustainable and accelerates the way for a greener future.

Pledge 7

Promote rapid progression between levels and settings with an aim to increase numbers at Levels 3, 4 and 5.

The pledges also reflect the Access and Participation Plan's strategic measures, for the two documents to work, concurrently.

The Office for Students' (OfS) and Walsall College's Access and Participation Plan.

The Office for Students' (OfS) is the regulator for HE and was established by the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, coming into existence on 1 January 2018. The primary aim of the regulator is to ensure that English higher education is delivering positive outcomes for students – past, present, and future. The OfS seek to ensure that students, from all backgrounds (particularly the most disadvantaged), can access, succeed in, and progress from higher education.

The four primary regulatory objectives

All students, from all backgrounds, and with the ability and desire to undertake higher education:

1. Are supported to access, succeed in, and progress from, higher education.
2. Receive a high quality academic experience, and their interests are protected while they study or in the event of provider, campus or course closure.
3. Are able to progress into employment or further study, and their qualifications hold their value over time.
4. Receive value for money.

Walsall College successfully secured registration to the OfS regulatory framework from its inception, which designed to mitigate the risk that these primary objectives are not met.

Regulation is then maintained by scheduled returns of an Access and Participation Plan, which sets out how higher education providers will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education.

They include:

- the provider's ambition for change
- what it plans to do to achieve that change
- the targets it has set
- the investment it will make to deliver the plan.

The OfS monitors access and participation plans to make sure that the providers honour the commitments they make to students in these plans, and take action if they do not. The College has now had the 2021 – 2025 Access and Participation Plan (APP) approved, and the 19/20 APP Impact Report has been submitted. The OfS identify areas for the College to address across agreed timescales. Our most recent set of strategic measures from the OfS are set to be achieved across the 2021-22 academic year and maintained thereafter.

Walsall College's agreed Strategic Measures

Strategic Measure 1 – Offer a comprehensive programme of staff development.

The measure reflects the college ambition to offer excellence in teaching, learning and assessment. A refreshed approach will see each curriculum area have an *Advanced Practitioner*, who will be an advocate of excellent teaching pedagogy in their area of expertise.

Strategic Measure 2 - Generate a deeper analysis of wider communities and intersections through greater transparency of data and its review.

The college will strive for a seamless customer service experience for all of the communities that it serves. By understanding its local community; the College will understand the wants and needs of the community of which it serves, a further identify areas where there are gaps in achievement, progression and success.

Strategic Measure 3 - Strengthen our view of HE destinations.

By aligning the curriculum with the requirements of the labour workforce will enable the college to gather accurate information regarding the destinations of H.E leavers. We currently use an external agency to gather this data. We are pleased to see that this year, 87% of 19/20 H.E leavers gained a positive destination of work or further study.

Strategic Measure 4 – Increase access to provision from underrepresented groups.

We dedicate energy to an annual Higher Education Fair, which support students in their understanding of higher-level progression opportunities; through the levels offered at the College. Also, strengthening the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Team has built expectations to deliver (with Aspire to H.E) subject specific outreach activity.

Strategic Measure 5 – Close continuation gaps for target groups identified.

The College are using various techniques to increase access to provision and college curriculum. The Aspire to H.E programme uses the POLAR classification system to identify students from traditional 'cold-spots' around the Walsall Borough to motivate potential students to attend university courses, and progress through the levels offered by the College's suite of qualifications.

Strategic Measure 6 - Increase progression rates for target groups identified.

The College will build upon the existing progression statements for students and prospective students so we are committed to offering the full range of potential next steps information (progression routes for students wishing to proceed to a course of higher-level study or a job, a better job or career).

3. The Context for the College's H.E Provision

Walsall is an area of high economic and social deprivation: low skills, low-income economy, and has become more deprived (according to indices of multiple deprivation from 2019) to 22 out of 32 most deprived areas in UK. Walsall also ranks 16th out of 20 out of the top 20 local authority districts with the highest proportions of income and employment deprivation, respectively. 12.3% of the Walsall population have no qualifications, compared to 7.7% of the national figure. Only 27.6% of the inhabitants of Walsall have a Level 4 qualification and above, compared to 40.3% of the overall figure for Great Britain (this is 12.7% lower than the national average).

Established in 1952, Walsall College aims to support our customers with the highest quality education, skills development and training programmes, which are focused on the needs of a modern economy. One of the largest in the West Midlands, the College is the only general Further Education College in the borough of Walsall, with 4,000 14-19-year olds, 5,000 adults, 2,000 apprentices, and over 250 traditional higher education (H.E) students increasing to 400 when including the Degree level and higher apprenticeships. Students are recruited from Walsall, the wider Black Country and Birmingham, although some partnership work does serve other parts of the country. Links with partners locally, regionally and nationally are strong and interactions with businesses have become a prominent focus for the College over recent years, working with over 1,000 employers.

Recruitment onto our own traditional H.E provision is predominantly from our local area, as we offer H.E provision in an F.E environment, as an alternative to applying to Universities outside of Walsall. It is not untypical for example, that more than 70% of college-based HE students reside within Walsall postcode areas. When this significant proportion of local students is considered alongside the economic status of the region, it is clear that recruitment activity supports widening participation in higher education. We continue to recruit most HE students from Walsall's most deprived wards often progressing with us from levels 2 and 3. We see living and operating in an area of very high levels of social deprivation as a context, and not an excuse, as demonstrated through very successful outcomes for high volumes of our HE students, demonstrated for example by our overall H.E achievement for 2019/20 at an outstanding 96.6%.

H.E provision remains a relatively small part of our business portfolio, nevertheless, its position in the College does contribute to increasing numbers of students wanting to begin a pathway with us at level 2 or 3 with an ambition to become 'H.E ready'. The success of the provision at level 3 is reflected in the fact that over 500 students secure external university places through UCAS each academic year, with an additional 230 students selecting to stay and progress to HE within the College's BTEC Higher National offer. A small percentage of students attend with us for HE from external sources, occasionally from a local F.E provider; or adults wanting a change of direction straight from work or unemployment.

The College's Higher Education portfolio has seen shifting patterns of recruitment over the previous decade. Relatively new provision such as the BTEC Level 4 HNC in Public Services (Blue Light Services) has grown rapidly in just 2 years, or the level 6 Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship which is now our largest single HE programme with 49 active students. Other courses, particularly our HND level 5 programmes often seem to struggle to recruit against regional completion. Our advice and guidance to students always remains impartial and this includes supporting their progression to HEIs further afield as a live style change as well as recommending our own provision for those who want or need to study locally.

Increasingly the wider higher-level portfolio includes higher apprenticeship programmes and Degree level apprenticeships. A growing number of applicants are choosing these courses as their preferred options and able to continue working at the same time. The table below pulls together the current (2020-21) position for the College in terms of the higher level programmes, adding the traditional higher national diplomas alongside the level 6 top-up programmes and the higher and Degree level

apprenticeships. This demonstrates that the overall higher-level provision at the College is larger than previously reported when looking only at our suite of higher national programmes.

Higher Education level Provision at the College

The table below outlines the College's current student numbers across our provision at levels 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Levels 4 and 5. Also known as Higher Level. Level 4 includes Certificate of Higher Education, Level 4 Diploma, and Higher National Certificate. Level 5 includes, Diploma of Higher Education, Foundation Degree, and Higher National Diploma. Apprenticeships can also be delivered at higher level.

Levels 6 and 7. Also known as Degree level. Level 6 includes a full Undergraduate Degree (may be Degree with Honours/Bachelor's Degree), and a Graduate Diploma. Level 7 includes a Masters Degree, Postgraduate Diploma, and a Level 7 Diploma. Apprenticeships can also be delivered at Degree level.

Programme Title	Programme Type	Level	Total number of students
Higher Apprenticeship in Business and Professional Administration	Apprenticeship Framework	Level 4	40
Professional Accounting/Taxation Technician	Apprenticeship Standard	Level 4	12
School Business Professional	Apprenticeship Standard	Level 4	4
Software Developer	Apprenticeship Standard	Level 4	1
Data Analyst	Apprenticeship Standard	Level 4	1
Operations/Department Manager	Apprenticeship Standard	Level 5	53
Assessor Coach	Apprenticeship Standard	Level 4	2
Learning and Skills Teacher	Apprenticeship Standard	Level 5	4
Leader in Adult Care	Apprenticeship Standard	Level 5	2
Diploma in Adult Care	Standalone Diploma (not an apprenticeship)	Level 4	5
Diploma in Management and Leadership	Standalone Diploma (not an apprenticeship)	Level 5	3
Diploma in Leadership and Management for Adult Care	Standalone Diploma (not an apprenticeship)	Level 5	1
Chartered Manager Degree	Apprenticeship Standard (with Worcester University)	Level 6	49
Sub- Total Apps			177
BTEC Level 4 HNC in Computing (Software Development)	BTEC Higher National Certificate	Level 4	14

Programme Title	Programme Type	Level	Total number of students
BTEC Level 4 HNC in Computing (Networking)	BTEC Higher National Certificate	Level 4	11
BTEC Level 4 HNC in Photography	BTEC Higher National Certificate	Level 4	12
BTEC Level 4 in Art and Design (Arts Practice)	BTEC Higher National Certificate	Level 4	7
BTEC Level 4 HNC in Fashion and Textiles	BTEC Higher National Certificate	Level 4	8
BTEC Level 4 HNC in Graphic Design	BTEC Higher National Certificate	Level 4	7
BTEC Level 4 HNC in Creative Media Production	BTEC Higher National Certificate	Level 4	11
BTEC Level 4 HNC in Construction and the Built Environment	BTEC Higher National Certificate	Level 4	15
BTEC Level 4 HNC in Public Services (Blue Light Services)	BTEC Higher National Certificate	Level 4	16
BTEC Level 4 HNC Hospitality Management	BTEC Higher National Certificate	Level 4	12
Sub HNC Total			113
BTEC Level 5 HND in Computing (Software Development)	BTEC Higher National Diploma	Level 5	14
BTEC Level 5 HND in Computing (Networking)	BTEC Higher National Diploma	Level 5	7
BTEC Level 5 HND in Photography	BTEC Higher National Diploma	Level 5	14
BTEC Level 5 HND in Fashion and Textiles	BTEC Higher National Diploma	Level 5	2
BTEC Level 5 HND in Graphic Design	BTEC Higher National Diploma	Level 5	5
BTEC Level 5 HNC in Creative Media Production	BTEC Higher National Diploma	Level 5	10
BTEC Level 5 HND in Public Services (Blue Light Services)	BTEC Higher National Diploma	Level 5	9
BTEC Level 5 HND Hospitality Management	BTEC Higher National Diploma	Level 5	8
Sub HND Total			69
Level 6 B.A (Hons) Visual communications (Photography) Top-Up	Top-Up Birmingham City University	Level 6	8
Level 6 B.A (Hons) Visual communications (Graphic Design) Top-Up	Top-Up Birmingham City University	Level 6	9
Level 6 B.A (Hons) Fashion Design Top-Up	Top-Up Birmingham City University	Level 6	4
Diploma in Education and Training	Diploma from University of Warwick	Level 5	17

Programme Title	Programme Type	Level	Total number of students
Diploma in Education and Training*	Diploma from Birmingham City University	Level 5	6
Post Graduate Certificate in Education *	Certificate from Birmingham City University	Level 7	10
Sub Total Top-Ups			54
Overall subtotal – L.R			236
Overall total			413

*Both the Diploma in Education and training; and PGCE are two-year courses and have had their numbers included in the total of 236 students.

National Strategies for Post-18 Education and Training

The post-18 review was announced in February 2018 and since then the independent panel, chaired by Philip Augar, undertook an extensive programme of stakeholder engagement and evidence gathering. Just recently we see some emergence of government policy which goes some way to address some of the findings. The review amongst other things recognised the disparity between HE and FE institutions. Funding levels in FE are inadequate to cover essential maintenance or to provide modern facilities, and funding flows are complex to navigate.

As the College updates this HE strategy, we see a government strategy emerging that aims to add parity of support and esteem for FE. The Department for Education (DfE) is planning to improve higher technical education to help people train or retrain for high-skilled jobs.

The DfE reforms are designed to:

- improve the quality of higher technical education on offer
- encourage more people to take higher technical education courses and get high-skilled work
- introduce a national approval scheme, to show which higher technical qualifications meet employers' skills needs

A new mandate to support adults in being able to access more, high-quality alternatives to university degrees under new measures to boost the nation's skills and job prospects. The future challenges of technological innovation, artificial intelligence and shorter job cycles will require greater labour market flexibility. The College's own post-18 offer needs to respond to this: doing more of the same will not be enough.

Across the lifecycle of this HE strategy, the College will need to continue to invest in new equipment that will support technical studies, and boost training opportunities with businesses in areas such as digital and construction. For those adults wishing to upskill or retrain, we need to devise greater flexibility in how and when they study. Too many of our current HE courses still follow traditional, full time, day time study modes with too few options to study part-time or weekends or via blended learning programmes allowing adults to access education from home. In several cases, our recruitment onto BTEC higher nationals is low, meaning that classes are having to merge to create viable group sizes. It is absolutely the right time to conduct a comprehensive review of the curriculum, including the College's higher-level offer across all provision types.

Annual Curriculum Conference

In January 2022 the College will hold its first Curriculum Strategy Conference event. Influenced by employers, the Federation of Awarding Bodies, Ofsted, Ofqual and LMI experts (for example) but also including input from College Governors and students so that all perspectives can be considered in the College's next steps regarding the curriculum design and offer.

Meeting the skills demands of the future will require more than just the acquisition of knowledge and skills; it will involve the mobilisation of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to meet complex demands. Future-ready students will need both broad and specialised knowledge. To this end, a multi-disciplinary approach will be an embedded feature of all curricula, enabling and facilitating connections and collaborations between and across traditional 'subjects', driving creativity and innovation. We will cater for multiple entry points along the age distribution and along the skills spectrum. Important too will be actively linking different areas of knowledge to understand complex issues and increasing our students' ability, personal resilience and flexibility to make the logical leaps needed to solve problems that are increasingly multidisciplinary, cross-dimensional and transnational.

With the potential to introduce A level provision back into our portfolio, we will explore how these factors could have implications for progression routes at higher levels. One of the hardest (but most important) decisions facing a young person aiming for university is whether to apply for an 'academic' course, or a 'vocational' one. Those in the first group are not commonly linked with any specific type of work, while those in the second are directly linked to jobs or career sectors. We do know however, that universities are now accepting applicants from both A level routes and vocational (BTEC type) routes in equal measures (stemming from a growth in acceptances from vocational applicants).

Higher Technical Education and T Levels

In September 2020, the College was amongst the first wave of providers to offer the three initial **T Levels** in Construction, Digital, and Education & Childcare. We have since added to this portfolio from a further seven introduced in 2021.

T Level	Number enrolled (as of 08/09/21)
Digital Software Design and Development Year 2	9
Digital Software Design and Development Year 1	16 (12)
Digital Infrastructure Technician Year 1	6 (5)
Digital Data Technician Year 1	0
Construction Design Surveying and Planning Year 2	16
Construction Design Surveying and Planning Year 1	19 (18)
Construction Building Services Engineering (Electrical) Year 1	6 (5)
Education: Education and Childcare Year 2	9
Education: Education and Childcare Year 1	20 (23)
Health Year 1	30 (2)

T levels are based on employer-led standards and offer a prestigious technical alternative to A Levels. From 2023, there will be around 24 T Levels covering 11 technical education routes available to students. The government aim is for T Levels to be the option of choice for the majority of 16- to 19-year-olds who want to progress into skilled employment or onto higher levels of technical education. Students completing T Levels will be awarded UCAS tariff points in line with three A Levels, supporting progression to higher education in related technical areas if they choose.

The College is well placed to build on our success as an initial provider of the flagship T level qualifications and therefore discussions across 2021-22 will review our appetite and positioning for **Higher Technical Qualifications** (HTQs; levels 4 and 5), the Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education has introduced a new approval system based on the national system of employer-led standards that is already used for higher apprenticeships. The Institute is an employer-led organisation sponsored by the DfE, ensuring that the apprenticeships and technical products are of the highest quality. By signalling which Higher Technical Qualifications meet these standards, and working with the Office for Students, approval will send a clear message to prospective students about which Higher Technical Qualifications are high-quality and really valued in the labour market. 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 ambitious plans to increase the availability and accessibility of higher technical, professional and vocational education that will meet the needs of the local and regional population, as well as business and the economy.

Higher Technical Education Growth Fund

The College's application has been successful in securing this funding with both capital monies and resource for the period from September 2021 to March 2022. The aim of the fund is to support providers to build and create additional capacity to grow high quality provision and raise the prestige of approved Higher Technical Qualifications amongst students and employers. This is to ensure the quality of higher technical education provision is sustainable and supports the foundations for the Lifelong Loan Entitlement. Walsall College intend to offer cycle 2 approved Higher Technical qualifications within the following occupational standards launch in September 2023:

Digital

- Software Developer L4 x15
- Network Engineer L4 x15

Construction

- Construction Site Supervisor L4 x12

Health and Science

- Cycle 2 Nursing Associate L5 x15

The expansion of apprenticeships and the reform of technical, professional education in the UK provides greater opportunities than ever before to engage with employers in the co-creation of higher education programmes which are aligned to business needs and career progression.

With the support of the College's employer partners, our aim is to continue to develop desirable highly skilled Apprentices and graduates, with the skillset to succeed in their future job roles and careers. We create streamlined technical and professional routes, which develop higher, economically valuable skills environment, which provide students with the opportunity to apply knowledge and learn through experience.

Our approach instils a desire for lifelong learning within our students by developing learning independence and professional autonomy. We will continue to build on our success in widening access and participation in higher education through the provision of a relevant and accessible environment for inclusive learning, teaching and assessment and by working in close partnership with employers and students. We will continue to work in partnership with employers to give students real-

life, structured opportunities for learning in a workplace setting and we will incorporate relevant professional qualifications or accreditation to enhance student employability.

Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth (21 January 2021): This white paper outlines how the Department for Education propose to support people to develop the skills they need to get good jobs, including:

1. Putting employers at the heart of the system so that education and training leads to jobs that can improve productivity and fill skills gaps.
2. Investing in higher-level technical qualifications that provide a valuable alternative to a university degree.
3. Making sure people can access training and learning flexibly throughout their lives and are well-informed about what is on offer through great careers support.
4. Reforming funding and accountability for providers to simplify how funds are allocated, give providers more autonomy, and ensure an effective accountability regime which delivers value for money.
5. Supporting excellent teaching in further education.

Higher apprenticeships

Apprenticeships offer a valid alternative to university, with the qualifications to match. Higher apprenticeships provide an opportunity to gain Level 4 qualifications or above, with most apprentices gaining an NVQ Level 4, HND, or foundation degree. Some offer the opportunity to progress to Level 7 (which is postgraduate degree level). A higher apprenticeship can take from one to five years to complete, and involve part-time study at a college, university, or training provider.

According to government figures, 90% of apprentices in England stayed on in employment after completing their qualification; 71% with the same employer.

- Apprentices are employed and paid a wage throughout the course.
- Apprentices will gain a head start in their chosen profession.
- Training costs are co-funded by the government and the employer.

The College has seen growth in this provision in recent years currently offering 12 strands with 128 learners active across the portfolio.

Degree apprenticeships

Degree apprenticeships are available at levels 6 and 7 (full bachelor's and Master's). The College offers the L6 Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship Standard (in partnership with Worcester University). There are circa 50 active learners on this programme with several recruitment points across the year.

Lifetime Skills Guarantee

The planned reforms aim to deliver the Prime Minister's Lifetime Skills Guarantee, as set out in his speech in September 2020. This Government will help everyone to get the skills they need at every stage in their lives. A Lifelong Loan Entitlement will be available, the equivalent of four years of post-18 education from 2025, and we will transform the funding system so it is just as easy to get a loan for a higher technical course as it is for a full-length university degree.

Wherever people are in their careers, the Lifetime Skills Guarantee allows access to the skills that they need to be successful and ensure everyone has access to education and training that will help them to get a great job. Part of this strategy includes funding free qualifications for any adult without an existing full level 3 (A Level equivalent) which in turn could develop an increased pipeline of application for higher level study thereafter.

The loan entitlement will be useable for modules at higher technical and degree levels (levels 4 to 6) regardless of whether they are provided in colleges or universities, as well as for full years of study. It will make it easier for adults and young people to study more flexibly – allowing them to space out their studies,

4. The Benefits of HE

There are economic benefits of higher education at both the individual (a graduate premium' in the form of higher wages) and on an aggregate level (e.g. contribution to economic growth), there is also a variety of wider benefits that do not relate directly to the intrinsic higher education qualification holder, but have significant impacts to the individual and societal levels. Higher Education contributes to more cultural dimensions, in terms of attitudes and values. Wider benefits can encapsulate civic engagement, citizenship, greater social mobility and greater social capital.

The Higher Education strategy feeds into Walsall Local Authority's Walsall Plan: The Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2021. The Walsall Plan identifies three emerging needs: People, Business and Place, and sets out three priorities:

1. Increase economic prosperity through increased growth.
2. Maximise people's health, wellbeing and safety.
3. Creating healthy and sustainable places and communities.

In being a major contributor to the 14-19 and adult education, skills and training agenda, the College is crucial to the successful implementation of the Walsall Plan. Strong Walsall partnerships, committed and working together, will realise the priorities of the Walsall Plan. The commitment to offer high quality, higher-level qualifications is fully supported by the Walsall Plan and its priorities. The H.E strategy aims to serve the needs of those individuals that aspire to attain level 4, 5 and 6 qualifications in order to enable them greater personal life choices. Over half of job vacancies between now and 2022 are expected to be occupations that require high-level graduate skills and knowledge.

The College has firmly embedded support structures for students from non-traditional backgrounds, which ensures seamless transition into higher-level education. From the moment that level 3 students start at Walsall College, they are made aware that a higher education qualification can lead to increased earning potential and a wider range of opportunities, and hopefully therefore a more rewarding career. Higher education allows students to experience a rich cultural and social scene, meet different people and explore something they are really interested in at a higher level.

Recent research confirmed that higher education conferred benefits in terms of occupational status, workforce participation (i.e. occupational stability) and earnings.

Over their working life, the average graduate will earn comfortably over £120,000 more in today's valuation, net of tax, compared to a similar individual with two or more A-levels who does not continue into higher education.

Government publications estimate the following earning potential:

- Men - £168,000
- Women - £252,000

According to the department of Business, Innovation and Skills, they advocate that the earning potential of a graduate has a 40% advantage in earnings, and a 34% percentile point in occupational status or prestige, in comparison to a student who stops study after GCSE's.

Initial graduate salaries tend to benefit from substantial pay rises and higher returns for people from lower income backgrounds. The Government supports the growth of HE, and have concluded that more high-level skills can improve social mobility and raise economic performance.

5. Success Measures

Walsall College measures the overall success of its HE provision in the same way that we do our non-HE provision, in that we do not exclude students from the achievement data if they were active at the start of week five of their course. This means that we review the effectiveness of being able to support students in securing the 'right student, right course' and correct level as early as possible, as well as then supporting their retention on the course towards ultimate achievement.

For 2019/20, HE student success at Walsall College was 85%, increasing dramatically from previous years, and significantly above the national average.

6. Student Satisfaction

Student engagement with quality assurance and enhancement is well embedded. All students are made aware of the '7 ways to have your say', which offers students a range of ways to feedback and influence provision. Higher Education students take part in regular College surveys as well as the National Student Survey (NSS). Surveys allow Higher Education students to feedback on their experience of induction, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and College support services; and facilities. Higher Education students also feedback on unit assignments through the online GOAL. Further formal feedback is gained from students via their Course Representative and HE Lead Representatives through student focus groups, and the course rep meetings. Students are represented at senior committees such as the HE Management Board, the Learning and Quality Committee (L&Q), and the Student Voice Committee. Actions to bring about improvement are tracked through the Student Voice Action Plan within the Student SharePoint area and within Course Reviews and Quality Summits. Actions taken to improve provision are fed back regularly to the student body.

The National Student Survey (NSS) is a high-profile census of nearly half a million students across the UK, which has been conducted annually since 2005. Following the 2015 NSS, Walsall College was listed amongst fourth highest for student satisfaction, out of all other institutions in the UK offering HE provision. Like other institutions however, the cohort size of those taking part in the NSS was less than a quarter of those in taught provision. This year, given the pressures and uncertainties colleges and universities faced in responding to the coronavirus, the UK funding and regulatory bodies kept the 2020 NSS under review. An assessment of the impact has been held, and the data published. Walsall College did not take part in the 2020 NSS survey. In subsequent years the criteria for inclusion in the NSS survey has changed, and only small numbers of students in their final year with us have been selected to take part. The College therefore made the decision to replicate the NSS questions and run the survey internally, capturing a much larger majority of student voice in order to strengthen the data collected. The Higher Education Student Survey (Internal) for 2020/21 concluded with 98% of students being overall satisfied with their course. We believe that excellent staff support and smaller class sizes enable students to feel valued, and to enjoy and thrive in their work.

7. The QAA Review

Academic standards across the UK are moderated by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). QAA conduct Quality and Standards Reviews (QSR), which provide evidence to the Office for Students (OfS) about whether providers meet the providers meet the Core practices of the UK Quality Code of Higher Education. The OfS will confirm with each provider if a Quality and Standards Review is required. The College's most recent review was conducted in December 2014 and resulted in an extremely positive report that clearly recognised the high quality of teaching, learning and assessment of HE. The College was **commended** for the quality of student learning opportunities. Walsall College's next QAA QSR is scheduled for 2020/21. At present due to COVID-19; QSR's are suspended.

The Annual Provider Review (APR) as conducted by HEFCE concluded its most recent findings September 2019 and outlined a number of positive attributes of the college's approaches and commitment to quality assurance and the HE students experience. HEFCE noted the high levels of engagement from good governance and suggested that, as a low risk HEI, the likelihood of a QAA review in 2020 -21 was now listed a low risk (unlikely).

8. Higher Education Strategic Aims

The Strategic Ambitions of Walsall College outlines our commitment to social inclusion and social change and one that welcomes students from all backgrounds, including those underrepresented in Higher Education.

The aim is to increase vocational opportunities for the following groups of students:

- Students completing a Level 3 course.
- New students, adults in the workplace, adults reaching or working at Level 4, but not regarding themselves as participating in HE.
- Re-engaging adults and lifelong students ranging from those participating in continuing professional development to those initiating career change and transition.

Providing opportunities for higher level learning throughout life, HE provision is designed for any student who has suitable practical experience at work, and a preparatory Level 3 qualification or equivalent. Information, advice and guidance (IAG) are provided for applicants and students to enhance their opportunities of appropriate progression. Effective communication between course teams and student support services ensures clear and accurate information regarding all HE opportunities. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is considered, where appropriate to assess a student's suitability for higher-level learning, or to gain credit for partial elements of a programme.

These commitments aim to:

- Ensure that all HE students benefit from a high-quality learning experience, fully meeting their ambitions to succeed and progress to positive destinations.
- Continue to strengthen our employer and partnership network to best support the students' career potential and progression.
- Ensure that our staff are confident, ambitious and innovative, effectively supported and well prepared for the future.
- Extend provision at Levels 4, 5 and 6 and to widen access and participation to Higher Education (HE) programmes in the area; to ensure equal opportunities for local people to access HE.

9. Higher Education Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy

The Higher Education Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy 2020- 2023 reflects the College's mission, strategic ambitions and values and is closely linked to national priorities to achieve excellence.

Walsall College is committed to continuously improving the high-quality vocational education and training it provides for a diverse range of students. This HE Strategy has been informed by The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ).

Walsall College works effectively with staff, students and other stakeholders, to articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices. This purposely enables every student to develop as an independent individual. From initial advice and guidance through to induction activities and the delivery of study skills throughout their chosen courses, students can access their chosen subject(s) with an expectation of working at an increasingly higher level of autonomy, producing in-depth evidence, which enhances their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.

As a truly inclusive College, we will develop talent from all sectors of society, fully develop the talent of all our staff and students, and build collaboration and a sense of community. The College is able to take steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. We are able to monitor and evaluate support arrangements and resources, which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

Whilst Walsall College does not have degree awarding powers (DAP's), it does have a commitment to maintain academic standards for Higher Education, using the FHEQ framework and its qualification descriptors as important reference points to enable us to do that effectively.

Teaching, learning and assessment approaches are implemented to enable students to develop as independent, autonomous students with provision of opportunities for independent learning that places emphasis on developing students with high levels of critical thinking skills. Opportunities are embedded to gain relevant work experience through placements, 'live' projects, and other such work-related practices.

The students are supported in a safe and effective learning environment, developed by reflective staff who are committed to their own continuous improvement through sharing good practice, resources and scholarly activity to maintain the currency of their knowledge and skills for the benefit of their students.

Student progress is monitored and recorded to inform continued academic development, assessment judgements and to improve learning. In addition, assessment judgements in HE are formed by employers, teachers, by student peers when engaging in collaborative or project work, and self-assessment by students themselves when they are striving towards high standards. Feedback from employers, teachers, peers, and from reflections through self-assessment is provided, and can be used for the purpose of improving learning and performance. Assessment types are varied and include portfolios of practical work, solutions to problem-based practical scenarios, academic report writing, assignments, case studies, projects, seminars, examinations and/or in-class tests.

10. Enhancement of Learning Opportunities

Walsall College is passionate about delivering the very best services to its Higher Education community. The College takes deliberate strategic and operational steps to improve the quality of learning opportunities through its Quality Assurance and Improvement processes and student engagement activity.

The further improved our learning environment becomes, the more successful and confident our students will become, and the greater the impact we will have on their progress and subsequent impact in the development of Walsall as a Borough. Should a graduate utilise the experience to aid their personal, social capital, then the economy as a whole will benefit.

Walsall College believes in preparing students for the world of work with skills and attributes that go beyond the mastery of their chosen discipline to include skilled, professional and enterprising. *The Walsall College Graduate* (WCG) programme equips students with the attributes required to make a positive impact in the workplace with wider interpersonal skills, professional confidence, positive attitudes to work, motivation, and health and well-being. Upon completing their course at Walsall College, students will have demonstrable qualities that enhance their values to employers in addition to their main qualification. Skills and qualities that the Walsall College Graduate programme offers includes:

- reflection upon personal qualities including levels of motivation, ability and transferable skills;
- identification of strengths, areas for development and actions required for improvement;
- strong communication skills (including the ability to adapt to different situations and people);
- a strong awareness of the requirements of the professional environment and digital identity.
- the ability to work effectively with others;
- an awareness of social and cultural issues and an improved understanding of the world around them;
- identification of a career goal and a pathway to achieving it;
- the development of a strong work ethic and the motivation required to excel within their chosen field of work.

The Walsall College Graduate programme maximises opportunity for personal development through the delivery of core curriculum and the provision of a comprehensive tutorial and enrichment offer. WCG encourages students to create themselves a personal reflective log, to be used as a starting point to create their own Curriculum Vitae, displaying their personal learning journey throughout their course.

The College has taken a number of deliberate strategic steps to enhance its Higher Education provision. These include:

- Development of online systems to make transparent the recording and monitoring of course evaluation and improvement plans.
- Development of the College's virtual learning environment (GOAL) to support independent learning at a higher level.
- The Scholarly Activity Policy, which recognises the distinct nature of professional development and upskilling for HE tutors.
- Highly developed student engagement through '7 ways to have your say'.

The College's Quality Strategy embraces quality assurance processes for Higher Education provision. Within the Quality Improvement Cycle, and the Higher Education Enhancement Cycle; there are clear processes to assure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and success in outcomes through Learning Walks, Quality Summits, Course Review, Internal Verification, Student/Stakeholder Voice activity, and Self-assessment and Quality Improvement Planning.

11. Curriculum Development

Course Approval

Recommendations for new programmes come from the 'bottom up' or the 'top down'. Directors of Faculty and their teams are closer to students and employers, and will suggest that a new programme be introduced. The College's Senior Management Team or its delegated authority in Course Approval Panel approves all HE courses of study, including any amendments to and withdrawal of these. All courses of study are approved, reviewed and modified in accordance with the College's systems, and arrangements are in place for managing the quality and standards of its taught provision. Approval of HE courses of study entails a two-stage process, whereby proponents of new courses are in the first instance required to complete a rationale for the course proposal. Stage 1 requires completion of a New Course Approval Form, with a view to then proceeding to Stage 2 - Approval, which requires further presentation to the approval panel comprising members of the College staff as well as external members as appropriate.

The cross-college Curriculum Planning Group then receives all recommendations for new HE programmes.

12. The Management and Governance of Higher Education

The responsibility for the strategic direction of all College provision including the Higher Education lies with the Corporation of the College, which receives regular reports on the provision through the College Principal.

The College's Senior Management Team (SMT) is the body within the College with overall responsibility for the management of the Higher Education. The College's Academic Regulations for HE and any proposed amendments thereto, are approved by the College's Senior Management Team through the Higher Education Management Board.

The College employs two senior managers to oversee the Higher Education provision: The Assistant Principal, Curriculum and the Assistant Principal of Quality and Higher Education.

The College consists of Four Faculties, all managed by a *Director of Faculty*, and supported by Curriculum Delivery/Apprenticeship Sector Managers (CDMs/ASMs). Higher Education programmes are currently offered in seven curriculum areas, namely Public Services, Education, Sport, Hospitality and Travel, Art and Design, Photography, Fashion, Graphic Design, Media; and Digital Development. In addition, the Workforce Development department at Walsall College leads the delivery of higher-level teacher training activity in partnership with Birmingham City University. Staffordshire University currently run a partnership with the college for a Top-Up Level 6 for Computing Science; that will start in September 2021. Course approval for the BA Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CDMA) was concluded during 2017-18. Where the College delivers in partnership with a Degree Awarding Institution, programme design and development are determined by the institution's own management and leadership teams, who take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities.

All BTEC Higher National qualifications delivered by the College are based on a teaching year comprising of Autumn, Spring and Summer term (of approximately 12 weeks each). All Pearson courses are classified as full-time study, with an option to study part-time (apart from where specified specifically as part-time only).

Higher Education provision takes place on College site (when safe and feasible); and online, and is delivered in parallel with Further Education courses. Directors of Faculty have responsibility to ensure all aspects of quality assurance processes are effective and fully embedded in the design, development and approval of all programmes. CDMs/ASMs are responsible for academic and resource planning to ensure relevancy and currency.

13. HE Academic Regulations - Maintaining Academic Standards

The *Academic Regulations* for the College refer staff and students to all aspects of quality assurance that underpin delivery, assessment, and verification and enable the College to maintain academic standards and outcomes across its HE provision. It also sets out regulations across a range of associated issues such as authenticity, grading, academic appeals etc. and as such, must be read as the underpinning document to this strategy.

14. Higher Education Management Board

The Academic Board meets four times each year to act as the strategic board charged with reviewing all aspects of Higher Education provision at Walsall College. This extends to the review of HE performance through success data, Course Reviews, Gradebook, Smart Assessor, External Examiner Reports and Stakeholder Voice. It comprises of the Assistant Principal of Quality and Higher Education, Assistant Principal of Curriculum, Directors of Faculty (both Curriculum and Apprenticeship provisions), H.E Development Manager, Student Representative, Quality Assurance Manager, Head of Management Information Services, and Head of Marketing. In addition, minutes from H.E Practitioner meetings are reviewed and the sharing of good practice across the College is discussed at a strategic level. This Board also discusses and puts forward recommendations for new programme validations, fee changes, procedure changes, regulator updates and the marketing of HE programmes.

15. HE Practitioner Meetings

There are six set dates across the academic year where tutors and managers involved in the delivery of Higher Education courses at the College meet. The Higher Education Practitioner meetings generate agendas which inform recorded summary notes and actions, which are followed up at each meeting. These meetings are chaired by the H.E Development Manager. The role also ensures continuity across the leadership and management structure by also attending the HE Academic Board meetings as well as Quality and Standards Committee, Senior Management Team meetings, Periodic Reviews and Assessment Board meetings.

At the Higher Education Practitioner meetings, the prime focus remains the experience of our students, and areas for development are reviewed in order to create a culture of constant improvement leading to increased student achievement and satisfaction. The meetings also enable the HE delivery teams to come together as a community, sharing good practice as research in action, supporting new tutors/internal verifiers/share awarding body updates and being supported by cross-College expertise such as UCAS applications and finance experts.

16. Assessment Boards

The College applies its Academic Regulations to govern the principal mechanisms for the delivery and management of academic standards for the College's Higher Education (HE) course provision at Level 4 and above. These Academic Regulations incorporate both the general regulations that apply to students as well as regulations that apply to student admissions and the conduct of student assessment, progression and appeals.

The College's Senior Management Team (SMT) is the body within the College with overall responsibility for the management of the academic standards and the quality of H.E courses leading to awards of the College or of another awarding organisation. The College's SMT has delegated authority to the Assessment Board to make decisions on student progression and award, award of academic credit to students, or withdrawal of students from a course of study because of academic failure, through their consideration of the marks for student assessment.

The Assessment Board is held annually, towards the end of programme delivery and includes consideration for all HE courses including partnership delivery where it will receive and take note of grades and reports as provided. There is a second, smaller Assessment Board in September. It is attended by the Assistant Principal of Quality and Higher Education, the Assistant Principal of Curriculum, and the H.E Development Manager. The board includes external panel membership to strengthen validation and any recommendations made.

17. External Examiner Visits and Reports

The External Examiner (EE) appointed by the awarding organisation (e.g. Pearson) will visit the delivery team, meeting staff and students and sampling a range of assessment and verification decisions against national standards. An External Examiner's Report is produced as a result of this visit, which is shared across the appropriate staff and students and is presented at the Assessment Board.

Directors of Faculty have responsibility to ensure all aspects of particular HE course agreements appertaining to quality assurance processes are fully embedded in the design, preparation and delivery of programmes. CDMs/ASMs are responsible for academic and resource planning to ensure relevancy and currency. For individual tutors, annual observations of teaching (using the learning walk process), learning and assessment practice across all HE staff and provision facilitates monitoring and improvement activities. Tutors monitor students' academic and personal progress through the College Walsall College Graduate process. Course teams fully abide by Awarding Organisations' Quality Assurance Procedures and the College's own HE Academic Regulations.

18. Resourcing of Higher Education: Staff, Facilities, Equipment and Learning Materials

Generally, HE resourcing is integrated within the F.E curriculum areas. However, there is a dedicated section of the HE Learning Deck for all H.E students to enhance the students' higher education experience. This area is particularly well-equipped with I.T facilities, and allows students to undertake independent learning.

When a new programme is introduced, a budget is specifically allocated to purchase appropriate equipment and, if necessary, software or other relevant resources. A budget is also set aside for purchasing library materials. As a minimum, the College purchases all the books on each unit-reading list along with the necessary journals and e-resources. The College Learning Resource Centre (LRC) purchases e-books where they are available.

Each year a budget for books, stationery, materials and equipment is allocated to each curriculum area based on its weighted student numbers. If programme managers wish to purchase capital equipment or require additional resources then a procedure exists for additional allocation of funds.

Most H.E tutors also teach F.E students. When tutors are appointed, if it is likely that they will teach on H.E programmes then their qualifications will be scrutinised accordingly. When advertising positions, applicants with Masters Degrees are encouraged. If a new H.E programme is being introduced, a tutor or tutors may be appointed with the necessary qualification although wherever practicable, existing F.E tutors will be trained for the role.

All H.E tutors have the time, support and opportunities necessary to develop their teaching approach, scholarship and networking with other H.E tutors. As part of their contract, tutors have time on their timetables for preparation and development of their teaching. They have ten days a year of 'scholarly activity', which they can use at their discretion to return to 'industry' to update their knowledge of current professional practice, update their knowledge and skills in other ways, exhibit or research.

Scholarly activity at Walsall College is associated with professional currency and the application of research, which may, in some cases, lead to the creation and pursuit of new knowledge. We believe that scholarly activity contributes to staff confidence, competence and development.

Scholarship supports the professional approach of staff and plays a central role in the advancement of knowledge and understanding of subject and discipline areas. Effective scholarly activity can inform and guide the development of curricula and taught programmes. Direct benefits from staff engagement with scholarly activity and research are gained by our students through transfer and dissemination of knowledge within taught programmes and other relevant activities.

The College also believes that involvement in scholarly activity informs and enhances the design and delivery of its curricula and ensures relevancy, engagement and a high-quality student experience. Scholarly activity and research encourages the development of open and critical minds, a vital part of the College's education philosophy - skilled, professional and enterprising.

The objectives for scholarly activity are:

- Ensuring an individual's currency of subject knowledge.
- Curriculum development through advancing knowledge in the subject area.
- Engaging in practice to advance knowledge.
- Contribution to relevant communities of practice in order to share and disseminate knowledge and practice.
- Relating to the changing requirements of professional practice.

In order to enhance the College's engagement in scholarly activity and to promote the benefits to individuals, significant partnerships are being formed with universities and other relevant agencies. The college is a member of the Higher Education Academy (Advance HE), which promotes excellence in Higher Education. Membership of Advance HE has led to staff development opportunities being made available to staff delivering Higher Education programmes. It awards various fellowships to staff as a method of professional recognition for university teachers. Similarly, partner universities extend staff development opportunities to Walsall College lecturers.

As Higher Education is growing at Walsall College, it is imperative to enhance colleagues' scholarly activity in terms of outputs and scope of dissemination. Individual lecturers are therefore encouraged and supported, through buddying arrangements with experienced colleagues to build capacity and expertise amongst a growing number of staff.

Negotiations with partner universities are taking place to put formal arrangements in place that will recognise the growing expertise of Walsall College staff in terms of curriculum development and research through individual institutions' academic recognition schemes.

Furthermore, programmes of staff development take place throughout the academic year, but also two days are dedicated for HE staff development to take place at the end and the beginning of the academic year. In the last academic year, sessions were delivered on completing Annual Monitoring Reviews, assessment, the use of the UK Quality Code, Office for Students updates, and the use of VLEs.

19. Relationship with Employers

All HE programmes of study at Walsall College are vocational in nature; they are demand-led and respond to the needs of local, regional and national employers. Funds from the Office for Students and Research England (as part of UKRI) are used to research the needs of employers to improve the relevance of the curriculum material and to provide links between College-based activity and the workplace. Major employers in the West Midlands covering significant industry sectors have been invited to comment on the suitability of awards, prior to validation. Active employer forums have the aim of ensuring courses are kept current with new developments being incorporated and outdated content being dropped. Employer views are sought in preparation for Course Reviews and through placement/work-based learning reviews. This practice will be integral to any future development work to capture the experience and views of a range of trade organisations, professional bodies, government, practitioners and the academic world.

The College wishes to continue to increase its involvement with employers in the design and delivery of HE programmes. The College is fortunate that it has excellent links with many local employers as a result of the delivery of FE programmes and associated work experience links. Good links have been formed with employers on programmes such as the HNC/HND Business, Photography and Computing where the students are already employed and the employer is frequently the students' course mentor. Similarly, in programmes such as the HNC/HND Graphic Design, students have gone on to create their own graphic design businesses locally or they form the majority of the employees in local graphic design businesses.

20. Relationships with HE Partners

The College's main HE partner is Pearson, whereby the majority of programmes form part of the well-respected and established suit of BTEC Higher National Diplomas. These programmes are understood by employers and clearly relate to specific vocational industries across a number of different sectors. The College's strategy for HE also includes programmes which are also validated by a partner universities, with an aim to increase the number of level 6 top-up progression routes for our HE students studying at level's 4 and 5. To this end, we currently offer level 6 programmes through formal partnership with Birmingham City University (BCU), Degree Level Apprenticeship provision (CDMA) with University of Worcester, and a level 5 Diploma in Education and Training in formal partnership with the Birmingham City University (BCU).

BCU provision is changing for the next academic year. The Level 6 B.A routes for Fashion and Visual Communications will now teach out, and there will be no more enrolments for 2022. With the cessation of these courses, the College will explore further partnerships with Staffordshire University to ensure sustainability for students currently on the Level 5 on Visual Communications and Fashion. The Diploma in Education and Teaching, and the Post Graduate Certificate of Education will remain with BCU provision.

The College believes that much can be achieved for its students by fully engaging in meaningful and productive partnerships. It is therefore committed to working with partner colleges in the Black Country and the West Midlands conurbation, developing fruitful relationships with Higher Education institutions through Black Country College Group membership.

As part of Uni Connect; The National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) is particularly important for the college, as another means to work collectively across the West Midlands to promote aspiration and raise attainment and ambition; and close gaps of traditionally underrepresented groups that would not normally attend university.

21. Summary

The College's HE strategy is informed by key national and local strategic documents and draws on the College's existing strengths and ethos. It envisions the development of HE provision that is fit for purpose and that proposes to deliver a portfolio that targets vocational skills, employability, up skilling, employer engagement and widening participation. Within these overarching themes, the College delivers a range of provision that recognises the significance and mutual inter-dependence of both FE and HE. It has the potential to establish itself as a lead provider of a distinctive and competitive HE offering that makes a major contribution to educational, economic and social regeneration and aims to grow provision, expertise and facilities accordingly.

22. Government Documents

- [Further Education and Skills Inspection Handbook \(2019\).](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2020\).](#)
- [Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth \(web version\)](#)
- [Post-16 Skills Plan \(DfEd 2018\).](#)
- [Report of the Independent Panel on Technical Education \(Sainsbury 2016\).](#)
- [UK Digital Strategy \(Gov. 2017\).](#)
- [Quality and Standards Review for Providers registered with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers QAA \(2019\)](#)
- [Quality and Standards Review for Providers registered with the Office for Students: responsibilities checklist for providers without degree awarding powers QAA \(2019\)](#)
- [The Higher Education Code of Governance - Committee of University Chairs September 2020.](#)
- [The revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education \(the Quality Code\) QAA 2018.](#)
- [The UK Professional Standards Framework \(UKPSF\) Advance HE \(2019\)](#)
- [Higher Education: success as knowledge economy \(2016\) Government White Paper](#)
- [Higher Education: reopening buildings and campuses \(2020\) DfE guidance](#)
- [The English Indices of Deprivation \(2019\)](#)
- [Nomis Labour Market Statistics \(ONS\) Labour Market profile: Walsall](#)
- [The Walsall Plan: Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2021](#)
- [Walsall College: Corporate Strategy 2020-2023](#)
- [BIS: Things we didn't know about the wider benefits of higher education \(2013\)](#)
- [BIS: The Benefits of Higher Education Participation for Individuals and Society \(2013\)](#)
- [BIS: The Impact of University Degrees on the Lifecycle of Earnings: Some Further Analysis \(2013\)](#)
- [Research England](#)
- [Department for Education: Post-18 review of Education and Funding \(2019\)](#)