



STRATEGIC PLAN

2016 - 2020

24 June 2016

CC CLEVELAND COLLEGE OF
AD **ART & DESIGN**

THE NORTHERN SCHOOL OF ART

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Introduction

The further and higher education sectors have been subject to considerable change in areas such as funding, patterns of participation and academic delivery. Since the College approved its previous Strategic Plan, less than a year ago, the FE sector has seen the announcement of the Area Review process and the College was a participant in a Wave1 review which approved its draft report on 11 May 2016. In that period the Government has also published a Green Paper on HE in November 2015, followed by a White Paper in May 2016 and draft legislation in June 2016. The College has, as a result, been obliged to consider its HE tuition fee policy and Access Agreement for the 2017-18 academic year.

In this context it can be argued that the HE sector in particular has entered a period of further and significant change and a much more market-orientated environment is being driven by Government policy. In practice this means that the Government sees higher education, for undergraduates, primarily as a route to better-paid employment, thereby increasing the emphasis on the quality of industrial links, and that the newly-conceived Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) will be a key mechanism in shaping institutional behaviours to meet policy objectives.

In 2015, recognising that substantial change was likely, the College Strategic Plan was agreed on the basis that it would be reviewed again in a year. The College management now believes that further review is timely.

In setting out strategic objectives the College remains mindful that it must continue essential features of its present provision. It also acknowledges that in some areas there is a need for progress and improvement. The College is aware that it must act as both a supportive employer and as an educational establishment committed to excellence that must be borne out by staff performance and the quality of students' experiences.

In seeking to build the quality and reputation of its higher education provision in Hartlepool the College is pleased to be able to work closely with Hartlepool Borough Council. To date that relationship has been positive and mutually beneficial, and the College hopes to build positively on this relationship over the lifetime of this plan.

This plan is supported by the underpinning strategies of the College. These are short and contain a limited number of objectives. These in turn are reflected in underpinning operating plans for teams across the College and in individual staff performance objectives. In concentrating on change, a key factor is the implementation of the College's vision. There has never been a lack of imagination about how the College might change but there must be a sufficient focus on the execution of its strategies.

The College recognises that review of, and response to changes in, the environment is a fundamental aspect of the College's operation. Strategies and targets may consequently be modified in response to changes in the external and College environments, and the College will formally review progress in implementing planned changes twice a year.

Overall, these objectives seek to build on what is positive within the College and make it better for students, staff and other key stakeholders. The College has a vision of itself as a proactive Art School, at the cutting edge of developments in both the creative industries and art and design education. The objective of this plan is to move the College substantially towards realising this vision its conclusion in 2020.

Our Vision

As one of the few specialist art and design institutions in the country the College has a strong reputation, but one that is known to a narrow group of educators and practitioners in the creative sector. The College's vision is therefore:

“To gain national recognition as a leading provider of creative education”

In practice this means that the College must strive to work with nationally-recognised organisations, demonstrating that it is at the cutting edge of practice, both within the creative industries and in terms of the academic community. In turn this means that staff must be fully engaged with the appropriate academic and creative sector organisations, demonstrating the value of what the College does for its students and for the creative sector by their outward facing engagement and participation.

Our Mission

The College's essential mission concerns the quality of students' learning experience and outcomes. Its mission statement reflects this:

“Exceptional education for creative careers.”

In practice this means that the desire to improve the quality of students' experience and outcomes must be our primary concerns.

Our Objectives

We have characterised our objectives in a highly abbreviated form as:

“More students on better courses”

Our Values

Creativity and Excellence

We aim to place creative practice by students and staff at the centre of what we do, with excellent outcomes as our goal.

Professional Practice, Employability and Enterprise

We aim to develop students' skills for employment and enterprise through curricula informed by staff, and by student engagement with the creative industries. We value the encouragement of professional practice in students and the continuing professional development of staff, improving their performance and the contribution that they make to the education sector and creative industries.

Student Engagement, Collaboration and Community

We aim to promote student engagement within their learning environment as a partnership with staff, to aid delivery of a high quality student experience. We also aim to promote understanding and appreciation of art and design, with participation extending to CCAD's wider community, as well as developing complementary areas of study that support interdisciplinary collaboration and learning and engagement with external partners.

Our Behaviours

Concern for the quality of student experience

A high quality student experience is the essential prerequisite for the College's success. At its heart this means a high quality experience in terms of teaching, learning and assessment. That also means that the curriculum must continue to be relevant and delivered by staff whose knowledge is up-to-date. More than this, however, is key: student interactions with support staff in all areas of the College, whether obviously student facing such as Student Services, or more "back office", must reflect high standards of customer service.

A positive, collegiate approach

The reputations and fortunes of the College's FE and HE courses and programmes are, to a large extent, entwined. This must be recognised by staff who should realise that there are many positive opportunities both for expansion of HE provision and for FE and HE colleagues to work together to achieve this, and to bolster FE recruitment as a result of enhancements to the College's reputation.

Professionalism and respect, with review

Whatever their role within the institution, all staff should seek to achieve appropriate high standards and behaviours – in other words being professional. Colleagues should respect this aspiration. Part of being a professional is that work is subject to review and comment in order to maintain and improve standards. Staff should work together to improve achievements by appropriate planning for improvement, and individuals should seek to provide and receive feedback in a respectful manner which aims to improve outcomes for the College and its students.

Always seeking improvement; appropriately self-critical

We should always seek to improve the quality of our provision to students and other stakeholders. To this end all College staff should seek to be appropriately self-critical as long as this focuses on future improvement.

Equality and diversity

The College is committed to the principles of equality and diversity and aims to ensure that all employees and college users are treated fairly and equally regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Realising the vision

The College's Strategic Plan is organised as set out below:



The communication of behaviours and objectives and the development, implementation and monitoring of operating plans underpinned by performance management will be key. Management and operating team meetings will be central to the implementation of the plan. Experience within College has shown that team ownership of relevant objectives and monitoring of progress is essential. Necessary amendments may also be suggested, keeping the plan relevant.



Key Objectives: Overview

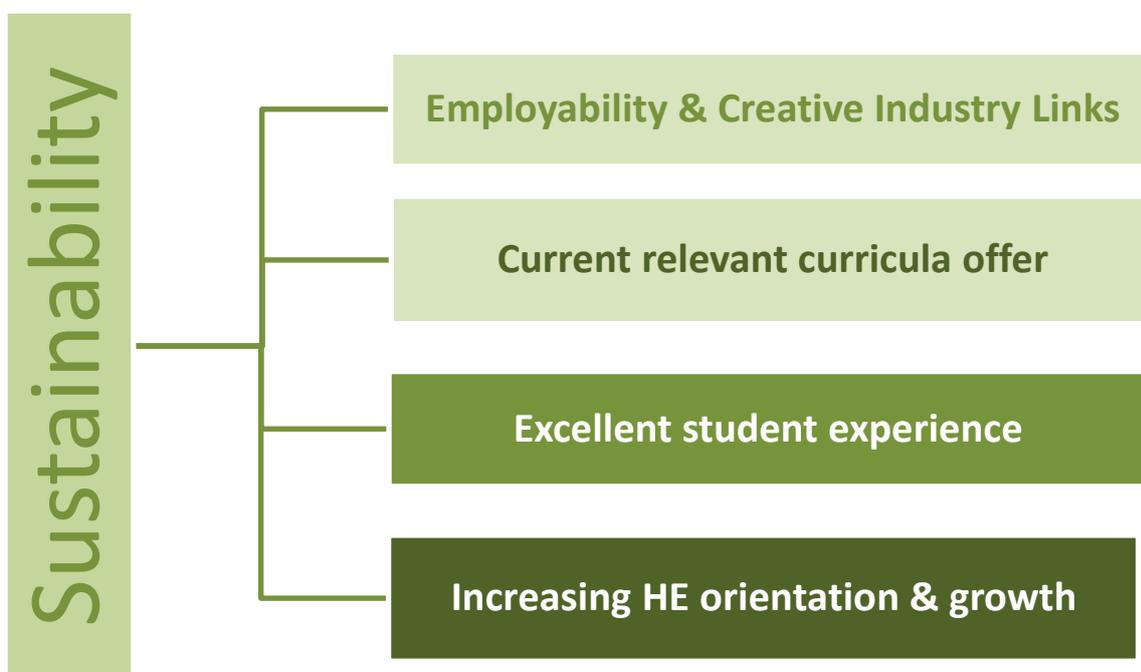
Employability & Creative Industry Links: In an increasingly competitive market, where employment in the creative industries is usually predicated on a degree, the College must improve the coordination of its links with employers as part of improving the currency of its offer and its ability to assist graduates in finding employment.

Current relevant curricula offer: The College must keep developments in the creative industries and creative education under constant review, assessing potential student demand in order to ensure that its offer is relevant and contemporary.

Excellent Student Experience: The College has a reputation for the quality of its provision. Though well-deserved this may be fragile, particularly in the new TEF era. The quality of provision must therefore be maintained – and improved – throughout the life of this plan. As well as teaching, learning and assessment the whole student experience is crucial, and the College must ensure that staff in all areas understand the imperative for high quality customer service and appealing extra-curricular options.

Increasing HE Orientation and Growth: The College sees its strategic direction being based upon expansion of its HE activity. This is predicated on increasing the HE orientation of its staff by focusing on development, their contribution to UK HE, the nature of the scholarly activity undertaken in the College and a student experience which fully meets the standards expected. The College believes that there are opportunities for growth even in the present difficult market and that these are dependent upon demonstrating good graduate outcomes and creative industry-relevant programmes.

Sustainability: The College has always been financially sound and is determined to remain so. Sustainability must underpin the College's other ambitions.



Managing the inter-relationship between these priorities will be the key task for the College over the life of the plan.

Employability & Creative Industry Links

Position Statement – where are we now?

For 2015 the position at HE was considerably improved. The headline destinations figure had risen to 96% (in employment or further study six months after leaving) from its historical level of 80%. This is comparable with the best HEIs. The College has managed to improve on this performance this year. Revised Industrial Liaison Group arrangements have seen the recruitment of a fresh and high profile set of Visiting Fellows, many with national and international reputations. There is still work to do to improve College systems relating to industry contacts and to develop further industry links for Live Projects and Work Experience, where practice across programmes is mixed. The recording of the impact of industry links is still not consistent.

At FE most courses have links to creative industry providing engaging live briefs and internal work place experiences. Further work is required to align the skills developed with the learners' progression goals. External work experience opportunities exist but are limited.

Objectives – what are we trying to achieve?

1. To maintain the headline level of graduate employment at 96% or better
2. To increase the range and quality of student opportunities for work experience and live projects during the course of their study programmes
3. To increase reported levels of student satisfaction with how their experience at CCAD prepares them for work
4. To further embed skills for progression into the FE curriculum by developing the role of progression coaches.

Key Performance Indicators – what are we going to measure to see whether we have been successful?

1. Maintain graduate headline figure for employment or further study at 96% through until 2020
2. Improve the 57% figure for Graduates in employment who are employed at professional or managerial level six months after leaving – achieving 58% in 2017 and 60% by 2020.
3. By 2020 ensure all undergraduates have the opportunity to experience at least one externally set Live Project in each year of their study
4. Improve reported levels of graduate satisfaction with how their CCAD experience prepares them for both work or self-employment [2016 – 74%; 2020 target 85%].
5. Improve FE students understanding of skills required to achieve their future progression goals

Curricula developments

Position Statement – *where are we now?*

The College is presently in the process of reviewing its HE curriculum offer. The Curriculum Development Working Group will conclude its work in respect of the 2018-19 offer by the end of 2016. It has already recommended the development of a new programme, which has been included in the 2017 HE prospectus, as well as significant revisions to one existing programme. These are subject to validation by the Arts University Bournemouth.

The FE curriculum has seen modest changes for 2015-16, with additional changes being considered for 2016-17. More significant developments are being considered for 2017-18 as a consequence of changes to the specification for Extended Diploma courses.

Activities to promote improved FE/HE staff dialogue have been planned, such as an FE/HE staff conference being held in June 2016 to consider the nature of outcomes and delivery at levels 1-6.

Objectives – *what are we trying to achieve?*

1. Staff are fully aware of current creative sector and academic developments and are able to use this knowledge to propose and evaluate curricula change
2. A distinctive series of HE programme offers which demonstrate currency in academic terms and high quality links with relevant organisations of at least national standing in the creative industries
3. FE courses that remain appealing to learners in the Tees Valley and the wider region.
4. Consider diversifying the College's HE offer by developing new modules within the existing provision and consider new provision where there is robust evidence for demand.

Key Performance Indicators – *what are we going to measure to see whether we have been successful?*

1. Increased levels of HE and FE applications
2. A greater proportion of programmes recruiting at least 20 undergraduates per cohort
3. Improved HE student work experience and placement opportunities
4. Improved graduate-level employability

Excellent Student Experience

Position Statement – *where are we now?*

The College's FE success rates are outstanding. Student surveys show high levels of satisfaction. There are very high levels of progression to higher education from the College's Level 3 courses.

At higher education the College has retention rates that, although improving, require further positive change to support progression and growth. The National Student Survey (NSS) results remain generally good. However, in some curriculum areas student perceptions of teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) is below expectation. Student perceptions of support areas are generally positive, but there is need for improvement. Overall, the broader HE student experience is in need of development and this is in the process of being addressed by the recently-appointed student liaison officer following the development of the Student Engagement Strategy. The College is able to work well with local organisations, especially Hartlepool Borough Council, to improve the wider student experience.

Objectives – *what are we trying to achieve?*

1. To meet or if possible exceed internal and external benchmarks in terms of success rates, progression, higher degree classifications and student satisfaction.
2. To develop further the rigour and monitoring of TLA across HE and FE, to identify key strengths and to support a culture of staff research and development.
3. An improved wider HE student experience through collaborative interdisciplinary working by academic staff and via cooperation with local partners.

Key Performance Indicators – *what are we going to measure to see whether we have been successful?*

1. Maintain success rates for FE courses commensurate with Outstanding provision. (92% or better in 2016/17 and subsequent years)
2. Increase HE retention rates both in year (90%) and across 3 year programmes (85%)
3. Attendance rates at FE of above 90% on main course and in maths and English and 85% on HE programmes.
4. HE degree classifications (for first & upper second class degrees) meet national benchmarks.
5. Increase levels of QDP student satisfaction in all main categories unless 10% above benchmark.
6. In top 10% of country for NSS rating in the category of student satisfaction.

Increasing HE Orientation and Growth

Position Statement – *where are we now?*

The College operates with a slight majority of FE provision. The Hartlepool campus is a solely HE site. Many staff have postgraduate degrees and the number undertaking external examiner roles continues to expand. All teaching staff have allocated research and scholarly activity built into their timetables allowing improved 'externality.' Greater emphasis and measuring of the impact of these activities is needed to be recorded against college overall aims and objectives for Higher Education provision.

For several years the College has recognised that it has a very good reputation amongst those in the sub-region who are aware of its activities but that its presence and offering are not widely known. As a consequence of this analysis the College determined that it needed to substantially increase the emphasis on its marketing and recruitment activities. FE and HE recruitment levels for 2015 were merely adequate and projections for 2016 are no better. However, the College has increased staffing and changed line management responsibilities in its recruitment function and it is anticipated that these changes should bring recruitment improvements in 2017.

Objectives – *what are we trying to achieve?*

1. Maintain the level of FE applications and enrolments year-on-year whilst maintaining or improving quality and operational efficiency (i.e. maintain or improve mean group size).
2. Increase the proportion of CCAD FE students accepting places on College HE programmes.
3. FE to HE progression rates of over 40% from all relevant FE courses by 2020.
4. A majority of HE rather than FE provision by 2018-19;
5. Continued development of research and scholarly activity that meets the curriculum and business needs of the College and creative industry partners.
6. The preparation of a credible application for Taught Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP), ideally by 2020 or 2021.

Key Performance Indicators – *what are we going to measure to see whether we have been successful?*

1. Increasing proportion of HE enrolments and the level of progression to College HE by FE students.
2. All teaching staff to have completed or be working towards a teaching qualification by 2016/17.
3. All current HE academic staff to be Fellows of HEA by July 2017.
4. All HE academic staff have, or are working towards, postgraduate degrees by 2017/18 (MA, PhD, MRes, MPhil)
5. Increasing number of HE staff holding external examiner roles (currently 11 academic staff).
6. FE and HE application, offer, firm acceptance and enrolment targets are met
7. Annual review of enrolments shows satisfactory conversion ratio for target schools/colleges

Sustainability

Position Statement – *where are we now?*

The College has a good track record of financial stability and robustness since incorporation, whilst maintaining quality at a high standard. However, due to the current modest size of the institution CCAD is more vulnerable to shifts in funding and government policy than larger institutions. In response, significant emphasis is placed on careful and prudent financial management and planning. The College recognises the need to be responsive and flexible and the requirement to adapt quickly to a changing external environment. The College is currently taking advantage of the Local Growth Fund, via the local LEP (Tees Valley Unlimited) and Tees Valley Combined Authority, to invest in and expand the Hartlepool Campus in order to ensure that the facilities are fit for purpose, and to encourage additional HE student recruitment.

The main challenges for the planning period are identified as being:

- The impact of a demographic decline in the student population until 2020;
- Growth in HE student numbers whilst maintaining FE numbers;
- Recruitment and retention of students and
- The uncertainty of government funding policies at both FE and HE and the regulatory changes in HE following the publication of the HE White Paper.

Objectives – *what we are trying to achieve over the next 3 years?*

To pursue, refine and maintain a financial strategy as the basis of the sustainable financial health of the College in order to ensure:

1. The long term reputation and viability of the College for the benefit of students, staff and the creative industries by maintaining operating surpluses and positive cash generation;
2. Meeting the obligations of financial covenants set by the College's loan providers;
3. The availability of sufficient resources to match its stated strategic objectives; and
4. The financing of developments, capital investments and long term maintenance expenditure.

Key Performance Indicators - *what are we going to measure to see whether we have been successful?*

1. Planning, budgeting and financial management
 - a. Maintaining a Good financial status whilst meeting banking covenants;
 - b. Monitoring the achievement of financial targets via monthly accounts produced by working day 10; and
 - c. Providing timely costing information in support of the planning and budgeting process.
2. Teaching operations
 - a. To meet targets for the cost effectiveness of curriculum delivery which will be shared with academic staff;
 - b. To provide modelling of the cost implications of curriculum and funding changes for to support decision-making.

Summary

FE quality and standards are and will remain Outstanding. The key College objective during the life of this Plan is increased HE student numbers, ultimately resulting in the majority of College activity being in higher education. This will only be achieved by maintaining a focus on the quality and appropriateness of both the HE programme offer and the wider student experience. This means that all staff must work together to focus on these key areas for change. A vital aspect of this work is that staff must be collegiate and outward-facing; staff have a common objective, the future success of the College and its students, and all need to recognise the need to work together to achieve these aims, set within the context of current activity in both the creative sector and higher education.

Monitoring and Review

The College will review budgets and performance against the Strategic Plan objectives twice per year. A formal mid-year review exercise will be reported to the Corporation Board.

Related Documents

Student Engagement Strategy

Financial Strategy

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy

Curriculum Development Plans

Higher Education Academic Development Plan

Human Resources Strategy

Employability and Enterprise Strategy

Student Services Strategy

Marketing Strategy

Property Strategy

Quality Improvement Plans (HE & FE)

Alumni Development Plan

Scholarly Activity Strategy

