



HARTPURY
C O L L E G E

Hartpury College Academic Strategy

2020-2025

'Hartpury College, a specialist Landbased and Sport provider, developing resilient, confident and independent young people to support lifelong success and to 'make a positive difference' to the industries that we serve'

1. Introduction

Hartpury College has a long and established history of delivering high quality specialist education in Sport and Landbased provision on a local and national scale. Since September 2019 the organisation evolved to become a university and a college on a single site, creating a unique organisation within the sector and providing a number of strategic and operational benefits to the student experience.

It is essential that this Academic Strategy provides the underpinning structure to support Hartpury College to react adeptly to the continuously changing education and political environment, expertly negotiating the skills agenda, focusing particularly on how policy and evolving sector best practice most effectively lands in the institution. Demographics coupled with appropriate reaction to current, emerging and future industry priorities are also key areas needing consideration.

Addressing the above key areas will be important in order to retain a continuously outstanding, high performing and industry connected student experience, enabling the holistic development of students to support lifelong success and therefore as a College retaining a leading place in the specialist landbased and Sport sector (the detailed intent of which is set out in the College Curriculum Plan¹).

As a well-established provider, Hartpury College is currently rated as Ofsted Outstanding (May 2018) overall and Ofsted Outstanding in its residential provision, this latter position having been maintained for three consecutive inspections over a period of nine years. The College also has strong industry connectivity, this being a deliberate and essential feature evident throughout all of the provision to ensure industry skills demands are being met in addition to equipping all students with core transferable skills. The impact of our offer is seen through high levels of positive progression each year, the most recent of which reflects 97% positive progression overall.

BTEC Diploma provision has been high performing for a number of years with high levels of value added and high grades. A Level provision (11% of overall current College numbers) has in recent years, been largely average with pockets of poor performance. Following significant intervention, this position has now been reversed and in 2019 A Level performance exceeded the national pass rate and moved from the bottom 25% to the top 20% for value added in the country. The College portfolio also includes small Access to HE provision in Sport and Landbased, supporting transition to university for the mature student.

GCSE Maths and English re-sit performance is slightly higher than sector average, following significant improvement made over the last four years. It remains a key feature of our provision in line with Government condition of funding requirements and is an area that has a continuous focus on further improvement.

The dual academic and sporting pathway of our Sports Academy model is also a unique selling point of Hartpury College that supports recruitment and ultimately provides exceptional opportunities for established and developing athletes in a unique setting.

All of the above significantly reinforce the position that Hartpury College currently holds in the market place which has enabled the high levels of recruitment evident over the last four academic years in spite of a declining 16-18 national demographic. Our recent journey to achieving university status and establishing both a University and a College, with parity of

¹ FE Curriculum Plan – *'Our Intent, Implementation and Intended Impact'* 2019-2020

esteem on a single site, will also further support recruitment and the raising of aspiration among many other benefits that such a unique environment can afford.

1.1 External Context

As ever, the external environment continues to evolve, educationally, politically and economically. There is also much more of a focus on regulatory compliance, particularly in relation to accuracy of regulatory data quality and financial returns, sub-contracting provision and overall expenditure of public funds.

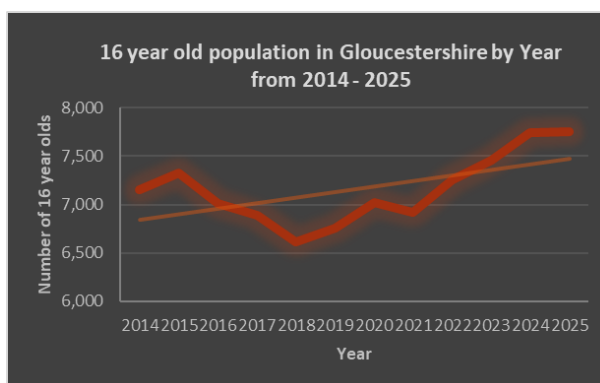
Qualification changes in line with the Post 16 Review, including the transition to technical qualifications alongside an A Level academic offer, new apprenticeship standards and T-Levels are an important part of the external landscape and it will be essential to 'gear up' appropriately in order to positively impact the student experience and therefore retain the College's position and reputation. T-Levels in landbased occupational routes are due to commence from 2023 and there is a possibility that delivery will attract capital funding of circa £95 million² to support specialist resource requirements.

In addition, the updated Ofsted Inspection Framework that favours the holistic development of students and which also aligns with the Government focus on the Careers Agenda, designed to support social mobility, continues to provide the College with a core focus. Such a focus aligns very much with our approach to providing an outstanding experience that is continually reviewed and developed in accordance with sector best practice, the Industrial Strategy, the national health agenda and Gloucestershire's Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Plan, ultimately underpinning a strong curriculum intent.

Demographically, the 16-18 national population is set to increase from 2021 (*figures one and two*) and therefore targeted growth predictions have taken advantage of this. As the largest, residential College nationally with strong bed space occupancy rates supporting a national reach, it will be essential to take advantage of the local population growth to maximise the recruitment position and reach the 2025 optimum target of 2000 full time students. The socio-economic status of the local area in which we operate, for example the Forest of Dean, should also be considered as our local recruitment targeting will also help support areas of deprivation, thus improving social mobility.

It is also important that we consider the different markets that we operate in: primarily A Levels and BTEC Diplomas, both of which behave differently from a recruitment perspective given the nature of the provision and when taken in the context of our competitors. This is particularly important when we are aiming to achieve an optimum balance between our Landbased and Sport/A Level provision in support of the student experience and optimum business model.

Figure 1:



² Likely to be available for 2021 and 2022 T-Level adopters initially subject to the Spending Review

Figure 2:

2014-based Population Projections by single year of age												
Source: 2014-based Subnational Population Projections, Office for National Statistics												
Adapted from data from the Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.0.												
Gloucestershire												
AGE	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
16	7,151	7,327	7,011	6,891	6,609	6,759	7,021	6,916	7,252	7,463	7,741	7,758
17	7,602	7,408	7,566	7,245	7,115	6,830	6,980	7,246	7,148	7,490	7,705	7,990
18	7,420	7,533	7,340	7,487	7,173	7,040	6,762	6,909	7,170	7,086	7,425	7,636
19	6,966	6,870	6,953	6,780	6,894	6,608	6,468	6,234	6,368	6,601	6,567	6,882

It will also be important to support key government agendas such as the climate control and environmental agenda, using our study programme design and campus sustainability initiatives to educate our students, enabling them to gain that competitive advantage through equipping them effectively with the transferable skills and knowledge to support lifelong success.

1.2 Stakeholder Consultation

The 'new' College Academic Strategy was initially established in 2016-2017 and primarily focused on the steps needed to transition from provision of a 'good' to an 'outstanding' student experience. Each year a review supported further developments to practice. At this point all staff were consulted with and over the past two years, this consultation process has evolved. It now includes all middle managers leading strategy consultation sessions with their teams to maximise engagement with all. In addition, all departments complete an annual SWOT analysis to provide a 'snapshot in time' of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that they have considered. This links to the self-assessment process, supporting the development of a key Quality Improvement Plan focusing on operational strategy and ultimately supporting the 2025 strategic aims of Hartpury College Academic Strategy 2025 and the overarching Hartpury 2025.

External consultation and information analysis using a number of highly relevant institutions, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), Association of Colleges (AoC), Landex, Guild HE, Department for Education (DfE), Education and Training Foundation (ETF) and Ofsted is also key to the current strategic priorities that we have established, all of which provide opportunities for critical thinking to drive forward further improvements in the pursuit of excellence.

Most importantly, our key stakeholder consultation is that with our students, parents/ guardians/ carers and employers. It is clear that student and parent expectations are changing, with an expectation of a much increased level of digital communication supporting the transition from school to college, this being particularly important where we have a large proportion of residential students.

Overall there is a clear need to ensure that as we develop and evolve our systems, becoming much more reliant on technology to allow us to be swift and agile with our communication and information sharing, it will be essential to consider the effectiveness of the impact on the user.

It is also essential that we continue to support the key focus of our teaching staff – teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that all staff are continually provided with the tools, support and training to be able to deliver high quality and progressive learning.

2. Priorities

This Strategic document sets out the key priorities, actions and the desired measurable impact and how we intend to successfully navigate the external environment to support provision of an outstanding student experience in line with our core aim:

'Hartpury College, a specialist Landbased and Sport provider, developing resilient, confident and independent young people to support lifelong success and to make a positive difference to the industries that we serve'

Our College Academic Strategy aim and priorities outlined below align directly with our Hartpury vision and the key overarching priorities set out in the Hartpury 2025 Strategy.

Hartpury 2025 Being
the Best We Can Be

Hartpury 2025 Being
Inclusive in all that we
do

Hartpury 2025 Building
Strength Through
Partnership

Key Priority One: Providing high quality, stimulating and inspirational teaching, learning and assessment that supports significant progressive learning and skills development through a fully inclusive approach.

Key Priority Two: Ensuring the holistic development of our students through a highly relevant and industry connected approach that maximises employability potential, delivered through the Hartpury Certificate Plus initiative and key partnerships.

Key Priority Three: Achieving target growth towards a College population of 2000 that retains the optimum quality of student experience and provides a stimulating College community.

Overarching measures:

- ❖ Ofsted
- ❖ Ofsted Residential Provision
- ❖ Student Satisfaction
- ❖ Parent Satisfaction
- ❖ Employer Satisfaction
- ❖ Performance Data
- ❖ Student Progression to university study
- ❖ Student Progression to employment
- ❖ Staff Satisfaction
- ❖ Student Recruitment

Strategic Priorities

Key Priority One: Providing high quality, stimulating and inspirational teaching, learning and assessment that supports significant progressive learning and skills development through a fully inclusive approach.

Effective teaching, learning and assessment is at the core of enabling us to provide an outstanding student experience. Our focus is on the provision of inspiring, industry connected delivery that continues to develop contextualised numeracy and literacy³ and provides stretch and challenge to maximise learning for all. This is supported by a fully inclusive approach that supports equality and inclusivity for all. This is achieved in part by the employment of specialist

³ In vocational Teaching, Learning and Assessment

staff who have a proven level of industry knowledge and skill coupled with the passion to educate young people in their particular industry.

2020-2021 onwards will be a pivotal period for our BTEC provision as we transition fully to Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) qualifications that include examination as part of the assessment methodology. It will be important to protect our high levels of performance through effective curriculum planning and pedagogical training to support teaching staff with this transition. There are also opportunities to share good practice from our A Level and GCSE provision to assist this transition.

The effectiveness of the pedagogical approach to delivery will be essential to support staff and students with examination preparation, which at the same time supports the holistic development that we know is fundamental when preparing our students with the necessary skills for lifelong success. Adoption and execution of effective strategies that take account of our student starting points, prior knowledge and skill and learning needs coupled with significant thought surrounding curriculum sequencing will be essential. This will require a specific focus on building capacity and capability in this area from a teacher, manager and wider business perspective with our Professional Services teams.

Alongside this, following the improvement to A Level performance following significant changes to management processes, teacher expectations and ultimately culture, it will be important to ensure there is a continued focus on maintaining this level of performance and further increasing the number of students achieving high grades in support of their university applications and ultimately employment.

From 2023, we will see the introduction of T-Levels to our landbased provision which accounts for just under half of our College intake. This again significantly changes the current landscape in which we are operating and it will be important to support an effective transition should we adopt T-Levels. There are currently a number of unknown variables such as whether alternative, similar qualifications would be fundable. Keeping abreast of the external landscape therefore will be imperative to ensure we land these potential changes effectively in the institution and ultimately protect the outcomes for our students through maximising the opportunities that T-Levels could bring. A change in qualification uptake within our sectors could become a reality, for example increases in students favouring an apprenticeship route over a T-Level and as such, we need to be prepared for this.

Actions:

- ❖ Maintain a timely, proactive and adaptable approach to our TLA Continuous Professional Development programme to ensure it supports teaching staff in line with teaching excellence.
- ❖ Build staff and student capacity and capability to support success.
- ❖ Ensure relevant external exposure to enable constant learning from sector best practice.
- ❖ Transfer relevant processes from our A Level provision to our BTEC provision to support monitoring and intervention and therefore student outcomes.
- ❖ Ensure maximisation of inclusivity through effective arrangements for all of our students to support exam success.
- ❖ Develop the digital infrastructure to support innovative teaching practice.

KPIs⁴

- ❖ Student TLA Satisfaction Surveys
- ❖ Lesson observation outcomes
- ❖ Student retention

⁴ Aligned with Governor KPIs agreed and monitored at QuEST and Corporation (The Board)

- ❖ Student attendance and presence
- ❖ Student pass rates – qualification and 'Hartpury Certificate Plus'
- ❖ EDI characteristics – retention and pass rate
- ❖ Staff surveys

Key Priority Two: Ensuring the holistic development of our students through a highly relevant and industry connected approach that maximises employability potential, delivered through the Hartpury Certificate Plus initiative and key partnerships.

Whilst employability skills have always been core to the development of students studying courses at Hartpury College, the evolution of our 'Hartpury Certificate' and now 'Hartpury Certificate *Plus*' initiative over the last five years' places emphasis on the holistic development of our students in support of their ultimate employability success through a targeted programme.

The current initiative delivered through the tutorial 'Prep for Success' programme and additional activity supported through our Innovation, Careers and Enterprise (ICE) Department will need to be considered carefully alongside the transition to new BTEC qualifications to ensure effective delivery that does not compromise the quality of the student experience.

It will be necessary to further flex the opportunities that it provides to support our students with development of awareness of climate change and sustainability and what that means in the context of the industries in which they are likely to work. Signing up to the UK Climate Commission for Further and Higher Education is the first major step in raising awareness of climate challenges with our staff and students. Development of resilience will also be a key thread throughout all development opportunities that our students engage with, this being a well-publicised and essential attribute needed to successfully navigate life.

Our industry partnerships are fundamental in enriching and supporting our student experience through work experience and placement opportunities, provision of guest speakers and workshops, subject specialist careers events, enterprise activities and significant wellbeing events in support of resilience and wider life skills. Furthermore, our established formal partnerships with industry such as Gloucester City Farm, Claas and Active Gloucestershire provide extended opportunities for our students to experience focused industry engagement over and above the baseline.

Our partnership relationships are crucial to ensure our engagement with the industries that we serve reflects our curriculum intent and therefore our delivery matches the current, evolving and future needs of our workforce.

The recent addition of our Agri-Tech Centre, a strategic development designed to support College, University students and the wider farming community has provided the perfect platform to take our industry connectivity to the next level, ensuring that we are able to position our Agriculture students effectively to match the demands of the evolving digital climate that is set to move rapidly over the next ten years, supporting productivity in Great Britain. Once this model is established as sector best practice, this can be replicated across our other departments in line with our proposed strategic capital investments in Animal Management and Science.

Equally, our well established and highly successful Sports Academy model, supporting the dual pathway for the athlete alongside academic development is a key internal partnership integral to our enrichment offer and is further evolving to other areas of operation such as the Agriculture-Rugby model.

Clearly the uniqueness of Hartpury with both a University and College on a single site with equal parity of esteem provides a natural partnership opportunity on the doorstep which has many

reciprocal benefits in support of our student experience, particularly in relation to the raising of aspiration for some of our local students who may not have previously considered university as an option and therefore further increasing internal progression from Hartpury College to Hartpury University and supporting social mobility.

We should not forget our parent/guardian/carer partnerships and as we evolve digitally, our methods of communication should also be explored to ensure we are maximising the effectiveness of the school-to-college transition, especially in our residential context.

Undoubtedly, safeguarding is a significant feature than underpins all of our activities to ensure maximisation of safety of our students at all times and through provision of educational opportunities, and must continue to do so.

Actions:

- ❖ Further evolve the 'Hartpury Certificate Plus' initiative to maximise its effectiveness in retaining the holistic development of our students, reacting to key external matters such as climate change, alongside supporting maximisation of qualification success.
- ❖ Further develop our tutorial practice to ensure that it has the intended impact in supporting the holistic student experience effectively.
- ❖ Continue the work with industry to ensure we have a clear and current picture in support of our curriculum intent and evolve accordingly.
- ❖ Establish at least one key industry partnership in each of our departments to further enrich and enhance our student experience.
- ❖ Establish the Agri-tech skills model as sector best practice.
- ❖ Develop the digital infrastructure and data governance to support tracking and the requirements of the 'Hartpury Certificate Plus' developments.
- ❖ Develop the digital infrastructure to support parent/guardian communication (in relation to academic and residential life).

KPIs⁵:

- ❖ Student Satisfaction Surveys
- ❖ Student Rep Meetings
- ❖ Employer surveys – curriculum intent
- ❖ Employer surveys – satisfaction on preparation for work experience /placement
- ❖ Parent/guardian satisfaction
- ❖ Progression to university and/or employment
- ❖ Internal College to University progression
- ❖ 100% achievement of Gatsby benchmarks
- ❖ Student retention

Key Priority Three: Achieving targeted growth towards a College population of 2000 that retains the optimum quality of student experience and provides a stimulating College community.

In order to maintain the optimum student experience as we grow incrementally towards our 2025 target, the incremental increases of which reflect the increasing 16-18 demographics that colleges can take advantage of from 2021, it will be essential to monitor the growth at course level to ensure maximisation of the quality of experience together with efficiencies associated with theory and practical group sizes, where the staff to student ratio is smaller in line with health and safety requirements and sector best practice.

⁵ Aligned with Governor KPIs agreed and monitored at QuEST and Corporation

From a headline business perspective, the balance between Landbased provision and Sport/A Level provision is key to maximisation of income that supports development of new student facilities and effective maintenance of current facilities. Equally, overall, the balance supports efficient use of key, generic campus facilities such as the restaurants and College Learning Centre which in turn supports the overall student experience and therefore student satisfaction.

As we grow and evolve as a college, the requirements for social learning space increases. Whilst the number of students will increase overall, they will be local students and therefore will travel to and from Hartpury each day. As this 'travelling' population increases, so does the need for additional space that differs from that of the formal College Learning Centre setting, yet supports informal learning through a suitably flexible approach.

Equally from a wider business perspective we need to review our processes and systems to ensure that we are setting ourselves up effectively and efficiently to support this growth coupled with the overall campus growth when including our fellow university student population too. Our Continuous Improvement work will play a fundamental part in this.

Actions:

- ❖ Continue to monitor applications, offers and acceptances at a course level to ensure achievement of the overall annual target that is mindful of the Landbased: Sport/A Level optimum balance that we want to achieve in addition to the optimum student experience; react accordingly to patterns, trends and external demographics.
- ❖ Undertake targeted outreach activity to ensure we are maximising local⁶ recruitment and all class sizes.
- ❖ Ensure we do not grow more rapidly than projected and therefore not in line with campus developments such as the new restaurant / social learning space building projects.
- ❖ Engagement with the Campus Master Planning project to support the proposed developments in line with growth and the evolving student expectations.
- ❖ Develop staff and campus capacity and capability to support the projected student numbers on a single campus.
- ❖ Develop a culture that supports engagement with and development of continuous improvement initiatives to further support the student and staff experience.

KPIs⁷:

- ❖ Student recruitment targets
- ❖ Student satisfaction surveys
- ❖ Staff satisfaction surveys
- ❖ Staff retention
- ❖ Student retention

3.0 Implementation

The implementation of this document aligns with the Annual College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), the key document that details and helps to drive forward further developments to quality and curriculum as part of the annual self-assessment process. Whilst the QIP does make reference to all wider business aspects, the next review will further increase our focus on these as articulated throughout this document. This therefore means we will have one key action plan that will be used to monitor progress and ultimately the actual impact on the student experience. The QIP includes milestones, action owners and desired impact for each action. Each in year review reflects the quantitative and qualitative impact as appropriate.

⁶ Local = within a 30-mile radius

⁷ Aligned with Governor KPIs agreed and monitored at QuEST and Corporation

The QIP is developed with the College managers and their teams who have the opportunity to feed into it through a range of activities. It is then externally scrutinised prior to being presented at Quality Enhancement and Standards Committee for challenge, prior to being recommended for full Board approval at the winter Corporation meeting.

Overall, through implementation of this strategy, Hartpury College will be taken to the next stage of its development, building on its solid foundations of industry connectivity and high performance to being truly sector leading and therefore effectively positioning our students to succeed.