Guildford College Group

Teaching Excellence Framework Year 3 Provider Submission

(1) Introduction to Guildford College Group

Guildford College of Further and Higher Education (also known as Guildford College Group) is the largest further and higher education college in Surrey, serving West Surrey, South West London, North Hampshire and East Berkshire. It is based on three campuses: at Guildford College (a general vocational college), Merrist Wood College (a land-based college with residential accommodation, and a new centre for students with high needs), and Farnham College (a sixth form college with some vocational provision). Guildford College itself was founded as a technical college in 1936 and has delivered vocationally orientated Higher Education (HE) programmes since the 1950s. The College Group has around 2,500 full time further education students, 600 apprentices, 350 HE students, and totals around 7,000 students enrolled across all programmes per annum.

Our Vision: Our Vision is to be recognised as an excellent College leading change and innovation in the world of education and skills.

Our Mission: To inspire and enable learners, employers and the communities we serve to be successful, achieve their ambitions and rise to new challenges.

Our Values: Students, Staff and the Board of Governors have an agreed set of Corporate Values which are designed to characterise the desired work climate and interpersonal attitudes at the College and to guide the development of College policies and behaviours.

These are:

- **Integrity** - being honest and open, professional and reliable.
- **Respect for others** - for all who work and study here, for individual opinions and differences, for the environment and local community.
- **Quality** - of our customer service, the experience of our learners, staff and the college environment.
- **Being Responsive** - to our customers' needs, changing external factors, managing change and adapting to circumstances.
- **Being Bold** - having the courage of our convictions to stand up for what we believe is right, to champion those who come to us for support; not being afraid to abandon the easy path and lead the way.
- **Caring** - keeping the College, its staff and students safe.
- **Equality and Diversity** – actively promoting equality and celebrating diversity.

Guildford College of Further and Higher Education is an independent Corporation with exempt charity status formed under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. The Instrument and Articles of Government set down its powers, membership, role and responsibilities. The Corporation, also referred to as the Board of Governors, is similar to a board of non-executive directors. Guildford College Corporation is made up of members

from the business and local community, stakeholders, staff and students. There is a formal search process: appointments are based on skills and merit. The Principal is a member ex officio and the only executive member. The Corporation is accountable for the use of public funds and has a duty of care for the assets of the College. The Corporation is advised by a Clerk who is independent of College management and has access to independent professional advice. Teaching and learning quality is principally overseen for the Governing Body by their Curriculum and Standards Committee and the College also has a named HE governor who held a senior managerial post at a local university.

The College performs strongly in term of the quality of its HE provision, as evidenced by a very successful HE Review by QAA in 2014 and external examiner reports year-on-year. The review identified a number of examples of good practice, which included: the staff's engagement in continuous professional development, which enhances the quality of teaching and learning and this is valued by students; the management and support of work-based learning that ensures students' access good quality learning experiences and the dedicated management and resourcing of HE. Outside the scope of the TEF, the College has not yet reversed an OFSTED grade of Requires Improvement from June 2015, being judged the same in May 2017. However, the recent inspection report noted “The new leadership team has a clear vision for the college’s improvement and high expectations for learners.”

The College’s prescribed higher education portfolio primarily serves the local area and a local demand for skills. Programme sectors such as land-based industries and counselling, though, recruit beyond the traditional catchment area to the wider region. The current portfolio of HE programmes covers a variety of animal management disciplines, counselling, early years, construction, and civil engineering. These range from HNC to Honours top-ups and concentrate in discrete curriculum areas where the College has a consistently strong track record in excellent teaching and learning across the Levels.

(2) Context and Strategies

Enterprise M3’s Skills and Employment Strategy (2014) highlights that “the area faces a number of skills challenges which threaten to hold back economic growth”.

These include: “meeting the demand for additional workers to 2020 with only modest growth in the working age population; meeting businesses requirements for the supply of specific skills and reducing the incidence of skills mismatches; and, supporting people with lower level skills to access and benefit from opportunities arising in the labour market.” HE at the College plays a notable role in addressing the last of these challenges. From the TEF3 contextual data, 54% of its HE students are non- or low-tariff applicants, yet the College boasts a creditable 87.3% continuation rate in the core metrics. Therefore its role in this “heavy lifting” or “learning gain” supports LEP priorities well.

Enterprise M3’s Skills and Employment Strategy (2014) also summarises the local context thus, and the College’s HE provision is particularly responsive to 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13:

1. The labour market in the Enterprise M3 area is characterised by a high employment rate and low level of economic inactivity;
2. Jobs growth over the coming years will exceed working age population growth;
3. The position is exacerbated by the net out-commute of higher skilled residents, and relatively low graduate retention;
4. Jobs are becoming more knowledge and skills intensive – demand for higher level skills will increase across all occupations and within all sectors;
5. This will affect recruitment related to replacement demands as well as new jobs;
6. Over half of job openings up to 2020 will require higher education qualifications,

while only 1% of jobs openings will employ people with no formal qualifications;
7. This means that competition for low skilled jobs will become fierce, increasing the challenges associated with reducing worklessness ;
8. But it may be productive to focus resources on increasing employment among specific groups currently under-represented in the labour market, including women, young people and older workers;
9. Business is concerned that learning providers are not keeping up with demand for specific skills areas, particularly STEM skills;
10. At the same time, businesses, particularly SMEs, are not fully aware of what colleges, universities and other training providers can offer and many find it hard to train and retrain their workforce;
11. Learning providers aim to respond to business need, but centralised data to support them in developing new courses is limited;
12. Apprenticeships are increasing significantly in number, but the proportion of Higher Apprenticeships remains small;
13. Everyone, including learners, feels that information, advice and guidance for young people (and indeed older people) to inform learning options, needs to be improved;
14. Work experience and employability support – understanding the world of work and employer requirements - is important for young people seeking and entering work.

A number of these points link closely to teaching excellence in the HE at the College, and also support our desire to confirm this via a strong TEF award. The College's HE, being vocational, addresses the shortfall in knowledge/skills intensity in certain industries very well, and a strong TEF outcome will enable to College to increase awareness of, and expand, its offer, after a period of rationalisation and strategic re-focusing. Also, as can be seen from the TEF contextual data, 34% of its HE students are under 21 and 32% are over 30. It is also noteworthy that 62% are females. In addition, the College is starting to offer Higher Apprenticeships in a key STEM area, using the HNC Construction qualification. In having a policy to interview all applicants, the College is strong at supporting improvement in the local HE information, advice and guidance (IAG) agenda.

The College has recently re-drafted its HE Strategy and has the following nine strategic aims for its HE provision over the next five years (2018-2023) which it believes are very much in the spirit of the Teaching Excellence Framework:

1. Maintain academic standards comparable with the higher education sector
2. Enhance teaching, learning opportunities and assessment/feedback to continuously improve the experience and outcomes for higher education students
3. Achieve a greater sense of partnership and community with its HE student body
4. Increase the number of prescribed higher education students/Higher and Degree apprentices on full and part-time programmes
5. Develop new programmes in line with local/employer need
6. Increase consultation with employers as part of the programme design/validation process
7. Introduce HE provision at Farnham College
8. Address the widening participation agenda through increased enrolments of students from disadvantaged and non-traditional groups
9. Ensure that higher education is taught and managed by staff that are both vocational experts and engage in scholarly activity

(3) The Higher Education Provision

The College, in 2017/18, offered the following programmes for new entrants.

Qual.	Programme	Level	College	Awarding Body
FdSc	Animal Behaviour & Welfare	5	Merrist Wood	Kingston U
FdSc	Animal Science	5	Merrist Wood	Kingston U
FdSc	Equine Management	5	Merrist Wood	Kingston U
FdSc	Companion Animal Behaviour	5	Merrist Wood	Kingston U
FdSc	Wildlife & Conservation	5	Merrist Wood	Kingston U
FdSc	Zoo Management	5	Merrist Wood	Kingston U
BSc	Animal Behaviour & Welfare (top-up)	6	Merrist Wood	Kingston U
BSc/BA	"Land-Based" (top-ups) (Animal Management; Golf Management)	6	Merrist Wood	Kingston U
FdSc	Counselling	5	Guildford	U of Greenwich
BA	Counselling (top-up)**	6	Guildford	U of Greenwich
FdA	Early Years**	5	Guildford	Kingston U
BA	Early Childhood Studies (top-up)	6	Guildford	U of Greenwich
HNC	Construction	4	Guildford	Pearson
HNC	Civil Engineering	4	Guildford	Pearson
HND	Construction (top-up)	5	Guildford	Pearson

**programmes are franchised rather than directly funded

The College is very proud of the highly inclusive profile of its HE student body. It has a wide stratification of age groups with around a third each being under 21, 21-30 and 30+.

54% of its HE students are non- or low-tariff entrants, which illustrates a flexible admissions policy that clearly does not impact on continuation rates – which at 87.3% are strong. The College interviews all applicants to ensure that it recruits with integrity and offers solid IAG. Unusually, 28% of students have an HE-level qualification on admission, which is predominantly those entering Counselling, Construction and Civil Engineering programmes.

13% register a disability, which is similar to the Surrey average of 13.5% (2011 Census).

9% declare they are from minority ethnic groups. The College has historically had a challenge in students accurately registering ethnicity, and has worked with the student body to improve this, and indeed in 2016/17 noted 10.3% declaring thus with 0% unknown. The Surrey average is around 9.6% (2011 Census).

The local area is not, however, an area of significant deprivation or low HE participation, and the College only has 6% of HE students from POLAR3 Quintile 1 wards. However, it is an active member of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) overseen by HEON at University of Surrey, which funds a fractional member of staff at the College to work to improve performance through progression and outreach activities – targeting our own Level 3 students, and schools in the towns to the West of the College where Quintile 1 areas are more common. The Director of HE sits on the programme's Steering Group.

There is a clear split on the basis of sex, with 68% of the HE student body being female. The College understands that this is because females tend to dominate recruitment in Counselling and Early Years, and to a lesser extent, Animal-related programmes. Males tend to be more prevalent in Construction and Civil Engineering.

Although full time is technically the "majority mode" at the College, nevertheless 27% of the HE student body are part time students, which is positive, inclusive and goes against broader national trends.

50% of students live in the Travel-to-Work area, which is quite low for College HE in general. However, both Counselling and Animal-related programmes draw from a wider geographical area than is typical here.

(4) Teaching Excellence

The College takes a strategic approach to teaching through the HE Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy and other relevant policies and strategies applicable to all College courses. Through these strategies and policies a shared understanding of a College wide approach is reinforced and the College is able to define the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary for completion of a higher education programme, and the responsibilities of staff delivering the curriculum. Across programmes a variety of learning and teaching strategies are employed including formal lectures, seminars, independent research, projects, practical workshops, group discussion and peer-teaching opportunities, enabling students to act as instructional resources for one another.

To provide every student with an equal and effective opportunity to achieve their intended learning outcomes, the College places students on the right course through setting appropriate entry requirements and interviewing of each applicant. Once on programme students complete questionnaires to identify individual learning styles and preferences which in turn helps build a group profile to plan learning and teaching. To support learning, different types of media are used to assist the delivery of content, such as relevant YouTube clips, DVDs, podcasts and other broadcasts. For programmes such as Animal-related courses, the use of technological equipment in the Animal Management Unit allows for more innovative approaches to learning. These resources include QR codes, Zoological Information Management System (ZIMS), web cams, camera traps, CCTV for remote behavioural observation, tracking devices and state of the art incubators and brooders for birds and reptiles. Guest speakers and educational visits to a range of working environments are used to support learning. These experiences enable students to support their learning in context and allow a network of contacts to develop. This range of strategies accommodate different learning styles and enables programme delivery to be more inclusive and engaging. The College scored 94% in the 2017 NSS on staff making the subject interesting.

Of particular note was the introduction of podcast production at Guildford, allowing students to learn IT skills, editing and production skills as well as immersion in the topic.

FD Counselling, External Examiner, 2017

To enable students to monitor their progress and further their academic development, higher education programmes incorporate group tutorial and 1-1 tutorials. Group tutorial includes activities such as personal development planning, academic writing and use of sources. 1 to 1 tutorials are delivered by a personal tutor who will support students with financial or personal issues as well as academic guidance. Programmes deliver tutorials to develop academic skills and enable students to monitor their progress. This will include how to access and use learning resources, academic writing and the support of personal development planning. Academic development is managed through Personal Development Planning (PDP) or Personal Development Record (PDR). This enables the student to set targets and reflect on their progress. An important opportunity for students to reflect on their feedback is through a reflective element of an assignment. The personal tutor scheme allows for regular discussion and review of individual student progress. Students are encouraged to attend tutorial sessions and to participate fully in their own Individual Learning Plan (ILP) in order to progress their development and gain maximum benefit from the

feedback/feed forward process. Learning coaches are also allocated to students and can provide generic academic guidance which is of particular use for the research project.

Useful generic feedback provided for Research Proposals. Critically constructive feedback getting the students to focus on evidence base and scientific rigor. Excellent feed forward for this module.

BSc Animal Behaviour & Welfare, External Examiner, 2017

Overall, I was impressed with the diligence and care taken by tutors in their feedback to the students.

FD/BA Early Childhood Studies, External Examiner, 2017

Evaluation of staff's professional practice is managed through the Colleges lesson observation process. HE staff are subject to full lesson observations and "walk throughs" where management staff visit session for a short amount of time. To ensure the continued effectiveness of its approach to, and the enhancement of, learning opportunities and teaching practices, the College's HE course leaders consult with employers as part of validation or re-validation, keep up to date with sector changes and developments, and analyse continuation, achievement and completion data, and the feedback from external examiners and students, as part of annual monitoring.

One example of improvement, already evident in some students work is to encourage all students to take note of wider national policy changes and continuing to direct them to reflect on these in their work more directly.

FD/BA Early Childhood Studies, External Examiner, 2017

At a strategic level the College collects and analyse appropriate information as part of the annual Higher Education Self- Evaluation Document (SED) and Action Plan, which is reviewed by Governors in the Autumn of each year.

The College's policy for student engagement is set out in the Learner Involvement Strategy which outlines the student representative system, student voice meetings, how the College gathers information from students and how the College responds to issues raised by students. This strategy applies to all students but the College approach to HE student engagement is further defined through the Higher Education Student Engagement policy. Student engagement is a priority for the College and one that is being approached from a variety of angles. Currently, higher education students have the following opportunities to engage with the College in the quality assurance and enhancement of all aspects of their education experience: boards of study/course boards, student staff consultative committees, ad hoc focus groups, faculty forums, Student Parliament, Student Conference.

To ensure consistency of representation, each cohort of students is required to appoint a representatives either through agreement or election. Training is delivered by student services on the role of a student representative, the structure of the student representative system and the key points of contact. In addition, the Director of HE provides formal guidance on HE student representation looking at the particular role and responsibilities. At course boards of study, student representatives are given the opportunity to comment on all

aspects of their programme including the learning opportunities available to them, the provision of resources and the clarity of course information and handbooks. Additional student comments gathered through student staff consultations or focus groups will discussed at boards of study and students will be invited to comment on them.

In addition to student representation at a programme level, the College actively seeks the involvement of higher education students at an institutional level. At a group level, higher education students are part of the Guildford College Group Student Parliament. Higher education students are invited to sit on the Parliament Committee which meets three times a year. Each academic year during Learner Voice Week, Student Services organises the Student Conference where all student representatives are invited to meet with managers and the executive team of the College. Higher education students attend this conference and suggest improvement to various services the College currently provides its students. An action plan is then produced which helps shape the next academic year.

In addition to attending the relevant meetings and representative groups, students play an integral role in the quality assurance and development of their programmes through the module review process. These reviews contribute to the annual monitoring report submitted by the course leader to the Director of HE and awarding body. Key instruments for hearing the student voice are internal surveys and the National Student Survey (NSS). Promotion of the NSS is managed by the Higher Education Department with posters and signage displayed in HE areas and regular communication to staff and students.

In term of Teaching, the College's Indicator in the Core Metrics is 88.4% (1.3% over benchmark) with no flags for all 3 years indicating a consistent performance arguably exceeding student expectations. In the split metrics, the College's mature HE students give a positive flag to Teaching.

For Assessment, the College's Indicator in the Core Metrics is 80.3% (3.0% over benchmark) with no flags for all 3 years indicating a clear overperformance, arguably significantly exceeding student expectations. This tallies well with the College's HE students' and external examiners' feedback that assessments are transparent, coherent and fair.

(5) Learning Environment

The key methods by which every student is provided with information that specifies the learning opportunities and support available to them is through induction and the course handbook. Induction will typically include ice-breaking activities, key staff and their role, the structure of the programme, the assessment strategy, awarding body regulations, and guidance on academic skills and student performance. Induction will commonly include a tour of College facilities including a library induction.

A commitment to equity guides the College in all aspects of enabling student development as stated in the College's Equality and Diversity Policy. Through this policy the College seeks to eliminate discrimination, promote and facilitate achievement, narrow achievement gaps, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with people with different protected characteristics. At a programme level, this commitment is evident in the application and interview process, and the approach taken to learning and teaching through differentiation. Furthermore, all staff are required to complete equality and diversity training. At a curriculum level, equity is sought through careful programme design and a variety of

assessment methods. Furthermore, the College reflects on its approach to enabling student development, and equality of opportunity, through the programme and module review process. Where the assessment methodology or the management of a module has impacted on a specific student or group of students, modifications will be explored. For students with specific individual needs, a risk assessment will be completed by the College. For programmes validated by an HEI, the College will refer to specific regulations regarding extenuating circumstances.

Enabling the successful transition of students into higher education is managed through initial tutorials and the setting of professional, personal and academic targets/goals for the coming term. Many programmes issue an assignment at the start of term to which feedback is given in a timely manner to ensure that the learner can develop rapidly in terms of academic performance. Similarly, the importance of formative assessment and its role in academic progression is evident in definitive documents/programme specifications and the assessment strategy. For level 6 programmes which include a dissertation/research project, formative assessment is essential. In the case of the Research Project module for BSc Animal Behaviour and Welfare, use of formative assessment at level 6 includes a draft methodology which informs the student of their academic progression without affecting their summative assessment grade. This, in turn, gives scope for feed forward opportunities.

Students new to HE (especially mature students) can find the early stage in their studies daunting so programmes often utilise students at higher levels to meet with groups to help them understand the academic progression they are expected to make. Additional activities are arranged to help students recognise the transition. For example, in the Animal Behaviour and Welfare and Animal Management programmes, new level 4 students are issued with an indicative assignment and asked to grade it against the set criteria. Once this exercise has been completed the students' grades are compared to the actual grade awarded, giving a clear indication of how work is assessed. For students on FdA Early Years, preparation/transition to year 2 of the programme is aided through summer break reading and study tasks. In addition to the academic progression achieved through subject specific study, study skills sessions provide students with the opportunity to develop an understanding of, and the necessary skills to demonstrate, good academic practice. These include time management, taking notes effectively, reading for academic purposes, writing an essay and Harvard referencing. The 2016 Internal Subject Review by Kingston University commended "the commitment and exemplary support that the Guildford College team provide to their students."

The College approach to supporting the individual needs of students is set out in the Additional Learning Support Policy. Currently, coordinating the support of HE students is the responsibility of a Lead Specialist (LS) Additional Learning Support (ALS) tutor with a level 7 Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) qualification. If an HE applicant declares that they have previously had support or have a disability or SpLD, the College admissions department contacts the LS who liaises with the relevant programme and, if appropriate, attends the interview. When students start, the LS has an induction interview with them to discuss the support they would like. Ideally there is also a meeting with their tutor, to discuss the implications of their support. Support sessions are then arranged to fit in with students' timetables. Because of the teaching timetable and that many students are in placement or working, support is often given outside of usual teaching hours. If the LS is unable to offer

support, another suitably qualified ALS tutor meets with the student. For example, the LS tries to ensure that all HE students with dyslexia are supported by a dyslexia specialist.

DSA support has been arranged for students with hearing impairments, visual impairments, autistic spectrum disorders, mental health difficulties, mobility difficulties and others. Each student has to have an individualised package of support which is monitored by the LS. Sometimes the support allowance for a student needs to be renegotiated, where the LS liaises with Student Finance England. Several of our HE courses have examinations so access arrangements are put in place for students with DSA. The LS arranges these in consultation with the course leader who seeks authorisation from the awarding body. Where a student without disclosed learning difficulties encounters challenges whilst on their programme of study, the LS will support their academic development through workshops on specific study skills sessions such as Harvard Referencing or writing in the third person. Tutors sometimes request that the LS screen individual students for learning difficulties as they have noticed particular challenges the student is facing. If it becomes evident that a student has an undiagnosed SpLD, the LS arranges to meet with them and explain the DSA process. The College will give a limited amount of support to students without DSA.

Course leaders engage in continual reflection and adaptation of their programme. For example, on BSc Animal Behaviour and Welfare, the programme has developed through liaison with industry contacts such as Zoological Society of London (ZSL), Chessington Zoo, Birdworld, Compassion in World Farming and other welfare organisations. Feedback has also been sought from current and graduate students of the BSc and FdSc in Animal Behaviour and Welfare. Based on this information, refinements have been made which promote transferable skills of initiative and independence. The 2016 Internal Subject Review by Kingston University commended “the extent of industry input to the Guildford College provision, both in terms of curriculum design and course delivery and further manifested by the College’s plans to seek a zoo licence”. A member of staff from Chessington Zoo was included as a panel member at the recent validation of six foundation degrees in Animal Management. All of the HE counselling lecturers are themselves practitioners with their own part time practices.

As another example of engaging externally for the benefit of students, in 2017, College staff spoke at a Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) CPD meeting, and took some HNC Civil Engineering students to both the British Library and Institute of Civil Engineers (ICE) for a “research day”. ICE also came to the College talk to first years as part of their induction. An informal development project is ongoing within Construction and Civil Engineering exploring collaboration between external agencies, internal departments (e.g. the LRC), staff and students. College and British Library staff spoke at the UKSG conference about the specifics of HE in FE support. Further work is now being undertaken looking at how the College can provide bite sized insights into research methods, to be delivered in an audio-visual format.

HE staff are supported by the general CPD policy for the College. This policy includes reference to specific HE activities. HE Staff also benefit from College INSET days offering a variety of CPD opportunities. These are open to all staff but will include activities relevant to HE staff and the management and delivery of their programme such as: differentiation, learning outcomes, technology enhanced learning, enrolment training and customer care. The College CPD policy also requires full-time teaching staff to undertake five days of work experience, per year, to keep abreast of industrial developments and requirements. In recent years HE College staff have managed hospitality events, attended work experience programmes in South Africa, visited other Colleges to observe their delivery of a programme, worked at sporting events such as PGA championships, and developed policies for new counselling services. Specific HE focussed CPD days/events are organised by the Higher

Education Department. These have included sessions on working with academic regulations, support in annual monitoring and managing student complaints, and updates on the HE Sector. The yearly appraisals process provides a mechanism for highlighting development areas for the individual and teaching programme. Conducted by Heads of Learning and Standards, targets are negotiated with the member of staff based on feedback, lesson observations, or programme performance. The QAA found in their HE Review in 2014 that "Effective staff engagement in continuous professional development enhances the quality of teaching and learning and is valued by students."

The opportunity for staff to engage in scholarly/research based activity is an admitted challenge for the College due to teaching work load. Staff do engage in these activities where possible and seek to develop their teaching practice. A current example of this can be seen in two members of staff (in counselling, and animal management) currently serving as external examiners. The College hosted the first Surrey Colleges Scholarship Conference in July 2017 at Merrist Wood College, and a number of HE staff (from Business, Construction and Civil Engineering) delivered sessions. Also, Access and Humanities tutor Claire Goodwin, has recently been awarded a leading prize by the Women's History Association of Ireland for the research that formed the basis of the dissertation she produced for her MA in History, which she recently completed. The Women's History Association of Ireland presented Claire with the 2016 MacCurtain Cullen Award in Irish Women's History for her essay entitled 'Prostitution in Victorian Belfast: a study of the lives and experiences of women working as prostitutes in Belfast during the years 1850-1900'.

Course team very focused, passionate and knowledgeable. Their enthusiasm for ensuring their students have a positive learning experience is evident across the programme.

BSc Animal Behaviour & Welfare, External Examiner, 2017

The College has designated two areas at Guildford College and Merrist Wood College as HE zones. At Guildford College, the top floor of six-storey block is dedicated to higher education. Teaching rooms, a lecture theatre, meeting rooms, a computer suite and a social area are provided for higher education students only. The HE Directorate is also on that floor allowing HE students to have quick and easy access. At Merrist Wood, the HE Centre provides similar resources ensuring that HE students have their own distinct zone within the College and a microwave and kettle have recently been purchased in response to a simple request at a course board. The QAA's HE Review in 2014 found that "The dedicated management and resourcing of higher education which provides effective oversight and a structure for enhancement".

The College's VLE (Moodle) is maintained by the IT department with each programme using it to support students. Effective use of Moodle is the responsibility of module leaders and programme managers. Where inconsistency of Moodle use has been identified, the College has been able to address and provide feedback to students. The Learning Resource Centres (LRCs) at Merrist Wood and Guildford College have supported Higher Education courses for many years and consistently receive positive feedback from staff and students. Investment in eBooks and online information databases and improvements to the LRC information and services on Moodle help to enable as many students as possible to access information Professionally qualified staff in the LRCs are responsible for supporting specific HE courses. The librarians liaise with curriculum staff for the purchase of resources (print and non-print) and they manage a budget for this purpose. They are also responsible for delivering inductions and information sessions for HE students. A small team of LRC Assistants at each site support students using the computers and help with issues and enquiries. All staff are encouraged to attend staff training within the college and to attend professional meetings and conferences. Library resources scored a strong 81% satisfaction in the 2017 NSS.

Both LRCs are zoned for silent study, quiet study and group work. The Guildford College LRC has a dedicated computer zone for HE students. There are also two adjoining meeting/seminar rooms which can be booked. HE students also have access to the Blue Room where they can practice presentations. Both LRCs are open in the holidays but for reduced hours. Outside the LRC opening hours, students have access to the HE Centre and the Learning Hub at Stoke Park and the HE Centre at Merrist Wood. Online LRC information and services are available at all times. Students on franchised degree programmes can also access full library resources at their host HEI. The LRC continues to invest in online information databases to support HE courses. For example, the College purchased the EBSCO Discovery Service in 2014 which has greatly improved accessibility.

LRC inductions are provided at the beginning of the course followed by a follow-up support session to introduce students to the catalogue, eBooks and e-resources. Additional in-depth support is available on request for small groups and occasionally for individual students. LRC information on Moodle is continually developing and improving. Online support for topics such as research skills, referencing and plagiarism are just a few of the activities included in the iSkills programme. Guidance in using our online products is also provided in addition to general information about the LRC and its services. Support is also provided by email and telephone. Staff of the Guildford College LRC have recently been awarded a commendation at this year's Council for Learning Resources in Colleges (CoLRiC) Best Practice Awards, for demonstrating excellent practice. The team were tasked with submitting an initiative which makes a difference to the College's Learning Resources Centre learner experience. Their submission was for the 'iSkills' project, designed to reach students which other LRC sessions do not reach.

Due to the variety of higher education programmes, and the distinctly different subject areas of Guildford College and Merrist Wood, resource requirements differ greatly. At Merrist Wood, the animal management HE programmes are supported by a new multi-million pound Animal Management Centre completed in 2015/16. The development of this new resource saw consultation with higher education students regarding the resources and learning environment. This new build has provided students with a state of the art learning resource in terms of species diversity and opportunities for observation, research and practical development. The College now plans to apply for a zoo licence in order to enhance student employability and to broaden species still further to include primates.

There was excellent emphasis on practical work based skills in assessments for some modules which made full use of the excellent animal resources in the college

Foundation Degrees in Animal Management, External Examiner, 2017

In autumn 2017, anticipating the arrival of a pair of coatis, Animal Management degree students were tasked with researching the species to help design their new enclosure within the Tropical Biome. One of the students who helped to design the enclosure, who is studying the Foundation Degree in Zoo Management, commented: "The research on coatis which we carried out before designing the enclosure was really interesting and it's great to see them settled into their new environment." Another student, also on the Foundation Degree in Zoo Management, said: "I came from a much smaller college than Merrist Wood and I couldn't believe the facilities here. The animal collection is so diverse and getting involved in a project like this is amazing."

Students have the opportunity to work with many species in a range of roles, from basic handling and husbandry, to training, health monitoring, condition scoring, welfare checks, faecal egg counts and breeding management. The College utilises the ZIMS electronic system (utilised by all BIAZA zoos) to manage its animal stock enabling learners to experience the type of management programme used in industry. The whole collection is managed by a detailed Collection Management Plan which has been reviewed by external partners within the zoo industry. The College works closely with Chessington Zoo, ZSL, Whipsnade and Birdworld to ensure its standards meet those in the zoo industry.

HEFCE Capital funds have in the past been used to redesign and refurbish a laboratory and lecture theatre at Merrist Wood and invest in information technology infrastructure to support the increasing demand for fast access, streaming media and accompanying tools required to support flexible and blended styles of learning, to purchase IT equipment including monitors and iPads, and a range of resources for animal management programmes including bird and reptile incubation equipment, recording equipment and night vision goggles. In 2013, the College's higher education Counselling courses saw a significant improvement to their learning resources and teaching environment in the form of a £200,000 refurbishment. The area has 2 large classrooms with 7 breakout rooms facilitating small group work.

Although Academic Support has no flags, with an Indicator at 77.6% (4.8% below benchmark) the College recognises that the negative flag in Year 2 was problematic. The College addressed the 68% satisfaction score in the 2016 NSS so that it recovered to 79.5% in 2017 with issues identified around being able to contact staff when students need to on a particular set of programmes (the relevant NSS question scored 80% in 2015; 65% in 2016; 77% in 2017). The College is moderately satisfied that the trajectory is in the right direction now having reinforced to all stakeholders what expectations are reasonable here. In the Split Metrics, it is clear younger students tend to be more critical of Academic Support and the programmes above tend to have a younger demographic. Students from less deprived areas also tend to be more critical of Academic Support.

The Indicator for Continuation is broadly where one might expect at 87.3% (0.4% over benchmark). The College recognises a certain volatility with a double positive flag in Year 2 but a double negative flag in Year 3. This was investigated and the College has concluded that the most likely cause was two relatively small Higher Nationals that are no longer offered, mainly because students struggled to meet the learning outcomes despite being suitable applicants who were given sufficient opportunity. From the Split Metrics, students from lower participation areas are less likely to continue, which is a phenomenon that the College is seeking to understand better, as this has the potential to undermine work being carried out to attract more POLAR3 Quintile 1 students.

(6) Student Outcomes/Learning Gain

Academic, personal and professional progression is facilitated in all programmes through personal development planning (as part of tutorial) and personal and professional development modules. In the case of BSc Animal Behaviour and Welfare, the Practical and Professional Skills Development module includes an in-depth professional development portfolio that requires students to record and reflect on their personal, academic and professional skills development. Essential to the academic, personal and professional progression of students is that assessment develops not only subject knowledge but a range of personal and professional skills, relevant to the needs of industry. Equally, work placement is fundamental to the student's personal and professional development. Where

possible, students will engage in activities on-site that further develop their personal and professional skills.

In addition to the curriculum design facilitating academic, personal and professional progression, careers support officers deliver sessions on CV building and job applications. Individual 1:1 sessions are also available by appointment. Programmes such as BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies have visits from universities to speak with students about academic training routes and career progression. Lecturers will also use Moodle as a means by which to inform students of job opportunities. As a College of vocational higher education, student employability is embedded into the design, learning, teaching and assessment of each programme. All students enrolled on higher education programme will develop knowledge and skills essential to employment. The impetus for employability being embedded into each programme comes from the College's portfolio of HE qualifications being predominantly foundation degrees and Higher Nationals.

Key to ensuring that employability is fundamental to a programme is the design process and validation. In developing higher education programmes, the College will engage with employers to ensure that the curriculum is relevant to that sector and that graduates obtain the necessary knowledge and skills in order to enter employment successfully. The College manages annual employer engagement activities that are used to develop curriculum at all levels. Staff who deliver or manage higher education programmes will meet with employers in the interest of developing relevant programmes, a recent example being working with Eagle Radio, who are located on the College site, to scope a Cross-Platform Media Production programme. In addition to these activities, the College holds regular careers fairs which are attended by industries relevant to the College's higher education provision such as the Professional Golfers Association (PGA) and local construction firms.

Definitive documents/programme specifications outline how employability is addressed through curriculum design. These statements provide information on how the programme seeks to provide a grounding for students to move into their chosen sector and how essential employability skills are embedded throughout. Students will also typically be provided with information on the types of organisations graduates are appropriate for and where previous students have gone on to work. In seeking validation, the College is typically required by its university partners to map programme aims and/or learning outcomes to sector requirements. This could be, for example, the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce, National Occupational Standards or other relevant professional standards. Additionally, University policy on mapping teaching, learning and assessment methods to key graduate attributes and transferable skills is addressed in definitive documents, emphasising the key employability skills gained through completion of a programme.

The primary means by which the College seeks to develop general student employability is through the learning, teaching and assessment strategies of its higher education programmes. Personal development planning and professional development modules are centred on skill development for both general employability and specific roles, with assessment often approached through portfolio building. Employability is reinforced through CV building, applications, mock interviews and questioning. For students on HNC/D Construction and Civil Engineering who work full-time, their general employability skills are

enhanced through report and documentation writing, CV writing and interview techniques. The ability to work effectively in a group/team work is developed through programmes and where appropriate, the focus of an entire module. For programme areas such as Early Childhood Studies, there is the expectation that students are working within an early years setting. This establishes a link between the taught lectures and the students' own practice which in turn forms the basis for their assessment.

The contribution of employers to assessing students on their practical work skills gives an extra layer of validation on the employability of students.

Foundation Degrees in Animal Management, External Examiner, 2017

Some very relevant industry skills and topics used within assessments

BSc Animal Behaviour & Welfare, External Examiner, 2017

In order to develop student employability in regards to a specific field, programmes deliver relevant content and use appropriate methods for learning, teaching and assessment. Tutors will use real-life examples in their lessons in order to link theory with current issues. For programme areas such Counselling, professional requirements are addressed throughout the programme. Professional Development covers various topics such medication, working with suicidal clients, working with risk, ethical decision making, and Work Based Learning includes reports on the student's clinical placement. The business side of this profession is also taught through sessions that cover: marketing, setting up a website, professional persona, how to set up in private practice and the accreditation process. This programme is enhanced by the availability of the counselling suite where students practice their counselling skills with their peers as clients.

To assist students in thinking beyond their programme of study and plan their career path, programmes will provide opportunities for students to engage in career planning. For Animal Behaviour and Welfare and Animal Management, students evaluate a range of current job applications and complete mapping activities of essential and desirable skills that identify their key areas for development. These can then be used as targets for future PDP and PDR assessment which can result in a student realising the importance of skills that might not necessarily be animal related. Where students are already employed within their subject area (Construction), they are able to share contacts and experiences informally as a group. For Counselling students, a "next steps" session is delivered to help them consider their options for employment.

Progression into employment is further supported by the The Careers, Advice and Guidance Team which holds the Matrix Award. Through this team, all Guildford College Group students have access to Level 6 qualified and experienced Careers Advisors. Students can be referred by tutors, can self-refer for a booked 1:1 guidance interview, or can also drop in over the lunch period. There is also a member of the National Careers Service who offers appointments and support to adults every Thursday. HE students receive a letter outlining the careers service during the Easter holidays to remind and encourage them to make use of it. The Careers Service will work with higher education programmes to develop subject specific careers guidance. Tutors and/or students can also book group sessions delivered by the Careers Team on a range of careers and employability topics, including CV writing, interview preparation and technique, options following their course, job seeking, and careers

induction. Job vacancy boards are regularly updated and these are shared with subject relevant tutors to pass on to students. The College also promotes and makes available a number of online resources to students including: Prospects website and Careers planner; National careers service; NARIC; U-Explore; Create.

Fundamental to the development of student employability is work-placement. Higher education programmes delivered by Guildford College provide students with the opportunity to undertaken relevant and worthwhile work placements. Students will complete in some cases up to 450 hours of work experience/work-placement. Students are able to use one work placement during their course but are often encouraged to change placement in order to gain a diverse experience. Work placement offers higher education students the opportunity to experience the professional environment, develop essential knowledge and skills and make contacts. Furthermore, students will, on occasion, benefit from in-house CPD training delivered by the employer. In addition to students engaging with industry through work placement, programmes will regularly visit organisations and have guest speakers to enrich learning. The College's approach to higher education student employability is complemented by external examiners across a range of programmes. The QAA found in their HE Review in 2014 that "The management and support of work-based learning that ensures students' access to good-quality learning experiences".

For the College's FdSc in Counselling, the programme and students benefit from accreditation from the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). This professional recognition enables graduates of the programme to go on to a register of counsellors held by the Health Professions Council. Whilst on programme, the College recommend to students that they become members of the BACP which gives them access to additional resources to support their study, access to professional advice lines, and the BACP journal that provides opportunities for employment and to be a participant in research. Furthermore, as a result of the accreditation, the College is providing students with a professionally recognised and scrutinised programme that ensures currency in regards to professional expectations and specific employability skills. To ensure that the programme and the delivery remains sector relevant, the College is required to apply for reaccreditation every five years and submits an annual report to the BACP. The College had its last successful reaccreditation in December 2017.

In its Core Metrics for Employment/Further Study the College's Indicator was 96.4% (1.1% over benchmark) with no flags for all 3 years showing a slight overperformance in student outcomes. Disabled students, in the Split Metrics, are especially likely to overperform on this metric, which is very pleasing.

For the Highly Skilled Employment/Further Study Indicator the College showed a double negative flag in the Core Metrics at 57.8% (13.3% below benchmark) with negative or double negative flags in all years. This is almost certainly due to high proportion of land-based students at the College (27% of full time students) who do not tend to obtain this type of role in the short term. Other local land-based Colleges in TEF Year 2 showed a similar phenomenon in this Indicator with Plumpton at 60.3%, Sparsholt at 53.2% and Hadlow at 46.1%. Early Years students similarly do not progress to this type of employment readily, and Counselling students tend to become self-employed in many cases. In the Split Metrics, Level 6 students, white students, non-disabled students, and students from high participation areas tend to underperform in this respect all with a double negative flag.

This submission was compiled by the Director of Higher Education in consultation with colleagues from across the Guildford College Group, the HE student representatives, and the Students Union President.