TEF Year 3 Provider Submission

Provider Context

Petroc is a large, successful further education (FE) and higher education (HE) College that was formed following the merger of North Devon College and East Devon College in August 2008. Petroc serves the communities of North, Mid and East Devon, Torridge and North Cornwall. The geographical region that Petroc serves contains four different local authorities; consequently it is often referred to as Northern Devon, a term that will be used throughout this report. As the only provider of taught higher education within a 40 mile radius of our Barnstaple campus, Petroc offers a broad and diverse curriculum with a clear focus upon the needs of our communities.

The Ofsted Inspection Report published in December 2015, graded the college as "good" whilst the QAA Higher Education Review (HER) published in the spring of 2015 judged Petroc as of meeting all four UK expectations. Petroc made a TEF year 2 provider submission in January 2017 and received a silver award.

The statement of findings recognised:

- The excellent focus on learning and teaching, enterprise and skills in a local context.
- Our model of small group teaching and skills development which is highly valued by students.
- The highly effective partnership approach to student feedback through which students are engaged in decision making
- The implementation of an institutional culture that facilitates, recognises and rewards excellent teaching.

Presently Petroc has 10,000 students enrolled upon programmes that range from level 1 to level 5, of whom approximately 500 study higher education. The vast majority of our HE students reside locally and have chosen to study whilst living at home, 93% of our HE students are residents of either Torridge or North Devon local authority areas[1]. Students studying for a Foundation degree account for 92% of our HE students, with 8% enrolled upon one of our 4 BA (Hons) programmes[2]. All students who successfully complete a Foundation degree at Petroc have the option of topping up to BA or BSc qualification at the University of Plymouth with one year additional study.

Our HE programmes are delivered in partnership with the University of Plymouth, our degree awarding body. Programme design, management of the student experience, quality management, student recruitment and our approach to teaching and assessment are all informed by our strategic relationship with the University. Our approach is to work within the University of Plymouth regulations and via the creation of Petroc policies and strategies, enhance the

[1] HE student residence data taken from Petroc MIS

[2] HE student enrolment data taken from Petroc MIS

delivery of Higher Education to satisfy the needs and demands of the people and employers of Northern Devon.

During 2017 Petroc published a new strategic plan to cover the period 2017 - 2020. The strategy document places Petroc at the heart of its communities, serving a predominantly rural, coastal, geographically dispersed population with substantial pockets of economic deprivation. The strategy requires Petroc to create an environment which will support the development of sustainable economic growth, through the creation of high quality productive employment to suit the needs of local businesses. This requires the college to work closely with local employers, the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, the University of Plymouth and feeder schools. At the centre of this strategy is our commitment to Higher Education. The Northern Devon economy is dominated by micro businesses and small to medium size enterprises. Of those employed 50% of the total workforce work in either wholesale / retail, health, social care, accommodation and food production[3]. These sectors of the economy which are over–represented in our locality tend to suffer from low productivity.

Thus Northern Devon is characterised by low wages, poor transport links and a population with lower levels of higher qualifications than the national average. In 2017 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) ranked all local authority districts in terms of average gross weekly pay. Of 361 authorities ranked in England, Torridge was ranked at 360, North Devon at 342 and Mid Devon at 337 with 1 being most prosperous and 361 most deprived.

Qualification levels tend to provide a reasonable indicator of the quality of the local labour supply in any geographic region. Northern Devon once again falls consistently below the national average. According to the ONS, in England 27.4% of the population are qualified to level 4 or above, within Devon the figure rises to 27.8%. Mid Devon however, has 26.4%, North Devon 22.6% and Torridge only 21.7% of their workforce holding qualifications at this level[4].

Despite this relative economic deprivation Northern Devon has a number of successful technology based industries. These are primarily operating in the manufacturing, electronic engineering, aero-engineering, pharmaceuticals and the creative industries sectors. These businesses employ significant numbers of skilled staff, pay wages above the regional average and consequently provide opportunities for social mobility. As an institution Petroc is STEM assured and is in partnership with the local business community and local authorities to develop both an Institute of Technology and Business Innovation Centre to support the growth of our local economy.

Petroc's strategic approach to Higher Education has been to work closely with both the University of Plymouth and a range of local employers, to develop a curriculum which will provide excellent opportunities for graduate employment in our locality. At the same time we recognise the need to provide a curriculum

[3] Devon County Council, The indices deprivation 2016 new.devon.gov.uk/factsandfigures/social-issues-and-deprivation/deprivation

[4] UK Government, Indices of deprivation 2015 www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015

which offers ample opportunity for academic progression within and beyond Northern Devon.

Teaching Quality

As a Further and Higher Education college, Petroc places great emphasis on the quality of teaching on all programmes. All members of the teaching staff are expected to hold, or be working towards, a formal teaching qualification. Members of teaching staff working towards a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) or Certificate in Education (Cert Ed) are provided with remission from their teaching timetable to support them gaining these necessary qualifications.

As part of an ongoing process to improve the quality of teaching, all teaching staff are formally observed teaching on an annual basis by a Teaching and Learning Coach. Staff are required to achieve a lesson observation grade of 1 or 2 (outstanding or good). Staff initially unable to achieve this grade are provided with a Learning Coach who will support, mentor, and ultimately assist in achieving the required improvement deemed necessary prior to re-observation. In 2016 /2017 94% of all staff observed ultimately achieved a grade of good or outstanding[5].

As an institution, Petroc recognises that the demands and challenges of teaching Higher Education are subtly different from those of teaching Further Education. Consequently, we have created a quality system to support excellence in the delivery of Higher Education. In 2014 we created a post of Higher Education Teaching and Learning Coach. This role encompasses the responsibility for improving the quality of teaching on all HE programmes.

Teaching intensity across Higher Education programmes stands at 35% teaching or tutorial support, based upon the KIS data of 200 hours per 20 credit module. The average class size of our Higher education programmes is 10 learners.

Petroc also implements a Peer Review system for all staff who teach on Higher Education programmes in addition to the lesson observation process. Peer Review is based upon observation by a subject specialist whose primary role is within Higher Education. Peer Review is intended as a constructive process that values both the quality of teaching and specialist knowledge required at a higher level. The Peer Review process is particularly valued by teaching staff who work substantially on Higher Education programmes, in that it is formally linked to the Petroc Appraisal Performance and Review system. This enables staff to identify at appraisal, opportunities for academic development, training, professional updating which arise initially during Peer Review. The Peer Review Observation process is organised, administered and reported upon by the HE Teaching and Learning Coach.

As an institution committed to developing graduates with the knowledge and skills required by local businesses, Petroc is keen to support the concept of dual professionalism. Our structural arrangements are designed to encourage the

[5] Petroc lesson observation grades held on Petroc MIS 2016-17

utilisation of professional practitioners to teach specific modules and to support our full time lecturing staff and programme managers. On FdA programmes as diverse as Healthcare Practice, Nursing Associate, Human Biosciences, Animal Conservation, Music Performance, Teaching and Learning and Fine Art, we aim for 25% of the curriculum to be delivered by professionals working in the relevant profession. We believe that this model supports credibility with local businesses and students. To ensure this model works to the ultimate satisfaction of all stakeholders, we ensure that this is supported by our academic infrastructure. The position of HE Teaching and Learning Coach and the transparent linkage of Peer Review to the college appraisal system has been crucial in creating this supportive culture.

To further support the professional delivery of HE programmes and to encourage greater participation from professional practitioners, the college has introduced a formal induction programme for all staff new to the delivery of Higher Education. The induction programme is delivered every September by the HE Departmental Managers. In addition to supporting professional practitioners to become capable teachers, we are also keen to ensure our full time teaching staff have relevant, current industry required knowledge. To achieve this, all full time lecturing staff who teach substantially on Higher Education programmes, have an allocation of 10 Self Directed Scholarly Activity (SDSA) days at their disposal to update their knowledge and skills. Part time lecturing staff have an allocation of SDSA days pro rata to their contract. SDSA days can be used for traditional research, we have a number of staff engaged in formal post graduate study, work shadowing, consultation, project work or individual practice.

Petroc considers itself an open and transparent institution. Students are aware that teaching staff are observed and peer reviewed. All programmes are required to hold a Programme Committee Meeting twice per academic year. The agendas for all Programme Committee Meetings are informed by the content of the National Student Survey (NSS) and Plymouth Student Perception Questionnaire (SPQ). The SPQ survey is informed by the format of the NSS, the questions are identical, is held over a similar time period and is completed by all non-final year students. Programme Committee meetings agendas replicate the content of NSS and SPQ surveys, thereby creating a debate regarding quality of teaching, assessment / feedback and the quality of academic support. External Examiners are invited to attend the spring Programme Committee Meeting. This gives the External Examiner an insight into student satisfaction with teaching and learning at Petroc and the opportunity to discuss issues / concerns with both staff and students. The SPQ survey for 2017 had a 73% response rate, with 91.8% of students stating that overall they were satisfied with the quality of their course, this is an improvement from 88.1% in 2016. All four questions regarding the quality of teaching produced an average score of above 90%[6].

The minutes from the various Programme Committee Meetings support the NSS and SPQ findings and reveal a widespread consensus that HE teaching is strong at Petroc, with feedback responsive and constructive. However, the information

[6] All non-final year students are requested to participate in the University of Plymouth Student Perception Questionnaire. These students are exempt from National Student Survey.

gained from Programme Committee Meetings has on occasion led to changes in lecturer approach, alterations to assessment schedules and in a minority of cases, changes to teaching teams.

Petroc is committed to a proactive response to feedback, aiming to 'close the feedback loop' and respond to learners promptly and effectively. The participation of Student Representatives from every cohort on every degree level course in Programme Committee Meetings, Learner Forum Meetings and other cross-College forums allows learners an open channel of communication directly with staff and senior managers. Students are also encouraged to give feedback via an anonymous comments system, directly to academic or support staff, and via several student surveys. Petroc supports this feedback cycle by including Student Representatives in committee meetings and minutes, programme level feedback and the use of a 'You Said/We did' notices. Student groups are also encouraged to meet with External Examiners, whose subsequent feedback is formally responded to and openly available to learners via the higher education website.

In the spring of 2017, Petroc gained recognition for the quality of our Higher Education teaching, with two members of staff winning prizes at the University of Plymouth Student Union (UPSU) SSTAR Awards[7]. Every year the UPSU recognises the excellence of teaching across the University, the award winners being nominated by students, Laura West Burnham (Early Childhood Studies) won the award for Innovative Teaching and Kate Roberts (BA Professional Development) winning the prize for Outstanding Tutor. This is the second year in succession that Laura and Kate have achieved this accolade.

We would argue that our robust approach to lesson observation and peer review, coupled with our open and democratic engagement with Higher Education students, has proved essential mechanisms for improving the quality of teaching and student experience at Petroc. This is recognised by our partners at the University of Plymouth and as evidenced by the TEF metrics.

Learning Environment

Petroc is not a University, nor do we aim to replicate a University experience. Our approach is to use our size, scale and close relationships with stakeholder groups such as employers and the University of Plymouth to maximise benefit for all HE students.

We would argue that our form of governance and structural arrangements enhance our Higher Education provision. Two members of our governing body have direct responsibility for Higher Education whilst HE co-ordinator has a permanent seat on the Senior Management Team and therefore has direct access to the executive on a biweekly basis. The HE co-ordinator is supported in his role by two Higher Education Departmental Managers who are responsible for academic development and quality on a day to day basis.

[7] The SSTAR Awards are University of Plymouth Awards to identify and celebrate excellence in teaching for which students are able to nominate staff including those from Partner Colleges.

Our approach to student engagement has been to enhance and improve upon the formal mechanisms agreed through our partnership with the University of Plymouth. In addition to Joint Boards of Study (JBS) and Programme Committee Meetings (PCM) both of which occur twice annually and require student representation, we hold termly HE forums which provide students with the opportunity to meet with members of the Petroc Executive Leadership team and the HE co-ordinator.

The vast majority of our Higher Education provision is taught at our University Centre, Brannams Campus. HE students are therefore invited to attend the Brannams User Group meetings. This connectivity between our Executive Leadership team and student body, means we are capable of rapidly responding to a variety of challenges. In the past 12 months, air conditioning has been improved, the car park capacity increased and noise reduced across the Brannams Campus. The majority of these improvements have occurred within 30 days of the students raising the issues with Executive Leadership Team members. These actions may, on the surface, appear trivial but they have unquestionably improved the learner experience. The SPQ response to the statement "I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on my course" produced an agree score of 91.7%[8].

As an institution Petroc prides itself on the quality of our teaching. We recognise that a high proportion of our learners come from non-traditional academic backgrounds. Upon entry, 69% of our students were classed as low or no tariff. We believe that such learners require differentiated levels of academic support to enable them to maximise their potential and that the success of our approach is evidenced by our outstanding results on programme and through progression.

Petroc's commitment to inclusivity means we recognise and value our diverse student body. In line with our own and the University of Plymouth's Inclusivity policies, we take measures to improve the success of learner groups for whom the educational journey may present unique challenges. Managers and academic staff aim for a fully inclusive approach from 'admissions to alumni', responding to a range of needs as diverse as the learner groups themselves.

We aim to identify early and resource support for any learners with support needs. All learners have the opportunity to discuss their needs and have those needs highlighted at their interview, as well as at any point during their academic journey. Staff are supported to make reasonable adjustments and utilise the Reasonable Adjustment Review Panel at the University of Plymouth and to also liase with Petroc's own Higher Education Departmental Managers and Disability Support Teams.

A focus on a close relationship with our smaller learner groups and consistent and effective personal tutoring, helps learners feel supported in this process. Our internal quality systems also help academic and support staff, to provide effective teaching and learning and post session support and inclusive

[8] SPQ Survey Results 2017

assessment / feedback, by auditing the Moodle pages to ensure resources are provided in the most appropriate format for inclusivity.

We therefore create an environment where our students have the opportunity to develop a close working relationship with their lecturers. In 2016 /2017 we delivered our Higher Education programmes to an average class size of 10. This average class size enables learners to receive advice and academic guidance from teaching staff who are fully aware of the relative strength and weaknesses of individual learners. Assessment feedback for instance, is provided on a one to one basis with staff holding individual meetings. The SPQ response to the statement "I have received helpful comments on my work", produced an average score of 92.1%[9].

The Brannams Campus is approximately half a mile from our North Devon Campus and is equipped with a learning resources area, staffed by a specialist HE learning resources staff member. The learning resources area contains all core text books and is supported by a "book drop". Books ordered at Brannams are delivered from the main library twice daily to enable learners to have access to a wider range of resources.

Higher education at Petroc is supported via our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). All higher education programmes have a VLE which gives students access to student handbooks, definitive module records, schemes of work, reading lists and assignment schedules. In addition, each module on a programme has a VLE site containing a range of teaching materials such as PowerPoint presentations, lecture notes and assessment briefs.

Petroc's Learning Technologies and Quality departments support Academic staff to develop digital resources, including the use of digital playlists on Box of Broadcasts, SOLA and e-learning units, interactive online platforms and our core Moodle pages hosting resources for every module. These pages are awarded Gold/Silver/Bronze awards depending on content, learner feedback, accessibility, engagement, and variety of interactive and engaging resources. Currently 82% of our Higher Education pages hold this Gold award or are working towards the highest award, and staff are supported to do this with regular Development Days and sessions available.

Petroc has recently developed a Skills Self-Audit for learners in their first term to monitor progress through the induction and study/key skills workshop and proactively work towards completing all of the core competencies to succeed on their courses. This process will be reviewed with learner, staff and achievement results feedback in 2018, as we adopt a proactively reflexive approach to supporting learners to find the balance between independent engagement and our effective support and guidance. Learner progress and development is monitored through the College Information System (CIS). This enables staff to update individual learner progress with information regarding progress, achievement and attendance, which will be communicated to the teaching team and programme leaders. This system enables programme teams to identify

[9] SPQ Survey Results 2017

learners at risk of non-achievement and has supported improvements in non-continuation.

Through our partnership with the University of Plymouth, students can also access the University's teaching and library resources through the University of Plymouth portal. The portal proves particularly useful in that it provides learners with access to a broad range of academic journals. Petroc's HE Learning Resources staff provides a number of training sessions throughout the year, to both staff and students to encourage use of the portal. In response to the statement "the library resources e.g. books, online services, and learning spaces have supported my learning well" this scored 85.4% as to agree with the 2017 SPQ survey[10].

Student Outcome & Learning Gain

As an institution geographically located in an area of relative economic deprivation, with lower than average levels of educational qualification held by the local population, Petroc has a strategic commitment to widen participation and assist social mobility. Our approach to the widening participation / social mobility agenda, informed by the social mobility commission and the Life Chances Act 2010 is to design, develop and deliver, a curriculum with a distinct focus upon the whole student journey, from application through to graduation and employment.

Our UCAS tariff entry is a modest 56 points[11], indeed it is not unusual to receive applications from prospective students from non-traditional backgrounds who are often lacking level 3 qualifications. In addition, we often receive requests from local employers requiring staff members to gain a required HE qualification who previously had not gained a level 3 qualification.

As an inclusive institution we invite all applicants for a higher education programme to attend an interview, conducted by a Programme Manager. All Programme Managers have previously received interview training. The interview is used partly to explain to applicants the demands of Higher Education study at Petroc, with quite specific guidance provided with regard to academic workload and time that students will need to invest. The interview is also used to judge the experiences, motivations and aspirations of the applicant. We are aware that a high proportion of our successful graduates were modestly qualified upon enrolment. An interview can result in one of four options: a student being made an unconditional offer, a conditional offer based upon assessment results, a request for the production of a piece of academic work or portfolio to judge the suitability of the applicant to study on a Higher Education programme, or the suggestion to the applicant to take an alternative programme of study such as an Access Course or professional qualification to prepare themselves adequately for Higher Education study in future years. The University of Plymouth SPQ survey 2017, identified 90% of all year 1 students as agreeing with the

[10] SPQ Survey Results 2017

[11] Entry to HE Programmes and UCAS Tariff points are published on www.petroc.ac.uk and also within the Petroc HE Prospectus.

statement "good advice was available when I needed to make study choices on my course"[12].

With such a diverse and non-traditional intake, we recognise that many of our learners may require a broad range of academic support to enable them to achieve their aspiration of gaining a degree. As part of our curriculum design process, supported by the University of Plymouth, all year 1 students undertake some form of study aimed at the development of graduate skills. In the majority of programmes this takes the form of a 20 credit module titled Developing Graduate Skills (DGS). DGS is designed to provide all year 1 learners with the skills required both in terms of study and assessment, to succeed on their chosen programme of study. The University of Plymouth SPQ survey identified 90.8% of year 1 students as agreeing with the statement "my course has challenged me to achieve my best work"[13].

In addition to DGS all students have a one hour tutorial with their tutor / programme manager every week. The content of the tutorial can take numerous forms and can be organised in a whole group, small group or on a one to one basis, dependent upon student need. In whatever form, the tutorial is focused upon academic achievement, workload management and progression. The QAA higher education review (HER) Published in November 2014, identified 'the strategic approach to developing and extending employability skills which are integrated into the curriculum area across all programmes' as being a feature of good practice at Petroc. Tutorial support is identified, as a strength by year 1 students with University of Plymouth SPQ survey identifying as 92% of students in agreement with the statement "I have been able to contact staff when I needed to" and 89% agreeing with the statement "I have received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my course"[14].

However, as an institution we recognise that a minority of students will require additional learning support to enable them to maximise their academic potential. In the academic year 2016 /17, 38 of our students were supported with a disabled students allowance, of which 23 received additional study skills support, 14 mentoring support and 1 learner had a communication support worker in daily attendance. Of these students 11 graduated, 22 progressed onto the next stage of their studies, 4 withdrew and 1 failed. For students identified with some form of additional learning support need this would represent a success rate of 89%[15].

In addition whilst not formally entitled to a Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) award the college identified an additional 13 students, where it believed it necessary to offer some form of additional learning support. This activity was financed internally, with each of these learners receiving on average an additional 20 hours support. Of these 13 additional students, 12 progressed onto the next stage of their studies. In total Petroc had 51 learners or

[12] SPQ Survey Results 2017

[13] SPQ Survey Results 2017

[14] SPQ Survey Results 2017

[15] Governors KPI report held on Petroc MIS 2017

approximately 10% of our total HE student cohort requiring some form of additional support[16].

The combination of factors such as low qualifications on entry, recruiting a high proportion of learners from POLAR groups 1 and 2 and 10% of learners requiring some form of additional learning support, might have had a negative impact upon continuation / retention. This was clearly correct for the academic year 2015 / 2016, where for full time students Petroc had a non-continuation score of 17.6% which equated to 5.1% below benchmark[17].

The past 12 months saw considerable efforts in both identifying the causes of below benchmark continuation and tackling this problem. The reasons for non – continuation at Petroc would appear multifaceted. We did not have a cohort of weak or unpopular programmes that learners failed to graduate from, success rates remained consistent across curriculum. A robust action plan to improve retention was produced and agreed by senior managers with greater resource committed to advice and guidance, study skills, learning support and mental health clinics. In addition we have introduced continuation and progression workshops during the summer months for learners progressing onto the University of Plymouth final year programmes or who are returning to study after a lengthy break. A Higher Education Mentor position has supported learners through drop in clinics and targeted support this has proved particularly valuable for students who are not entitled to Disability Support but are experiencing challenges with mental health and emotional wellbeing. The wellbeing clinic also is able to sign post students who require financial, benefits or legal advice to the appropriate support services to hopefully ameliorate these issues.

We now interview any student who leaves a programme early irrespective of stage, or who fails an award board. The results of these interviews would appear to indicate that the majority of reasons for non–continuation are domestic, financial or health related rather than actual dissatisfaction with the chosen programme of study. Students do however identify the difficulty of balancing the demands of a degree programme with family and work responsibilities as being a considerable challenge.

The need to improve continuation figures by providing greater support for our learners resulted in the production of our OFFA agreement 2016/2017, which for the first time set our fees above £6000. Our commitment to widening participation in an economically disadvantaged area meant this decision was only taken after much debate and a degree of agonising. Ultimately, it was recognised that by increasing the absolute HE income we could invest significantly greater resource in student support, associated learner support, and support for resit work and that this would significantly improve the student experience and ultimately improve the continuation figures.

A significant improvement has occurred with full time continuation now at 83.5% or 1.4% below benchmark, but part time continuation at 81.5%, 12.7% above

[16] Information on Petroc MIS 2017

[17] TEF Metrics 2016

benchmark. These results represent significant improvement on the previous year's figures and demonstrate the immediate impact of our action plan[18].

As stated previously, the vast majority of Petroc's HE students reside locally. A high proportion of our students will not only study and graduate in Northern Devon they will choose to remain in the region on the completion of their studies. Consequently, Petroc recognises that it is crucial that our HE provides excellent opportunities for graduate employment and academic progression in our immediate locality.

Petroc has a crucial role in the future economic development of Northern Devon. We recognise the need to raise aspirations of many individuals in our communities and to work with local employers to develop a curriculum which will lead to well paid, secure employment. On this basis we are engaged with a range of institutions to support dialogue regarding the academic requirements of the local business community. Our Principal, Diane Dimond, sits as a board member on the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) whilst the HE Co-ordinator Craig Litster is a permanent member of the North Devon Manufacturers Association (NDMA) committee.

To formalise these relationships at curriculum level, Petroc has long established Higher Education Employer Advisory Committees in Engineering, Construction, Digital Technologies, Health and Social Care, Early Childhood Studies and the Creative Industries. These advisory boards meet 3 times per academic year and their purpose is to advise, design and inform our curriculum. These groups have proved invaluable when we have considered updating or altering curriculum. In 2015 / 2016 we revalidated all our HE Engineering and electronic programmes. Our Employer Advisory Boards were critical to this process as they advised on curriculum content based upon the needs of the local manufacturing community. Local businesses clearly value this opportunity to direct curriculum, as this committed several engineers at a senior level to support curriculum change.

Employers and independent academics also contribute at core curriculum level to all new and updated programmes. Sector and Industry Advisors are nominated to sit on every re-validation and validation panel, giving relevant, local, commercially relevant feedback on curriculum and provision. This process also involves independent academic advisors in the process, giving us a range of robust and reliable opinions on our proposed provision.

These advisory boards have created the impetus of a range of curriculum developments and supported the creation of a large number of graduate jobs across the region. 2016 /2017 saw the introduction of a Higher Apprenticeship in Healthcare Practice, working in partnership with North Devon Healthcare Trust and the University of Plymouth. We developed a Higher Apprenticeship based around our FdA Healthcare Practice programme and enrolled 15 students. We also developed an FdA programme in Nursing Associate, again supported by the local Healthcare trust and the University. By doing so, we recruited 30 students,

[18] TEF Metrics 2017

from as far afield as Exeter. These students are all studying whilst employed by the Healthcare Trust and on graduation will enter secure graduate employment.

In addition, working with a local digital marketing company called Applegate, we further developed our Business and Management degree to satisfy the needs of this employer. By giving some flexibility to the curriculum we were able to recruit another 6 Higher Apprenticeships at this company. An integral aspect of the Business programmes and the Higher Apprenticeships, is a focus upon enterprise and entrepreneurship. Enterprise and Innovation modules are core across the Business programmes and these learners are encouraged to collaborate with learners across other disciplines e.g. creative industries, to develop their entrepreneurial skills.

These curriculum developments driven by our strategic need to support the economic development of our region, has created an additional 50 graduate jobs in Northern Devon in 2016 /2017 alone. The impetus for this activity is our vibrant and long standing Employer Advisory Groups.

Our strong, positive relationships with our local business community and the University of Plymouth, has enabled Petroc to develop a modern, responsive curriculum enable Petroc to deliver opportunities for graduate employment and social mobility for our graduates. This is clearly evidenced by our TEF metric score for highly skilled employment, or further study which scores 7.1% above benchmark.

An area of development is our metric regarding 'highly skilled employment' or 'further study' for part-time students, which is -8.5% below benchmark. This metric may be explained when we consider the demographic of our part-time student cohort. The vast majority of our part-time student numbers study one of four programmes Engineering /Computing, Teaching, Business and Management or Creative Industries. These four subject areas account for 75% of all our part-time students. The remaining 25% of part-time students are divided across 10 other programmes of study. The vast majority of part-time students who enrol on Engineering / Computing, Business and Management are employed, indeed many of these students are sponsored by employers to study.

These learners enjoy abatement from work to attend college and in the majority of cases these students fees are paid for by their employer. On graduation the vast majority of these learners remain with this employer and pursue a graduate career within the host company[19]. Students who enrol upon our teaching programme clearly have an aspiration to teach, indeed many of these learners are already teaching on a part-time basis and feel they need the qualification to support a graduate career.

In terms of our total part-time student cohort, Fine Arts is our largest programme, with 23% of all part time students enrolled upon either Fine Art or Illustration. These learners are demographically distinct from the majority of our other part-time students. They are significantly older, few are employed and in the past 5 years none have received sponsorship or had the good fortune for an

[19] TEF Metrics 2017

employer to pay their fees. These learners without exception have decided themselves that they wish to study for a degree, in many cases seeking academic validation for a talent or hobby. These learners also tend to come from non-traditional academic backgrounds, Petroc has offered a highly successful "Arts on Prescription" for a number of years and an access arts course.

Many of these part-time creative industry students have no desire or intention to seek employment in a graduate career role upon graduation. Indeed a significant number on graduation would be near or post retirement age. They hugely enjoy their studies and take massive personal pride from the achievement of gaining either a BA honours or Foundation degree qualification, however the majority are fundamentally studying as a hobby to improve a skill and gain greater understanding of a subject they have a passion for.

As an institution we recognise that we need to encourage all our graduates to maximise the benefits of gaining a higher qualification. We also recognise that finding full time graduate employment for mature learners in a related creative industries discipline will be hugely challenging in Northern Devon. Therefore within the creative industries curriculum we have introduced academic content which has a focus upon enterprise and entrepreneurship. We support this by also running a number of graduate employability events / workshops to encourage students to consider what they may wish to do upon graduation. We have offered specialist business start-up workshops with a specific focus upon the creative industries. These have proved popular and what is particularly pleasing is that a number of our part-time creative industry graduates who have moved into self-employment as practising artists or by creating successful sustainable business within the locality opening galleries, cafés and design companies. Thereby providing secure employment for themselves and additional employees thus assisting the economic development and productivity of Northern Devon.

Supporting the Creative Industries to develop their employability and entrepreneurship skills has been a key driver in the development and writing of our unique BA (Hons) Professional Development programme, a top-up year that brings together four core disciplines: Business, Early Childhood, Health and Social Care, and the Creative Industries. By collaborating on key modules in meaningful terms, adopting a collegiate and cross-disciplinary approach, the programme allows learners to benefit from the skills of one another and to apply their own academic discipline in new contexts. Graduates of this course, particularly from the Creative Industries, report that it offers the only meaningful opportunity for them to progress to the full BA (Hons) award in their subjects, but also cite the many ways in which the experience has challenged and developed their professional practice and personal skills. The Higher Education Management team have conducted research with two graduating groups from these cohorts and presented the findings recently at the University's Teaching and Learning Conference and have submitted relevant points as a case study to the Higher Education Academy. With the rise in tuition fees we have in recent years recruited fewer part time creative industry students and far fewer mature students. At present we have a small number of students who have recently graduated or are about to graduate who in all probability will not seek graduate

employment. These students will either start their own business or continue to participate in the arts as a hobby or form of small scale employment. In terms of our metrics we anticipate a significant improvement as we see far greater numbers of part time engineers and healthcare employees over the following two years and beyond.

The vast majority of our students reside locally with 85% residing within a 20 mile radius and 97% residing within a 30 mile radius of their place of study[20]. For domestic, employment or health related issues, a significant number of these students are unwilling or unable to move beyond the region upon graduation. Due to their geographic location, for a significant proportion of these students, Petroc provides their only opportunity to attend an institution delivering Higher Education. We therefore recognise we need to design programmes that offer opportunities both for graduate employment situated in Northern Devon and academic progression.

As part of our partnership with the University of Plymouth all our students who successfully complete a Foundation Degree programme at Petroc have the opportunity to progress onto and convert their FdA award with one year's additional full time study, either by transferring to the University or enrolling onto one of the four BA programmes delivered at Petroc.

The opportunity for academic progression is perceived to be of huge benefit for all our students and Petroc itself. The opportunity for progression is stressed from interview, induction and throughout the programme. It is the norm for all our programmes to receive a visit from the University Academic Liaison Person (ALP) to discuss the benefits and challenges of transferring to the University, in addition all stage 2 students are invited and encouraged to visit the University to in a faculty led progression event aimed directly at foundation degree students. Transport for such events is provided by Petroc. We also arrange for alumni who have made the successful transition from Petroc to Plymouth to visit our students groups and give an insight into their experiences at the University.

We are conscious of the need to assess learners to a standard identical to the University, therefore we have a focus on student grade point average, we review the spread and standard deviation of grades at all Subject Assessment Panels with external examiners asked to comment on the standard and consistency of marking. Where individual module standard deviations are particularly high actions will be identified in annual programme monitoring.

The progression arrangements with the University have proven mutually beneficial, research conducted by J2 Profit in 2016 identified 47% of our full time FDA graduates as progressing onto a BA or BSc 1 year top up programme, with the vast majority transferring to the University of Plymouth[21]. With such a significant number of our graduates progressing onto Plymouth to take advantage of the 1 year top up agreement Petroc recognises it has a

[20] Residency of Petroc HE Students held on Petroc MIS 2017

[21] Report commissioned by Petroc, conducted by J2O on an annual basis to track progression of HE Students.

responsibility to prepare students for the transition from a further education college to a University both academically and socially.

Academically one of the biggest challenges faced by our graduates on progressing to the University is the need to complete a dissertation or final year project during stage 6 study. It is not uncommon for progressing students to be required to provide a provisional dissertation title within days of enrolling upon their chosen progression programme at Plymouth. To support and adequately prepare students for this challenge, all Petroc programmes now include a 20 credit Research Methods or Work Project module as part of their level 5 programme of study. Module leaders and programme managers stress the importance of this module of study to those keen to pursue the final year progression option at Plymouth.

As an institution we monitor and take pride in the final year BA and BSc results for those students who progress to Plymouth. In 2016 /2017, 80 students progressed to Plymouth for the single year top up programme. Of these 38 gained a First or 2:1, in addition a further 16 graduated from BA programmes delivered at Petroc, of these 11 gained a first or 2:1. Overall this means that of 96 students who progressed to final years honour, 50 or 51% gained a first or 2:1. This it might be argued represents a remarkable achievement in terms of distance travelled for an organisation where on average 69% of students enrol with low or zero tariff[22].

Conclusion

Petroc is justifiably proud of our Higher Education provision and the continued success of our graduates both academically and professionally. Geographically Petroc is remote, with the nearest alternate HE provider over 40 miles away with poor transport links. For many of our stakeholders both students and employers, we are the only realistic provider of Higher Education; therefore it is crucial that our Higher Education offer is of the highest quality and suits the needs of these stakeholders. As an institution we recognise that the biggest difference we can make is by having a curriculum suited to the needs of local businesses which is taught, assessed and supported by highly motivated professional staff.

The relative economic deprivation of Northern Devon, coupled with our rural isolation, means that Petroc has a key role to play in the future prosperity of our region. However, to support economic growth and social mobility we are aware of the need to listen to the exact needs of our students and employers. Our size and management structures, supported by our close relationship with our partner University does indeed our teaching methods and curriculum content to be responsive to these stakeholder needs. We would argue that it is by focusing upon the needs of our students, as both individuals and as a group, by maintaining a constant dialogue with a range of local employers and by encouraging them to engage with our curriculum, that we have been able to produce the impressive set of core metrics over the previous 3 years.

[22] Plymouth Graduation Results, Academic Partnership progression figures 2016-17