TEF Year Three Provider Submission – Leeds City College

1. Introduction

1.1 Leeds City College is a teaching-focused institution. There are different models of teaching and learning across our two centres, but both have an overarching emphasis on teaching excellence and investment in teaching staff and resources, as well as scholarship and professional practice that enriches teaching and leads to positive outcomes.

1.2 This submission is made during a period of transition for the College's Higher Education provision: the University Centre has been in the QAA assessment process for Foundation Degree Awarding Powers since September 2015 and Leeds College of Music is in the HEFCE/QAA assessment process for designation as a Higher Education Institution. Outcomes are expected imminently.

1.3 This submission evidences and contextualises our performance in the metrics, demonstrates the sustainability and consistency of metrics that meet the TEF benchmarks, and shows distance travelled and planned improvements in negatively flagged metrics.

1.4 The employment or further study metric is below a positive flag by a narrow margin, with excellent employment outcomes in year 2, and highly-skilled employment is at benchmark. These are the result of a strong employability focus in the provision. Development of employability skills is an explicit part of all curriculum design, and 44% of students study vocational Foundation Degrees. The submission also evidences effective methods of capturing the impact of HE on employability where this is not easily measured by the TEF metrics alone.

1.5 Performance in academic support is also at benchmark. The city of Leeds is an area of low participation in Higher Education (POLAR quintile 1), and many of its surrounding towns and cities are areas of lower participation (quintiles 1-3). We are effective in widening access to HE, particularly in recruitment from the local area, and as a relatively small institution we are able to offer a truly personalised learning experience that enables positive outcomes for students with a wide variety of needs.

1.6 Our development priorities are also highlighted by the metrics. We have made significant progress with our plans to improve assessment and feedback (section 3), working in partnership with students and making effective use of technology, and the impact is demonstrated by a positive direction of travel in student satisfaction. Satisfaction with the quality of teaching fell in year 3 due to the perception of intellectual stimulation and challenge (section 3), and continuation was lower in year 3, though we are aware that a number of non-continuing students had positive employment outcomes (section 4).

1.7 It is felt that the metrics do not fully portray the student experience or the quality of teaching and learning across the institution. The National Student Survey results are based on fairly low response rates (50-60%), meaning that we cannot be confident that they are representative of satisfaction with teaching and learning. The College is working to improve response rates in future years. Some NSS satisfaction rates are also affected by a high proportion of *neither agree nor disagree* responses, which in our experience, students do not realise are not counted in agreement rates. These make up, for example, 15% of responses for assessment and feedback, compared with 14% nationally[1].

[1] NSS 2017, responses for England

1.8 Our students recognise and demand excellence in teaching, learning and academic support, and are fully engaged with the formal and informal feedback processes that influence their experience. Scholarship, research and professional practice was highlighted by the QAA in 2016 as a feature of good practice, and through this we will continue to better understand and enrich the experience of our students.

2. Provider Context

2.1 Leeds City College is a HEFCE-funded further education college (FEC). With around 24,000 FE students and 1786 undergraduate students[2], it is one of the largest FECs in the UK. Its mission is *to be an exceptional and responsive college providing life changing education, skills and experiences for individuals, businesses and communities.*

2.2 HE delivery is organised across two centres: University Centre (UC) and Leeds College of Music (LCoM); where 'The College' is referred to in this document it covers all HE provision.

2.3 In the most recent TEF data, University Centre had 620 full-time and 260 part-time undergraduate students studying across 22 foundation degrees, 15 top-up programmes, 1 LLB and 3 PCET programmes. The subject balance is 23% education, 18% business & management studies, 16% creative arts and design, , 10% sport and exercise sciences, 9% engineering, 6% law, 6% subjects allied to medicine, 5% agriculture and related subjects, 4% computing, 3% biosciences and 1% social studies. Fees for University Centre courses are £6,750 per year (pro rata for part-time). Students are recruited via UCAS and predominantly from the local area: 57% of students are classified as 'Local Students' based on their home address[3]. 57% of University Centre students are mature[4], 47% are from a lower-participation area[5] and 24% are from the lowest participation areas[6].

2.4 Leeds College of Music is a conservatoire[7], which in the same year had 890 full-time undergraduate students across one Foundation Degree and one BA (Hons) Music degree with eight main pathways, twelve combined pathways and five with Foundation Year. Leeds College of Music charges the maximum permitted tuition fee (currently £9,250). Students are recruited via a combination of UCAS and UCAS Conservatoires, and are predominantly from outside the local area: just 9% of students are classified as 'Local Students' based on their home address. 15% of Leeds College of Music students are mature, 21% are from a lower-participation area and 8% from the lowest participation areas.

2.5 Overall, the highest proportion of activity (58%) is in creative arts and design.

2.6 The College has a broad model of contact time, as appropriate to each learning environment and type of provision, including lectures, seminars, practical workshops, tutorials, work-related and placement learning, and in the conservatoire model, small group and one-to-one instrumental teaching.

2.7 HE awards at University Centre are validated by the Open University and at Leeds College of Music by the University of Hull. Leeds City College underwent QAA Higher Education

[2] 2016/17
[3] Using the TEF specification definition of 'local student': students "whose home address is within the same Travel to Work Area… as their location of study"
[4] By HEFCE definition
[5] Where the student is classified into POLAR quintile 1 or 2
[6] POLAR quintile 1
[7] A specialist music college and member of Conservatoires UK

Review in March 2016 and Leeds College of Music underwent a Quality Review Visit in October 2017.

Student involvement

2.8 This submission was prepared with the involvement of the LCoM Students' Union President, who supplied information from the QAA QRV student submission and Student Led Teaching Awards nominations. HE students are represented on our main academic committees.

3. Teaching Quality

3.1 Student Engagement (TQ1)

3.1.1 Our learning and teaching strategies set out our aim to work in partnership with students[8]. The student voice is at the centre of our processes for monitoring, review, improvement and enhancement, and a collaborative student representation system ensures a continual dialogue with students. Working in partnership with the Students' Union has led to the joint development of academic support initiatives, in particular induction and assessment and feedback.

3.1.2 Student feedback is collected throughout the student lifecycle, including at application, enrolment, induction, and the end of modules, stages and programmes. Student course representatives receive training and undertake effective representation; student/staff forums are well-attended and demonstrate a good level of engagement and constructive dialogue. Internal student surveys are conducted online, on paper and by telephone as appropriate, and follow the NSS question areas as well as gathering opinion on institution-specific topics like VLE engagement. Results are triangulated with the NSS to identify key issues for action; cohort results are also tracked to ensure that the resulting actions will have a positive impact on current and future students. Each formal feedback mechanism feeds into curriculum team meetings and programme annual review[9].

3.1.3 Interaction between students and teaching staff is also a key source of informal feedback; students report consistently in survey comments that they value contact with tutors, and this interaction enables them to offer their opinion at any time rather than waiting for a survey or meeting. This adds agility to our action planning and curriculum development processes, and initiatives driven by student feedback can often be responded to in-year, for example minor modifications to modules or the addition of contact time or module content to address specific gaps in study skills.

3.1.4 Student feedback shapes improvements in the curriculum; recent examples include the development of optional group modules to foster collaborative working[10], the introduction of a new pathway to enhance student progression opportunities[11], the simplification of prerequisite structures to provide broader and more bespoke progression options, and the replacement of pass/fail modules with the full range of marks[12] to recognise and reward student engagement, all of which have been well-received by students.

[8] Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy; HE Learning and Teaching Policy
[9] Programme annual reviews are overseen by our validating bodies
[10] BA (Hons) Music Level 6 Final Project
[11] FD Sports PE
[12] BA (Hons) Music Level 5 and 6 options and Creative Project strand

3.1.5 Our students recognise teaching excellence through annual Student-Led Teaching Awards. Awards for teaching include *Most Innovative*, for staff who have engaged students in different ways, undertaking different teaching styles that promote a positive student experience, and *Most Inspiring*, where teaching has had a transformative effect on the student experience and motivated students to perform to their potential.

3.1.6 Both positive and negative student feedback is used to determine development priorities for teaching staff and to reinforce good practice as well as responding to areas of weakness. A staff development programme to promote more innovative teaching and learning methods across the provision was implemented in response to student feedback about the overuse of Powerpoint lectures, and led to a substantial increase in satisfaction with the quality of teaching in the subject area where the feedback was initially gathered[13]. Winners of Student-Led Teaching Awards, and staff whose practice has received consistently positive student feedback, are invited to share practice through staff development sessions.

3.1.7 Student engagement is central to the strategic development of learning resources. Well-established VLEs are in place, which undergo regular formal[14] and informal user experience testing to inform development. Online course materials include lecture notes, lecture-capture recordings of sessions and online forums that enable consolidation of learning, catching up with missed sessions and discussion with peers. Students at University Centre are provided with a Google Chromebook to improve remote access to learning resources. Student feedback demonstrates that they value the increased accessibility and flexibility with which they can engage with their studies and that this has enabled students who found it difficult to attend due to personal circumstances to remain on their course.

3.1.8 The College seeks to maximise student engagement with technology, with the focus on identifying opportunities to transform teaching and learning with non-traditional, independent and flexible approaches. Leeds College of Music is using Augmented Reality (AR) software, developed in collaboration with Jisc and student focus groups, to create an interactive, immersive experience for teaching complex technical concepts. University Centre has embraced a range of applications within the Google suite including Nearpod, Socrative classroom, Kami, Screencast-O-Matic, Hangouts, Pocket and ABBYY FineReader. Each of these initiatives supports greater retention of information for all learning styles and enables students to access tools for independent learning outside of scheduled teaching sessions.

3.2 Valuing Teaching (TQ2)

3.2.1 Overall agreement with the ‘teaching on my course’ NSS questions was consistent (83%±2%) from 2013 to 2016, but fell significantly into 2017 (83.9% in 2016 to 75.4% in 2017), mostly due to the changes to the questions in this section: the ‘enthusiastic staff’ question, which historically scored the highest in the group (90.3% in 2016), was replaced by the new ‘challenging course’ question, which scores the lowest in the group (67.6% in 2017).

3.2.2 The curriculum is designed to provide intellectual stretch, for example through ‘real life’ and industry relevant activities, and External Examiners comment consistently that academic standards are at the appropriate level. We are reviewing teaching and learning methods following the NSS feedback to ensure that the curriculum provides significant challenge. Where modes of delivery allow, teaching staff seek feedback from students

[13] +18 percentage points to 87%, Business and Management courses, National Student Survey 2014-2016
[14] Leeds College of Music Student Journey project

specifically on challenge and personal development. An annual peer review of assessment tasks and schemes of work, and revisions to the module evaluation questionnaire for 2017/18, aim to identify any module-specific improvements.

3.2.3 The HE Peer Observation Scheme aims to enable staff to enhance their teaching through practice sharing, and to foster a collaborative culture of continuous improvement in which staff feel able to openly discuss their professional practice with colleagues. The scheme is monitored at programme level and centrally, with good practice identified and disseminated through staff development events and the annual appraisal process. The use of technology in teaching and learning is a key theme in the identification and sharing of good practice, and sessions have led to an increase in staff engagement with digital teaching and learning methods.

3.2.4 The College has a CPD scheme specifically for HE academic and support staff, Developing Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Research (DELTAR), accredited by the Higher Education Academy. This continues to provide an excellent CPD platform for staff whilst also promoting academic research and collaborative activity. DELTAR contains a suite of modules to support professional development and to enhance and share best practice in teaching and learning, and aims to facilitate the development of analytical and reflexive understanding of current practices and changing demands in HE provision, enhancements in scholarly approaches to teaching and learning, and engagement in community learning partnerships. Staff have the opportunity to be recognised as Fellows or Associate Fellows of the Higher Education Academy.

3.2.5 Staff are encouraged to be members of relevant sector groups and professional bodies and to undertake External Examiner and validation panel member appointments at other institutions. Teaching and management staff are members of professional networks and forums and regularly engage in practice-sharing discussions via Conservatoires UK, Yorkshire Universities, the Mixed Economy Group, HEART, Association of Colleges (AoC) and the HE Academy.

3.2.6 Staff development funding is available to support teaching staff in gaining higher qualifications and attending training and conferences, in their subject specialism and/or in educational practice. Opportunities and impact are captured through the appraisal process.

3.2.7 Staff with postgraduate and doctoral qualifications are actively encouraged to advise on curriculum review and development in their specialist area, and staff undertaking professional development are invited to disseminate their findings. Recent examples include:

- a research project into students' digital literacy as part of a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice;
- the development of a Community Music Symposium and associated online platform to share staff, student, alumni and sector practice, and to promote awareness of the societal benefits of music in the community;
- research into nutrition, facilitating the introduction of a new pathway to a sports programme and enhanced networking opportunities and promotion of research skills;
- research into the impact of assessment fear on continuation and achievement in Biomedical Science, resulting in a review of assessment methods and a change in approach to the use of examinations;
- an investigation into perceptions of academic skills development and effective pedagogies in FD Photography, leading to review and enhancement of the delivery, content and approach, and a 5% increase in the average grade profile.

3.2.8 The College adopts a range of delivery models according to the needs of the subject and students. At University Centre, teaching takes place in lectures and seminars for subject delivery with tutorials for support and pastoral care, complemented by the open-door culture amongst teaching staff. 80% of teaching staff are full-time, and have relevant industrial expertise. A small number of part-time teaching staff cover specific areas of expertise within subjects.

3.2.9 LCoM has fewer classroom hours, yet a high proportion of teaching is intensive one-to-one and small group tuition. Teaching staff have a high degree of specialism and 90% of HE teaching is delivered by part-time staff, over 50% of whom have a contract of 0.2 FTE or less. Engagement of part-time staff is both a challenge and a priority. Attendance at twice-yearly staff development days is increasing year on year, through specific development sessions and the use of the VLE to enable remote attendance. The impact of a targeted initiative on appraisal completion is clear: this significantly increased completion of appraisals in 2015, and the increase was sustained in the most recent appraisal year.[15]

3.3 Rigour and Stretch (TQ3)

3.3.1 A developmental structure is designed into the curriculum to build students' independent learning skills throughout their programme, ensuring an effective transition through the levels. Assessment strategies at each level are designed to build on the previous level and prepare students for the next level, for example through increasing assessment load and length, and increasing 'real world' application of knowledge and understanding.

3.3.2 Training in placement learning prepares students to undertake placements in the following level, and smaller-scale projects at Levels 4 and 5 prepare students for larger-scale projects at Level 6. External Examiner reports confirm the effectiveness of this approach in supporting student progression

3.3.3 Curriculum design and review is informed by industry practice. Programme teams engage in active consultation with employers to determine their needs and ensure that these are reflected in learning outcomes and teaching, learning and assessment methods, which are also mapped to the graduate attributes in our strategic plans. Curriculum design embeds employability skills, often using 'real-life' assignment briefs to provide students with the opportunity to engage in realistic activities in the relevant industry. The success of this approach is consistently commended by External Examiners who note that it enables students to set and reflect on career aspirations, develop relevant vocational skills and create networks that enhance their employability.

3.3.4 Boards of Examiners, in conjunction with our validating bodies, reflect on student outcomes at stage and programme level and make recommendations for action where particularly low or high performance is identified. Enhanced monitoring and student engagement strategies have been employed where programmes demonstrated poor outcomes, with a resulting increase in success and progression rates, and staff development on marking schemes has been put in place where 'grade-bunching' was identified, to encourage the use of the full range of marks. Transitions between validating bodies have been carefully managed to ensure that no students were disadvantaged by changes in the calculation of classifications, however, at LCoM, this led to grade inflation for one year, identified with reference to HESA classification distributions by subject. Rigorous monitoring and risk management took place, including close scrutiny by External Examiners, to ensure that both fairness to students and academic standards were maintained.

[15] From 29% in 2014 (the first year part-time staff were included); 71% in 2017

3.3.5 The College values the input of External Examiners and scrutiny from its validating universities. We have robust systems in place to ensure that internal and external moderation is consistent and critical, and enables constructive dialogue between External Examiners, validation contacts and programme teams. External Examiners review work at Levels 5 and 6 and also have the opportunity to review work that does not contribute to degree outcomes, e.g. Level 3 on Foundation courses and Level 4 on first degree courses, to provide assurance on the coherence of the programme and the progression of students through each stage.

3.3.6 External Examiner reports are used by programme teams to set programme-specific development priorities, the impact of which is assessed year on year as part of annual monitoring. Following a programme of developmental activity to improve assessment feedback there was a marked increase in positive comments received from EEs in 2016/17 reports. An overall report on External Examining is prepared centrally and identifies common themes across the provision for wider action planning. Students have the opportunity to read and respond to External Examiner reports and to put forward ideas for action planning.

3.4 Assessment and Feedback (TQ4)

3.4.1 Assessment and feedback is a key development priority for the College, identified through annual monitoring of NSS and internal survey results, formal and informal student feedback and the March 2016 QAA HER[16].

Timeliness

3.4.2 The most significant progress has been made in the timeliness of feedback, where satisfaction has increased by 15 percentage points over three years[17]. Marking and feedback timescales are clearly communicated to students and robust monitoring processes have been put in place. Compliance with feedback timescales at Leeds College of Music increased from approximately 80% in 2013/14 to over 99% from 2015/16 onwards.

3.4.3 The use of online assignment hand-in and grading systems has improved and speeded up access to feedback, and also has benefits for internal and external moderation as student work and associated documentation are available online. At University Centre, this has taken place through the introduction of Turnitin, informed by a pilot study of its effectiveness. Electronic management of assessment at Leeds College of Music is via a bespoke integration of the VLE and student records system which was shortlisted for the 2016 Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Award (THELMA) for Outstanding Digital Innovation in Management and Administration. The system supports online hand-in for over 95% of assessments, automated release of marks and feedback to agreed schedules, managing and meeting student expectations, and an assignment dashboard for students showing upcoming deadlines and assignment statuses.

Helpfulness

3.4.4 Year on year improvements have been made in satisfaction with the helpfulness of feedback. New formative feedback methods have been embedded in assignment design

[16] The HER report included a recommendation that Leeds City College worked "at a strategic level to improve the quality, consistency and usefulness for students of feedback on assessment".
[17] From 59% agree in 2015 NSS to 74% agree in 2017 NSS.

and delivery, including opportunities to receive feedback on draft submissions, peer formative feedback in group settings, online quizzes, and assessment via ePortfolio, which enables both on-going feedback and the creation of a real-world portfolio that can be used in career development before and after graduation. Student feedback demonstrates that formative feedback improves confidence, time management skills and overall performance.

3.4.5 Though satisfaction with the question on feedback comments has remained static over the last four years (increase of 2% in 2017 along with change of question), initiatives are in place to improve the level of detail provided in feedback. Turnitin tools have provided students with access to a complete record of annotated work; this has been well-received at University Centre and the practice of annotating feedback is currently being trialled at Leeds College of Music.

3.4.6 Quality checking of feedback by module leaders identifies good practice and areas for improvement, which inform the content of staff development and practice-sharing in assessment and feedback. The Student-Led Teaching Award *Best Feedback* highlights further areas of good practice for wider dissemination. Students have the opportunity to rate their feedback via the VLE to request additional tutorial support if they need a better understanding of their progress.

Fairness

3.4.7 Student perception of fairness of assessment is lowest in performing arts subjects[18], which has led to a decline in satisfaction with '[marking and assessment has] been fair'[19]. as student numbers in these disciplines have grown. There are robust procedures in place to ensure fairness in assessment, for example the inclusion of expert external assessors on performance assessment panels, and audio/video recording of assessment, however the subjective nature of the performing arts makes this a challenging area to address. We are working with our students and in sector partnerships (for example with Conservatoires UK) to understand students' perceptions and to improve the way that we communicate about assessment. Key to this is developing a shared understanding of grading criteria; work has begun in this area including enhanced staff development sessions that use live performing ensembles for marking and feedback training, and mock performance assessments that enable students to receive immediate formative feedback and to discuss this with the assessment panel.

3.4.8 The student voice is central to our continuous improvement of assessment and feedback, and we work in partnership with the Students' Union to gather and act on student opinions in Feedback Week, following Semester 1 assessments. Student feedback has informed innovation in feedback methods, and a variety of methods are now in use including audio feedback, video feedback and screen capture to support feedback comments.

4. Learning Environment

4.1 Resources (LE1)

[18] 2016 NSS Leeds City College: 68% agree that assessment and marking arrangements had been fair on Performing Arts provision compared with an average 76% agreement for all other provision
[19] From 74% agree to 73% agree from 2014/15 to 2016/17

4.1.1 The College has a strategic commitment to investment in its estate[20], recognising that exceptional teaching and learning environments are essential to the delivery of its mission, and in its learning resources, to ensure currency and sustainability and to pursue excellence in technology-enhanced learning. We systematically review and improve our estate to ensure that physical and social environments deliver an excellent student experience.

4.1.2 High-quality facilities are a key expectation for a significant proportion of our students, including professional-standard environments for Creative Arts and Sports provision. We benchmark our resource investment against the sector and closely monitor student satisfaction with new specialist resources, to identify where investment will have the most impact. Recent developments have included the development of the new Printworks Campus, major refurbishment of Technology Campus, the creation of the University Centre as a hub for HE provision at Leeds City College, investment of £1.2m in a new Library and jazz archive at Leeds College of Music, and development of specialist facilities for music production, practice, performance . The design of teaching and social environments for HE is distinct from the wider Leeds City College Group, and the specialist conservatoire and Creative Arts facilities reflect the inspirational, creative ethos of the subject area.

The quality and currency of Library collections and learning resources are reviewed as part of annual monitoring, and Library and technical staff work closely with teaching staff to develop our services. The provision of Google Chromebooks to University Centre students was supported by significant investment in training to ensure that staff were able to make the best use of technology to support teaching and learning. The introduction of an Academic Skills Hub at the University Centre in the summer of 2017 builds on previous activity introduced to further enhance students research and study skills.

4.1.3 Engagement with employers and industry professionals, as well as teaching staff who are professional practitioners, maximises the vocational relevance of our facilities and learning resources. Employers are involved at each stage of programme design, including determination of market need and throughout the development of the programme structure, content, assessment and associated resources. This process has informed the development and use of industry-standard facilities for Dance, Music, Performance Practice and Sports Coaching.

4.2 Scholarship, Research and Professional Practice (LE2)

4.2.1 The QAA HER report in March 2016 identified as good practice “the strategic approach to supporting and facilitating scholarly activity and the professional recognition of staff, which are firmly embedded across Leeds City College [University Centre] and Leeds College of Music and which enrich the student experience”. This judgement was based on the implementation of the DELTAR CPD programme described above, as well as the development of HE Communities of Professional Practice and student perception that teaching staff had current professional knowledge that was used effectively in teaching and learning.

4.2.2 The College was invited by the Association of Colleges to become an Early Adopter of its Scholarship Project. This project will draw together a range of scholarly activity projects into a framework and will seek to embed scholarly activity further into policy and practice.

[20] Strategic Plan 2015/20, Property Strategy

4.2.3 Students have access to current professional practitioners throughout their studies. This includes use of a wide range of guest- and visiting lecturers, visiting professors and industry mentors who contribute to curriculum delivery and to extracurricular activities including workshops and masterclasses. This exposure to professional practice adds currency and relevance to the curriculum, as well as involving students in professional networks that enhance their employability. Employer endorsement of programmes has led to work experience opportunities for students, and a variety of placement learning enables students to benefit from mentoring from professionals as well as opportunities to showcase their work within the industry.

4.2.4 A significant proportion of teaching staff maintain a current professional profile in their field including active membership of professional networks and appointments as External Examiners and members of validation panels. All part-time staff at LCoM are active professionals in music, and their profiles are recognised and rewarded through an academic promotion scheme.

4.2.5 Staff are supported and encouraged to attend and contribute to external conferences, and we host a number of annual conferences and symposiums to which students are invited, including the biennial Conservatoires UK conference in October 2017, at which Sir Michael Barber was the keynote speaker.

4.3 Personalised Learning (LE3)

4.3.1 Though below benchmark, Continuation is negatively flagged by a narrow margin; six further continuing students would move this metric to the neutral flag range. Our relatively small size means that we are aware of students' individual personal circumstances, and that a significant proportion of the students who leave after their first year are entering employment in their area of professional specialism. This is particularly true of creative arts students, for example being offered recording contracts and/or professional performance work.

4.3.2 Continuation in First Degree provision is above 90%, however, for other undergraduate provision there has been a small decline in the most recent year of data. University Centre attracts students from a wide range of backgrounds with a high proportion of non-traditional HE students, many of whom are the first member of their family to enter HE. The average age of a full time Level 4 student is 22 years with 25% of the total population being 30+ years old. These students often have family commitments which impact on their studies. The profile of entry qualifications of University Centre students demonstrates significant risk with 67% of students' entry qualifications being classed as high risk in regard to student opportunity funding and 20% as medium risk. Continuation has been affected by a number of factors out of the College's control, for example, we have seen an increase in mental health and financial/personal problems affecting continuation. Whilst the College has good support mechanisms in place they cannot fully mitigate these factors.

4.3.3 HE induction was revised to include a briefing session on academic regulations, in particular the rules relating to resubmission and reassessment, academic malpractice, draft submissions and feedback practices. Student feedback indicated that the students had found the sessions useful and understood the regulations. The following year, the non-continuation rate reduced. Our application for Foundation Degree Awarding Powers is awaiting a decision by the Privy Council; if granted, the greater level of control over curriculum validation will also prevent any similar issues in the future.

4.3.4 Part-time Foundation Degrees constitute the majority of our part-time numbers and have good continuation rates; part-time continuation attracts a positive flag.

4.3.5 Induction aims to support the transition to Higher Education, and to help students understand their responsibilities for engaging with learning opportunities and shaping their learning experience. Expectations are outlined in the Student Charter and in student handbooks. A key expectation is that students should take responsibility for managing their own learning by actively engaging with their programme, including participating fully in group learning activities. Enhanced induction activities to develop team working and academic skills have been well-received by students and have helped to improve retention.

4.3.6 Pre-induction activities are available to students who need to develop their study skills before beginning their course. An online Summer School module is offered to students whose entry characteristics and profile indicate that they may need additional preparation for HE, and students who have completed the module have commented positively on their level of preparedness for study. At Leeds College of Music, incoming students have access to a range of Short Courses including Music Theory, which enables them to develop or refresh their skills prior to starting their course.

4.3.7 We work in partnership with the Students' Union to provide a comprehensive range of academic, pastoral and social induction activities, including tailored activities for specific groups of students. International students are invited to bespoke welcome activities, and students declaring disabilities and support needs are offered a pre-induction visit at a quieter time so that they have an identified support network before they arrive at enrolment. Student support staff are present during students' move in to student accommodation, and use this time to identify and put support plans in place for students who may not be settling in well and would benefit from access to additional support.

4.3.8 Student progress is monitored using a range of mechanisms that ensure both students and their personal tutors understand student progress and can engage in a meaningful dialogue. The use of online assessment and feedback methods enables students to track their grade profile, to plan effectively to achieve target grades and to take ownership of their learning. Mid-year and end of year examination boards also consider student progress and highlight any areas of concern, which enables timely identification of students who may need additional support to progress, and referral to the appropriate type of support.

4.3.9 Attendance is monitored centrally, with regular overviews considered by our deliberative committees, and at programme level. Individual student attendance at programme level is monitored by both academic and support staff working in partnership. This link between academic and pastoral support enables all staff to take responsibility for identifying students who may need additional support. The Fitness to Study procedure was introduced in 2014 and provides personalised support plans for students identified as being at risk of non-continuation or non-completion. As a minimum this is applied to students who have suspended and returned to study, but as the scheme has developed it has raised students' self-awareness of their own ability to stay on the course and they have begun to self-refer to the Fitness to Study procedure to access support.

4.3.10 Effective monitoring of student progress data (including retention, achievement, academic misconduct, extension and mitigation requests and use of student support services) also identifies student support needs at a strategic level. Monitoring has led to the introduction of an HE Learning Support Officer post to address specific learning needs, and a restructure of counselling provision to focus on mental health and wellbeing support, in response to identified demand for these services.

5. Student Outcomes and Learning Gain

5.1 Employment and Further Study (SO1)

5.1.1 Our students have excellent employment outcomes; the employment or further study metric carries a double-positive flag in year 2 and overall the metric would be positively flagged if there were a further six graduates in employment or further study.

5.1.2 The supplementary metrics show a positive flag in sustained employment or further study after graduation, but a negative flag in earnings above the median. This reflects the high proportion of students at the College who are studying courses in sectors that do not attract high salaries but that have demonstrable societal benefits, for example healthcare, childcare and creative arts and design. The exclusion of self-assessment tax data in the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) data additionally has a negative impact on the representation of creative arts and design graduates, who are more likely to have a portfolio career and therefore to self-assess for tax.

5.1.3 To assess employment outcomes we conduct an alumni survey; in the most recent results 78% of our alumni report that they are currently working in the creative industries, 68% combine two or more occupations in a portfolio career, and 88% agree that they are using the skills they gained in HE in their career[21].

5.1.4 The College's recruitment of students from outside the region is also chiefly in the Creative Arts: using the TEF definition of 'local student', 57% of University Centre students are classified as coming from the local area, compared to 9% of Leeds College of Music students. The TEF contextual maps show clearly the retention of Leeds City College graduates within the region, and with a high proportion working in the creative industries, our graduates are making a significant contribution to the local creative economy. A recent report by GuildHE[22] found that approximately 94% of creative focused institutions' students stay in the UK after graduating and that their employment is worth £8.4bn per year to the UK economy.

Our part-time provision is accessed primarily by mature students who are already working in their vocational sector, for example Childcare, Social Care and Computing, and who wish to gain higher-level qualifications. Alumni report consistently that they have achieved career development as a result of their studies, for example promotion at work.

5.1.5 We have a small, but growing, full-time postgraduate provision and the proportion of undergraduates progressing to our Level 7 courses is also growing. We are aware that many of our Music graduates go on to postgraduate study at other UK conservatoires after having studied a three-year first degree as opposed to a more traditional four-year conservatoire course, indicating that their distance travelled is significant. We are developing ways to capture this information to inform curriculum planning and impact assessment of our work.

5.2 Employability and Transferable Skills (SO2)

5.2.1 Employability development is embedded into all HE provision across Leeds City College, with a strategic focus on real-world learning[23]. All Foundation Degrees include work-related learning, which varies greatly as it is personalised to individual needs and aspirations. Work-related learning opportunities include students' own employment,

[21] 2016/17 Alumni Survey
[22] *The Economic Value of Creative Focused Universities and Colleges*, November 2016
[23] Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy; HE Learning and Teaching Policy

voluntary placements, block release and working abroad. Level 6 (and Level 7) provision includes professional studies modules, delivered in partnership with industry professionals, that develop core employability skills as well as broadening vocational options.

5.2.2 The College's strong industry links and wider professional networks of programme teams enrich the student learning experience by connecting students with employers. We have links with artists, photography studios, theatres and dance groups, and partnerships with external venues, promoters and equipment manufacturers e.g. Steinway and Roland, which provide opportunities to work with high-profile industry practitioners in workshops, masterclasses and guest lectures. LCoM students have performed in concert with Marc Almond at Leeds Town Hall and the Royal Festival Hall.

5.2.3 Across the provision, curriculum design and delivery facilitates development of a wide range of transferable skills; in particular working with and learning from professional practitioners develops confidence, industry-relevant skills and commercial awareness. Student feedback demonstrates that these opportunities are valued both during the course and after graduation.

5.2.4 The Careers and Employability service offers face to face guidance on progression planning, motivational support, decision-making, self-awareness, self-promotion, CV development and job applications. Careers staff also advise HE academic staff on support for their students' professional development. The impact of careers provision is assessed through an annual survey, the results of which are used to develop the service.

5.2.5 Entrepreneurism is a key aspect of career development in a large proportion of our provision, including Creative Arts and Business and Management programmes, and our Enterprise team work closely with teaching staff and students to offer a wide range of opportunities for students and early-career graduates. Examples include:

- a booking agency that provides paid, professional performance opportunities, and over three years has generated income of £100,000 for student and alumni musicians;
- support for bands and ensembles to perform at music festivals[24] and to go on tour in the UK and Europe, substantially increasing their profiles[25];
- a collaborative project for a regional music festival which Art students were invited to lead following their first year of participation;
- a theatre company established by Performance students which offered performance opportunities to other College students; and
- development of a community project with external funding following a successful bid by Performance students.

5.2.6 Support for career development includes the provision of advice and guidance, for example through vocational 'survival guides', practical support including professional contacts and promotion, and financial support like career development and proof of concept bursary schemes. We also work in partnership with the Students' Union to provide an annual Careers Fair that connects students with employers and potential funders. A number of our alumni have set up successful businesses which have employed other graduates, and secured funding and contracts to deliver community projects. They have also returned to College to share their experiences with and mentor current students.

[24] Liverpool Sound City 2016, Manchester Jazz Festival 2016, Live at Leeds (annual), London Jazz Festival 2017
[25] *Caro* undertook a 10 date tour of the UK and received Radio 1 airplay, significantly increased social media presence, and secured management and a booking agent

5.3 Positive Outcomes for All (SO3)

5.3.1 As a Further Education provider, we provide routes through our FE courses to HE study, including a Progression to HE programme, and through our Access Agreement activities we support FE students from lower-income backgrounds to achieve the standard to progress to HE by providing free additional tuition.

5.3.2 Recruitment to Leeds College of Music courses takes place via audition and interview, which protects diversity by ensuring students are selected on the basis of their potential; devolved admissions authority from the validating body also enables us to admit students who can demonstrate their capacity to succeed if they do not meet our standard entry requirements. This enables around 25 such students each year to access HE conservatoire study, a fifth of whom are mature students, and monitoring of their retention and progression shows that they are as successful as students admitted via the standard route[26].

5.3.3 Monitoring of student progress at both a programme and individual level aims to ensure that all students are supported in achieving their potential. Student support initiatives such as personal tutoring and attendance monitoring are carried out by teaching and support staff to identify the appropriate intervention for each student and share responsibility for monitoring their progress.

5.3.4 Support for specific groups of students is informed by effective monitoring of recruitment, retention, progression and achievement statistics alongside protected characteristics. Recent initiatives have focused on the gender balance in Creative Arts, and supporting and promoting female musicians through the development of a personal tutoring scheme that matches new female students to female members of academic and support staff, and annual Women in Music events to mark International Women's Day.

5.3.5 Equality and Diversity Champions, recruited from HE teaching staff, maintain an overview of teaching and learning materials, identify and disseminate good practice in embedding equality and diversity within the curriculum, and contribute to staff development sessions. We work in partnership with the Students' Union to deliver events and activities focused on equality and diversity, for example mental health, race, gender and sexuality awareness.

5.3.6 We engage with students declaring disabilities, learning difficulties and health conditions from the point of application, to identify and meet their support needs. Mentors assigned to students who are supported by the Disabled Students' Allowance are drawn from current students and alumni wherever possible to ensure that the mentor understands the environment and study context of the student they support.

5.3.7 Strategic development of the VLEs is informed by student support needs and carried out in consultation with students; students with disabilities are involved in user-experience testing[27] and accessibility features are developed in partnership between students, learning support, disability support and eLearning staff. Since 2015/16 all lecture notes have been provided on the VLE in advance of teaching sessions, which along with lecture recordings provided after sessions, enables all students to tailor their experience to their individual learning style.

---

[26] 'Special case' admissions: 2014 entry 92% pass rate after year 1 (88% all students), 2015 entry 86% progression after year 1 (90% all students).

[27] Leeds College of Music Student Journey projects