Name of Provider: Plymouth College of Art
UKPRN: 10005127

Introduction
In 2017 Plymouth College of Art was awarded Bronze in TEF2 on the basis of two negative flags, against employment and high level skills employment respectively. In our TEF2 submission we did not seek to contest the absolute data on which the metrics were based, which we accepted as representative of students enrolling on PCA programmes in academic years 2010/11 to 2012/13. Our contention was that this profile was manifestly unrepresentative of the College's current position in the context of exceptional subsequent growth and development; significant change in its enrolment profile; and in the implementation of a coherent cross-institutional approach to embedding employability and professional practice in the curriculum. We pointed out that the data on which the employment statistics were based (i.e. DLHE) were known to be unreliable, which was tacitly acknowledged through the New DLHE review and more starkly evidenced with last year's publication of institutional LEO data. Additionally, the lack of regional benchmarking for the employment related data penalises institutions whose students have predominantly WP, local and mature profiles in a geographic area with low levels of skilled employment and underdeveloped creative industries.

In our submission, we also asserted that the substantial programme of employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship which has been embedded into all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes for the last three years was just beginning to bear fruit. This year's DLHE data demonstrates that this is true, with performance above benchmark. However, negative flags against the employability metrics remain due to continuing aggregation with data from the previous two years.

In the present TEF3 submission, we evidence very high levels of teaching excellence, student support, industry-standard specialist learning resources, estates and technical assistance as evidenced by the 2 positive flags and very good NSS results. PCA can now evidence the rapidly improving employability of its graduates. In this context, we maintain that the current Bronze rating fails to recognise PCA as it is currently constituted, and thus potentially misleading in comparative terms to prospective students.

PCA student profile and direct engagement with the Plymouth context
Founded in 1856, in the wake of the Great Exhibition of 1851, PCA remains an independent Art College, a specialist provider of education and professional formation in contemporary Art, Design and Media practices. The college successfully transferred from the FE to the HE sector in July 2014.

As a small specialist HEI in the South West region undergoing rapid development in the scale, profile and staff/student demography of its HE provision, PCA has over the last few years been developing parallel strategies to assist graduates embarking upon sustainable careers in the creative economy.

HE provision has grown significantly since 2010 from 780 to 1370, mainly through the transfer from predominately local 2-year Foundation degrees to nationally recruiting 3-year BA Honours degrees. This has been a deliberate, planned redevelopment of our provision, particularly in refocusing on design and media programmes and the building of our taught MA Graduate School portfolio. Until recently PCA's profile was that of a regional FEC, the College's historical 70:30 ratio of regional/sub-regional-to-national student applications has shifted decisively to a new ratio of 35:65. Enrolment in 2013 showed regional/national ratio of 72:28 and now 50:50 in 2017.

PCA maintains a strong commitment to social mobility and a proud history of widening participation, as evidenced in the College's TEF Data Sets. The College's Vision implicitly includes the raising of aspirations amongst young people in the city of Plymouth and its most deprived wards, to achieve their full potential by being both inspired and prepared to enter Higher Education, then to graduate successfully into professional careers and/or further study.

Nineteen (12%) of Plymouth's Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are among the most deprived in England. Although the proportion of workers qualified to degree level or equivalent in Plymouth is

improving at 29.1%, it remains lower than the South West and UK (34.1 and 34.2% respectively). Key statistics related to the undergraduate student population covered by the timeframe of the TEF data (2013-16 intake) are that:

- 46% of our young full time entrants came from POLAR3 quintiles 1 and 2 (39% for mature full time entrants);
- 28% of our full time entrants came from addresses in PL1 to PL5 (5 of the most deprived boroughs in the UK);
- 50% of our full time entrants came from households with residual income less than £25K per annum;
- 56% of our total student numbers were on full state support, 70% were on full or partial state support;
- 30% of the students across all years had a declared learning difficulty or disability, with 28.4% of our full time first degree students in receipt of Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) one of the highest rates of any institution in the UK;
- 40% of the students across all years were categorised as mature;
- 13% of new entrants in 2014 enrolled on an extended programme with an initial 'Level 0' access year;
- 72:28 regional to national student intake.

These data contrast significantly with those of many of our benchmarked competitors. As a specialist art college, PCA shares in the national profile of creative arts and design subjects having the highest proportion of students in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). Coupled with low participation rates, the demographic and disability profile poses a challenging agenda for student retention, achievement and ultimately for employment opportunities and prospects within the as yet emergent creative economy of the South West region.

It is worth pointing out that, in line with the college's developing profile, our 2017 data for both WP and for the percentage of students from out of the region is changing:

- 38% of our young full time entrants in 2017 came from POLAR3 quintiles 1 and 2 (40% for mature full time entrants);
- 19% of our full time entrants come from addresses in PL1 to PL5 (5 of the most deprived boroughs in the UK);
- 34% of our full time entrants in 2017 came from households with residual income less than £25K per annum;
- 17% of the students across all years had a declared a learning difficulty or disability;
- 27% of our current students across all years are categorised as mature;
- 11% of new entrants in 2016 enrolled on an extended programme with an initial 'Level 0' access year;
- 50:50 regional to national intake.

Historically, many PCA students who come from the local region have chosen to remain in the area after graduation. Many are 'first generation' HE students, i.e. the first person in their family to progress into higher education. They often lack cultural capital and have predominantly local networks. Many are mature students with local family ties and substantive commitments. These characteristics make mobility and relocation to more established metropolitan creative economies far less feasible than it is for traditional students who enrolled as school-leavers. The college's regional partnerships, its capacity-building activities and employability, entrepreneurship and enterprise initiatives, are deliberately geared to support opportunities for our whole graduate community and to deliver social and economic impact in our city region.

Plymouth and the South West region underperforms nationally for progression to higher education and has low numbers for self-employment and new business start-up. The College therefore engages directly with educational disadvantage, widening participation and Plymouth's priority to raise aspiration. TEF metrics for the College clearly reflect this diversity.

As an emerging and distinctive case study in 'place-making'[1], PCA is now recognised nationally[2] and internationally[3] for the founding in 2013 of the Plymouth School of Creative Arts, a 4-16 mainstream inner city all-through school now enrolling 960 pupils at The Red House, opened formally by Sir Nicholas Serota in 2015. In 2017 PCA was awarded the Social Enterprise Gold Mark for its systemic commitment to social engagement, including *pro bono* design commissions undertaken by students in the service of charitable organisations and community groups, as well as the social impact of The Red House as a long-term community project. PCA students develop professional portfolios through live community projects at the School and the College's activity as a Founding Associate of Tate Exchange.

The College also successfully applied for £185k Big Lottery 'Power to Change' which adds to £96K awarded by Plymouth City council to establish a fashion manufacturing business CIC in partnership with Millfields Trust, a commercial 'cut, make and trim' business that will create local employment, occupy a current gap in the fashion industry supply chain regionally, operating commercially and providing a product prototyping and short-run production facility for self-employed graduate designers, micro-businesses and SMEs in the region.

While PCA cohort demographics are evolving annually with increased inward migration, the graduate employment environment data maps show that the South West still has far fewer highly skilled roles than many regions, particularly in the creative industries.

The South West continues purposefully to develop its market share of the increasing volume of creative industries employment in the UK but started from a relatively low baseline, Bristol, more than 120 miles from Plymouth, being the only major hub in the region. In its regional commitment, the College therefore faces additional challenges in supporting graduates to achieve highly-skilled employment that is directly related to their award discipline, particularly within the six-month timeframe of the current DLHE survey.

Teaching Quality

All academic and technical staff are employed on the basis of their up-to-date academic theoretical and practical understanding of and involvement in their subject disciplines, as well as their professional pedagogic expertise. Undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at PCA are delivered and supported by a dynamic community of academic and technical staff, visiting

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[1] David Marlow, 2017 presentations to the annual conferences of the Regional Studies Association and GuildHE, two forthcoming publications.

[2] Two independent films on the work of PCA and The Red House: Henry Ward (dir.) *Thinking Making* (Freelands Foundation, 2016) and Clare Hughes (dir.) *The Red House* (FCB Studios, 2016) were screened respectively at Saatchi Gallery, Plymouth Arts Centre, Tate Modern, and the Manchester International Festival. Also invited presentations (2013-17) including Art in Action, Cabinet Office, GuildHE, HEFCE, OECD, Tate Modern, V&A.

[3] BREWERTON, A.J., '*Making Learning*: Eine kunstpädagogische Fallstudie' [translated by Nikolaus Gramm], in Kai Buchholz, Elisabeth Mollenhauer-Klüber, Justus Theinert (eds.), *Herausforderung ästhetische Bildung*, (Bielefeld: Aisthesis 2017), pp. 177-202. Also invited presentations (2013-17) including Ateliers d'Art de France, Beijing Design Week, Chengdu (China), Confindustria Veneto, ELIA Annual Conference (Florence), IICD Jaipur (India), Loheland Stiftung (Germany), Nanjing Normal University, Révélations (Grand Palais, Paris), Seoul, Art Shanghai, Shanghai University.

specialists and engaged professionals, who contribute to the delivery of a comprehensive range of highly specialist programmes in the creative industries.

PCA lecturers are technical specialists in their respective fields as well as critically engaged practitioners and dedicated educators who bring a breadth of experience to the College. This interrelationship between teaching and learning, professional practice, action-based research and scholarly activity underpins the educational character of the College.

The college is a leader in creative pedagogy. As indicated above, in 2013 the College founded the Plymouth School of Creative Arts, a 4–16 inner city all-through school in an area of significant deprivation, as a Free School whose inseparable objectives combine pedagogical innovation and social impact. This is a trans-generational initiative in which School and College (undergraduate and pre degree) are together creating a purposeful continuum of creative learning from early years to Masters level which is attracting national and international attention.[4] In 2017 the college validated an MA in Creative Education, Making Learning and this year will be the second year that PCA has run a week-long event at Tate Modern focusing on creativity in learning.

As a small specialist HEI, teaching excellence in studio and workshop- based creative learning and reflective practice is highly student–centred, with our most recent NSS results evidencing very favourable comparison with HE sector averages:

	Sector Average 2017	**PCA NSS scores 2017**
Overall satisfaction	84	83
The teaching on my course	85	87
Learning Opportunities	84	89
Assessment & Feedback	73	82
Academic Support	80	86
Learning Community	77	84
Learning Resources	85	91
Student Voice	69	78
The SU effectively represents student interests	57	76

[4] http://plymouthschoolofcreativearts.co.uk/

Learning Environment
Since 2010 the College has spent over £12 million on new buildings, refurbishments and modernisation and over £3 million on capital resources. The college believes and is regularly told by visiting academics and students from other institutions that we have some of the best equipped

specialist resources in the country. We have an extensive Art Design and Media library, FabLab and students enjoy open door access to a wide range of student support, from counselling to finance from study skills to wellbeing.

Although small the Student Union is very active and engaged with regular events organised and regular student voice meetings. Feedback from students is sought through internal surveys, module evaluations, staff student liaison committees and through the SU representation on all major college committees. Feedback through the NSS is testament to the success of the PCA academic learning environment, with 76% approval for the SU's support of the students' academic experience against a national average of 56% in 2017.

Student Outcomes, Learning Gain, Employability Strategy and the '3Es'
Given PCA's regional context and student profile, the College is critically aware of the developmental priority to enhance opportunities for our graduates to build sustainable careers, whether in employment, self-employment, freelance, new business start-up or portfolio careers, in the region, nationally and internationally.

The College originally introduced the Employability, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (3Es) strategy and action plan, along with a supporting programme of activities in 2013, in order to centralise, consolidate and share the best practice happening at PCA across all programmes. It was intended that this initiative would further raise awareness of the need for employability skills within the curriculum and through shared resources, would offer increased staffing capacity to build employer links and develop enterprise skills amongst students. This team has subsequently developed and now includes a Head of Enterprise and Development, Careers and Employability Manager, Employer Engagement Manager, Enterprise advisor and Studentship Tutor. The work of the team (now called Careers & Enterprise) has evolved to complement work undertaken in the curriculum areas, providing substantial enrichment resources to support the acquisition of knowledge by the students, as well as additional employer engagement activities and careers support to facilitate the application of knowledge within the workplace and the wider creative industries. Work undertaken to support the college-wide employability agenda, as outlined in the Employability Strategy, includes:

- enhanced range of educational visits (including networking and employer visits, subsidised by the College, aimed at raising student aspiration and improving student understanding of their professional sector of the creative economy;
- comprehensive support for the use of live briefs/projects embedded within modules in academic work to enable wider experience of working to industry standards and requirements whilst enhancing students' employability skills and delivering against learning outcomes;
- supporting the depth and breadth of relevant professional industry experience for students, additional to the curriculum requirements. Including the implementation of an Industry Experience Bursary, enabling students to apply for up to £250 to support travel and accommodation costs linked to undertaking internships;
- provision of 1:1 careers support for all students and recent graduates, giving tailored guidance and help with getting into industry;
- extensive programme of talks, workshops, lectures and events supported by visiting speakers to enhance 3Es skills and awareness for all students;
- improving active engagement with the creative industries across all programmes;
- rolling out access to The Agency across all programmes to provide professional, paid live brief opportunities;

- a virtual and physical job wall to promote creative industry opportunities to all students (paid, volunteering, competitions and awards);
- increasing the visibility of employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship within the academic curriculum and community;
- increasing the reputation and profile of the College at national and international events to provide opportunities for greater interface with employers;

- increasing engagement by programmes with international trade fairs (e.g. TENT in London, Heimtex in Frankfurt, FMX Image in Stuttgart) to showcase student work;
- supporting opportunities for students to develop entrepreneurial and enterprising skills, for example by raising funds through their work, establish exhibition and sales opportunities and more;
- re-energising engagement with the industry through the further development of industry/professional networks in all programme areas.

Over the past three years significant progress has been made by the Careers & Enterprise team to raise awareness and engage curriculum teams in the employability agenda. An extensive programme of activities, visiting lectures, online material and other resources linked to each sector and programme area has been made available to all programmes, which has been coupled with a concerted effort to develop employer contacts, enhancing the links already in place within curriculum areas and a dedicated Employer Engagement Manager who has been focused on developing new regional, national and international links.

Consideration by Academic Board of the latest DLHE results, led to a substantial review of the Employability Strategy and action plan and the mechanisms by which to seek, implement and measure improvement with regard to student progression to professional careers. The introduction of the TEF sharpened the focus further. As a result, the employability Strategy and Implementation plan has been supplemented by a number of focused activities to further enhance the engagement of students in the employability agenda and to secure additional progression opportunities with employers. The College has also further strengthened the KPIs used in all performance reviews to include stretching targets for employability or further study and highly skilled employability or further study.

Employability in the Curriculum
Alongside the work of the Careers & Enterprise team, all programmes now share 3 x 20 credit Professional Practice modules, one in each year. These are supported by professional practice benchmarks which are reviewed for each year group against the QAA benchmarks.

Yr 1 Professional Practice & PDP 1
This module is designed to help students explore the shape and patterns of employment in their particular subject discipline or related industries. The module is designed to enable them to start to match their current skills, knowledge and creative portfolio to those required to successfully compete for work in their intended career. Having identified areas for development, students will work with the module leader to update their Professional Development Plan (PDP blog) enabling them to identify those experiences and skills they will need to acquire during their degree course. The module aims to enhance the students' confidence and will cover a wide range of general skills including personal SWOT analysis, effective professional communication with employers, CVs, applications, looking at employment and where appropriate freelance working, including starting to consider issues around contracts, copyright working with agencies, interviews etc.

Yr2 Professional Practice & PDP 2
This module extends skills acquired during Level 4 allowing individuals to further explore professional practice alongside an investigation into and applications for in-house employment, freelance entrepreneurial opportunities and possible internships. The module runs across level 5, informing an understanding of the level of professionalism, creativity and adaptability required to negotiate a career in the student's area of intended employment. During the module students have

the opportunity to respond to the requirements of a range of professionally focused projects. Whether they work on live briefs and external commissions, or competitions and simulated briefs, throughout the module, students will consider business and practice skills required to plan for their career, including the skills and attributes required for their practice.

Yr3 Creative and Professional Development
This module enables students to use personal career ambitions to position themselves for progression to employment, self-employment or to post-graduate study. It provides multiple opportunities for students to assimilate previous industry experiences and research into both contextual subject matter and creative outcomes of the final year modules. The module encourages consideration of audiences, end-users and relevant markets. Relationships with appropriate external agencies, individuals and professionals are explored, and interactions with the creative, commercial and cultural environments investigated. Students are expected to produce a range of personal promotional material relevant to their intended career trajectory, CVs, websites, portfolios, show reels, books, promotional films etc. as relevant to each student and subject area.

MA in Entrepreneurship for Creative Practice
The College has established an MA in Entrepreneurship for Creative Practice, this programme was in part designed in response to many of our Alumni who asked for a programme which would not only help them to better shape their creative output, but support them in establishing their business. The programme attracts highly motivated creative practitioners who want to accelerate their existing practice, find a fresh direction or start a new creative enterprise. The programme seeks to build the students' critical and entrepreneurial awareness, and it is structured so as to deliver concrete outcomes that will help to launch new careers, products, or business ideas.

The Agency
In 2015 the College set up an in-house Agency. This is a stand alone incubation space and creative agency, housed along side the Careers & Enterprise team, through which external businesses and organisations can pitch paid live projects and briefs to undergraduate students and recent graduates. The Agency covers all of the college disciplines. It mentors and supports students working on real live assignments, driving the application of their practical discipline skills, and offers a range of creative services for internal and external clients. Students are expected to apply and pitch for work in exactly the same way as they would post-graduation and are supported to do this through the Careers & Enterprise team. Similarly, students are supported to develop and practice their project management and customer relation knowledge, as well as other relevant employability skills, building their confidence and preparedness for application to their intended career. The Agency is managed by a full-time member of staff with a commercial and academic background.

The services offered by the Agency include: branding, web design, publications, graphic design, film, animation, 3D design crafts, fashion design, textiles design, illustration, photography, product design, jewellery design, printmaking, etc. Recent projects have included branding the new Sherford housing development, scarf designs for a charity, promotional films etc. With clients including Mercedes Smart Cars, British Ceramic Tiles, Sponge UK, Cuda Drinks, Seascape Analytics, Dartmoor Zoo, Finistree, Primal Europe, The Landmark Trust, Plymouth City Council, St Lukes Hospice, Goss International and Princess Yachts. The agency is regularly working with about 40 students across approximately 60 projects.

The 'Recruitment Agency' also links employers with students/graduates for jobs and paid internships nationally and internationally. Daily updates are emailed to all students with job opportunities, live briefs, competitions from the Job Wall Bulletin.

Visiting artists
In support of broadening student's horizons and aspirations, the PCA gallery lecture programme is now mandatory to each of the clusters where relevant to the exhibition, students will attend as part of the PDP delivery, as the artist showing will be delivering a careers specific talk, detailing the

business of their practice, as part of their exhibition contract. This is in addition to the wide range of visiting artists/practitioners who regularly contribute to each of the programmes.

Studentship and Character
As part of development work with our Pre Degree students, we have been working on a project called Character. This project looks at developing a set of skills for life, embedded into all the project assignments. This project has been highly successful in raising attainment and aspiration amongst our 16 – 18 year old students, and has been presented at a number of national conferences. This initiative has now also been integrated into our undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum.

21st century learners cannot be successful in the world with only their narrow subject-specific knowledge gained from a single course. Outstanding teaching and learning needs to embrace the qualities, behaviours and attributes needed to succeed in a workplace. This can include effective use of language, listening and communication skills, a positive, confident, trusting and respectful mind-set, the drive to succeed, grit, accepting and managing ambiguity and responsibility. These and other attributes come from an analysis from the World Economic Forum which supports the need to integrate these 'soft skills' into the curriculum.

All programme teams are involved in a process of highlighting these soft skills and working them seamlessly into the curriculum as part of the curriculum planning and timetabling for 2017 – 18, the skills also inform and are supported by the Careers & Enterprise team. We believe this initiative will have additional profound effects for our students but believe that it will take a couple of years for this development to really be seen in our graduate destinations.

Exhibitions and Events
The College is active in attending exhibitions and events. In addition to the Summer Show exhibitions at the college and fashion shows tacking place in the city, regional exhibitions etc. The College also organises and supports participation in a range of national and international events, a small sample of which are:

- TENT, London Design Fair 2017 - for the first time, in September 2017 the College exhibited the work of 20 graduates from across the College at London Design Fair. During the event 35 industry professionals registered for meetings with students and academic staff to discuss future collaboration with PCA and graduate employment.
- D&AD, London - 3rd year Graphics students exhibited at this industry standard event. Participation in this event resulted in 4 offers of internships and job interviews.
- Graduate Fashion Week - 3rd year Fashion students exhibited at this industry event. Student Anna Boast was spotted by the brand 'River Island' and subsequently employed.
- New Designers - Graphics and Illustration programmes exhibited at this graduate launch event. The Illustration programme gained the award 'Student of the Year'.
- Animation and Games programmes took students and student work to FMX in Stuttgart with multiple offers of work
- Painting Drawing and printmaking had a show in Cork Street, London
- Photography exhibited at FreeRange at the Truman Brewery in Brick Lane, London.
- Illustration exhibited at BABE artist book fair in Bristol

QAA HER theme of Employability
PCA selected 'employability' as the theme for the November 2015 QAA Higher Education Review because of the significance of this developmental agenda for PCA. The College wanted to make an evaluative analysis of progress to date, in ensuring quality graduate destinations and to inform next steps and future actions. The Higher Education Review (HER) in November 2015 was highly successful with the College commended for its enhancement of the quality of student learning opportunities and the rigorous implementation of its Quality Assurance and Enhancement Strategy. The feedback on the employability theme reads:

5 Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1 The employability of its students is a key strategic driver at the College. It is implicit within the College's vision, its stated values, development horizons and the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan sets a target for graduate employment to exceed 85 per cent by 2020. This aspiration is set

against a methodology for monitoring and reporting graduate destinations that is viewed as problematic by the College as it considers the creative sector to have part-time working, portfolio careers and small business start-ups as the norm. Consequently, although the College's graduate employment record is strong, the centrally collected data does not meet national benchmarks.

5.2 The College is working to offset this gap by extending its academic portfolio to offer undergraduate programmes that offer more direct opportunities for work with mainstream employers. The College chose the 3Es to capture its approach to employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship. It works to establish an aspirational learning environment that encourages the development of creativity and innovation together with professionalism and business acumen.

5.3 To further this aim, the College recently created a Business Development subcommittee of Academic Board with a specific remit to enhance the interface with external stakeholders in support of the employability agenda. The College has also produced an Employability Strategy which has seen the establishment of a small staff team dedicated to the implementation of the 3Es. Coherent efforts have been made to embed the 3Es within the curriculum and all programmes include elements of professional practice and business studies. This can be through placements, live projects and visiting professionals. There is also evidence of increasing use of specific year-long modules linked to personal development plans. This aims to assist the development of skills and encourage personal reflection to increase employability and the development of a broader employer-relevant skillset.

5.4 The Careers & Enterprise *Team in the Student Hub provide advice and guidance for students so that they can seek placement, internship and live project opportunities with the industry regionally and nationally. All students met by the review team spoke of their involvement with industry and the beneficial impact on their studies. Alumni also reflected on the benefits of work placement, and employers were active in seeking the College's students not just for placement but also for employment. However, concerns were voiced among some students that greater consideration should be made by the College for students who are not interested in starting their own business and would prefer to enter mainstream employment.*

5.5 The Careers Adviser provides advice and presentations to students on creating a CV. While this is appreciated by students, some students would also find advice and guidance on interview techniques useful, as well as highlighting job opportunities outside of the creative industry for students who are about to graduate.

5.6 To ensure the relevancy and currency of its provision, the College engages with external bodies such as Creative Skillset and Creative and Cultural Skills in addition to employers, alumni and other stakeholders. The College also sponsors crafts festivals as a vehicle of engagement in enterprise and entrepreneurship for its current students and alumni. For example, the College is an active sponsor of the Bovey Tracy Contemporary Crafts Festival in Devon that celebrates the best of British design and making, and the Cornish Port Eliot Festival. Additionally, the College has begun to increase its attendance at international trade fairs and events to interface with creative industries internationally for the benefit of staff and students.

5.7 The College considers itself to be the creative hub for local and regional practitioners and has embarked on a plan for new business incubation. This involves the development of managed workspace for artists and designers, and in the last few years the College has successfully operated a city centre shop to sell student work on a rotational basis. During summer 2015 the College Gallery held a 'marketplace' for graduate work as part of the tourist trail in the city and has

further plans for developing incubation space for its graduates along with its active support for pop-up shops on campus to sell and promote student work.

5.8 The recent investment in physical resources led the College to develop an accredited Fabrication Laboratory (Fab Lab), part of the international network of Fab Labs initially started by Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The resource is open to members of the community and to businesses that need to access the latest digital-making knowledge and 3D printing equipment and is intended to enhance engagement opportunities with industry in the region for the benefit of students. It also enables students to work with the latest industry-standard equipment to develop prototypes and understand the potential and limitations of modern small-batch production techniques.

5.9 Overall, the College takes its responsibility for promoting student employability seriously both academically and strategically. The creation of the Careers & Enterprise *team and the instigation of the Business Development Subcommittee demonstrate an ongoing commitment to promoting external links and employability. The College is active in using internal and external survey data as a measure of its success. Students commented very favourably on their ability to gain and benefit from work placements and many staff of the College are active practitioners who maintain positive links with the industry. This benefits student studying on the College's programmes by keeping the curriculum in touch with the latest developments in the industry. Coupled with the College's strategic and responsive approach to investment in physical resources, its students are well equipped to succeed in the creative industries upon graduation.*

Any developmental issued raised were included in the HER action plan and acted upon.

Additional NSS question
From 2016, in order to gain as much feedback as possible on student perception of the support offered for employability, the college asked 4 additional questions as part of the National Student Survey. Below is a table which shows the 2016/17 whole PCA results, which demonstrate that students are very positive about the support they are receiving.

Category	B1 Careers	B1.1 As a result of my course, I believe that I have improved my career prospects.	B1.2 Good advice is available for making career choices.	B1.3 Good advice is available on further study opportunities.
Plymouth College of Art 2016	82%	88%	85%	73%
Plymouth College of Art 2017	87%	86%	90%	83%

College 18 month Survey
Though it is clear from the small amount of LEO data we have that longitudinally our students are performing in line with those from many of our comparator institutions who have silver and gold awards. Creative industry graduates have historically taken longer to find appropriate 'highly-skilled' work, start their practice, establish studios and develop the majority of their income from their creative activity. In order to gain a more critical understanding of the employment trajectory of our graduates the college surveyed students who took part in the 2014/15 DLHE survey using the same question to identify their current employment status 18-months after graduating, which we intend to do again this February.

When resurveying the DLHE for our 2015 graduates the data was split into following categories;

1. Those that were unemployed/taking a gap year in the original survey
2. Graduates that were in employment that was not at a professional level
3. Students that had progressed to further study at PCA in 2015/16 or 2016/17

We contacted students in the order listed above by phone. Where there was no answer, the responses given in the original survey were used to complete the dataset.

For consistency, we did not contact those that did not respond to the original DLHE survey, thus ensuring a direct comparison with the original data. This exercise revealed the scale of change in employment 18 months after graduation; a time frame which matches the proposed 'NewDLHE'.

ORIGINAL DLHE SURVEY									
Programme		RESULTS (%)						For those in work:	
	No. of students in survey group	Working	Studying	Working and studying	Total for all in work or study	Unemployed	Other	% in professional job	% not in professional job
OVERALL	212	58%	12%	7%	77%	11%	12%	41%	58%

RE-SURVEY FEBRUARY 2017									
Programme		RESULTS (%)						For those in work:	
	No. of students in survey group	Working	Studying	Working and studying	Total for all in work or study	Unemployed	Other	% in professional job	% not in professional job
OVERALL	212	75%	13%	5%	93%	2%	5%	64%	36%

Notable change is recorded for all those in work or further study: an increase from 77% to 93%. The percentage for graduates in professional work has also increased from 41% to 64%, with 18% in further study or work and further study.

Graduate Destinations
As a specialist HEI, Plymouth College of Art also shares serious art, design and media sector reservations regarding the relevance, and therefore the validity, of the DLHE six-month census data as TEF assessment benchmarks for career outcomes and graduate employment in the creative industries and within the creative economy. The DLHE data on which the TEF metrics are based appear problematic for PCA in two ways.

Firstly, the College shares concerns regarding consistency of institutional practise and in these terms, along with the Office for Statistics, questions the validity of DLHE as a robust and consistent benchmark. Tacit acknowledgement of this problem is implicit in the planned centralisation of data collection, acknowledging a need to prevent any potential 'gaming' of results in order to ensure robust indicators of teaching excellence. For the record, Plymouth College of Art has always employed external agencies to ensure impartial DLHE data collection with no attempt to influence the process.

We would suggest that evidence of the lack of reliability of DLHE data is now implicit in the differential percentages arising between the DLHE scores collected by institutions and the centrally collected LEO outcomes; which against many of our comparator institutions are between 13% to 20% lower than their DLHE data would suggest. However, as a recent HEI we are not provided

with our full LEO data set for directly comparative purposes. The only year for which we have data shows a modest 6% difference.

Secondly, the TEF benchmarks for highly skilled employment fail to take account of regional variations for levels of employment, levels of highly skilled employment or particular industry sectors in regional contexts. The Devon and Cornwall region has lower than average highly skilled employment across all sectors and an as yet emergent creative and cultural economy – in Arts

Council terms, a 'cold spot'. The College's support for infrastructure development and capacity-building in the form of managed work space and artist- or curator-led start-up businesses or Community Interest Companies has made headway in terms of added value or 'distance travelled', with groups such as Ocean Studios, KARST and Flameworks established in Plymouth by PCA graduates. And initiatives such as Plymouth College of Art and Millfields Trusts "Cut Make and Trim Factory" with £280,000 of funding to establish a social enterprise, providing high quality sampling and small scale manufacturing facilities to the fashion industry. The enterprise will support recent graduates and early career designers through the provision of fully factored samples and short runs. The enterprise will also service existing SME's through the development of new ranges specialising in lux jersey and performance wear.

Conclusion

In this TEF3 submission Plymouth College of Art has demonstrated the scale of work undertaken to ensure teaching excellence, the quality of the learning environment, significant student support and the ongoing development and further enhancement of strategies to support high quality student employment destinations. The College supports the direction of TEF policy but believes that the historical data do not fairly or equitably represent the current profile and performance of the College, and that its Bronze award status is thus at significant variance with the reality of the student experience and our student perception. In consultation regarding PCA's TEF submission, students responded positively to questions about support in their preparations for professional employment. They valued *'the strength of professional practice as well as academic expertise'* amongst their tutors and clearly appreciated the extensive use of industry live briefs in support of learning outcomes. The increased range of educational field visits and bursary provision has helped foster students' closer affinity with professional aspiration, supporting *'a greater confidence to go out into their industry'*, and external observers note that the *'support here is huge compared to other places'*. We welcome the opportunity within TEF3 for a re-appraisal of PCA's TEF Bronze rating in light of new evidence (2016 data) and with due consideration of the case that was not fully articulated by the College in TEF2:

- PCA has undergone a period of exceptional change in its institutional structure, curriculum offer and profile since 2010;
- in this period, the College has engineered significant transformation in the range and diversity of its HE curriculum, particularly in design and media curricula;
- The college has been pursuing an institution wide initiative to substantially increase professional preparedness, employment, entrepreneurship and enterprise skills for students, leading to increasingly powerful student outcomes and destinations.
- the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey provides at best a suspect metric for classical career development and employment in the creative industries;
- the College shares concerns regarding consistency of institutional practice in collecting DLHE data which brings into question the validity of the data and any related benchmarks. This conviction is given greater credence with the publication of LEO data which shows a substantial difference between institutionally collected DLHE outcomes and centrally collected LEO data;
- in the context of graduate employment, TEF methodology does not currently benchmark or account for regional difference, for example given the emergent nature of the creative

economy in Plymouth and the South West in comparison with more established centres of creative industries found in larger cities and metropolitan areas;

- in this case the TEF metrics might appear inconsistent with, and at worst a structural disincentive to, the government's stated policy commitment to social mobility, which PCA maintains and can evidence through a significant and sustained commitment to widening participation (WP) and graduate retention in Plymouth.

Plymouth College of Art regularly reviews its performance against both internal key performance indicators and external metrics. The college is aware that although this year's DLHE data at 91% is above benchmark, these scores when aggregated with the historical DLHE data still produce 2 negative flags. As evidenced by the range of strategies and activities outlined, PCA has worked consistently over the last 4 years to ensure more positive graduate outcomes which are now beginning to show in the DLHE data. We take the data contained in the TEF metrics very seriously and have identified actions for further improvement that are already embedded in the curriculum and subject to ongoing review. These measures are beginning to produce increasingly positive outcomes for our student destinations. With the use of New DLHE data and LEO data in future years we are looking forward to a more level playing field with more accurate, reliable and relevant data informing TEF metrics.

Our primary concern is however to develop a more secure understanding of graduate opportunity as a specialist HEI with strategic commitments to social mobility and the yet emerging creative economy of Plymouth and the South West region.

As can be seen from this TEF submission, the college is acutely aware of the imperative to improve the destinations for our graduates. The College's development trajectory evidences a firm commitment to enhancing employability. It evidences a dynamic culture of reflection, innovation and improvement that addresses the regional context in which we work and informs standards to which we hold ourselves accountable as an academic community.

In its commitment to positive graduate destinations across an increasingly diverse student body, Plymouth College of Art acknowledges and embraces the imperative of continual improvement and is confident of significant improvement with future rounds of DLHE and other assessment outcomes, particularly in the context of employment, highly skilled employment and further study.