Name of Provider: Bishop Auckland College
UKPRN: 10000720

TEF Year Four provider submission

Provider Context

Bishop Auckland College is located in south west Durham in a semi rural location. Qualification levels across County Durham as a whole are below those both regionally and nationally with 30.2% of adults qualified to NVQ4 or above, north east 31.7% and nationally 38.6%. Earnings are 90% of that elsewhere in the UK and job density at 0.59 is well below the national rate of 0.84, consequently unemployment is higher than the regional and national levels. (NOMIS 2017) Despite the most recent English Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015 Statistical Release indicating that the north east is in the seventh decile in terms of deprivation, when considered at ward level the College is at the heart of an area with deprivation in the top 10% nationally. This correlates with the findings of the National Collaborative Outreach project which has highlighted the College as being in a cold spot for progression to higher education of young people from disadvantaged wards.

Set within this context, the College has developed its higher education offer to offer an articulated progression route in each of its curriculum areas. The semi-rural nature of the area means that public transport arrangements can present a barrier to students wishing to access higher education on a non-residential basis at one of the area's city based universities. The College provides a local solution to this issue and support with transport costs.

The College has an excellent track record of providing accessible higher education for all students. Using POLAR data; 32% full time and 33% part-time students are from Quintile 1 neighbourhoods (32% overall); 42% full time and 29% part time students are from Quintile 2 neighbourhoods (38% overall); 10% full time and 14% part-time students are from Quintile 3 neighbourhoods (12% overall). This reflects the 'local' nature of the student cohort and the demographic of this particular area in County Durham. The data shown below is extracted from the October 2018 TEF metrics and highlights an increase in recruitment of 11% from 2017 with the total proportion of students from POLAR 1 and 2 remaining constant. The College is located in a POLAR 1 area with the norm being 21.4% of young people progressing to higher education; the College is performing well in this context.

Higher education has been a key element of the College's work since 1993, and is central to its ambition to act as a catalyst for change in the local communities through enabling economic regeneration and social inclusion. The College values higher education as a key driver for economic and social progression, and views it as personally transformational. The College continues to have ambitious plans to increase the availability and accessibility of vocational higher education that will therefore meet the needs of the local and regional population as well as those of business and industry; this is defined within the College's Higher Education Strategy.

Despite obvious advantages and opportunities locally, there remain nonetheless pockets of extreme disadvantage and deprivation within this semi-rural area. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015 position the North East LEP area (which includes County Durham) as 10th in the ranking of multiple deprivation for the 39 LEP areas; however, this masks pockets of high deprivation at district level, particularly within south west Durham. The College's most immediate catchment area lies within the top 10% on the national Indices of Multiple Deprivation, with health deprivation and unemployment being the key factors influencing the ranking.

Teaching Quality

Teaching and Learning is a major strength of Bishop Auckland College with metrics showing a 9.4% positive difference when measured against national benchmark, with further analysis showing posags for Young People, Females and POLAR Q1 and Q2. The standard of teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) across the whole organisation as 'good' with the very large majority of sessions

observed graded as 'good or better'. The observation and quality review process frequently engages the services of external consultants to be members of the observation team, ensuring objectivity and that the relevant most current vocational expertise is present in assessing performance. A key element of the process is the developmental feedback provided to teachers following observation and the subsequent action plan and support to ensure the planned development takes place. This development is designed to support a teacher from good practice to outstanding as much as from satisfactory to good.

Consistent areas of strength identified through observations include:

- Structured and well-planned lessons offered learners a variety of authentic activities and were linked to course, assignment criteria and professional development
- Teachers facilitate supportive and motivating environments which successfully engage learners
- Sessions and tasks are set in relevant, real-world contexts providing links to employability including activities that motivate learners
- Lecturers draw upon their scholarly and research activities to provide engaging and inspiring context to learning
- Resources and assignments are creative and ambitious offering opportunities for learners to generate ideas and self-evaluate
- High quality 'open' verbal questions challenge and stretch learners, assisting them in creating relevant, authentic learning experiences
- A range of learning and teaching strategies support effective collaborative and independent learning

A dedicated professional development programme, consisting of individual and team coaching has strengthened teaching and learning practices. Students' responses in the external QDP survey about the quality of teaching and learning were very positive with a vast majority confirming, "The teaching on my course is good" (top quartile of similar providers nationally). The College's Teaching and Learning Strategy 2017-18 places strong emphasis on staff development to enhance student learning. The College has a weekly Teaching and Learning (CPD) hour attended by all teaching staff. Alongside weekly CPD sessions, newly appointed, Assistant Heads of School support the development of teaching, learning and assessment practices for all staff involved in teaching or supporting student learning. The annual graded observation process during 2017-18 was inclusive of all teachers. It provided senior staff with a measure of teaching and assessment performance across all types of provision using an ungraded observation process. The College sets performance targets for grade profiles of teaching and learning observations across learning areas.

All academic staff receive a Teaching, Learning and Development Plan at the beginning of academic year which is designed to keep all of the records and supporting evidence which will demonstrate that Academic Staff are making continuous good progress in your personal and professional development. The plan includes a Peer Review section that allows Staff to carry out Peer Learning Walks and reflect on their experience. Sections on Independent Research and Self Development are included to allow Staff to reflect upon the impact of such activities on their practice.

NSS results for all part time courses confirmed that student satisfaction is extremely high across all questions; these results have been maintained and improved upon, over a number of years. 100% achieved for The Teaching on my course, Learning Opportunities and Overall Satisfaction, and 95% scored for Assessment and Feedback and Academic Support.

Higher Education staff are also encouraged to put in proposals for Research and Scholarly Activity. There is a 'pot' of hours available (up to the equivalent of 10 days) for this type of activity, to help develop an HE ethos among the staff who deliver these programes. Recent examples include Sports staff who are undertaking a Masters degree qualification in order ot better support Sports learners

and Health and Social Care staff participating in Action Research as part of a 'Digital Technology in curriculum' programme.

The QAA review team identified the following feature of **good practice** at Bishop Auckland College, in relation to staff development for Teaching and Learning. 'The wide range of staff development opportunities and the support provided to engage in these, which enhances student learning opportunities (Expectation B3).'

Annual programme reviews (APRs) reflect upon assessment, including the internal and External Examiners' observations in relation to assessment. Should there be any concern that the regime of assessment was insufficiently robust, programme teams make suitable use of University of Sunderland procedures by which proposals for changes to assessment details can be made. Learner involvement is considered through stringent use of Module Feedback mechanisms and final validation of all APR's is conducted within the HE Quality and Standards Committee, that has learner representation.

Academic staff are also involved in a range of partnership meetings to support the ongoing design and development of awards validated by the University. These have resulted in a range of modifications and enhancements to programmes. Examples include implementing changes to assignments on the counselling programme, which has resulted in reducing the number of assignments issued and increasing the quality; feedback from teacher education students requesting more direct opportunity to visit the University, which resulted in the introduction of the 'Super Saturday', giving students the opportunity to go to the University to participate in a range of sessions including topics on Action Research and educational policy; and the enhancement of the Reflections, Action Planning and Target Setting booklet which plots students' development over the year to now include clearer criteria for observations.

Programme teams are required to consult with employers during the initial proposal of programmes and throughout the development process. Frameworks are in place to ensure engagement with employer feedback. A meeting with employers is included in the standard internal validation agenda and such meetings inform the decision making process on internal approval.

Learning Environment

The College is committed to the full consultation of its students in relation to all aspects of their experience at the College. All courses have an elected student representative for each year group, who are invited to course team meetings as a representative of the cohort view. All student course representatives are invited to attend termly cross college representative meetings which are chaired by the Principal. Students elect the Student President and Deputy annually and together with the Principal, they make up the Student Leadership Team. This small but extremely important group discuss key issues and agree actions.

HE Focus Group meetings are held every term as a mechanism for planning and monitoring enhancement across all HE provision. Student representation from each course and year group along with key staff, (The Principal, the Director of Finance and Planning, the HE Development Manager and the Library and Resources Manager), meet to discuss feedback from courses and identify actions around planned improvement and enhancement. Feedback is acted upon quickly, with learners receiving minutes and updates on actions via email, with any further action feeding into the HEQSC meetings for higher level discussion.

The programme of formal College meetings, Equality and Diversity Working Group, Marketing Working Group, IT Working Group, HE Quality and Standards Working Group and Corporate Board also include student representation. The Student Representative is a named elected member and is invited to attend all meetings or to submit items for discussion. The Student President receives an honorarium supported by the College and is an annually elected position. The Student President is

supported by a deputy and a team of student ambassadors drawn from across the student population.

NSS results for part time university provision indicated strongly that learners feel part of a community of staff and students with 95% of students agreeing this was the case. Similarly, 92.5% of learners agree with the student voice is valued and that they had the right opportunities to provide feedback on their courses. HE Focus Group meetings have a structured agenda to ensure that learning resources and support services are discussed and evaluated across the academic year, with key members of staff from a range of support services attending meetings to allow feedback to be gathered first hand, with actions being immediately identified.

Results from our HE Mid-Year survey indicate excellent satisfaction around Personal, Behavioural, Safety and Welfare questions. We were very pleased with the results obtained and feel this shows that the environment in which learners study allows them to succeed, enjoy lessons and feel safe while at College. Having included internet safety, PREVENT and Abuse in workshops within the annual Student Conference, the results reflect the success of this approach. Tutors also promote a variety of welfare and safety themes throughout both theory and practical lessons. Headline results are shown below;

Students behave responsibly & show respect	95%
Can recognise abuse, discrimination, harassment & bully	100%
Know action take if abused, discrimination, bullied, harassment	99%
I understand how to use the internet safely	100%
I feel safe in College	98%

Staff in the Learning Zone provide a high quality service based upon a range of print and electronic resources and other learning materials to support students in their studies. The service provided includes not only access to a wide collection of books, but also help with how to access and use your computer, Moodle (VLE) and Webmail accounts. The addition of ClickView has allowed lecturers to explore flipped learning and develop video based assessment into lectures and sessions. Other services include Study Skills Workshops, 1-2-1 sessions, Reading Lists, Factsheets, Assignment hand-in and more.

All Learning Zone facilitators and E-learning facilitators must possess a teaching qualification. This College policy, which provides greater understanding of the academic needs of students among support staff, strengthens the provision of academic skills support to students. The requirement for Learning Zone facilitators and the E-learning facilitator to possess a teaching qualification, which supports students' academic development, and was identified by QAA (2016) as **good practice**.

Students confirmed that they make significant use of the VLE and find it very useful, particularly those studying part- time. Use of the VLE is monitored by the College and the information obtained is used to support development and achievement. Students can access support for their learning through the College's HE Gateway and Learning Zone. Staff of this facility provide a range of sessions on academic skills development. The HE Gateway is a facility provided collaboratively by the College and the University. Its facilities are available to University students. The Learning Zone provides a range of learning resources and facilities for all higher education students at the College. The College monitors the quality of the content of its VLE using the 'Going for Gold' standard and improvement in this metric is a target in the College's Strategic Plan. Progress against this standard has recently been made. Students confirmed that they use the VLE and value it.

Student Outcomes and Learning Gain

The HE Enhancement Strategy is monitored and reported on at this key management group for higher education in the College. Student representation at the group and feedback through class representatives and focus groups ensures that enhancement is high on the agenda and any specific

focus is relevant to student needs. A key element of the Enhancement Strategy and also an area of strength for the College is the provision of work placement opportunities. In particular, Fd Counselling students provide the College counselling service for young people and HND Sports students have accessed extended international experiences through the support of teaching staff.

The College recruits students from a range of educational and social backgrounds which is reflected in the Polar data for the organisation. The College also recruits students from a range of ages as well those already in employment.

DHLE data indicates that across all of HE provision, 94% of students go on to employment or further study, with 63% in highly skilled employment. The highly qualified and experienced Careers Advice and Guidance team works with the students, delivering a range of progression sessions over the length of the course. Some part-time students may miss this opportunity and as a result the College is investigating methods to extend the reach of the careers and guidance sessions by offering e-learning options and video formats; using ClickView, the online video portal for students.

The 5 statements from the mid-year student survey that drew the highest levels of agreement (ranked by agreement) and that had College wide impact were:
(Note: numbers in brackets show the agree% from 2016-17 for comparison.)

- The College promotes safe working practices during lessons and in training sessions 98% (98%)
- I feel safe in College 98% (97%)
- My teacher treats us all fairly and equally 98% (97%)
- I know what action to take/ where to go to get help if I am being abused, discriminated, bullied or harassed 98% (98%)
- I can use a computer when I need to 98% (98%)

Summary

Bishop Auckland College is located in an area of significant deprivation where higher level skills and higher level qualifications are in short supply but where highly skilled employment is growing due to recent relocation of a number of large national companies. In response to local demand a high proportion of the curriculum provides education and training for the Early Years/Healthcare and Sports sectors which have national rates of low pay. Currently 62% of Part Time learners are located in POLAR 1 or 2 areas, therefore the College suggests that the above facts mitigate against the negative highly skilled employment metrics. The College asserts that the metrics evidence and impact indicate that it provides excellent outcomes for students and that students are stretched and challenged, and cleary appreciate the support and excellent teaching and learning on their respective programmes. The range of provision offered by the College indicates a thorough understanding of each sector and its current needs and demands. Finally, the College seeks to facilitate and reward excellent teaching, recognising its key importance in empowering students with skills for a productive and purposeful working life.