Name of Provider: [USP College]
UKPRN: [10005736]

TEF Year Four provider submission

Provider Context

USP College is a General Further Education College. As of the 1st of August 2017, USP College is the merged entity of Seevic College and Palmer's Sixth Form College. The College has provision ranging from levels 1-6, with learners enrolled on over 6800 learning aims. The college provides both directly funded Higher Education with Pearson as the validating partner, as well as franchised provision, in partnership with the University of Hertfordshire (UH), and Writtle University College (WUC).

The growth of Higher Education to provide a much-needed local entry point to study is a strategic driver for the College. The College's campuses sit within the HE cold spot with some of the lowest progression to HE in the country. Expanding the HE offer to the local community will hopefully increase uptake, and increase progression to highly skilled employment. Therefore, the College's strategic direction for growth reflects the current South-East labour market requirements. The launch of the College's new strategy identifies five sector areas that the College will promote, and deliver in high quality education. This includes; Medical & Health Care, Early Years, Childcare & Education, Life & Sport Sciences, The Financial Sector & Professional Services, and Creative and Digital sectors.

The college has established a history of providing high quality Higher Education. During the latest QAA Higher Education Review (2016) Seevic College met all of the UK Quality expectations. The college received two commendations for good practice relating to 'the high level of individualised support provided at all stages of students' engagement with the College, which enables students to develop their personal potential'. As well as ensuring 'effective arrangements to support the academic and professional development of students'.

Enrolment data for 2017-18 states that 93% of the student population are internal progression from level 3 provision, with all enrolments being direct applicants to the college. Contextual data from the TEF metrics indicate that 96% of all entrants accessing the college's HE provision come from a disadvantaged background (POLAR 3 or below), which would correlate with the radius that the College students reside. The metrics also suggest that 52% of students enter courses on a low or non-tariff programme. Internal data suggests that 78% of entrants studied BTEC qualifications, 12% studied A level provision, and 10% had another mode of entry.

The College is effective at adapting its delivery of HE to best match the often low previous academic attainment and complex needs of its HE student cohort. In addition, it provides extensive transitional and ongoing support to best enable 100% of its students to access employment or further study with 75% achieving highly skilled employment or further study at the end of their HE course (TEF Metrics).

Teaching Quality

The college aims to provide a clear, achievable focus to raise the standard of Teaching and Learning to support the college's career focused strategy pledge:

'By 2025 we will train 15,000 young people with the skills to stand out against their competitors to gain aspirational and exciting careers'.

The college's teaching learning and assessment strategy aims to develop a teaching team who are wholly reflective of their practice and driven to develop their skills to ensure all students achieve their potential.

The focus of this strategy will engage a teaching team who actively promote 3 key themes:

1. Inspiration; Building professional and supportive relationships with all of our students and forge trust

2. Individualised learning; Individualise learning throughout the provision to meet every students' needs
3. Challenge; Challenge students with high expectations to maximise value added for all students on all courses

The impact of this strategy will, of course, be measured by outcome data, but the college believes that the ultimate measure of success is seeing students engaged, excited and inquisitive in their learning and leaving as better people than when they arrived.

HE Teaching quality at the College is high. A comprehensive approach to learning and teaching exits with strategic and collective steps taken to ensure learning and teaching are systematically reviewed and continually enhanced in accordance with the College Quality Assurance Strategy, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy and Collaborative Reflective Practice Policy.
Support and guidance for our HE learner's is the cornerstone of our offer, being able to individualise support for the needs of our learners links to consistently high outcomes.

External Examiner (EE) and awarding body quality reports consistently detail good levels of learning and teaching quality and recognise a highly collaborative and supportive culture at the College. Student Achievement is high with 98% of HE students achieving a HE qualification and 60% of these achieving high grades (1st Class, Upper Second Class, Commendation, Merit or Distinction) this is despite the majority of students entering HE at the College with low previous academic attainment.

TQ1 Student Engagement :Teaching provides effective stimulation, challenge and contact time that encourages students to engage and actively commit to their studies.

The USP College teaching and learning strategy helps to drive teaching that is inspirational, individualised and provides suitable challenge. The 18 core ideas that under pin this strategy can be found in figure 1 (p3).

Student input is highly valued on all HE programmes and is used consistently to enhance courses through the involvement of students in; programme design; periodic review; the design of assessment methods; and evaluation of module and course performance including learning and teaching performance. This is achieved through Module Feedback Questionnaires (MFQs), Module Evaluation Forms (MEFs) and Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Reports (AMERs), all of which are presented to Student Representatives at Programme Committee and Student Representative meetings. Students are also engaged on the college's academic board, where the HE student representative has a standing agenda item for student feedback.

The college is committed to the power of the student's voice and how it can make meaningful change to the overall student satisfaction with the college.

"I'm pleased to have the opportunity to have the role of class representative as it enables me / us to have an input, and for our voice to be heard, and feel that the process is inclusive. I enjoy hearing other's opinions and perspectives. Also, we like hearing about aspects of UH from the link tutor".

Hollie Farrows, FD Early Years

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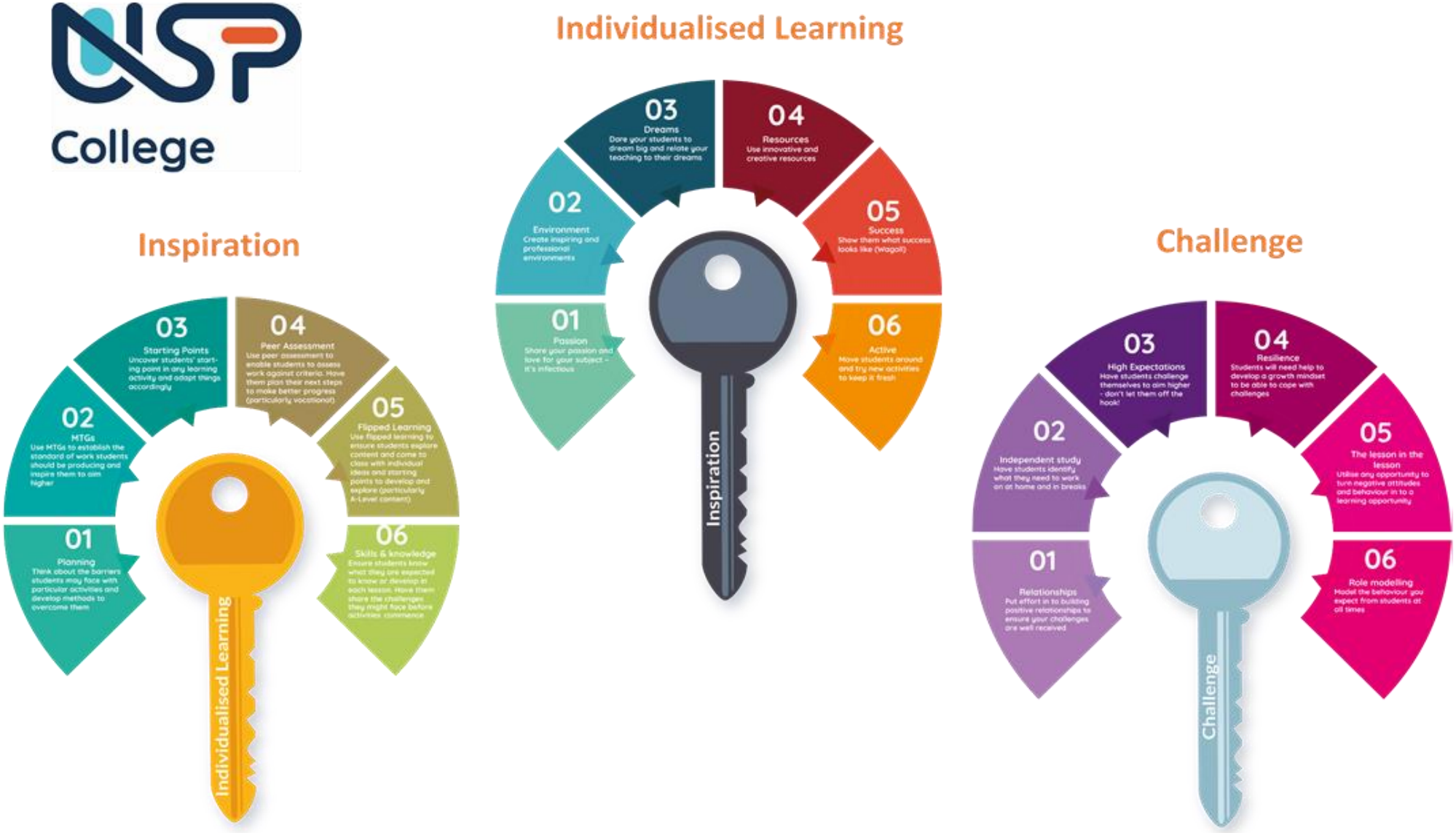

Figure 1 USP College Teaching and Learning Strategy

Teachers continually engage with students at course level regarding teaching and learning practices. Enhancements to lesson content, class room tasks, and assessment design are common examples of modifications made as a result of student feedback.

Examination of the themes of the college wide MFQs found that students were highly satisfied with the quality of teaching and learning on modules. With respondents in agreement that teaching themes were of high quality as shown in table 1.

Table 1 Cross College MFQ feedback relating to teaching on HE modules

Question		**Def Agree**	**Mostly Agree**	**Total**	**Total % Def/Mostly Agree**
6	The tutor was good at explaining things.	171	64	235	95%
7	The tutor made the subject interesting.	158	68	226	91%
8	The tutor was enthusiastic about what they are teaching.	187	52	239	96%
9	The module was intellectually stimulating.	145	77	222	90%

The MFQ feedback is corroborated by student comments at PCM meetings, where the consistent theme is high student satisfaction in relation to teaching on the programme.

"*The break given between hand-in of research project and the start of next modules has worked for them this year which has given a clear separation of work. They are enjoying the BA Hons degree and how supportive the HE tutors are*" (BA, Educations Studies Programme Committee Meeting 2 minutes, 2018).

The internal data significantly correlates with the year 4 metrics. The college scored 96.9% for the 'teaching on my course', placing the college in the top 10% of absolute performance, and significantly above benchmark. This profile has been consistently demonstrated in the last 3 years as outlined in table 2. Each of the last 3 years' data was shown to be significantly higher than benchmark (Z Score >+1.96).

Table 2 Three year trend of TEF teaching quality metrics.

Three year trend	Indicator (a) %	Benchmark (b) %	Difference (a)-(b) *	Z-score
The teaching on my course 2015-16	97.1	88.1	9.0	2.0
The teaching on my course 2016-17	98.8	87.6	11.2	2.8
The teaching on my course 2017-18	96.9	87.9	9.0	2.3

The high quality teaching staff should take primary credit for these excellent results. Though the college adopts a multifaceted approach to help facilitate this to ensure high quality provision.

The college values the teaching staff and are proud that 48% hold HEA accreditation, including 1 with Senior Fellowship, and another 32% are currently working towards the award. All teaching staff hold a qualification one level higher than they currently teach too, as well as all academic staff holding a level 5 teaching qualifications or are working towards completion, which is further evidence to support the results in table 2.

Our career-facing vision means we use a range of employability-focused pedagogic approaches including real world simulation, live industry projects, and work place learning. These learning and assessment activities stretch our students, and we set high expectations to ensure they develop to be creative, professional and enterprising graduates. Curriculum content and structure is always approved through the rigorous validation process of partner institutions. As part of this process, programme development teams must demonstrate that experts from business and the professions contributed to programme design and that they are working with professional engagement groups to ensure involvement in the currency of the programme.

The delivery of HE curriculum is supported by the role of the academic support tutor. These staff are employed to help develop course and academic study skills of our students. They work closely with the academic staff and play an important role that enables the college to individualise the learning opportunities for its students. Their impact is clearly evidenced using internal MFQ feedback, where 94% of students agree that '*they have received sufficient advice and support with my studies'*.
The internal data is again supported by external sources, including; a 100% agree rating, demonstrated by question 13 of 2017-18 NSS results, as well as an overall TEF academic support rating of 93.2%, 10% above benchmark and rated as significantly different.

The college operates a student centric model for class group sizing. It recognises the history of high quality provision and excellent outcomes and does not allow for group sizes to exceed 20 students, this, in turn, allows for students to build a professional relationship with the academic staff, and feel that they are able to access support when they require it. Students engage with their learning through the College interactive online learning platform – Moodle, and students on UH based courses make good use of the University's VLE - Studynet. Academic support staff provide ongoing support and guidance to students to help them make the best use of these systems. Student engagement with these learning platforms is high and is consistently monitored by teachers across HE programmes. Staff and students agree that the use of these systems encourages students to take responsibility for their learning and own their personal and professional development.

"I chose USP college because of the small class sizes, and for the fact, I wouldn't have to move away from home. I would have been really anxious in a large lecture theatre. Having a small class means I've made friends quickly, and I've been able to access help from the tutors regularly. I feel I get good value for money!"

Georgia Woodburn, BSc Sport & Exercise Performance

Assessment practices are varied, as recognised by EEs and encourage students to demonstrate in a variety of ways the breadth of skills and knowledge learnt. Live briefs are widespread and enable students to complete work for a range of employers in accordance with employer needs. Examples include; Art students who have worked with global brands like Manchester United, engaging in product design briefs; completion of assessments linked to YCN competition briefs, all set by external companies including; The Dogs Trust, Action for Hearing Loss and Street Feast. These students also regularly work with local companies as part of the Live Creative College Company. Early Years students have conducted assessments with local nurseries, designing and implementing forest school's activities, as well as carrying out action research. Sports students conducted fitness testing for local sports teams; as well as working with local gym members to provide nutritional advice. Students have confirmed they highly value live briefs of this nature, as they provide an opportunity to gain an insight into the industry, a chance to further hone valuable employability skills and the opportunity to develop professional networks.

Student attendance and punctuality are monitored weekly in accordance with the USP Attendance Policy. Weekly group attendance at lessons is typically 88% or higher. Courses with below average attendance levels are highlighted by the Head of Higher Education and shared with Heads of Learning and course leaders so that improvements can be targeted. Consistent low attendance is referred to the College Quality team who decide on relevant support/intervention. Individual student attendance is captured and displayed on the electronic student monitoring and tracking progress portal - Promonitor. Students and academics both have access to this system to facilitate course level tracking and monitoring of attendance. NSS data and outcomes data would confirm the effectiveness of these practices.

TQ2 Valuing Teaching : Institutional culture facilitates, recognises and rewards excellent teaching.

There is a strong ethos of excellence in learning and teaching at the College and staff are incentivised and motivated to perform to the highest level. All HE teaching staff at the College are required to hold a teaching qualification or be working towards achieving one. Financial uplift is awarded to teachers on successful completion of teaching qualifications, which are delivered in-house to College members. This in-house delivery enables the College to set its own standards and expectations for its teaching staff. Consistently high performing teachers at the College are eligible to apply for Teaching Improvement Practioner (TIPs) posts, which were introduced in 2016 to focus upon identifying and developing excellence in teaching, learning and assessment at the College.
Staff acting as TIPs are financially rewarded and receive remission to enable them to develop and support staff in delivering innovative, imaginative and dynamic teaching, learning and assessment opportunities. The focus is on inspiring individuals to raise aspirations and expectations and realise their personal and professional ambitions. TIPs are assigned across the institution and enable teaching staff access to a teaching specialist for support whenever needed. There is one TIP who is the lead for Higher Education, and this post helps facilitate good practice and provide support to Higher Education teachers. The main function of this support role includes; scheduled learning walks, leading CPD mini sessions, coaching colleagues. TIPs work flow is managed at local team meeting level and impact is measured, through the use of an action log.

The work of TIPs at the College has raised standards of learning and teaching, improving identified ineffective teaching by 66%. During 17-18, it was deemed that there was not an immediate quality risk to teaching learning and assessment, as identified through the learning walk process. The quality of HE learning and teaching delivery has been stable over the last three years; recent development needs have focused upon academic levelness, use of technology in and out of the classroom and engaging learners in the classroom. This approach, coupled with staff attendance at regular external development events at UH led by the Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre (LTIC), has positively impacted upon learning and teaching performance. This narrative again is evidenced in both College MFQ feedback, where 95% of students gave a positive response relating to the quality of explanations given by tutors, 91% of students agreed that staff made the course content interesting, and 96% of students agree that staff were enthusiastic about their subject. TEF year 4 metrics score for teaching on my course in the top 10% of absolute performance, significantly above benchmark (Z Score >+1.96).

The College has high expectations of its teachers and uses a learning walk model for observation of all HE teachers, excluding DTLLS Level 5 tutors who are observed as part of their teaching qualification. These are conducted regularly and are linked to the annual appraisal of staff. USP College teaching learning assessment Framework criteria are merged with the requirements of the UKPSF and Expectations of the QAA Quality Code to enable sound judgements of HE teaching practice to be reached. There is a specific focus within learning walks upon inspiration, and individualisation regarding the learning and teaching on courses. Learning walks are conducted by members of the Senior Management team, Heads of learning staff with HEA accreditation and TIPs. Learning walks are themed on a termly basis focusing on the three keys of the USP teaching, learning and assessment framework. Learning walk feedback is collected thematically by teaching area to allow for the college quality team to have oversight on the current level of teaching learning and assessment. Reports regarding the quality of learning and teaching across the organisation are collated and presented to the College governing body by the Vice Principal Quality.

This model is used in conjunction with the college's Collaborative Professional Reflection (CPR) policy; whereby teachers reflect on their own performance and collaborate with peers to support and develop practice, share best practice and identify training needs. The enhancement of teaching performance remains an important priority for the college and is key to high quality provision. After consultation with teaching staff, it has been recognised that teacher ownership is pivotal to driving forward improvements in teaching and learning. Therefore, the decision was taken to design a non-judgemental, teacher owned strategy (CPR) for the enhancement of teaching and learning. The aim of this process is to promote a culture whereby teachers, assessors, progress tutors and learning coaches take ownership and have autonomy over their teaching practice. This will allow the College to develop an ethos whereby teachers willingly share best practice and engage in peer support. The policy employs a coaching model to the

experience of reflecting on teaching, learning and assessment, with staff engaging with critical reflection, to develop a continuous professional development portfolio. This process is presented in figure 2.

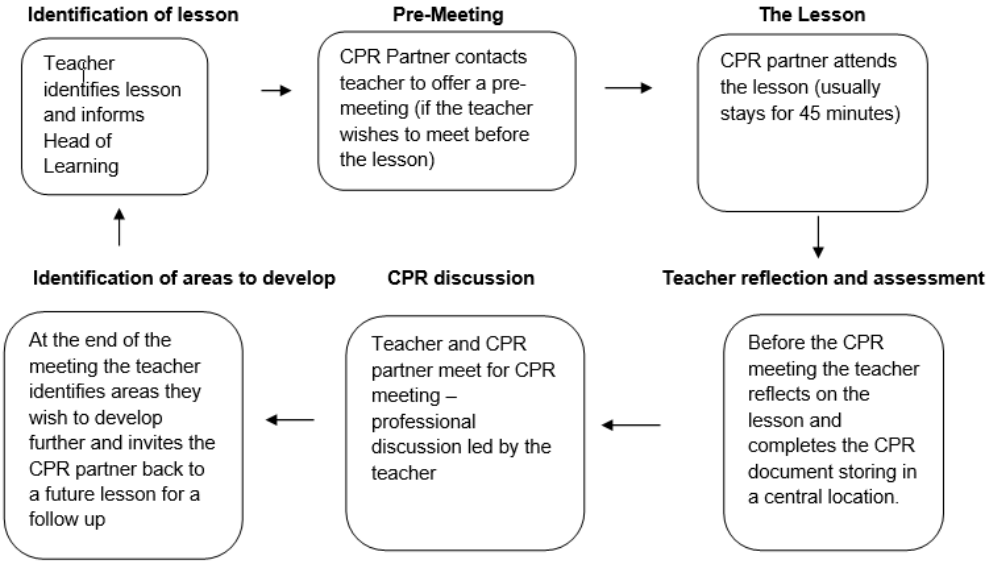

Figure 2 The CPR Process

The College values its teaching staff and those involved with HE and recognises the differences between teaching at L3 and at Higher Education. The staff that teach on Higher Education programmes are given a remission weighting factor of 1.5 for every module they deliver. This time back reflects the additional preparation time required to design lesson content, prepare resources, and stay up to date with current literature at levels 4, 5 & 6. In addition to this, HE staff are paid to assess the first submission of all summative work. Again, in recognition of the extra time demand that is required to assess, and internally verify work at the higher levels.

The teachers delivering specific HE courses work collectively as a team and cooperate across modules to ensure students receive a high quality all round learning experience. MFQs are completed by students at the end of each module/semester, and the results from these are discussed at forums attended by senior managers (HE academic quality and standards committee) teachers and support staff (HE team meetings) and students (programme committee meetings). This feedback informs the course level self-assessment process, which ultimately feeds in to the college annual provider review, were quality is assured by governors. Collectively these reporting mechanisms are key drivers for informing future staff development activities.

TQ3 Rigour & Stretch : Course design, development, standards and assessment are effective in stretching students to develop independence, knowledge, understanding and skills that reflect their full potential

Robust procedures for the validation and revalidation of UH and WUC programmes exist. These procedures are managed and documented by UH and WUC and are fully adhered to by College HE staff and overseen by the College's Head of Higher Education. The Periodic Review Handbook, supported by the HHEC/FHEC Quality Handbook, details specific procedures. Course design and revalidation are completed in accordance with internal and external drivers including the UH or WUC Graduate Attributes, FHEQ, Subject Benchmark Statements and Foundation Degree Characteristics Statements. For Pearson based qualifications, centre quality review and EE reports document effective assessment practices and confirm that appropriate challenge and independent learning are embedded within courses. Comprehensive moderation and internal verification processes enable academic rigour to be monitored and maintained across all HE. QAA confirmed through HE Review visits that all HE delivered by the College met UK expectations for setting and maintaining academic standards.

Students, EEs and employers contribute towards course and assessment design, both during formal validation/revalidation activities and during programme delivery. Student input is gained at the point of programme design, periodic review and throughout programme delivery to inform the design of courses

and assessment methods. Student voice and satisfaction is monitored 'in year' through MFQs, and the self-assessment process, all of which are used to continually enhance course content and delivery.

Reports from EEs are regularly positive regarding assessment opportunities and provide evidence that grades awarded for assessments are appropriate and consistent. Furthermore, EEs confirm that the institution's processes for assessment are deemed sound and fair, whilst assessment and moderation processes are a strength across HE with rigorous and robust processes identified. Feedback from ongoing engagement with employers enables College staff to ensure alignment of course delivery with industry needs. Independent learning and skills development is embedded throughout College HE in direct response to employer feedback.

The appropriateness of the colleges and partners approach to rigour and stretch is evident with 98% of HE students achieving a HE qualification, 100% of students progressing to further study of employment, and 75% achieving highly skilled employment or further study within six months.

TQ4 Feedback Assessment and feedback are used effectively in supporting students' development, progression and attainment

The College's approach to assessment and feedback effectively supports the development, progression and attainment of its students. NSS and MFQ feedback from students (shown in table 3) is consistently high, and the year TEF metrics show assessment and feedback in the top 10% of absolute performance, 10% above benchmark (Z Score >+1.96).

The College recognises the significance of feedback to facilitate student development and has a twenty-day policy for the return of assessment grades and developmental feedback to HE students. Assessment feedback is provided electronically to students via Studynet or Moodle via turn it in. Academic Support Tutor sessions provide students with the opportunity to discuss feedback and create future student targets to enhance development, progression and attainment. Both UH and WUC feedback forms enable students to highlight to staff areas that they would like feedback on from the academic staff. This mechanism has helped individualise the approach to feedback for HE learners.

The work of the Early years, in the form of their supported experiment for 2017/18, worked on improving student recognition of feedback opportunities. It was observed in 2016-17 via NSS (88%) and Module Feedback Data (81%) that students often scored the provision lower for the amount and quality of feedback that students received. It was hypothesized by the team that this was because students did not associate the multiple forms of feedback they received as feedback, and when surveyed only considered the summative feedback received on assignments. To address this, the team conducted a feedback work shop during tutorial sessions, exploring the multiple forms of feedback opportunities students received, coupled with staff wearing 'this is feedback' stickers on the back of their ID badges. This sticker was used to associate when the group were receiving feedback in more informal ways. This greatly improved 2017-18 overall NSS and MFQ feedback scores 96% and 94% respectively. This idea was shared with UH on a recent collaborative partner day, and the School of Education at UH have also decided to adopt this approach.

Table 3 Three year trend of MFQ & NSS Feedback scores

Year	2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
Question	MFQ	NSS	MFQ	NSS	MFQ	NSS
The criteria used in marking have been made clear in advance	96%	100%	95%	100%	94%	82.3%
Feedback on my work is helping me to clarify things I did not understand	88%	84%	81%	94.7%	89%	100%
Feedback on my work has been prompt.	91%	88%	85%	94.7%	93%	82.3%

Learning Environment

LE1 Resources

Physical and digital resources are used effectively to aid students' learning and the development of independent study and research skills

The College is committed to providing students with both physical and virtual environments that best support learning. Investment of circa £750,000 over the year has enabled the College to update IT hardware, software and network infrastructure, while developing physical recourses, building four immersive rooms, upgrading the Sports Science Laboratory, and to remodelling the HE study room. Four immersive rooms, two at each campus, have been installed to enable a new approach to providing inspirational content, and the ability to share teaching expertise at the two campuses. New laptops and tablets were provided for HE classrooms; there was an increase in the provision of upgraded teaching devices; various software updates to staff and students, and increased student Wi-Fi coverage and bandwidth in response to student feedback. In addition, the College provides staff and students with full access to Microsoft 360 which can be accessed in and out of the classroom, to support learning, personal development and encourage independent and collaborative learning.

Students registered on UH based courses have student access to CANVAS Studynet (virtual learning platform) and associated university resources and facilities. Usage of CANVAS Studynet is consistent across the College and Student Representatives have confirmed the effectiveness of this to support learning within their groups. Students registered on WUC courses have full access to the WUC moodle site, which gains them access to the WUC university library and online learning resources. Students on Pearson based courses access the College platform use the USP moodle and have further access to HN Global to support their studies. The use of the online course material is designed to support students learning outside of the classroom.

Student engagement with online learning is monitored as a proxy for engagement. Staff engagement is monitored in year, in accordance with a Minimum Usage Policy. The results are shared with the quality team each semester. Any courses below minimum expectations are targeted, and action plans are shared with curriculum areas where improvement is required.

Student NSS satisfaction rates for learning resources are the lowest scoring for the college, the three-year trend is presented in table 4. The college recognises that in 2017-18 student were not satisfied with the IT equipment that they were able to access, even though this has been consistently close to national benchmarks for the previous three years. Focus group analysis of this data explained that it was the physical IT resources (Desktops, Laptops & Printers) that were at the source of the problem. This poor score did not extend to online learning resources.

Table 4 NSS feedback relating to resourcing

NSS Question	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
The IT resources and facilities provided have supported my learning well.	71%	79%	47%
I have been able to access course-specific resources (e.g. equipment, facilities, software, collections) when I needed to.	77%	95%	93%

In response, the college has already invested upwards of £75,000 improve the physical IT resource for HE students, upgrading desktop and laptop facilities in HE classrooms. As well as entering into a new contract with Cannon to provide an improved reprographics and printing services for staff and students.

All HE students have access to the College HE student room, which was designed by students to best meet their needs. Following feedback from multiple student groups, this area was remodelled in 2018. This area features a working zone, with IT access and a more relaxed social space. Student Representatives are canvassed each year to ensure this space continues to be suitable for their needs.

LE2 Scholarship, Research and Professional Practice: The learning environment is enriched by student exposure to and involvement in provision at the forefront of scholarship, research and/or professional practice

The College is committed to providing training and Continued Professional Development (CPD) opportunities and support for staff to maintain good industry links, scholarships and to ensure high standards with regards to professional practice. Training and development opportunities are offered within the College in response to departmental needs; based on learning walk theme data, student feedback and EE reports. This individualised approach contributes to the enhancement to the student learning experience. In addition, staff are eligible for remission to access external training and development or top up qualifications, examples of some which staff have accessed include: Masters, PhD or higher level based qualifications; College funded HEA accreditation (available to teachers and non-teachers); Professional Conferences; Annual LTIC and International Partners Conferences at UH. Staff also engage in industry based training and qualifications and are able to develop professional relationships with employers through the provision of work experience and curriculum design.

The college uses the concept of 'Supported Experiments' an initiative used with teaching staff, to enable experimentation with any form of teaching, learning or assessment. The college has adopted this method of scholarship, based on the principle that skill level is improved with engagement with deliberate practice. The concept enables staff to experiment with their teaching to incorporate elements of deliberate practice to try and convert successful action research in to their normal teaching practice. The concept uses the normal scientific approach to research, with staff supported through the planning, design, implementation, and dissemination of results by the college TIPs. This process is facilitated as workshops on designated College CPD days. The results of the projects are all shared at a cross college fair and share event at the end of the academic year. With staff presenting their results in multiple formats; Presentations, Academic Posters, Practical demonstrations to name the most common. This initiative is linked with the Colleges CPR policy (figure 2) for staff development, where identified individual teaching and learning CPD targets are addressed with help to design a meaningful supported experiment.

The initiative has run since 2016, and has had measurable improvements on teaching quality across the institution as a whole. Although, the evidence collected and reported is not empirical, improvements in value added and student achievement data have been seen across multiple curriculum areas where supported experiments have been implemented effectively.

Students undertaking work experience and completing live briefs gain valuable insight into industry practices, a chance to develop professional networks and the opportunity to undertake research and projects specifically centred on the needs of employers. Some examples include Art students producing Exhibitions for the Beecroft Art Gallery, Short films for Southend Museum textile collection. Sports Students have worked on live coaching briefs working with Professional & Semi Professional sports teams, including Team GB Basketball, London Irish Rugby Club & Southend Rugby. All Early Years students complete a minimum of 150 hours work experience in the early year's sector and use this opportunity to embed theoretical concepts in to every day practice.

Industry skills are regularly shared with students through external visits, contributions from external speakers, former student experiences and through the experiences of specialist course delivery teams, in recent years this has included talks from Manchester United's Marketing Department, The Dogs Trust charity, and former students now employed in Early Years settings. In addition, professional skills are considered in all course design and periodic review activities.

LE3 Personalised Learning

Students' academic experiences are tailored to the individual, maximising rates of retention, attainment and progression

Academic support for HE learners is highly personalised, extensive and stretches far beyond the learning and teaching delivered in the classroom through integration of specialist support provided by the academic support tutors and Student Support functions at the College. Students are provided with tailored support to maximise their personal rates of engagement, retention, attainment and progression whilst enabling them to gain valuable industry experience or maintain work commitments.

Table 5 Three Year Trend TEF Metrics for Academic Support

Three year trend	Indicator (a) %	Benchmark (b) %	Difference (a)-(b) *	Z-score
Academic Support 2015-16	95.2	83.4	11.9	2.2
Academic Support 2016-17	96.1	82.7	13.4	2.7
Academic Support 2017-18	93.2	83.2	10.0	2.1

Table 5 shows satisfaction rates for academic support for students from all backgrounds are above benchmark values with no difference being reported between any of the split metrics. All scores from the past 3 years evidence significant flags for academic support, showing this to be something that the student of the college value. This strength was acknowledged by QAA, as previously stated, academic support was one of the commendations that the college received in its 2015 HER.

As part of the curriculum design for higher education programmes, the College employs academic support tutors. Each student has access to an academic support tutor for guidance and support through their studies on the programmes. The support tutors are educated to degree level within the area of study, and part of their job is to attend all timetabled sessions to give individualised support within class time, as well as offering one to one tutorial support outside of the sessions, access to module workshops to support academic writing skills. These staff are contactable outside of teaching hours and regularly provide email support. These staff are contractually obliged to be working towards a Diploma in Education and Training or equivalent, and often assist the academic teaching with the modification of resources to further individualise teaching. This approach has had significant success at maximising student experience and outcomes.

Table six outlines the excellent Retention, Success & Achievement Rates for Higher Education courses in 2017/18.

Table 6 HE Course Retention, Success & Achievement Rates for 2017/18

Qualification Aim	Level	Definition	2017/18
HNC Art & Design	4	No of Starts	13
		Retention Rate	100%
		Achievement Rate	100%
		Success Rate	100%
HND Art and Design	5	No of Starts	7
		Retention Rate	100%
		Achievement Rate	100%
		Success Rate	100%
Foundation Degree Early Years	4	No of Starts	27
		Retention Rate	100%
		Achievement Rate	100%
		Success Rate	100%
Foundation Degree Early Years	5	No of Starts	25
		Retention Rate	100%
		Achievement Rate	100%
		Success Rate	100%
Ba Education Studies in Early Years	6	No of Starts	23
		Retention Rate	96%
		Achievement Rate	96%
		Success Rate	100%
BSc Sport & Exercise Performance	4	No of Starts	9

Qualification Aim	Level	Definition	2017/18
		Retention Rate	100%
		Achievement Rate	88.9%
		Success Rate	88.9%

	2017/18
Retention Rate	99%
Achievement Rate	98%
Success Rate	99%

Non Continuation data was non-reportable based on the TEF metrics, but according to internal data non continuation rates since 2014/15 for USP College is 1.6%. This data has been submitted as an additional page of quantitative evidence.

Student Outcomes and Learning Gain

SO1 Employment and Further Study

Students achieve their educational and professional goals, in particular, progression to further study or highly skilled employment

Students achieve their educational and professional goals with 100% (1.2% above TEF benchmark) accessing employment or further study and 75% (5.7% above TEF benchmark) achieving highly skilled employment or further study on completion of their HE course (TEF Metrics). The College contributes towards this by providing; a focus on employability across all its courses; good transitional support for students; high quality learning and teaching that centres on rigour and stretch; the provision of good levels of feedback that enable progress and development; effective academic and non-academic support for students; close monitoring of student performance data; and a learning environment that inspires and motivates students to achieve their full potential.

This is reflected in high levels of students achieving HE qualifications (98%) despite 52% of students accessing College HE having low to non-tariff on entry (11% low tariff and 40% non-tariff) and 96% being typically from disadvantaged backgrounds (POLAR quintiles 3 or below).

The internally held college data presented in table 6, again evidences that student achievement, retention and success are all very positive metric for student enrolled onto college higher education programmes, and this success leads the students into further study or employment. A point reinforced by QAA who stated ‘there are effective arrangements to support the academic and professional development of students’.

Through close quality monitoring between the college and delivery partners, we are aware of the performance of our students in relation to students at the partner institutions. Performance on UH based course shows that all students have achieved the qualification, higher than that of the awarding body. On WUC courses the performance of students is equal to that of the awarding partner.

Teaching staff maintain contact with their graduating students through email, LinkedIn and the work experience based modules. The college marketing department run the alumni group on the LinkedIn platform and use it to foster a network of contacts who the College use to enrich the curriculum for current students. Anecdotal feedback from students and Student Representatives, confirms the practice of former students offering work related opportunities and the sharing of their experiences is valued by students.
A project run this year by the Early Years team, looked at capturing the views and experience of graduating student in an alumni handbook. The book was a look through the experiences of study for each of the modules on the programmes with a collation of student feedback explaining hints and tips that may allow success for future students. This trial was well received by prospective students, and the College will look to replicate this for other courses across the provision.

SO2 Employability and Transferable Skills

Students acquire knowledge, skills and attributes that are valued by employers and that enhance their personal and/or professional lives

The College embeds employability throughout all HE courses. Work experience is a distinctive feature within each course and a wide range of projects and experiences are completed by students, typically in collaboration with local and regional employers.
The inclusion of live briefs enables students to interact with employers and enhance student learning opportunities. Feedback from students and employers is consistently positive and good relationships between employers and the College exist. Feedback from employers contributes to future assessment practices and informs College staff of skills and attributes sought within relevant industries.
Assessment design is considered in the planning phase of the validation of UH programmes where the planning team gain employer feedback on the relevance of the content and the applicability of the assessment methods, ensuring that current practices are observed. On Writtle based courses, the implementation of student feedback in the design of curriculum and assessment is evident, following a 'you said, we did' exercise, changes to the curriculum included, additional guest lectures on starting your own business for sport & exercise professionals, in a request that was seen as unique and beneficial to the students ever developing professional skills. Other modules included more field based assessment methods, replicating skills that you would need in the sports industry, rather than classical forms of assessment. In addition, the college has used in house expertise to run sessions on interview techniques, CVs, digital footprints and the use of social media.

Students highly value the opportunities to engage with employers. More specifically, students appreciate the opportunity to apply knowledge learnt in the classroom within a professional working environment. NSS data presented in table 7 from years 16/17 and 17/18 shows the students consistently value the opportunities they are afforded as part of their curriculum to apply their learning.

Table 7 NSS Results pertaining to application of learning

NSS Question	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
My course has provided me with opportunities to apply what I have learnt.	n/a	94%	94%

Regular tracking and monitoring of student performance and career aspirations in weekly academic support sessions enable staff to provide a personalised approach to maximise student personal development. Students are referred to additional training and development opportunities to enhance their employability. Examples include; Sport students shadowing PE staff to gain insight to the teaching professional, and access to the opportunity to complete additional coaching qualifications; Art students producing work for end of year final show, and HE students retaking GCSEs at the College to enhance their chances of career progression, students and staff also take advantage of the wide range of online subject specific development content from providers like lynda.com and edX.

SO3 Positive Outcomes for All

Positive outcomes are achieved by its students from all backgrounds, in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds or those who are at greater risk of not achieving positive outcomes

The College received an affirmation for 'high level of individualised support provided at all stages of students' engagement with the College, which enables students to develop their personal potential' (QAA 2016). College reporting systems enable teachers and senior managers to effectively monitor attendance, punctuality, student performance, progress and attainment throughout each academic year. The integrated approach to support learning and teaching and individual students across the College maximises levels of attainment of all HE students. College systems allow senior managers to routinely identify and monitor gaps in attainment by diverse cohorts. Student satisfaction rates are also examined to ensure the student experience is high across all student groups.

Outcomes for all students are high at the College as demonstrated in table 6 (p11), there are no obvious gaps in performance or attainment from students with protected characteristics, though it is noticeable that a significant proportion of our students come from disadvantaged backgrounds, though results seem to suggest that this is not a factor in the success of these learners, and may be testament to the support structures in place and the hard work of both the students and academic staff.

In conclusion, the College is dedicated to providing high quality learning and teaching to all students regardless of background. The impact and effectiveness of teaching on the student experience and outcomes they achieve is highly positive and reflect the College's mission to inspire, individualise and challenge its provision for the students who decide to study with us. Student feedback, from both internal and external sources demonstrates high levels of satisfaction and the College is committed to working with students, employers and staff to continue to enhance all aspects of its HE provision.