

Assessment for quality and standards initial conditions B7 and B8

Waltham Forest College

Provider legal name: Waltham Forest College

Provider trading name: Waltham Forest College

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Enquiries to: regulation@officeforstudents.org.uk

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Executive summary

Type of assessment	Initial conditions B7 (quality) and B8 (standards)
For	Waltham Forest College
Advice to the OfS on B7	Waltham Forest College has credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with conditions B1, B2 and B4 from the date of registration.
Advice to the OfS on B8	The standards set for the courses Waltham Forest College intends to provide, and the achievement of students on these courses, appropriately reflect sector-recognised standards.

1. This report is an independent assessment of Waltham Forest College's compliance with the Office for Students' (OfS's) initial conditions of registration for quality (condition B7) and standards (condition B8).
2. The report shows the findings of an independent assessment team. It does **not** represent a decision by the OfS about Waltham Forest College's compliance with these conditions of registration.
3. The OfS's regulatory framework sets out that a higher education provider must register with the OfS to access certain benefits.¹
4. As part of the registration process, the OfS must assess whether a provider satisfies the initial conditions of registration, including initial conditions B7 (quality) and B8 (standards).

Initial condition of registration for quality (condition B7)

5. The assessment team found that, if registered, Waltham Forest College has credible plans that would allow it to comply with the OfS's ongoing conditions of registration for:
 - academic experience (condition B1)
 - resources, support and student engagement (condition B2)
 - assessment and awards (condition B4).

Initial condition of registration for standards (condition B8)

6. The assessment team found that, if it is registered, the standards set and applied for any relevant awards granted to students who complete a higher education course that Waltham Forest College intends to provide appropriately reflect applicable sector-recognised standards.

¹ See [Regulatory framework for higher education in England](#).

How we assess providers applying to register

The OfS will assess the applications and relevant evidence of higher education providers seeking registration to determine whether they satisfy the initial conditions of registration. For providers that applied for registration on or after 1 May 2022, this includes an assessment of whether the provider satisfies initial conditions B7 (quality) and B8 (standards) as set out in the regulatory framework (November 2022).

For this assessment, the OfS appoints an assessment team that includes external academic experts. The assessment may include a visit to the provider by the assessment team, after which it produces a report. The report does not consider matters that may have occurred after that period.

As part of the registration process the OfS also assesses risk against the related ongoing conditions of registration. These cover the following areas:

- academic experience (condition B1)
- resources, support and student engagement (condition B2)
- assessment and awards (condition B4)
- sector-recognised standards (condition B5).

7. Waltham Forest College's current higher education offering comprises a Level 4 certificate in Laser and Intense Pulsed Light Treatments, awarded by VTCT.
8. In accordance with the guidance on registering with the OfS (Regulatory advice 3),² the OfS decided that it was necessary to undertake an assessment visit to Waltham Forest College to gather evidence and provide advice to inform its decision about whether Waltham Forest College satisfies the initial conditions B7 and B8. The OfS decided that this assessment should be undertaken by assessors able to provide expert academic judgement.
9. The purpose of the assessment is to provide advice to the OfS to enable it to decide whether Waltham Forest College satisfies initial conditions B7 and B8 and whether there is any regulatory risk.
10. The evidence from the assessment will inform the OfS's decisions about whether to register Waltham Forest College and, if registered, whether any mitigation is necessary.
11. The OfS appointed an assessment team that consisted of two academic expert assessors and a member of OfS staff. It asked the team to give its advice and judgement about Waltham Forest College's compliance with initial conditions B7 and B8.
12. The team considered a range of information submitted by Waltham Forest College as part of its application for registration.

² See [Regulatory advice 3: How to register with the Office for Students](#).

13. The assessment team visited Waltham Forest College in June 2026 when it met with students, staff, senior leadership, toured the premises and observed teaching.

Introduction and background

14. Waltham Forest College is a medium-sized, general further education college in Walthamstow, east London. It operates on a single campus where most of the teaching and training takes place.
15. Waltham Forest College provides educational programmes for young people, adult learning programmes, apprenticeships, and provision for learners with high needs. There are over 3,000 full-time study programme funded learners and around 6000 adult learners on various courses, most of which are part-time courses.
16. Ofsted rated Waltham Forest College 'outstanding' in its most recent inspection in March 2024.
17. Waltham Forest College's higher education strategy aims to address the low supply of high quality technical qualifications at Levels 4 and 5 in the area. Waltham Forest College's curriculum strategy has identified key local needs in priority areas for the local economy in health and care, engineering and business.
18. Waltham Forest College currently delivers a VTCT Level 4 certificate in Laser and Intense Pulsed Light Treatments. There are currently ten students on this course, studying part-time, with a proposed intake of 15 students in 2026-27.
19. Waltham Forest College plans to deliver the courses set out in the table that follows.

Table: Proposed courses at Waltham Forest College

Higher education course	Awarding body	Course length	Mode	Proposed number of students
Level 5 Diploma in Teaching	NCFE	2 years	Part-time	15 (internal staff)
Level 4 Higher National Certificate in Business (Leadership and Management)	Pearson	2 years	Full-time	15
Level 5 Higher National Diploma Business (Leadership and Management)	Pearson	2 years	Full-time	15
Level 4 Higher National Certificate in Electrical and Electronic Engineering	Pearson	2 years	Full-time	15
Level 5 Higher National Diploma Electrical and Electronic Engineering	Pearson	2 years	Full-time	15
Level 4 Higher National Certificate in Healthcare Professions Support	Pearson	2 years	Full-time	15
Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Healthcare Professions Support	Pearson	2 years	Full-time	15

20. Waltham Forest College plans to deliver the above proposed courses from September 2027. It had been arranging for the courses to be awarded by a partner university from September 2026, with Waltham Forest College acting as franchise partner. However, Waltham Forest College informed the assessment team that it will now likely deliver these courses by itself from September 2027.
21. Waltham Forest College operates under one statutory corporation, established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.³ The corporation is responsible for both further education and higher education. Waltham Forest College's governance arrangements provide for distinct higher education oversight, where required, alongside its further education provision. These arrangements include a curriculum and quality committee, which oversees academic standards, quality assurance and learner outcomes. There is also a governors' higher education oversight subcommittee to provide assurance, challenge, and formal oversight of higher education strategy, which reports to the curriculum and quality committee. The higher education steering board is the top-tier academic governance body, chaired by the principal, responsible for higher education strategy, standards, policy approval, and institutional compliance.

³ See [Further and Higher Education Act 1992](#).

Assessment process

Initial condition B7: Quality

22. Waltham Forest College submitted a quality plan and supporting evidence, as required by the OfS's guidance for providers applying for registration (Regulatory advice 3).⁴
23. The assessment team requested and received further evidence from the college on 28 April 2026 and 4 June 2026. It also had access to data and information relating to the college and relevant to the assessment that are held by the OfS.
24. The team undertook an assessment visit on 2 and 3 June 2026. During the visit, the team met with staff, current students, observed classes, and assessed physical and online facilities and resources.
25. The team used this evidence to provide advice on whether Waltham Forest College complies with the requirements set out in initial condition B7. B7 requires that Waltham Forest College has credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with conditions of registration B1, B2 and B4, and requires it to have the capacity and resources to deliver these plans. As well as the advice provided by the team within this report, the OfS will likely draw on evidence Waltham Forest College submitted in relation to the other conditions of registration to make a judgement about whether they have the necessary capacity and resources to deliver their plans in practice.

Initial condition B8: Standards

26. Waltham Forest College submitted information relevant to the academic standards of the courses it intends to provide if registered, including course documentation, programme specifications and module outlines.⁵
27. Waltham Forest College submitted evidence of student achievement in assessed work and associated records of this achievement for courses it intends to provide if registered. (See also Annex A for the approach to sampling.)
28. Because Waltham Forest College provides a small number of courses, the assessment team has considered information relevant to all the courses Waltham Forest College intends to provide upon registration in reaching its view on B8.
29. The 'sector-recognised standards' are set out in a document published by the OfS.⁶ These set out the standards that all registered providers are required to meet and were used by the assessment team for its assessment.

⁴ See [Regulatory advice 3: How to register with the Office for Students](#).

⁵ See Annex 'Guidance for providers on the assessment of initial condition B8 (standards)' at [Regulatory advice 3: How to register with the Office for Students](#).

⁶ See [Sector-recognised standards](#).

30. The standards the OfS has identified as applicable are:
- A.1: Qualifications at each level
 - A.2: Volumes of credit
 - A.3: Qualification descriptors, specifically:
 - A.3.1 Descriptor for a qualification at Level 4
 - A.3.2 Descriptor for a qualification at Level 5.
31. The assessment team considered the evidence available to provide advice on whether Waltham Forest College complies with the following requirements set out in condition of registration B8: that Waltham Forest College demonstrates, in a credible manner, that any standards to be set and/or applied in respect of any relevant awards granted to students who complete a higher education course provided by, or on behalf of, Waltham Forest College (if registered), whether or not Waltham Forest College is the awarding body, appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards.

Part 1: Assessment of condition B7 – Quality

This section sets out advice on whether Waltham Forest College has credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with conditions B1, B2 and B4 from the date of registration.

Condition B1: Academic experience

Criterion B1.2

Does Waltham Forest College have credible plans to ensure that the students registered on each higher education course receive a high quality academic experience?

32. The assessment team considered Waltham Forest College's plans to ensure that students registered on each higher education course will receive a high quality academic experience.
33. In doing so, the assessment team first considered the factors set out below at B1.3 alongside any other information relevant to ensuring a high quality academic experience.

Criterion B1.3.a

Does Waltham Forest College have credible plans to ensure that each higher education course is up to date?

Advice to the OfS

34. The assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College **does have** credible plans to ensure that each higher education course is up to date.

Reasoning

35. The assessment team reviewed course specifications from the proposed awarding bodies alongside Waltham Forest College's own course documentation, which has been scrutinised through its validation process. The assessment team reviewed the validation documentation and records of the validation meetings. Additionally, Waltham Forest College has relationships with its existing and proposed awarding bodies for the proposed higher education courses, which include regular communications with staff, verification and moderation activities with annual updating and training for college staff.
36. In considering how proposed courses are appropriately informed by developments in subject matter, research, industrial and professions and learning and teaching, the assessment team also referred to the Waltham Forest College's staff development policy, its plans for tracking industrial placements and the assessment team's discussions with staff.
37. The staff development policy requires regular engagement with industry, with an annual placement expected to ensure up-to-date knowledge of subject matter and industrial and professional developments. Staff at all levels confirmed the enactment of the policy, emphasising Waltham Forest College's strong links to local employers. Staff referred to

examples of employers recruiting from the student population and providing insights for students into industrial working practices.

38. The staff development policy offers a minimum of five days continuing professional development activity for all staff. These activities include initial professional development with teaching staff, including adjunct staff being required to complete a teaching qualification, college-wide training days at least three times a year, and weekly development sessions provided by the quality team focussing on updating teaching practices. The assessment team noted the work already taken by Waltham Forest College in the development of staff use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) and the teaching toolkit, which provides extensive learning opportunities for staff.
39. The staff development policy clearly outlines opportunities for financial support for additional qualifications and training. Staff in meetings confirmed this approach, as did the budget holder for the staff development budget.
40. Waltham Forest College has strong partnerships with the awarding bodies for both the current and proposed higher education courses, as evidenced by regular meetings, annual training and support for updates to the qualification specifications.
41. Waltham Forest College's current offer comprises a Level 4 certificate in Laser and Intense Pulsed Light Treatments. The assessment team examined the course handbook and the unit guides and found these were current containing all necessary information for students.
42. The assessment team observed teaching on this programme during the visit and found the students to be active participants in their learning, with formative assessment on current theory taking place in the observed session. The external quality assessment report from VTCT confirmed course is up to date, commenting specifically on the learning resources available to the students.
43. The assessment team also had sight of the plans for keeping the course up to date through the higher education deliberative committee structure handbook, which outlines the responsibility of the academic curriculum development and quality committee. This committee has responsibility for course development, modification and review including any revalidation with oversight through the higher education steering board and the governors higher education oversight committee. Examination of the minutes of the academic curriculum development and quality committee confirms discussion of issues relating to the development of courses and the operation of the committee structure.

Criterion B1.3.b

Does Waltham Forest College have credible plans to ensure that each higher education course provides educational challenge?

Advice to the OfS

44. The assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College **does have** credible plans to ensure that each higher education provides educational challenge.

Reasoning

45. The assessment team reviewed course specifications and unit information from the awarding bodies, which have been incorporated into Waltham Forest College's own programme handbooks. The assessment team also considered Waltham Forest College's plans for assessment, including its higher education assessment board policy, its assessment and internal quality procedure and its assessment plans for the proposed courses.
46. All courses are approved for delivery through Waltham Forest College's higher education validation policy. This policy references the inclusion of external experts, employers and students in the design of courses. The assessment team was able to confirm the operationalisation of the policy when it reviewed the validation documentation for each of the proposed courses along with the minutes of the validation panel meetings.
47. The course content and assessments ask students to define, analyse, explain and evaluate topics relevant to the titles of the courses. For example, the levels within the HND (higher national diploma) in electrical and electronic engineering appear appropriately differentiated. Representative examples include learning outcomes for electric and electronic principles requiring students to 'describe', 'analyse', 'explain' and 'apply' relevant topics, as appropriate to Level 4 study of the subject. For the unit industrial power, electronics and storage, learning outcomes shift to include 'investigate' and 'evaluate', as appropriate for higher Level 5 study.
48. Course delivery teams have considered the sequencing of learning. For example, while the higher technical qualifications do not prescribe the order of the units for delivery, engineering staff have recognised a need for students to develop mathematical skills early in the programme, and continue to develop these skills over time, alongside the other units to which they can be applied. This is considered in the delivery and assessment plan.
49. Waltham Forest College has a robust validation process through which all proposed higher education courses are scrutinised, as discussed above. Course and curriculum documents for the proposed higher education courses demonstrate an appropriate level of rigour and difficulty that is expected of study at Levels 4 and level 5.

Criterion B1.3.c

Does the Waltham Forest College have credible plans to ensure that each higher education course is coherent?

Advice to the OfS

50. The assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College **does have** credible plans to ensure that each higher education course is coherent.

Reasoning

51. The assessment team considered Waltham Forest College's validation process as well as its programme handbooks and unit specifications, as discussed above.
52. The documents presented courses that offer a range of units appropriate to the qualification title. The units selected offer a breadth of topics for students appropriate to the level of study,

with learning outcomes within the units demonstrating an increasing depth of knowledge as students move from describing to evaluation. For example, the Level 5 HND in Healthcare Professions Support contains a unit in effective healthcare practice using maths, in which students progress from explaining mathematical information, to application and finally to investigation and assessment.

53. Skills are clearly developed within the units of study. Skills are introduced alongside content and the learning outcomes require the assessment of skills and not just subject specific knowledge. The Level 5 HND in Business (Leadership and Management) contains a unit in managing a successful business project where students are required to produce a project management plan. In the accounting principles unit, students are required to produce budgets using spreadsheets. The Level 4 certificate in Laser and Intense Pulsed Light Treatments contains a unit in laser and light treatments for hair removal, which requires students to communicate to the client in a professional manner in addition to conducting skin analysis and treatment.
54. The units that Waltham Forest College would deliver on the proposed courses provide a clear path for all students. The units are standalone and may be delivered in any order. However, on review of the assessments plans within each course handbook, and following meetings with those tasked with the design and delivery of the programme, the ordering of units has been clearly considered with the student journey in mind.
55. In considering coherence, the assessment team considered the breadth and depth of the proposed offer. Each proposed course offers a range of units that provide breadth across the qualification subject area. The progression within the learning outcomes for the units of study ensure students reach an appropriate depth, with key concepts introduced early and built upon as students progress. While the units may be taught in any order, it is evident from the planning documents and meeting with the proposed delivery teams that consideration has been given to the ordering of the units to enhance the students' experience.

Criterion B1.3.d

Does Waltham Forest College have credible plans to ensure that each higher education course is effectively delivered?

Advice to the OfS

56. The assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College **does have** credible plans to ensure that each higher education course is effectively delivered.

Reasoning

57. Programme handbooks for the proposed higher education courses outline delivery plans for the academic year, which are split across autumn, spring and summer terms. Delivery of the taught elements of the programme is scheduled to meet and exceed the guided learning hours for each of the programmes. Waltham Forest College plans to stagger attendance across the week for students on higher education courses to allow best access to its higher education hub. While there are sufficient other facilities on Waltham Forest College's premises in addition to the higher education hub to accommodate higher education students

(discussed further below), there are immediate plans for extension to the higher education specific spaces following the start of the proposed provision. This will allow for greater freedom in timetabling.

58. Programme handbooks include assessment schedules. These show plans for assessment based on unit delivery. The planned schedule is in line with effective delivery of the units of study and distributes student assessment across the academic year, avoiding a concentration of assessment activities at any one time.
59. The assessment team reviewed schemes of work, which provided additional detail for the delivery of the units. In meetings with the staff expected to deliver the programmes, it was clear to the assessment team that careful, considerate planning had taken place in producing the schemes of work.
60. Programme handbooks contain a balance between lecturer-led and student-centred activities. For example, the range of activities for the HND in Business (Leadership and Management) includes lectures and seminars, self-directed learning, industrial and off-site visits and guest lectures incorporating case studies, group working, presentations by and for students and the development of research skills.
61. Waltham Forest College's approach to the assessment of teaching is set out in its teaching and learning policy. This includes staff training, deep dives with individual learning walks, themed learning walks across the institution, student feedback and self-assessment; all of which feeds into the annual quality processes. Developmental observation of teaching is an established practice for all staff within Waltham Forest College. Waltham Forest College has recognised the distinct requirements of higher education teaching in its plans for a modified approach to classroom observation for higher education classes.
62. Waltham Forest College will ensure learner progression through the personal tutoring scheme, with regular review meetings at least once a term. Meetings will cover academic progress including development of academic and research skills, careers and personal professional development and wellbeing.
63. The evidence reviewed by the assessment team confirms that there are credible plans in place for the effective delivery of the courses proposed. Waltham Forest College has planned delivery to support higher education students, with assessment scheduling carefully considered to avoid concentration of activity at any one time. There is a diversity in the proposed delivery methods in addition to a balance between directed learning and independent study.

Criterion B1.3.e

Does the Waltham Forest College have credible plans to ensure that each higher education course, as appropriate to the subject matter of the course, requires students to develop relevant skills?

Advice to the OfS

64. The assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College **does have** credible plans to ensure that each higher education course requires students to develop relevant skills as appropriate to the subject matter.

Reasoning

65. The assessment team examined the programme handbooks for the current and proposed higher education courses. Additionally, the assessment team had sight of the unit handbooks, which contain the unit learning outcomes. Subject specific skills development is embedded within the learning outcomes and assessment for each unit, and the assessment team noted the close partnerships with local employers, discussed above, in respect of Waltham Forest College's course offering. Waltham Forest College works closely with employers to deliver live assessments and projects that reflect the specific professional contexts of the proposed programmes.
66. Professional competencies are evident in units of study. In the Level 4 certificate in Laser and Intense Pulsed Light Treatments, the unit on laser and light treatments for hair removal includes communicating in a professional manner and selecting products and tools among the learning outcomes. In the Level 5 Diploma in Teaching, the unit on teaching a specialist area requires working with others to develop practice. Practical and transferable communication skills are evidenced in units where students are asked to explain and present their findings in various formats.
67. While academic skills are also developed in the units, there is additional support for students who may need it. The personal tutoring scheme will provide opportunities for the identification of any areas of development or the need for additional support. The learning resource centre also advertises sessions to students for skill development. The careers service also provides sessions, which will assist students with skills development for their future employment. These resources are discussed further below.

B1 conclusions

Does Waltham Forest College have credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with condition B1 from the date of registration?

68. The assessment team considers that, overall, Waltham Forest College **does have** credible plans to ensure, if registered, students on each higher education course would receive a high quality academic experience.

69. The plans Waltham Forest College has in place will ensure up-to-date and coherent study courses, which can be effectively delivered with the staff and resources that are currently in place. The plans include development of provision, which is steady and manageable by the current team. The courses proposed have a high employability focus and skills development is embedded across the programmes, with additional support available for students who need it. Regular staff development, including spending time in a relevant workplace, will ensure subject matter is up to date. The curriculum demonstrates an appropriate level of rigour and the difficulty that is expected of study at Levels 4 and level 5. There is diversity in the proposed delivery methods. Course units provide breadth across the qualification subject area, with key concepts introduced early and built upon as students progress.
70. The assessment team noted that the requirement of condition B1 is expressed as a principle that can be satisfied in different ways. The assessment team is of the view that the evidence set out above is sufficient for it to make an overall view in respect of initial condition B1. Considering its findings at B1.3.a, B1.3b, B1.3c, B1.3d and B1.3e above, and the reasoning contained therein, the assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College has credible plans to ensure its students will receive a high quality academic experience.
71. The assessment team did not identify any broader concerns relevant to condition B1 to report to the OfS.

Condition B2: Resources, support, and student engagement

Criterion B2.2.a (Resources)

Does Waltham Forest College have credible plans for how each cohort of students would receive resources which are sufficient for the purposes of ensuring:

- i. A high quality academic experience for those students**
- ii. Those students succeed in and beyond higher education?**

Advice to the OfS

72. The assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College **does have** credible plans for how each cohort of students will receive resources which are sufficient for ensuring a high quality academic experience, and for those students to succeed in and beyond higher education.

Reasoning

73. Waltham Forest College has invested significantly in specialist and technical equipment for student use. The assessment team toured general teaching classrooms, specialist technical teaching areas, computer rooms and breakout areas. During the visit, the assessment team also met with eight students who spoke positively about the availability and currency of resources. Current higher education students confirmed that resources reflected current industry standards.
74. The suitability and sufficiency of teaching spaces was corroborated through teaching observations, where students were observed being taught across the campus in the hair and beauty centre, STEM centre and the newly designed health and life sciences skills and training hub. The hub is equipped with a hospital ward and training cadaver facility, designed in partnership with Barts Health NHS Trust. Education in the hub is co-delivered by two teaching staff employed in the health sector, ensuring that students benefit from current professional expertise alongside specialist facilities. Teaching staff also provided a practical demonstration of the immersion room and digital media production suite during the visit. The teaching and learning spaces observed were appropriately configured to accommodate both the student numbers and the forms of specialist teaching provided across the proposed Level 4 and 5 programmes. The assessment team was satisfied that the specialist teaching facilities available to students are of a high standard, industry-current and appropriate to the breadth and level of the proposed higher education provision.
75. During the tour of the campus the assessment team noted the provision of learning hubs equipped with general use computers, a laptop loan scheme, reading pens, printers and scanners, alongside quiet rooms and break out spaces to support smaller group work. Students endorsed the suitability and accessibility of these spaces and spoke positively about the newly redesigned areas, confirming that resources were readily available and that they had been trained in their use. The assessment team was satisfied that the variety, capacity

and accessibility of study spaces across the campus, supported by structured training in the use of available resources, provide sufficient resources to support a high quality experience for students as provision grows.

76. During the visit the assessment team also toured 'The Pool', a flexible teaching space and the dedicated higher education learner hub, both newly developed learning spaces. Students confirmed they have been actively involved in the design process for the higher education spaces, and college directors verified that plans have incorporated the ability to adapt physical spaces as higher education provision grows. The higher education strategy and the estates strategy further confirm that investment in resources to support higher education course delivery has been made a strategic priority at institutional level, with oversight provided through the governors' higher education subcommittee, the higher education steering board, and the assistant principal for higher education and academic standards. Taken together, the extensive evidence of investment in high quality physical and digital higher education resources, the active involvement of students in space design, and the demonstrable capacity to scale provision give the assessment team confidence that students on the proposed higher education courses will have access to appropriately resourced learning environments.
77. Course leaders provided a live demonstration of the VLE, hosted on Microsoft Teams. The assessment team viewed a range of uploaded materials including module handbooks, assessment schedules and course materials. A class notebook function is linked to each unit, supporting learners to navigate course content more easily. Waltham Forest College has introduced minimum expectations for VLE use, and members of teaching staff confirmed they receive individual training on its use and how to monitor student engagement. Insights on student engagement are shared each semester via college briefings, and an assessment team meeting with heads of department verified that the efficacy of the VLE is a regular feature of staff CPD days (held five times a year).
78. During the visit, students confirmed that a broad range of approaches to teaching and supporting learning are used within the teaching spaces. Teaching resources are further augmented by materials available on Teams, with the chat function used effectively for academic support and advice. The VLE is accessible via both phone and computer, ensuring students can engage with learning materials at a time and place that suits them. The assessment team was further reassured by plans to undertake ongoing review and monitoring of the system as higher education learner numbers grow. Based on the live demonstration and corroborating student and staff testimony, the assessment team is satisfied that the VLE is functioning effectively to support learning and that Waltham Forest College has credible plans in place to ensure it continues to do so as provision grows.
79. The learning resource centre houses a range of physical books as well as online digital books and EBSCO, providing students with a broad base of academic resources appropriate to support study. During meetings with personal tutors and student services staff, the assessment team was informed that clear processes exist for signposting students to additional learning through ProMonitor, with further support available via the BeSafe team and specialist support practitioners. Waltham Forest College's learner resource pages corroborated the range of provision described to the assessment team. Taken together, the availability of physical and digital library resources and structured referral pathways to specialist support gave the assessment team confidence that students will have access to the

academic resources and specialist learning support services necessary to support their studies and to succeed at a higher education level.

80. The assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College has appropriately qualified and sufficient staff for higher education delivery, with clear and credible plans in place to recruit additional staff as provision grows. A review of 23 staff CVs and staff lists demonstrated that the current staffing profile is commensurate with the proposed student numbers, with staff holding a broad range of professional, industry and teaching qualifications that support contemporary and industry-informed delivery. During the visit, the assessment team met with programme, module and teaching staff who confirmed that Waltham Forest College has robust frameworks in place to support teaching quality. These include a whole-college approach to enhancing teaching and learning, a full induction on appointment, five days of continuous professional development (CPD) per year, and support for staff to obtain a recognised teaching qualification.
81. Minutes from the September 2025 academic curriculum development and quality committee and meetings with programme leaders confirmed that all teaching staff had completed awarding body annual training modules in advance of delivery of the approved programmes. This provided direct assurance that staff are prepared for higher education delivery from the point of registration. The assessment team's view is that current staffing is sufficient to deliver the proposed provision to the required standard, and that the frameworks in place to support ongoing staff development and planned recruitment will ensure this remains the case as the portfolio expands.

Criterion B2.2.a (Support)

Does Waltham Forest College have credible plans for how each cohort of students would receive support which is sufficient for the purposes of ensuring:

- i. A high quality academic experience for those students**
- ii. Those students succeed in and beyond higher education?**

Advice to the OfS

82. The assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College **does have** credible plans for how each cohort of students will receive support which is sufficient for ensuring a high quality academic experience, and for those students to succeed in and beyond higher education.

Reasoning

83. The assessment team reviewed several documents, including the quality plan and higher education quality framework policy list schedule, which set out the academic and pastoral support arrangements for learners from the point of admission. During the visit, the assessment team was provided with a live demonstration of both the staff and student-facing higher education learner hub. A review of the student-facing hub confirmed that a comprehensive suite of policies and support resources spanning academic support, student wellbeing, misconduct, appeals and engagement will be accessible to students. Pre-entry

information will be communicated via a dedicated higher education section on Waltham Forest College's external webpage and through course information sheets.

84. During the assessment visit, members of the corporation, chair of governors and higher education oversight committee confirmed that all support policies will be monitored and reviewed by the higher education steering board, with academic oversight provided by the higher education deliberative committees. The assessment team viewed minutes of board meetings, including the corporation curriculum and quality planning committee, which confirmed that emerging support issues are identified and resolved at an early stage through established governance processes. The assessment team was satisfied that the governance infrastructure in place will provide credible institutional oversight of the support framework, ensuring that provision will remain responsive as student numbers grow.
85. Each student will be assigned a personal tutor responsible for overseeing academic progress, development of academic and research skills, and general wellbeing. As set out in the higher education personal tutoring policy, students will have access to one individual tutorial every four to six weeks. ProMonitor will also be used to personalise individual learning plans, monitor assessment engagement and facilitate timely communication between specialist support services and academic staff when additional needs are identified.
86. During the visit, programme leads, course tutors and students confirmed the availability and effectiveness of personal tutor support, with students expressing confidence in knowing where to access help when needed. The assessment team was satisfied that personal tutoring arrangements will be structured and sufficiently frequent to provide students with credible academic support throughout their programme of study.
87. During the visit, the assessment team met with the learning resource centre manager and additional support manager, who described how student support needs will be communicated across college staff to support students to succeed at Levels 4 and 5. A learning needs survey will be completed by all students at the start of their course, enabling staff to identify individual skill gaps and tailor support accordingly. A review of the student-facing higher education learner hub and higher education student support and wellbeing policy by the assessment team also showed dedicated sections on academic writing, study skills and Harvard referencing as part of the induction. Flyers and student information advertising the academic support available to students were also on display throughout the campus and within the learning resource centre.
88. Waltham Forest College has plans to deliver a weeklong induction and offer ongoing support and enrichment opportunities to enable students to make effective use of physical and digital learning resources. All students will receive induction on the physical book collection, use of digital platforms and available equipment including printers and scanners. Waltham Forest College uses two digital library platforms and has procured an EBSCO higher education subscription in recognition of the more advanced needs of higher education students. Students will also receive additional software licences for personal computer use, and every curriculum area will have a dedicated Teams channel for key communications and resources. During the visit, students confirmed they had been inducted on to their courses, the VLE and Teams, and were confident in using both platforms. The assessment team was satisfied that induction and ongoing digital support arrangements will be well resourced and appropriately tailored to the needs of students at Levels 4 and 5.

89. Waltham Forest College has comprehensive arrangements in place to identify and respond to the additional learning needs of students. Declaration of additional need will form part of the enrolment process, enabling appropriate support to be put in place from the start of the programme. The additional learning support manager described the range of provision that will be available, including formal Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) assessment, exam access arrangements and physical adaptations to learning spaces. A dedicated dyslexia specialist will be available to higher education students, and the equality, diversity and inclusion policy confirms the college's commitment to equitable access and inclusive practice. The assessment team heard that appropriate software will provide the operational interface between specialist support services and academic staff, ensuring coordinated and timely responses to identified need. The assessment team was satisfied that additional learning support arrangements will be proactively managed from the point of enrolment and sufficient to ensure equitable access to the proposed higher education programmes for all students.
90. The assessment team sampled 54 draft unit handbooks across the current and proposed Level 4 and Level 5 delivery, and within each handbook Waltham Forest College's approach to academic misconduct was consistently embedded alongside guidance on assessment requirements, feedback processes and available support. Turnitin will be used for the electronic submission of all assessed work, and during meetings with programme leads, course tutors and students, all parties confirmed familiarity with and confidence in its use. The college's higher education academic integrity and malpractice policy is hyperlinked in course and unit handbooks and the live demonstration of the student-facing higher education learner hub confirmed it will be directly accessible to all students at the point of delivery.
91. During the campus tour, academic misconduct posters were displayed prominently across the college. Students confirmed they are taught how to use artificial intelligence ethically as part of their programme. The triangulation of policy documentation, physical observation and corroboration from staff and students across all group meetings gives the assessment team confidence that students will be well informed about academic misconduct and clear about Waltham Forest College's approach to it.
92. The assessment team met with the employment, careers and admissions leads to discuss the advice and guidance that will be available to support students to succeed in and beyond higher education, as outlined in the college careers education and guidance policy. Waltham Forest College will offer personalised guidance for learners including support with UCAS applications, funding opportunities and individual appointments. Students met during the visit corroborated the availability and quality of careers support. Current further education students cited the effective use of the skills builder framework and progression to higher education as a tangible outcome of the support received. The assessment team was satisfied that the careers support offer will be comprehensive and sufficient to support higher education students to succeed in and beyond their studies.

Criterion B2.2.b

Does Waltham Forest College have credible plans for how it would ensure effective engagement with each cohort of students which is sufficient for the purpose of ensuring:

- i. A high quality academic experience for those students**
- ii. Those students succeed in and beyond higher education?**

Advice to the OfS

93. The assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College **does have** credible plans for how it would ensure effective engagement with each cohort of students which is sufficient for the purpose of ensuring a high quality academic experience for those students, and for the purpose of ensuring that those students succeed in and beyond higher education.

Reasoning

94. Student engagement and representation are clearly defined and supported across a range of formal governance structures and roles. The deliberative committee structures include planning for student representation at the higher education oversight subcommittee, higher education steering board and academic curriculum development and quality committee. During the visit the assessment team met with student governors and student representatives who reported that termly meetings are held with college governors and the senior leadership team, confirming that the student voice is embedded at the highest levels of institutional governance.
95. The assessment team reviewed the higher education student engagement committee minutes which demonstrated clear and evidenced communication between students and staff, with students having fed directly into the design development of new higher education learning spaces. Student feedback confirmed the Waltham Forest College's commitment to capturing the student voice and represents a tangible and visible example of Waltham Forest College acting upon student engagement in a manner that has meaningfully shaped the student experience. This gives the assessment team confidence that student engagement structures are and will function effectively.
96. Waltham Forest College has a range of formal mechanisms to receive and respond to student feedback. The student engagement and partnership policy provides a detailed outline of the various opportunities for student engagement, monitored by the higher education steering board utilising a 'You Said, We Did' approach to closing the loop. During the campus tour the assessment team observed visible evidence of this feedback culture in action, with posters displayed prominently across the college showing specific examples of how student feedback has informed curriculum design and development. The assessment team was satisfied that Waltham Forest College has established a clear and visible commitment to student engagement that will extend beyond formal policy into the day-to-day experience of students on campus.

97. Waltham Forest College captures student feedback through a range of mechanisms at programme and module level. Each higher education programme will have two elected student representatives, and formal unit evaluation questionnaires will be completed following each delivery. The assessment team reviewed student feedback provided on modules for assessment boards. Strategies to increase student voice in the Level 4 Laser and Intense Pulsed Light Treatments programme were evident within the assessment board minutes, demonstrating that feedback is actively monitored and responded to at programme level. The programme's external quality assurance report provides further evidence of twice-yearly independent review through which the student experience is reported and scrutinised.
98. The assessment team reviewed student on-programme higher education survey data for 2023-24 and 2024-25 which indicated broadly positive trends in student satisfaction. The senior leadership team confirmed plans for ensuring effective ongoing engagement using the student satisfaction survey and self-evaluation document to monitor trends over time. The student compliments, feedback and complaints policy outlines how issues will be handled by the quality team, ensuring that all feedback will be considered and responded to through a transparent and accountable process.
99. During the visit, students reported that they are offered regular and varied opportunities for active engagement, including via the student engagement committee, unit surveys and informally within class. Students confirmed that they felt able to provide feedback freely and honestly, and the assessment team noted that feedback mechanisms include both named and anonymous routes, ensuring that all students can contribute to quality processes without concern. Waltham Forest College has confirmed that the effectiveness of student engagement mechanisms will be reviewed by the higher education steering board as provision develops and student numbers grow, providing assurance that engagement structures are designed to remain effective and responsive at scale.

B2 conclusions

Does Waltham Forest College have credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with condition B2 from the date of registration?

100. The assessment team's view is that, overall, Waltham Forest College **does have** credible plans to enable it, if registered, to comply with the requirements of condition B2 in relation to resources, support and student engagement.
101. The assessment team saw evidence of significant investment in both academic and industry-current resources and facilities throughout the campus. Planning and delivery of resources has been informed by active student input and there are clear governance structures in place to ensure sufficiency is monitored and maintained as higher education provision grows. Waltham Forest College has clear and credible plans to ensure effective student representation is embedded across the full deliberative governance structure of the college. Planned feedback mechanisms are varied, frequent and include both named and anonymous routes. There are also defined mechanisms in place to report any changes made from this feedback to the student using close the loop processes.

102. Student support for learners and personal tutoring frameworks are structured, policy-driven and supported by proactive tracking through specialist software, with specialist support services designed to be accessible and clearly signposted to students from the point of enrolment.
103. Academic misconduct arrangements are clearly communicated across multiple channels, consistently reinforced in both the physical resources and digital environment and well understood by staff and students alike. The live demonstration of the student-facing learner hub provided direct and distinctive evidence that policies and support resources will be actively and accessibly presented to students.
104. Considering its findings at B2.2.a, B2.2.b and B2.2.c above, and the reasoning contained therein, the assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College has credible plans to ensure high quality resources and support, and effective student engagement.
105. The assessment team identified no broader concerns relevant to resources, support or student engagement to report to the OfS.

Condition B4: Assessment and awards

Criterion B4.2.a

Does Waltham Forest College have credible plans to ensure that each higher education course is assessed effectively?

Advice to the OfS

106. The assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College **does have** credible plans to ensure that students are assessed effectively.

Reasoning

107. The assessment team reviewed all unit assessment plans and assignment briefs across all proposed programmes. Individual programme design provides appropriate challenge and testing of relevant skills and knowledge in clear alignment with the sector-recognised standards specified for Level 4 and Level 5 qualifications and the assessment framework set by the awarding bodies.
108. A review of six proposed schemes of work and all unit handbooks confirmed the breadth and depth of assessment design across the proposed programmes. For example, the Level 5 Diploma in Teaching unit five assesses students' ability to analyse advances in digital, online and emerging technologies and their applications in the teaching environment, demonstrating the level of critical engagement and applied analysis expected at Level 5. During the visit, programme leads confirmed that command verbs specified within the awarding body qualification framework are used to guide assignment design at the appropriate cognitive level for each award. Grade descriptors are aligned to the national qualification standards shared with students and embedded within assignment briefs, ensuring students have a clear understanding of what is required to achieve at each level. The assessment team was satisfied that assessment tasks are designed with sufficient stretch and rigour to be consistent with the requirements of the proposed Level 4 and Level 5 programmes.
109. Assessment tasks across the proposed courses have been purposefully designed to test relevant skills and applied professional competence appropriate to each subject area. Programme leads confirmed that assessments are not designed in isolation but with deliberate bridges built between assessment tasks, using different assessment methods and ensuring that assessment is linked to the awarding body criteria and the requirements of the employment sector. Waltham Forest College works closely with employers to deliver live assessments and projects that reflect the specific professional contexts of the proposed programmes. The HND Healthcare Professions unit nine requires students to draw directly on their own practice setting: critically assessing challenges within the context of planning and delivering person-centred care. Rather than a simulated task, students are assessed on real service performance. The assessment team was satisfied that assessment tasks are purposefully constructed to reflect sector requirements and that the collaborative approach to assessment design with employers strengthens the applied professional competence tested across the proposed courses.

110. During the visit, the assessment team observed teaching, with students undertaking a formative digital assessment using quiz software, with the teacher differentiating responses from learners, clarifying rationale and correcting wrong answers with reasoning in preparation for a summative examination. Students met during the visit confirmed that assessments are designed to prepare them for the real world, testing knowledge gained and with the appropriate use of technology, including virtual reality, helping to prepare them for work in their chosen profession or onward studies. The assessment team was satisfied that assessment tasks are purposefully designed to test the relevant skills and applied professional competence expected of students at Levels 4 and 5.
111. The assessment team reviewed the module handbooks for the Level 4 programme in Laser and Intense Pulsed Light Treatments and met with learners on the course. The assessment team's view is that underpinning fundamental knowledge is taught and assessed prior to learners undertaking summative client-facing practical assessments. This supports learners to be secure in foundational topics, including health and safety, before moving to practical application. Course assessments are varied and designed to assess breadth and depth across the curriculum content, and there is evidence from the validation document that the course is aligned with relevant occupational standards. The process for course delivery and assessment includes twice-yearly external quality assurance visits by an awarding body industry assessor, providing an independent professional perspective on the standard and appropriateness of assessment. The assessment team considered two such reports, carried out in June 2023 and June 2024, which were detailed and specific in their feedback, giving confidence that the course assessment procedures are rigorous and representative of current professional and academic standards.
112. The assessment team reviewed 12 summative student assignments from the Level 4 programme in Laser and Intense Pulsed Light Treatments, including tutor feedback, internal quality assurance and external quality assurance evidence, covering both pass and refer grades. Feedback was found to be specific and developmental, referencing AI usage and clearly linked to learning outcomes, demonstrating that students receive meaningful and actionable guidance on their performance. Marking was consistent across moderation judgements, with both pass and refer decisions clearly justified against the awarding body criteria. The assessment team was satisfied that the standard of marking, feedback and moderation evidenced in the reviewed student work is consistent with the requirements of effective assessment at Level 4 and provides direct assurance that assessment judgements are reliable and appropriately communicated to students.
113. The assessment team reviewed all proposed and current programme level assessments and marking and grading criteria. Assessment design and delivery approaches across all programmes demonstrate standardisation, with marking and grading criteria clearly defined and consistently applied in accordance with higher national qualification requirements. The assessment team met with department heads who confirmed standardisation meetings have been held across subject areas to ensure parity across the proposed course design.
114. Programme leads confirmed that all staff have undergone annual awarding body training on assessment standards. Departments will undertake 100 per cent sampling of assessment across higher education delivery upon commencement of proposed courses. This will provide a robust framework for ensuring consistency of assessment judgement across the programmes. The assessment team was satisfied that the assessment framework across the

proposed programmes is appropriately structured and clearly aligned to awarding body requirements to ensure consistent and effective assessment.

115. The assessment and internal quality procedure policy and higher education assessment board policy sets out clear standards required by the relevant courses of study. Internal and external quality assurance reports presented to the higher education assessment board provides further evidence of achievement of academic level and descriptor requirements. Programme leads confirmed that assessment boards provide formal oversight of assessment outcomes, ensuring that any anomalies in marking or grading are identified and resolved through established processes.

Criterion B4.2.b

Does Waltham Forest College have credible plans to ensure that for each higher education course assessment is valid and reliable?

Advice to the OfS

116. The assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College **does have** credible plans to ensure that each higher education course assessment is valid and reliable.

Reasoning

117. The assessment team reviewed course handbooks and unit handbooks for current and proposed courses to assess alignment and consistency with sector-recognised standards, approved qualification frameworks and the validation framework. For each course, individual learning outcomes were mapped directly against the relevant assessment criteria, demonstrating alignment with threshold academic standards for Level 4 and Level 5 and coherence across the courses. A review of awarding body and validation approvals confirms that assessments are valid in that they are designed to result in students demonstrating the knowledge and skills intended by the learning outcomes of each qualification.
118. The awarding bodies regulatory frameworks set out clear requirements for assessment design, marking, moderation and standardisation at Levels 4 and 5. The assessment team reviewed course mapping documentation for assessment range and variety. These documents confirmed that Waltham Forest College's assessment practices are fully aligned with these requirements. Awarding body training has been delivered to all relevant staff, ensuring that those responsible for assessment have a thorough understanding of the assessment framework and the standards required for valid and reliable assessment.
119. Individual assessment schedules demonstrate a coherent pathway of assessment with specified unit leaders and course tutors. Schemes of work confirm that the assessment workload is aligned to the typical volumes of credit for qualifications at each level, ensuring students are continually and appropriately challenged across their course. Course hand-out and hand-in dates confirm that assessments are effectively spaced, balancing theoretical and vocational assessment activities. The range of assessment types, discussed above, supports validity by ensuring that different forms of knowledge and skill, professional competence and vocational orientation are each assessed using appropriate methods.

120. Waltham Forest College has credible plans to ensure reliability of assessment between students through a robust framework of moderation and standardisation. All assessed work will be subject to 100 per cent moderation upon commencement of the proposed programmes, providing comprehensive oversight of marking consistency across the student cohort. The assessment team identified clear evidence of second marking across the 12 sampled assessments, with feedback being supported by the marking policies and the use of Turnitin for electronic submission of all assessed work. Academic teams have held standardisation meetings in preparation for the commencement of the proposed programmes, and department heads confirmed these will continue across subject areas to ensure parity of assessment judgement. Results will be presented to the higher education assessment board for ratification and scrutinised using key performance industry benchmarks set by Waltham Forest College, providing a formal mechanism for identifying and addressing any inconsistencies in marking across the student cohort. ProMonitor will be used to store evidence of assessment and monitor the consistency of assessment outcomes between cohorts over time.
121. The assessments reviewed confirm that the work produced demonstrates achievement of the specified knowledge, skills and behaviours intended by the assessment design, confirming the validity of the assessment tasks. Feedback on areas of development for individual learners is specific and developmental, and there is clear evidence of consistency in marking between learners, with moderation judgements aligned across all reviewed submissions. These processes are supported by formal course unit reviews. The assessment team reviewed four Level 4 unit reviews undertaken by course tutors, which demonstrated clear actions identified and implemented in line with the higher education assessment board's policy. Curriculum managers verify internal quality assurance processes and identify any actions required, providing an additional layer of oversight to ensure reliability is maintained across the student cohort.
122. The assessment team reviewed 11 assessment board minutes, which confirmed the standard of assessment in each subject is formally scrutinised to ensure academic standards are maintained at subject level, including the distribution of marks for all modules and courses. Learner feedback is considered at each assessment board alongside appeals, extenuating circumstances, academic misconduct and breaks in learning. This ensures that assessment decisions are reviewed in the context of individual student circumstances. The assessment team was satisfied that the assessment board structure provides a robust and formal mechanism for maintaining the reliability of assessment judgements across all programmes and over time.
123. The assessment team reviewed internal and external quality assurance reports covering Waltham Forest College's existing Level 4 provision. No concerns were identified across all five external reports, with risk classified as very low in each case. The external quality assurance process included interviews with internal quality assurance staff, review of conflict of interest arrangements, assessment of alignment with the award, and confirmation of valid, reliable and standardised assessment processes. Malpractice was discussed as part of each review and where issues arise there is clear evidence of Waltham Forest College reporting concerns to the awarding body's investigations and compliance team. The consistency and strength of the quality assurance findings across five consecutive reports gives the assessment team confidence that Waltham Forest College has well established and effective

quality assurance processes that will underpin the validity and reliability of assessment across the proposed programmes.

Criterion B4.2.c

Does Waltham Forest College have credible plans to ensure that for each higher education course the academic regulations are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible?

Advice to the OfS

124. The assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College **does have** credible plans to ensure that for each higher education course the academic regulations are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible.

Reasoning

125. Waltham Forest College follows the academic regulations of its awarding bodies, including assessment criteria for individual units and the determination of award classifications. All proposed awards are graded pass, merit or distinction and are gained by achieving a specified number of credits aligned with the sector-recognised standards of 120 credits at Level 4 and at Level 5. Compensation can be awarded where a student has attempted but not achieved a pass in one 15-credit unit at Level 4 or Level 5, provided the student has achieved a pass in at least 105 credits in the remaining units. The overall grade is calculated based on the student's performance across all units to the value of 120 credits. During the visit, the senior leadership team confirmed that Waltham Forest College operates within the awarding body frameworks and that all staff have been trained in its requirements. The assessment team was satisfied that the regulatory framework governing the proposed programmes is robust and appropriate to ensure the credibility of awards granted to students.
126. Waltham Forest College's academic integrity and academic misconduct policy clearly outlines what constitutes academic misconduct and sets out the processes for investigation and resolution. This policy sits alongside the awarding body regulations to provide a comprehensive framework for maintaining the integrity of student assessed work and the credibility of awards granted. The policy is accessible to students through the student-facing learner hub and embedded within all unit handbooks.
127. The assessment team reviewed units for the proposed courses and found that each unit specifies a clear assessment strategy by which students can demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes for that unit, in alignment with the requirements of the relevant awarding body.
128. Meetings with the senior leadership team and a review of the higher education deliberative committee structure confirmed that governor oversight of awards is in place through the higher education steering board, with formal procedures established to assure the standard of awards. The assessment team reviewed the terms of reference and minutes from five quarterly academic curriculum development and quality committee meetings. These provided evidence of awarding body representation and formal processes to maintain oversight of academic awards and receive awarding body and external examiner reports. The assessment

team was satisfied that the governance infrastructure in place provides appropriate senior level scrutiny of award standards and that the involvement of awarding body representatives in deliberative committees directly supports the credibility of awards over time.

129. The data, registry and finance committee meets three times a year to ensure robust and accountable systems for data returns in relation to assessment board outcomes, awards and progression. The committee also holds responsibility for HESA data, continuation, retention and completion data and outcomes, providing a comprehensive institutional mechanism for monitoring award credibility over time. Assessment board minutes and completed assessments confirm that student achievement is being assessed at the right level. Taken together, the externally regulated awarding body framework, clearly defined grade descriptors, robust internal governance and independent external scrutiny give the assessment team confidence that the academic regulations used by the college are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible and appropriately reflect students' knowledge and skills at the required level.

Criterion B4.2.d

Does Waltham Forest College have credible plans to ensure that for each higher education course, the academic regulations are designed to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner which appropriately reflects the level and content of the applicable higher education course?

Advice to the OfS

130. The assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College **does have** credible plans to ensure that for each higher education course, the academic regulations are designed to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner which appropriately reflects the level and content of the higher education courses the college intends to deliver.

Reasoning

131. Students are required to hold GCSE English at grade A* to C or grade 4 or above, or a recognised equivalent, to enter a programme, ensuring that students have demonstrated a minimum level of English language proficiency prior to commencing their studies. The Pearson regulatory framework sets additional equivalent English language requirements for non-native English speakers, ensuring that all students have the capability required to engage with programmes that are both taught and assessed in English.
132. A review of unit handbooks by the assessment team indicated that all work submitted for assessment must be in English, ensuring that written communication is assessed as an integral component of student achievement across all programmes. The Pearson BTEC higher national specifications explicitly embed the use of English within the curriculum in accordance with industry requirements, requiring students to develop communication skills including the preparation of written reports, formal presentations, professional conversations and the use of sector-specific language. This embedding of English language proficiency within the qualification framework confirms that technical proficiency in English is assessed as

a core component of the proposed courses, rather than as a separate or additional requirement.

133. Waltham Forest College employs specialist English teachers to support students to progress from foundational to higher level English. The lead for Waltham Forest College's dedicated English for speakers of other languages team confirmed targeted support for students whose first language is not English. During the visit, teaching staff confirmed they are trained in supporting students with English as an additional language as the majority of the current student body are studying in their second language. The head of learner services confirmed that specialist support is in place to identify key skills gaps, with interventions offered to students, including a reading club. The assessment team was satisfied that the arrangements in place to support and assess English language proficiency are comprehensive and sufficient to ensure that students can meet the English language demands of assessment at Levels 4 and 5.

Criterion B4.2.e

Does Waltham Forest College have credible plans to ensure that relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously?

Advice to the OfS

134. The assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College **does have** credible plans to ensure that relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously.

Reasoning

135. At the time of assessment, Waltham Forest College was only delivering one Level 4 programme. The assessment team reviewed two marking reports as well as assessment board minutes, which confirmed strong award outcomes across previous cohorts of learners including a 92.9 per cent completion figure. These outcomes show a demonstrable track record of supporting students to achieve credible awards and enable meaningful progression.
136. The assessment team reviewed five consecutive external quality assurance reports covering the existing provision, which confirmed that there are no concerns with award standards and that risk is classified as very low in each case. This provides independent external assurance that awards granted to students on the existing provision are credible and appropriately reflect student achievement at the required level. A meeting with the assistant principals confirmed the college currently achieves a 98 per cent completion rate across its further education provision and has set an 85 per cent completion rate target for its proposed higher education programmes. This demonstrated a realistic and evidenced approach to benchmarking award outcomes against existing performance.
137. Waltham Forest College does not yet have historical award data for the proposed programmes against which to benchmark outcomes or make direct comparisons with other providers.

138. Governors confirmed that the higher education oversight committee will meet four times a year to monitor risk and provide ongoing scrutiny in respect of awards. Internal governance, through the college higher education deliberative committee structure, supported by independent external scrutiny through twice-yearly external quality visits, will ensure that award standards are maintained and monitored over time as provision grows.

B4 conclusions

139. The assessment team's view is that, overall, Waltham Forest College does have credible plans to ensure, if registered, that it would comply with the requirements of condition B4 with reference to assessment and awards.
140. Assessment design across all proposed Level 4 and 5 programmes is purposefully aligned to awarding body frameworks, provides appropriate stretch and rigour, and tests relevant skills and applied professional competence in a manner consistent with the subject matter and level of each course. The review of student assessed Level 4 work confirmed that marking is specific, developmental and consistent across moderation judgements, with both pass and refer decisions clearly justified against awarding body criteria.
141. Academic regulations are set and quality assured by awarding bodies, providing a robust external framework for the credibility of awards, supported by Waltham Forest College's own academic integrity and misconduct policy and clearly defined grade descriptors communicated to students through unit handbooks and the student-facing learner hub.
142. English language proficiency is effectively addressed through clearly defined entry requirements, awarding body regulatory requirements for non-native English speakers and specialist support provision are embedded across the college's learning support infrastructure.
143. Considering its findings at B4.2.a, B4.2b, B4.2c, B4.2d and B4.2e above, and the reasoning contained therein, the assessment team's view was that Waltham Forest College had credible plans to ensure students will receive a high quality academic experience.
144. The assessment team identified no broader concerns relevant to assessment and awards to report to the OfS.

Part 2: Assessment of condition B8 – Standards

Requirement

Does Waltham Forest College demonstrate in a credible manner that the standards set for the courses it intends to provide, if it is registered, appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards?

Advice to the OfS

145. The assessment team's view is that the standards set for the courses Waltham Forest College intends to provide, should it be registered, appropriately reflect the sector-recognised standards applicable at the time of the assessment.

Reasoning

A.1: Qualifications at each level

146. The assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College has demonstrated in a credible manner that, if it is registered, the courses it plans to deliver will appropriately reflect the standards set out in part A.1 of the sector-recognised standards document.
147. The titles Waltham Forest College has adopted for the courses it plans to offer, and the course it is currently offering, provide appropriate information about the qualification, clearly indicating the correct level of the qualification, the volume and field of study. Evidence from the course information indicates that Waltham Forest College's qualification titles are accurate.
148. The course validation document for the Level 4 programme in Laser and Intense Pulsed Light Treatments sets out that students are required to develop skills as a higher level beauty therapist and to contribute to the effective running of a beauty therapy business.
149. In the Level 5 Diploma in Teaching qualification specification it is clear that course is designed to provide trainee teachers with the knowledge and skills to teach in a range of contexts, with careers in further and higher education both identified as expected employment opportunities upon completion.
150. Course documentation for the higher technical qualifications in electrical and electronic engineering sets out options for continued study to undergraduate degree level (Level 6) or employment as a technician (Level 4), senior technician (Level 5) or in managerial positions (Level 5) as appropriate outcomes.
151. Course documentation for the higher technical qualifications for Healthcare Professionals Support clearly identifies courses that lead to opportunities for further study at undergraduate level (Level 6) or employment at assistant practitioner level in supporting healthcare professionals.
152. The course specifications for the higher technical qualifications for Leadership and Management are clear that these qualifications are designed to equip students for continuing

study at undergraduate level (Level 6) or with the skills necessary for employment in operational (Level 4) and managerial positions (Level 5) across a range of business areas.

A.2: Typical volumes of credit for qualifications

153. The assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College has demonstrated in a credible manner that, if it is registered, the courses it plans to deliver appropriately reflect the standards set out in part A.2 of the sector-recognised standards document.
154. Waltham Forest College uses the credit system to define the volume of learning expected of students, equating to credit with learning time. Each of its courses is described in relation to the typical credit volumes set out in Table 2 of the sector-recognised standards document.
155. The Higher National Certificate (HNC) programmes have units of study which equate to 120 credits at Level 4. The programmes in Leadership and Management and Electrical and Electronic Engineering both require eight units of study to achieve the 120 credits, whereas the HNC for Healthcare Professionals Support contains one 30 credit module, reducing the number of units to seven to achieve the 120 credits. These are aligned to Table 2 of the sector-recognised standards document.
156. All HND programmes have units of study that equate to 240 credits in total, with 120 credits at Level 4 and 120 credits at level 5. Both the Leadership and Management and Electronic Engineering programmes having an additional 16 units of 15 credits each for the total of 240 credits. The HND Healthcare Professionals Support is made up of made up of 12 units of 15 credits and two units of 30 credits for the total of 240 credits. These are aligned to Table 2 of the sector-recognised standards document.
157. The Level 5 Diploma in Teaching requires students to gain 120 credits at Level 5. Students must take 90 credits from the mandatory modules and 30 credits from optional modules for the total of 120 credits.
158. The Level 4 programme in Laser and Intense Pulsed Light Treatments requires four units of study for a total of 31 credits.

A.3: Qualification descriptors

159. The assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College has demonstrated in a credible manner that, if it is registered, the courses it intends to provide appropriately reflect the standards set out in part A.3 of the sector-recognised standards document.
160. The assessment team assessed Waltham Forest College's alignment with qualification descriptors by reviewing the programme specification learning outcomes.
161. The HNC courses proposed provide sound basic knowledge of the subject areas and meet the standards set out in the sector-recognised standards A.3.1 to ensure that students have demonstrated:
 - knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study

- an ability to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, in order to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of their subject(s) of study.

162. The HND courses proposed will ensure students have sound understanding of the principles in their field of study and will have learned to apply those principles more widely. For example, the course aims for Level 5 Electrical and Electronic Engineering include 'equip students with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to achieve high performance in the engineering and manufacturing environment'. The HND courses also address the need for the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment. For example, the course aims for Level 5 Leadership and Management include 'to develop student behaviours that are inclusive, agile and professional, to enable students to strive for achievement in all aspects of work and demonstrate resilience and accountability'.

Requirement

Does Waltham Forest College demonstrate in a credible manner that the achievement of students on the courses it intends to provide, if it is registered, appropriately reflect applicable sector-recognised standards?

Advice to the OfS

163. The assessment team's view is that Waltham Forest College has demonstrated that the achievement of students on the courses it intends to provide, if it is registered, will appropriately reflects applicable sector-recognised standards.

Reasoning

A.1: Qualifications at each level

164. Awards currently made to students, and those proposed, appropriately reflect the title set out in the programme specifications for each course.
165. The assessment team viewed a sample of 12 summative assessments for the current Level 4 provision and the feedback provided. The team considered assessment to be appropriate to Level 4 of the sector-recognised standards, with clear feedback accompanying both pass and refer decisions.
166. The assessment processes and internal verification processes, discussed above, were confirmed in meetings with staff from across the college, providing evidence of a consistent process well established in current practice.
167. The awarding body visits the institution twice per year to confirm awards made are at the standards required.
168. The assessment team reviewed internal and external quality assessments which identified no concerns regarding Waltham Forest College's current Level 4 programme.
169. Assessment board minutes were reviewed by the assessment team and demonstrated formal and robust mechanisms for the maintaining the reliability of assessment judgements.

A.2: Typical volumes of credit for qualifications

- 170. Waltham Forest College has demonstrated through the design of the proposed courses that each one has the required volume of credit for each qualification.
- 171. Credit weightings for every unit of study are indicated in the unit handbooks and the overall number of units and total credits are indicated in the course handbooks.
- 172. Plans for delivery of the courses demonstrate a commitment to ensuring sufficient contact hours and independent hours to meet the requirements for each qualification and equate appropriately to the credits offered for each unit.

A.3: Qualification descriptors

- 173. Course learning outcomes are fulfilled through the learning outcomes of the selected units of study. Course learning outcomes are indicated in the course handbook, with unit learning outcomes shown separately in each unit handbook.
- 174. Assessment plans are linked to the outcomes explicitly within the unit handbooks alongside assessment briefs. The tasks set are appropriate for the level of study, with an increase in complexity between Level 4 and Level 5. There is a variety in the types of assessment proposed, which will allow students to demonstrate their cognitive skills, practical skills, transferable skills and professional competences.
- 175. With the current provision, the assessment team was able to examine the course and unit handbooks containing learning outcomes and assessment briefs, students' submitted work, marking and feedback alongside the assessment process. Assessments were explicitly aligned to learning outcomes, with the tasks set appropriate to the level of study and providing opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning achievements.

Annex A: Approach to sampling of evidence

1. As Waltham Forest College provides only one higher education course, with ten current students, and proposes only a limited number of courses, it was deemed proportionate and representative to include all of the courses in information or samples of information to be requested from Waltham Forest College.
2. Waltham Forest College provided programme documentation for all of the courses it intends to provide, if it is registered. This included programme specifications, programme regulations, module guides and learning outcomes. The assessment team considered this documentation to be an appropriate sample to enable it to advise on whether the standards set for the courses Waltham Forest College intends to provide, if it is registered, appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards.
3. The assessment team took a representative sampling approach in relation to evidence of student achievement in assessed work for the one higher education course currently being delivered. 12 pieces of assessed work were requested from across all of the available Level 4 units. Of these 12 assessments, the assessment team requested that four assessments should be those marked as 'refer'. The assessment team requested to see, where possible, work from at least six different current students.
4. The assessment team considered this sample of student work appropriate to enable it to reach a judgement on whether the achievement of students on the courses Waltham Forest College intends to provide, if it is registered, appropriately reflects applicable sector-recognised standards.
5. Waltham Forest College provided exam board documentation for its current higher education course. The assessment team considered this an appropriate sample to enable it to advise on whether awards made to students reflected the titles in the programme specifications, and whether students accumulated the necessary volume of credit for an award as set out in the relevant programme specification and the sector-recognised standards document.



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