

**College Development Plan 2022-23**

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# STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Northern Ireland Further Education (FE) colleges are required, under Article 20 of the Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, to produce and publish annual business plans (College Development Plans).

The six FE colleges (collectively the FE sector) are Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB) and a key delivery arm of the Department for the Economy (DfE). The FE sector is unique in that it has a dual mandate, taking a pivotal role in generating a strong and vibrant economy through the development of professional and technical skills, increasingly at higher levels, and by helping employers to innovate; and supporting social inclusion by providing those with low or no qualifications, or who have other barriers to learning, with the skills and qualifications needed to find employment and to become economically active.

It is vital that the Northern Ireland skills system supports economic growth that is socially inclusive and builds the skills base necessary to fulfil the [Executive’s draft Programme for Government (PfG)](https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/publications/programme-government-draft-outcomes-framework-2021-downloadable-consultation-response-documents) aspirations.

The FE sector will support the ‘New Decade, New Approach’ deal which outlines a series of priorities and ambitions for a reformed Executive, including the development of “an enhanced approach to careers advice, curriculum, training and apprenticeships to enhance employability and support economic growth” and the development of “a regionally-balanced economy with opportunities for all”. In addition, the sector plays a key role, along with other education and training providers, in helping to address the links between deprivation and lower educational outcomes. FE colleges continue to contribute to the development of a more joined up approach to education and training provision for 14-19 year olds with the aim of enhancing the 14-19 education and training landscape so that our young people reach their potential and maximise their contribution to our economy and society.

The global pandemic, COVID-19, completely transformed the way we live, work and learn. The FE sector digital platforms provide learners with a flexible delivery model, taking into consideration the capacity and capability of the learner and the needs of the specific course. This flexibility will allow the sector to respond quickly to any future restrictions. [The Northern Ireland Skills Barometer 2021 update](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-skills-barometer-2021-update) provides a detailed understanding of the future skills needs and skills gaps by qualification level, subject area and sector (for Northern Ireland) covering the period up to 2030. This helps form the basis of future curriculum plans in the FE Sector.

Creating a dynamic ecosystem where Government, Industry and Education providers can work in partnership is a key priority. The FE sector will support delivery of the Department’s ‘[Economic Recovery Action Plan](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/economic-recovery-action-plan)’ which sets out a range of actions to kick-start economic recovery in Northern Ireland and build a more competitive, inclusive and green economy. It reflects the colleges’ contribution to raising skills levels and increasing productivity of the future workforce and aligning study to the needs of the economy in supporting a highly skilled and agile workforce. This included the introduction of Skills for Life and Work and Traineeship programmes from September 2021, replacing Training for Success.

The following visions and strategies have been published by the Department, building on the ‘Economic Recovery Action Plan’ which the FE sector is a key partner in taking forward:

* A [10X Economy](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/10x-economy-economic-vision-decade-innovation) – an economic vision for a decade of innovation in delivering a ten times better economy that will ultimately result in a ‘positive impact on our economy, societal and environmental wellbeing’, ‘creating jobs’, ‘increase incomes’, ‘improve productivity levels’ and ‘provide opportunities for all’.

Through focusing on the five priority clusters identified in ‘10X Economy’, the FE sector will support the Department’s economic vision to ‘recover, rebuild and rebound back stronger than ever’, meaning ‘better jobs with better wages, in a more flexible working environment and a better overall quality of life’. The five priority clusters identified are:

* Digital, ICT and Creative Industries (e.g. Cyber Security);
* Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering (e.g. Composites);
* Agri-Tech;
* Life and Health Sciences (e.g. Personalised Medicine); and
* Fintech / Financial Services.
* [Trade and Investment for a 10X Economy](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/trade-and-investment-10x-economy-priorities-northern-irelands-inward-investment-trade-and-exports): focuses on equipping individuals and business with the information and skills to exploit emerging trade and investment opportunities in the priority clusters; and in providing ‘a world class talent offering’.
* ‘[Tourism Recovery Action Plan](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/tourism-recovery-action-plan-TRAP.pdf)’: The FE sector supported the development and continues to support the implementation of phase two of the action plan. This document provides a solid foundation for the recovery of the Northern Ireland tourism and hospitality industries, and the progression of Northern Ireland as a sustainable and competitive tourism destination that meets the needs of both future visitors and local communities alike.
* [Tourism Recovery Action Plan](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/tourism-recovery-action-plan-TRAP.pdf): This strategy replaces “Success through Skills – Transforming Futures”, addressing the skills needs across Northern Ireland over the next decade. FE colleges have played a key role in the development of the strategy. Despite the change in economic circumstances and uncertainty created by the pandemic, the underlying key policy objectives over the next period remain consistent:
* Investing in our digital skills across all sectors of our economy;
* Creating a culture of learning for all ages to include upskilling and reskilling in addition to innovation; and
* Reducing the skills imbalances in the workforce, with a particular focus on those with low or no skills.

The NI Traineeship is the new flagship Level 2 vocational education programme that delivers the commitments set out within ‘Generating our Success’; the NI Strategy for Youth Training for a non-employed route. The programme aims to create a pathway through vocational education that offers participants the opportunity to achieve qualifications equivalent to five GCSEs through a combination of vocational training, structured work placement and numeracy and literacy qualifications, to support that individual’s progression into employment or higher levels of education and training. An Advanced Technical Award at Level 3 is being piloted, which will build on the Traineeship model and help to deliver a consistent full-time vocational pathway at this level. Both programmes will prioritise those skills that are most economically relevant and contribute to increasing the proportion of working-age population with qualifications at Levels 2 and 3.

Aligned with the ‘Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland – Skills for a 10X Economy’, the FE sector has begun delivering Skill Up – The Flexible Skills Fund (Skill Up) across multiple levels and sectors, focusing on the priority sectors and accredited qualifications at Levels 3, 4 and 5 where there is the greatest need, as highlighted by the Skills Barometer. Through Skill Up, we aim to skill, upskill and reskill individuals to meet the needs of the economy as we emerge from the pandemic and continue to grow the economy while boosting participation in lifelong learning and reducing key skills imbalances in areas such as digital technologies, advanced manufacturing, leadership and healthcare. As the Skill Up programme prepares to enter its second year, proposal requests for Year 3 are also being sought from course providers.

Developing a highly skilled and motivated workforce will be at the core of our economic recovery, and the FE sector plays a key role by providing high quality learner education and training. The establishment of seven Curriculum Hubs in key occupational areas focusing on priority skills and growth sectors of employment fully supports these goals.

The FE sector will contribute to the review of Level 4 and 5 Provision and Higher Education (HE) in FE and, as the review concludes, it will work towards implementation of agreed recommendations. This includes ensuring that HE in FE qualifications and progression pathways through HE remain appropriate for meeting the needs of learners and the economy. In addition, input from colleges will be vital to ongoing work examining the reform of vocational qualifications and responding to developments across the UK in this area.

The FE sector is also represented on the Tertiary Education Sector Senior Leaders’ Forum. The core purpose of the Forum is to foster greater collaboration between all those involved in post-compulsory school-age education, and to help move towards a unified tertiary education sector in Northern Ireland. The Forum seeks to advance the principal aims of supporting all learners to reach their potential and, in doing so, support the skills needs of the Northern Ireland economy.

The FE sector will provide support throughout to those who face particular challenges and barriers to engaging in education. This includes learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability and learners in the three prisons in Northern Ireland.

Aligned to the Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership statement “Safeguarding is everyone’s business”, colleges’ safeguarding, care and welfare policies are built on a foundation of ‘zero tolerance’ and have a shared objective to keep children, young people, adults at risk of harm and adults in need of protection safe from harm. The FE sector is committed to ensuring that all students, staff and stakeholders of the colleges experience an inclusive, enjoyable and safe environment in which they feel respected and valued.

The Department is investing £224 million in delivering seven new FE campuses providing modern facilities from which to deliver new and evolving curriculum provision addressing the needs of learners, industry and the wider economy, with new campuses at Armagh, Banbridge, Ballymena, Craigavon, Coleraine and Enniskillen along with expansion of existing Newry East campus via re-development of the former Newry Sport Centre. The new iconic Erne campus in Enniskillen is constructed to the highest environmental standard of Passivhaus Premium, a world first for an educational building. In addition, a major £10 million refurbishment of North West Regional College’s Springtown campus has recently been completed.

In conjunction with the City Deals programme, further capital projects are being considered at North West Regional College and South West College.

The FE sector is an essential component to support delivery of the Executive’s PfG Outcomes and the Department’s vision and strategies outlined above. NI’s future economic and social success is predicated on its ability to access a highly skilled, talented and flexible workforce to deliver a vibrant economy and inclusive society. FE colleges will play a crucial role in supporting NI to move through the Recovery to the Renewal Phases.

In order to carry out that role effectively, the FE sector needs to be able to flex delivery to adapt to the changing economic and strategic environment in which it operates. While the current six-college model provides the ability to adapt provision to meet the skills need of specific areas, the associated governance required can constrain the sector’s ability to act quickly and cohesively to meet the challenges it faces, including its increasing cost base and the recent decline in enrolments.

The Minister has therefore approved the initiation of the first stage of a Review of the current FE Delivery Model, which will seek to develop an evidence base on current delivery in the sector and to bring forward alternative delivery models to help inform how the Review will be taken forward. An external contractor, Tribal, has been commissioned to carry out a benchmarking exercise as part of this initial stage, which is expected to be completed by Summer 2022. A submission will then be made to the Minister summarising the current position and seeking approval for proposals on how the Review should be taken forward. The Department has been meeting with colleges to seek their initial views, and that engagement will intensify if the Minister decides the Review should progress to the next stage.

# CURRENT OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

This College Development Plan has been progressed against a backdrop of a non-functioning Northern Ireland Executive, absence of longer-term budgets, a world-wide recession, a cost-of-living crisis and rising energy costs, ongoing turmoil within the UK Government, and continued uncertainty on the world stage emanating from the Ukrainian crisis. This creates uncertainty in NI generally, significant financial pressures for government, businesses and citizens, and impacts on the services required from the FE sector.

Expert analysis for the recovery of the NI economy reflects the following:

• Ulster Bank Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) June 2022 reported a sharp decrease in output and new orders as severe price pressures caused demand to contract. Business confidence also fell, but companies continue to expand staffing levels.

• Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (Spring 2022) noted NI growth prospects are still relatively good, with anticipated growth of 4.2% in 2022, although global uncertainties remain a challenge for the NI economy. The inflation projections for 2022 are 5.9%. The issue of the Northern Ireland Protocol provides opportunities and challenges, giving NI manufacturers access to both UK and EU markets; however, import of goods from GB is causing significant challenges for many firms and adding to costs.

Despite these uncertainties, it is recognised that Northern Ireland’s future success is predicated on its ability to access a highly skilled, talented and flexible workforce, giving people access to better jobs across different sectors by: providing more opportunities through Lifelong Learning; supporting personal development; addressing the issues that lead to underachievement; and strengthening links between industry and academia. The future demand for skills is particularly relevant to Colleges across Northern Ireland as the skills barometer highlights that delivering on Northern Ireland’s economic potential will require a significant uplift in the number of people undertaking professional and technical qualifications.

The demand for skills in NI will outstrip supply, but the nature of the skills gap varies across NQF levels. The largest gaps are likely to emerge in the mid-tier skills levels across most subject areas, linked primarily to a supply issue. NQF level 4-5 qualifications represent only 7% of the overall supply of labour from the education system. The skills barometer also suggests that addressing this undersupply could be met by either increasing the course offering and participation in mid-level qualifications at FE or increasing the number of apprenticeships that achieve at least mid-level qualification. A significant majority of the jobs that supported our economy during the lockdown were vocational and remain essential to continued growth, particularly at Levels 3-5, across all sectors of the economy. These sectors will be central to economic recovery and are dependent on the FE sector to provide their talent pool. This CDP details how the FE Sector will capitalise on the achievements to date to ensure the needs of students, employers and communities are met as NI responds to, recovers from and renews itself following the pandemic.

The drive for higher skills and relevant professional and technical qualifications is also being progressed by Colleges through the delivery of a new Vocational Education and Training system (VET). The new VET system includes the well-established apprenticeship pathway and a non-employed pathway based on Level 2 Traineeships and Level 3 Advanced Technical Awards. The implementation of this non-employed pathway is central to the transformation of the VET landscape of Northern Ireland. The FE sector is committed to developing qualifications that will underpin the new VET system in Northern Ireland. The introduction of the new Traineeships/Advanced Technical awards are based on a new pedagogy underpinned by Project Based Learning that aims to create a new system of learning that will:

• Simplify the overly complex vocational offer;

• Reduce the number of vocational qualifications;

• Establish clear pathways based on apprenticeships (employed) and non-employed routes – providing seamless transition and progression for learners;

• Address the risks created by change across the qualifications market and ensure the availability of qualifications which meet our needs; and

• Address the forecasted skills shortfall at Level 3.

The Further Education Colleges successfully adjusted to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic over recent years, including shifting to new delivery models, centre assessed grading and assessment and enhanced support for learners. However, the downward trend in full-time further and higher education enrolments remains a significant concern across all Colleges. While recognising that the number of school learners at 16 years of age has dropped, the extent of the decline is attributed to the outworking of education policy across NI and, in particular, the growth in sixth-form provision and a funding model that has incentivised schools to retain learners. This has lead to increased levels of duplication of provision across schools and colleges.

The joint DE and DfE 14-19 Framework was approved by both DE and DfE Ministers in June 2022. It is critical that the Framework, ‘Developing a More Strategic Approach to 14-19 Education and Training’, progresses a range of actions to deliver a more effective partnership delivery model between schools and FE Colleges that will provide value for money and address the shortage of vocational skills at mid-tier levels. The Colleges are committed to progressing any actions that may emerge from the 14-19 Framework to ensure that the needs of all young people are met.

A further challenge that will impact College delivery is the cessation of EU funding; particularly in the area of social inclusion. Over a number of years, Colleges have secured funding for substantial programmes to support disadvantaged young people to progress to education, training and employment. As a result of EU Exit, there is risk of a reduction in this provision if no replacement funding is secured through new schemes such as Peace Plus and the Shared Prosperity Fund.

This CDP is set in the context of the Recovery phase, and focuses on ensuring the skills ‘infrastructure’ is maintained. Further Education Colleges will play a crucial role in supporting NI to move through the Recovery to the Renewal Phases.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles have been developed to set the direction for the 2022/23 CDP in light of the current operating environment:

1. Social distancing will not be in place at the start of the academic year (however, good practice and COVID hygiene measures will still be promoted) and recruitment capacity will return to pre-COVID levels. However, the residual impact of COVID-19 will result in smaller class sizes for years 2 and 3. Delivery will continue to adhere to any updates from the Departmental Advisory and Oversight Group on the safe resumption of onsite delivery.
2. The FE Sector will use its allocated resource budget to maximise the curriculum offer across the region. We will be proactive in developing and delivering an innovative curriculum provision in line with a range of departmental funding streams to deliver on the 10X and Skills Strategies.
3. Colleges will engage appropriate strategies to reset themselves as ‘face to face’ institutions.
4. Colleges will use the experiences of the pandemic to build on the use of technology to support more flexible forms of learning to businesses, and for individuals who wish to retrain or upskill.
5. Work with local employers will continue to develop new apprenticeship and placement opportunities.
6. We will engage with businesses to:

* Support employers through the provision of fully funded, tailored solutions through the Skills Focus Programme and use the Skill Up Initiative to increase the skills levels of the workforce; and
* Facilitate small businesses in acquiring the skills to innovate, by delivering up to three InnovateUs upskilling projects per business, through which they can work on developing new products, services or processes.

1. The FE sector will continue to work with relevant stakeholders in the development of a new Vocational Education and Training system through the further expansion of Traineeships, Advanced Technical awards and Apprenticeships.
2. The FE Sector will continue to support the most disadvantaged in communities across NI by ensuring access to learning opportunities that lead to sustainable career pathways.
3. The FE sector will continue to support local schools in the delivery of the Entitlement Framework through on-site delivery and in accordance with DfE guidelines on safe resumption.
4. The FE sector will play its role in implementing key policy initiatives and recommendations from:

* The 14-19 framework ‘Framework Developing a More Strategic Approach to 14-19 Education and Training’;
* Review of Level 4 and 5 Provision and HE in FE; and
* Vocational Qualifications Reform.

1. The FE Sector will continue to build on its programme of collaboration aimed at ensuring the delivery of a more coherent and responsive sector and making best use of existing resources and expertise.
2. The FE sector will use the ETI review of Curriculum Hubs to continue to build the effectiveness and responsiveness.
3. FE Colleges will continue to play a key role in supporting the work of City and Growth deals across Northern Ireland.
4. FE Colleges will support the work of local Labour Market Partnerships and other cross department initiatives.

# REGIONAL OPERATING CONTEXT - CHALLENGES

As the Further Education College for the capital of Northern Ireland and the Belfast City Region, we respond to the opportunities afforded by growth, jobs and diversity, alongside dealing with the challenges of areas that have some of the highest levels of poverty, economic inactivity and deep-rooted social problems in the country.

***Our Community***

Given the geographic placement of the College campuses and community Hubs, our catchment area largely resides within Belfast LGD; of the 18,579 enrolled in a course at the College for the 2021/22 academic year, 50.1% were from Belfast. As to be expected, Belfast city district has the largest post-primary education provision in the country, with 17 grammar schools, 17 secondary schools, 7 preparatory schools, and 4 universities.[[1]](#footnote-2) Although we are the only Further Education College in the Belfast city district, our catchment area also overlaps with two fellow FE providers in Northern Ireland: Northern Regional College and South Eastern Regional College.

However, our catchment area also spans across other government districts, with 11.2% of students residing in Lisburn and Castlereagh, 10.6% in Antrim and Newtownabbey, and 6.7% in Ards and North Down. As such, the College is made up of learners from a range of socio-economic background. While 27.3% of our 2021/22 learners live in the 20% most deprived areas in Northern Ireland (Quintile 1 NIMDM), 25.2% live in the 20% least deprived areas in NI (Quintile 5 NIMDM). In 2021/22, 12.6% of our learners declared a disability, of whom 45.2% have a Specific Learning Disability. Furthermore, 10% of our current learners identify as BAME (Black, Asian, Minority or Ethnic).

Based on the most recent projections, Belfast’s population is expected to grow from 341,877 to 344,474 between 2018 and 2043. The number of females is expected to decrease from 175,915 to 175,244, with the number of males predicted to increase from 165,962 to 169,230. Across the same period, the number of 15-19-year-olds in Belfast is projected to grow from 20,967 to 21,403, with the number of females increasing from 10,297 to 10,564, and the number of males increasing from 10,670 to 10,839.[[2]](#footnote-3)

***Labour Market***

The labour market for Belfast differs to that of wider Northern Ireland, and that in turn shapes what skills are needed and what we, as an FE College, provide. In essence, Belfast is more skills intensive than the rest of Northern Ireland, has a greater diversity of industrial sectors, and will continue to demand a more highly skilled workforce. Belfast is home to many of Northern Ireland’s high productivity and high-skilled jobs, and has a high concentration in sectors forecast to experience the most rapid growth over the coming decade.

Despite the size and complexity of the labour market in the City Region and the diversity of employment opportunities available, Belfast ranks consistently amongst the lowest-performing local government districts in educational attainment relating to young people, such as in school performance and participation in tertiary education. Low performance is concentrated within certain areas of the city. This means that there are additional challenges for the Belfast City Region in achieving economically inclusive growth.

Although economic growth slowed in the final quarter of 2021 due to new restrictions being introduced in response to the Omicron variant, key forecasts have suggested that the Northern Irish economy could reach its pre-COVID levels of economic activity earlier than previously expected. After strong growth of 7.7% in 2021, it is predicted that economic output could grow by a further 4.2% in 2022, with the number of jobs also predicted to grow by 1.5%.[[3]](#footnote-4)

However, these forecasts are prefaced with the fact that the global economy still faces significant risks, meaning this predicted growth is still highly uncertain; the current humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, inflation and the soaring cost of living, and the risk of future COVID-19 variants all pose significant risks to economies at the global level. Despite the seriousness of these global challenges, Northern Irish businesses have continued to highlight access to local skills and talent as the primary challenge they face.[[4]](#footnote-5)

One of the major impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic was changing the way in which people work. Prior to 2020, less than 4% of Northern Irish workers worked remotely; the lowest percentage of any UK region.[[5]](#footnote-6) However, by the height of the first “work from home” mandate in April 2020, this figure had increased drastically to 41% and, over a year later in December 2021, approximately 21% of workers were still fully remote, with 11% working a “hybrid pattern” (ie, both working from home and travelling to work).[[6]](#footnote-7) Furthermore, recent research has indicated that, in practice, 40% of jobs in Northern Ireland could be completed remotely, with the figure for Belfast even higher at 46%.[[7]](#footnote-8) In terms of what employees want, surveys have suggested that, across most sectors, workers in Northern Ireland are in favour of a return to the workplace, but *only* if it was combined with home working.[[8]](#footnote-9) As a result of this growing consensus, as of June 2021, around 30% of UK businesses stated that they intended to adopt a homeworking business approach going

forward.[[9]](#footnote-10)

Therefore, it appears as though there may be a post-pandemic shift towards hybrid working patterns. While this presents significant challenges for employers, we recognise our role as Belfast’s Further Education College in preparing our people for this new world of work.

***Our Economic and Social Context***

* ***Jobs:*** In Belfast, up until 2027, 3,540 jobs will need to be filled each year from education and migration.[[10]](#footnote-11)
* ***Productivity and growth sectors*:** Belfast local government district has the second fastest job growth, with 36% of the total NI job growth over the 2012 to 2017 period.[[11]](#footnote-12)
* ***Skills levels:*** There is an oversupply of low-level skills at NQF Level 2 and below. In the future, 56% of the labour force will require a degree-level qualification.
* ***Skills imbalances***: only 28% of Belfast City Council residents are qualified to Level 4+, compared to 44% of the Belfast city workplace employees.[[12]](#footnote-13)
* ***Occupations:*** in Belfast, administrative occupations are the largest occupational group in the workforce, accounting for 14% of total employment, compared to 10% for Northern Ireland.[[13]](#footnote-14)
* ***Businesses:*** Belfast hosts the largest number of businesses in Northern Ireland, with 11,405 (14%) registered businesses out of a total of 78,885.[[14]](#footnote-15)
* ***Digital economy:*** 64% of the total workplace jobs in Northern Ireland in IT are situated in Belfast. The IT sector is expected to grow by 4.7% between 2017 and 2027.[[15]](#footnote-16)
* ***Population changes:*** Belfast’s population is projected to grow from 341,477 to 344,474 between 2018 and 2043. The number of 15-19-year-olds in Belfast is also projected to grow from 20,967 to 21,403 across the same period.[[16]](#footnote-17) The population of children is set to decrease, there will be more people of working age (16- 64) and more over 65s – in short, the population is expected to age.[[17]](#footnote-18) Belfast was the most ethnically diverse Council in Northern Ireland in the 2011 census.[[18]](#footnote-19) In the intervening decade, Northern Ireland welcomed steadily increasing numbers of newcomer pupils to the Northern Ireland education system.[[19]](#footnote-20) This trend in population diversity is expected to continue in the upcoming figures in the 2021 Census.[[20]](#footnote-21)
* ***Poverty*:** 25% of the Belfast population are in the bottom income quintile for the UK.[[21]](#footnote-22) 50% of the poorest 100 areas in Northern Ireland in terms of the measures of multiple deprivation are in Belfast, the highest proportion of all local government districts.

***School leavers:*** Belfast, at 71.8%, has the lowest proportion of school leavers who achieve five GCSEs, including English and Mathematics, as compared to 77.7% for Northern Ireland as a whole.[[22]](#footnote-23)

***Unemployment and economic inactivity*:** unemployment has decreased to 2.6% in Northern Ireland over the past year. However, the economic inactivity rate in Northern Ireland remains high at 27.8% and stands at 30.1% in Belfast; the fourth highest of the 11 local government districts. The figure for those aged 16–24 who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) in Northern Ireland has decreased from 10% to 7.5% over the past year and sits below the UK average of 9.5%.[[23]](#footnote-24)

***Health and wellbeing:*** prevalence of mental health problems in both the adult and youth population in Northern Ireland is reported as being around 25% higher than in the UK.[[24]](#footnote-25) It is estimated that 11.6% of 16-24-year-olds in Northern Ireland have a physical or mental health condition or illness expected to last 12 months or more; a figure that has reduced from 13.6% in 2020.[[25]](#footnote-26) Estimates have suggested that 22% of Northern Irish school-aged children have special educational needs, 63% of whom are male.[[26]](#footnote-27)

Belfast Met has a dual mandate to promote economic growth and social inclusion and our provision must be fully aligned with the key Government policies and projects that set the policy and delivery context for Belfast Met, namely:

* NI Economic Strategy
* NI Economic Recovery Plan 2022-25
* NI Skills Strategy
* NI 10X Economic Vision
* DfE Transformation Programme
* 14-19 Strategy
* NI Government Instability and Departmental Fiscal Pressure
* College Long-Term Financial Sustainability Strategic Commitment
* New Decade, New Approach
* Programme for Government
* Transition of Young People into Careers (14–19) project
* Tourism Recovery Action Plan
* Forthcoming Independent Review of Education
* Belfast Region City Deal.

2021/22 saw the development and publication of our new 2021/22 – 2023/24 Strategic Plan, ‘*Choose Success*’. A comprehensive range of actions to deliver on our dual mandate of promoting economic growth and social inclusion are articulated in the [Strategic Plan](https://indd.adobe.com/view/6b3ccacf-ba42-465e-93ee-78c68c6c55bc), underpinning operational plans, as well as the [Widening Access and Participation Plan 2022/23 – 2024/25](https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/siteFiles/resources/docs/PublicDocuments/WideningAccessParticipationPlan2022-23.pdf), the Whole College Quality Improvement Plan 2021/22 and 2022/23, and in the planned provision set out in the Educational Report Card accompanying this document.

***Our challenges and opportunities as we emerge from COVID-19, and the actions we are taking to manage the impact on our people, both students and staff, are as follows:***

***Table 1: Challenges, opportunities, issues and actions***

| **Challenges/ opportunities** | **Issues and taken/planned actions** |
| --- | --- |
| **Declining enrolments.** | FE Colleges are tasked with delivering services in the context of a range of competing, and sometimes conflicting, educational and economic policies in Northern Ireland.  Total FE College enrolments have declined by a net 36.3% in Northern Ireland between 2016/17 and 2020/21 (from 153,088 to 97,532), and the same pattern applies in Belfast Met. Causes are well documented and, in summary, include:   * Diminishing numbers of 18-year-olds. * Expansion of HE within HEIs with increased MASN places. * Schools retaining pupils at sixth form. * Competition from other providers. * Higher than expected attainment in some areas at GCSE and A-level. * Lack of agreed approaches in respect of the development and delivery of HE in FE and the impact of this on progression pathways from FE to HE. For example, Belfast Met considers that partnerships between the College and the universities that have articulation arrangements in place from Foundation Degree to full Degree programmes are not always implemented in the spirit in which they were agreed, as a result of published entrance criteria being reduced by universities. Furthermore, there have been occasions where some universities do not accept FE students’ qualifications from particular Awarding Bodies without additional interventions such as bridging programmes. In addition, some universities will accept a 2 + 1 model of delivery whereas others insist on a 2 + 2 model, which is another example of the lack of agreed approaches.   HEIs reducing entrance criteria to Degree programmes. A range of interventions have been identified, including:   * Reviewing our communication and marketing strategy with potential and actual applicants to convert more students to enrolments, both for FE and HE. * Actively marketing progression pathways to internal students so that more can progress through levels or across provision and remain at the college for longer. * Integrating curriculum, Centre for Skills and Apprenticeships (CFSA) and Centre for Economic Development and Social Inclusion (CEDSI) via curriculum development and planning processes to ensure that all potential students are catered for, from Skills for Work and Life and entry levels, to increase the numbers of students progressing from entry and Level 1 provision through to Level 2 and beyond. * Differentiating our college offer from schools’ by increasing our Traineeship offer and adopting Advanced Technical Awards at Level 3 as appropriate and following pilot programmes. * Increasing HLA provision in line with 10X priority clusters to meet the needs of employers and attract applicants seeking employment and study; for example, digital/ICT and fintech. The College will deliver an HLA footprint with 20 cohorts in 2022/23, one more than last year. This additional cohort follows on from the successful validation of an OU Foundation Degree in Culinary Arts. * Reviewing and updating our HE offers as part of curriculum development and innovation, and revalidation processes to ensure the offer is relevant, flexible and with a clear line of sight to employment to attract more applicants and increase enrolments. * Meeting the increased MASN figure. Belfast Met sees a positive trajectory, as HE applications have increased by 32% on last year’s figure. To support meeting this target, the College is promoting eight new Foundation Degrees and four new Higher Education courses including: a Foundation Degree in Data Business Management; CPCAB Level 5 in Counselling and a HND in Art and Design (ceramics).   The Foundation Degree in Culinary Arts provides currency in content and an opportunity for progression from Level 3 vocational pathways in professional cookery and patisserie.   The Foundation Degree in Chemical Sciences (Validated by Queen's University) is also being offered again in 2022/23 to enrol a first cohort. * Delivery of future Curriculum Development and Innovation Investment Plans. * Implementation of the Development Framework for HLA curriculum. * Supporting the implementation of recommendations arising from HE in FE reviews. * Schools Partnership Programmes as well as programmes such as College Connect and Futures have been vital in supporting young people to progress into further education, training and employment. * The FE sector and the College will adapt and refresh its curriculum offer and delivery to meet the strategic direction of policy initiatives and needs of local industry and economy. This will incorporate the invaluable work being taken forward via the Curriculum Hubs. As the Hospitality and Tourism and Digital and IT Curriculum Hubs take a sectoral approach, all six colleges are represented and are committed to collaboratively developing a curriculum that is fit for purpose across the province. * Belfast Met will be an active participant in all sector working groups in actively seeking solutions to declining enrolments. |
| **Increasing costs, declining funding and budgetary uncertainty.** | * The 2022/23 year presents potentially the most significant financial challenge for the sector in recent years. * With increased fiscal pressure and budget uncertainty, coupled with a period of significant inflationary pressure and a period of rising prices, the College will undoubtedly face financial pressure in the 2022/23 year, and will require an adequate budget and the requisite resource to enable the delivery of the enrolments as set out within our CDP and to ensure we have a financially sustainable College. * The College continues to prioritise our frontline service while also recognising that efficiencies are still necessary in line with the requirement from the Department. * We have completed our whole College financial planning process to support the development of our draft annual budget for 2022/23 and we have clearly identified the inherent financial pressures based on the draft budget allocation from the Department.  We await the final budget allocation for the 2022/23 budget year, and we will continue to appraise our Accounting Officer and Governing Body of the position. |
| **Developing a relevant, flexible delivery model to meet demand.** | * Review and develop curriculum design following curriculum development process to update our curriculum offer and its delivery so that it is aligned with skills and industry demand. This will incorporate the invaluable work being taken forward via the Curriculum Hubs. * Good practice of blended and remote learning that emerged during COVID will be retained and further enhanced to give flexibility and to support learners and employers; e.g., in HE and professional learning programmes. * While all programmes will incorporate at least some online learning to develop digital skills for learning, programmes from Levels 3-7 will have a fully blended design aligned with the curriculum delivery framework. * Implement Plan for Scheduled Online Learning and Assessment (SOLA) for all full-time programmes in line with curriculum delivery framework. * The College is undertaking a curriculum refresh of its provision ensuring relevancy and currency of the offer. The emphasis will be on pathways of access to all levels, development of areas to meet social inclusion and industry needs while ensuring access through flexible modalities of delivery. * Further develop and embed flexible peripatetic and blended delivery solutions for work-based learning programmes. * Further develop and enhance the recruitment and marketing of FE and HE in FE as a first choice for study. * Belfast Met leads two of the FE College Curriculum Hubs (Hospitality & Tourism and Digital ICT) and the College is committed to playing a key collaborative role in supporting fellow colleges’ leadership of the other equally important sectors/Hubs and the impacts of this work in support of the College’s aspiration of developing a relevant, flexible delivery model to meet demand. A key programme delivered through the Digital IT Hub is the ‘Bring IT On’ programme, which is a key communications and outreach initiative to promote pathways into the IT sector. * Lead the Digital by Design Programme Board during 2022/23 and launch our Digital Manifesto, embedding supporting principles to provide a great learner experience. * Draft and implement Estates Strategy. |
| **Increasing numbers of students with learning support requirements and/or requiring student support.** | The DfE Review of Student Support 2020 indicates that:   * The number of school leavers aged 16+ with Special Educational Needs (SEN) will grow by 20% over the next five years. Of these leavers, a consistent 43% will choose to further their education at FE Colleges. This has changed by +18% in the past five years. * Over the next five years, more students will choose to study at FE Colleges and that an increasing proportion of these students would require specific student support with their studies. This will have implications for the FE Colleges for the support they provide and the resources they allocate. * The number of leavers with special needs attending FE Colleges will grow, both in % terms (up 21%) and as a total ratio of joiners (to more than 33%) over the next five years. The Department assists colleges to fulfil this obligation by providing funding to the Colleges to support SLDD through the Additional Support Fund (ASF). It should be noted that success rates for students with SLDD02/03 have consistently been higher than non-SLDD students. * The increasing number of students with learning support requirements presents Belfast Met with a number of challenges, namely: * Students presenting with complex and co-occurring needs alongside the impact of COVID. * Increase in requests for exam access arrangements. * Staffing levels have not increased to match the increase in referrals. * Staff absences and vacancies in difficult-to-recruit key roles, such as the Register for Mentors, Note Takers and Learning Support Assistants, have compounded the difficulties faced in provision, and students who have been found through assessment to need these additional supports are not receiving them. * High risk of not being able to put reasonable adjustments in place and the legal implications of failing to meet legal obligations. * Lack of physical space for 1-1 assessments on the Millfield and Castlereagh campuses.   This results in issues for students in class, such as difficulties staying on course, feelings of demotivation and struggling to cope with the potential of withdrawing from the course. It can also lead to legal challenges for failing to put reasonable adjustments in place. Further, it can result in:   * Learners not being assessed within the three-week KPI and in line with Exam Access Arrangement deadlines resulting in malpractice. * Increased pressure on staff and their well-being to manage increasing caseloads. * No opportunity for growth with current staffing resources.   We are already the largest provider of programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the region. We are currently in year two of the DfE’s predicted growth, which is evidenced very clearly in our referral figures below:  ***Table 2: Student Referrals between 2017 and 2022***   |  | **2017-18** | **2018-19** | **2019-20** | **2020-21** | **21-22 YTD** | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Total number of referrals** | 1396 | 1232 | 1388 | 1370 | 1597 | | **Total number of students supported by Initial Needs Assessment (FE/HE/App/Training etc.)** | 1053 | 969 | 1051 | 1082 | 1178 | | **Total number of ASF 02 students**  **(FE Mainstream)** | 541 | 573 | 628 | 530 | 586 | | **Total number of students with Exam Access Arrangements** | 440 | 546 | 706 | 571 | 669 |   Table of student referrals between 2017 and 2022   * At the time of preparing this CDP (July/August 2022), 1,597 students are on the Inclusive Learning Register with 1,046 attending an appointment to assess/review their needs; 941 are in receipt of Curriculum Support Recommendations (CSR); 669 have recommended Exam Access Arrangements; 192 specialist exam access arrangements assessments have been completed; and 345 personal/technical support interventions are in place. * In relation to the two main funds, 580 have accessed SLDD02 and 43 SLDD03 under ASF Basic and 105 are funded under **Disabled Students’ Allowance** (DSA). In 2020/21, there were 1,370 students on the Inclusive Learning Register; 571 were recommended Exam Access Arrangements; 139 had specialist exam access arrangements assessments completed (Form 8/File Notes) and, in relation to the two main funds, 530 accessed SLDD02 and 39 SLDD03 under ASF Basic, while 93 were funded under DSA. |
| **Attracting talent into our workforce and some skills shortages in areas.** | To be effective at addressing the shortages in the NI workforce, it is essential colleges have skilled staff who feel valued. The College increasingly finds itself with a strategic business challenge in the War for Talent and the changing landscape around the attracting and retaining of talent, which is a critical driver for corporate performance. The proportion of employers with hard-to-fill roles has increased from 3% to 47% and recruitment difficulties remain higher in the public sector (54%) than in the private (46%) and voluntary sectors (46%).[[27]](#footnote-28)  For the last number of years, the College has experienced difficulty in filling lecturing vacancies in specific skills areas such as:   * IT and software engineering * Cyber Security * Hospitality and Professional cookery * Health and Social Care * Plumbing and Heating * Electrical, Mechanical, Civil and Aeronautical Engineering   The impact of the pandemic has compounded this position with these pre-existing skills gaps growing over the last two years.  Staff recruitment and retention in the FE sector now is very difficult and extends beyond even the historically “hard to recruit” areas identified above. Recruitment of high-quality lecturers is made challenging by direct competition from schools, higher education institutions and businesses, all of which typically offer more attractive rates of pay for comparable roles, and the gap is widening. Colleges now find themselves in a position where they are unable to match pay offered in many growth industries.  However, pay is only one part of the story in ensuring the continuity of the colleges’ workforce supply. Faced with constrained budgets and the need to adapt and innovate to improve quality, the FE sector Colleges are doing all that they can to recruit the most talented staff in a timely, efficient and cost-effective fashion.  In some of the skills and trade areas, such as Plumbing and Heating and Electromechanics, there is a pool of skilled recruits currently working in the industry who have an excellent expanse of relevant skills in their technical field. However, more often than not, they hold technical trades qualifications, which is at odds with the prerequisite of a Level 6/5 qualification for entry into lecturing, as well as the University of Ulster requirements for entry onto the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCFHE), therefore remaining a strong barrier to entry into a career in FE. The College acknowledges the mitigation offered by DfE in the communication of December 2019, which supports recruitment outside of the requirements of the circular FE 01/12.  The most profound impact of not having the skilled workforce that we require is that we are unable to develop and deliver the curriculum required. Resultingly, the College has had to remove some curriculum offering in its totality in some cases to reduce the number of cohorts that we can accommodate. Turning away students means fewer enrols and reduced income. Even with reduced cohorts in some areas where staff shortages run deep, there remains a potential risk that some staff may be required to work in excess of their contractual hours for a period of time. Ultimately, this can impact negatively on the health and wellbeing of our staff. With difficulty in getting backfill staff to cover absences, the resultant outcome eventually means classes are cut, the student learning experience is impacted and the risk of poor retention increases.  Our strategic approach to recruiting the right staff with the right skills ahead of need is centred around our strategic objective to be an Employer of Choice. We are engaged in a wide range of activities in support of this objective that we refer to as “Build, Grow, Buy”, including:   * We continue to be involved in the negotiations taking place with CEF to secure a new pay deal for lecturers to provide them with a more competitive salary and a transformation of their contract. * Traditional channels of advertising vacancies and attracting talent are steadily being replaced in line with consumer preferences and trends towards digital, social and mobile media to increase the scope of attraction. * A range of PR strategies on recruitment and retention are planned to raise the profile and extol the benefits of working in the FE sector in Belfast Met and focus will be placed on the role of the lecturer as a technical specialist at the forefront of their field. * Working with DfE to reduce entry-level qualifications on certain hard-to-recruit skills areas. * Investment in upskilling and reskilling our staff to build the skills that we need internally. * Targeted recruitment campaigns are being deployed; e.g. in plumbing, using bespoke job boards and industry related distribution channels. * Job fairs and attraction campaigns with the two teacher training colleges to raise awareness of working in FE and encouraging young graduates to make FE their first choice for career opportunities. * Undertaking a root-and-branch review of our recruitment and onboarding process to ensure that there is nothing in the applicant experience that is putting people off or unnecessarily slowing down the onboarding process. * In the incoming academic year, we plan a refreshed approach to recruitment in the college where we will transform from a totally competency-based process to including a values-based process and to hire for potential in the hope to attract a wider and more diverse pool of applicants to the college. * Exploring an internship training model to “grow your own”. |
| **Meeting the needs of an evolving regional and College demography.** | Belfast Metropolitan College was the first, and is the only, Further or Higher Education institution to receive College of Sanctuary status in Northern Ireland.  The College is the largest provider of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses in Northern Ireland with 2021/22 ESOL enrolments totalling 1,649. Over 75% of learners are from a Refugee or Asylum Seeker background, which equates to 672 individuals. Our ESOL learners come from a range of native countries, but the top five are Syria, Sudan, Iran, Somalia and Eritrea.  We also manage the NI ESOL coordination for Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) across the six local colleges and the community and voluntary sector for Syrian refugees. We are actively involved with DfE and others in supporting arrangements for other refugee and asylum seeker groups such as Afghan and Ukrainians.  The Executive Office estimates noticeably larger numbers of asylum seeker arrivals presenting who gravitate towards Belfast requiring ESOL support. This is evidenced in the already unprecedented demand for ESOL provision, and this context is understood by FE Division including FE Policy Branch. At the time of writing, the College was already over 450 above target on ESOL enrolments with 1,864 enrols and a waiting list of 1,121. While enrolments and waiting lists will settle as places become available, the challenge for the College in taking action to reduce waiting lists and accommodate demand is the lack of analogous resourcing (lecturing staff, admin support for students, and admin support for management and classrooms, for example).    These learners already faced a range of extensively documented barriers to learning, which were further compounded by the pandemic as well as a huge demand for ESOL with limited provision. The College was able to respond to these and support learners in a number of ways during 2021/22. In response to a shortfall in the Family Action Fund, a separate fund was established through the Belfast Met Charitable Trust in 2021/22. This intervention has helped support refugee and Asylum seeker students to access and complete their studies at the College by providing a payment to support travel and other expenses. The College has established a Sanctuary Scholarship that will help fund full-time study for a number of Asylum seeker students in 2022/23.  The College also ran a new initiative comprising two intensive courses, four weeks in length, which were delivered over the summer to a total of 44 learners at pre-entry level (the area of greatest demand). |
| **Addressing regional skills needs as set out in the Skills Barometer and Departmental/Executive Strategies outlined in the ‘Strategic Context’, including through the delivery of Traineeships, Skills for Life and Work, and Advanced Technical Awards.** | We are committed to addressing the skills in demand as articulated in the NI Skills Barometer 2021[[28]](#footnote-29) through the Skill Up programme, which is providing free accredited up-skilling across the region with courses aligned to the growth sectors of the NI economy, as well as utilising programmes such as Skills Focus to support businesses to up-skill their employees, and Assured Skills Academies to support individuals in gaining the skills they need to compete for guaranteed employment opportunities while simultaneously assuring new Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) companies and locally expanding companies that the skills they require are available.  Skills in Demand (NI Skills Barometer 2021)[[29]](#footnote-30)  ***Figure 1 Subjects in Demand***  A diagram called "More People Needed with Degrees in" comprises 10 infographics: a cog, with the title "Engineering and Technology"; four mathematical symbols entitled "Mathematical and Computer Sciences"; a leaf with the title "Physical/Environmental Sciences"; a paintbrush and palette titled "Creative Arts and Design"; two speech bubbles titled "Languages"; a tractor titled "Agricultural Sciences"; a picture of a clock face with the title "Historical and Philosophical Studies"; a graph with the title "Business and Financial Studies"; a helix titled "Biological Sciences"; and a pencil drawing a house with the title "Architecture and Related Studies".  ***Figure 2 Subjects in Demand***  A diagram called "More People Needed with Foundation Degree Level/Higher Level Apprenticeships in" comprises 10 infographics: a cog, with the title "Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies"; a laboratory flask over a sum reading one plus two equals three titled "Science and Mathematics"; a paintbrush and palette titled "Arts, media and publishing"; a hand holding a symbol of a heart titled "Health, Public Services and Care"; a low resolution arrow signifying a computer cursor titled "Information and communication technology"; a hard hat titled "Construction, planning and the built environment"; a tractor titled "Agriculture, horticulture and animal care"; a mortar board with the title "Education and training"; a picture of a clock face with the title "History, philosophy and theology"; and a group of people with the title "Social sciences".  At the bottom of the diagram are the words "The subjects are listed in priority order of demand".  Belfast Met will play a key role in integrating Sectoral Partnerships in curriculum development and will ensure that, with the recent removal of the age cap on Apprenticeships and Higher Level Apprenticeships, it will best meet the needs of the wider economy.  One of the responsibilities of the Curriculum Hub, of which Belfast Met has two — IT and Hospitality & Tourism — is to provide the Secretariat to the corresponding Sectoral Partnership group. This ensures that departmental initiatives fully complement each other, and that industry partners receive consistent information about what support is available, now and in the future, so that they are able to reflect employer needs and concerns to the Department.  Through the IT Sectoral Partnership, the College is engaging with companies to review apprenticeship provision and delivery. In relation to Level 3 Apprenticeships, two apprenticeship pathways have been updated in Software Development and Networking Infrastructure and an additional two pathways developed in Cyber Security and Digital Forensics.  Additional Higher Level Apprenticeship provision is now provided at Level 5 and 6 in key technology areas including cyber security and cloud computing.  The Hospitality & Tourism Sector Partnership has developed new frameworks and qualifications at Level 2 for Traineeships and Level 3 for Apprenticeships in Commis/Professional Chef and Hospitality & Tourism Team Member/Leader. Further SP engagement has led to the development of a range of Higher Level Apprenticeships based on sector needs in the areas of Culinary Arts, Hospitality Management, Tourism Management and Event Management.  Furthermore, we will continue to actively participate and achieve success in regional and national WorldSkills as well as inter-college competitions across many areas of the curriculum, including carpentry, joinery, hairdressing, barbering and catering. Belfast Met will host the WorldSkills UK National Finals in 2022. |
| **Promoting economic growth and social inclusion in a complex and conflicting policy arena and challenging funding environment.** | The barriers to education and employment are clearly set out earlier in this document as well as in the wider policy context. As we learn to live with COVID-19, it is clear that the pandemic has had an unequal socio-economic impact upon individuals and businesses, risking the widening of existing gaps.[[30]](#footnote-31) Actual College provision in 2021/22 and planned provision in 2022/23 in relation to promoting economic growth and social inclusion is set out in the Educational Report Card accompanying this document.  A comprehensive range of actions to deliver on our dual mandate of promoting economic growth and social inclusion are also articulated within the [Strategic Plan](https://indd.adobe.com/view/6b3ccacf-ba42-465e-93ee-78c68c6c55bc), underpinning operational plans, as well as the [Widening Access and Participation Plan 2022/23 – 2024/25](https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/siteFiles/resources/docs/PublicDocuments/WideningAccessParticipationPlan2022-23.pdf) and the Whole College Quality Improvement Plan 2021/22 and 2022/23. For example:     * Futures/College Connect and Skills for Industry are key programmes that support our social inclusion mandate – none of these are funded through mainstream provision, but they provide a significant progression pathway into the College. Two of these programmes have come to a close this year with College Connect completing in March 2023. * Working with delivery partners at a local level to better support progression pathways into FE Deliver Community Education Programme. * Leading Partner in Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD). * Delivery of BRCD business and enrolment targets. * Expanded Traineeship curriculum in the 2022/23 academic year. * We are the lead College delivering Learning and Skills programmes in NI Prisons, in partnership with NWRC. * Implement agreed framework to deliver KPI targets for economic and social impact, including the Social Return on Investment impact targets to measure and report on socio-economic impact 2022/23. * Deliver the Social Inclusion Framework. |

Table setting out challenges, opportunities, issues and actions

# PLANNED ACTIVITY

The tables below set out the College’s planned activity for the 2022/23 year. Our forecast funding requirement is £50.001m, which is in line with the June internal planning update 2022/23 received from DfE on 14 September 2022. For the purposes of building the CDP, we have used the updated indicative budget figure of £50.001m.

***Table 2: Qualifications 2022/23***

| **2022/23 Qualifications** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Area of Planned Activity**  **(Data source: CDR)** | **Planned Activity**  **For 2022/23** | **2021/22 In-Year**  **Activity** |
| **FE Activity:**   * L0-3 * FT & PT * Excluding Essential Skills | 16,211 enrolments equating to 7,883 Individuals | 15,529 enrolments equating to 7,594 Individuals |
| **HE in FE – Full time**:   * L4-6 | 1,408 enrolments equating to 1,408 Individuals | 1,092 enrolments equating to 1,087 Individuals |
| **HE in FE – Part time**:   * L4-6 | 1,057 enrolments equating to 968 Individuals | 1,198 enrolments equating to 1,038 Individuals |
| **TfS:**   * L0-3 | 0 enrolments equating to 0 Individuals | N/A |
| **Skills for Life and Work**   * L0-2 | 80 enrolments equating to 80 Individuals | 0 enrolments equating to 0 Individuals |
| **Traineeships:**   * L2 | 322 enrolments equating to 226 Individuals | 145 enrolments equating to 104 Individuals |
| **AppsNI**:   * L2-3 | 952 enrolments equating to 749 apprentices registered for training  90% of AppsNI apprentices who remain on the programme for at least four weeks after initial registration and go on to remain on the programme for more than 52 weeks. | 953 No. of enrolments equating to 842 apprentices registered for training  89% of AppsNI apprentices who remain on the programme for at least four weeks after initial registration and go on to remain on the programme for more than 52 weeks. |
| **HLAs**   * L4-5 | 263 enrolments equating to 255 HLA | 218 enrolments equating to 206 HLA |
| **Essential Skills** | 2,300 enrolments equating to 1,631 Individuals. | 2,212 enrolments equating to 1,571 Individuals. |
| **Priority Sector Areas and / or STEM (PSSA)[[31]](#footnote-32):** | 12,046 PSSA enrolments equating to 7,950 individuals enrolled in one or more PSSA subjects.  9,658 final year students enrolled in one or more PSSA subjects. | 10,815 PSSA enrolments equating to 6,858 individuals enrolled in in one or more PSSA subjects.  6,476 final year students enrolled in one or more PSSA subjects. |

Table of qualifications 2022/2023

***Table 3: Overall Prison Service Delivery 2022/23***

| **Overall NI Prison Service Delivery**  **(BMC Lead College – Compiled in conjunction with NWRC)** | |
| --- | --- |
| **Area of Planned Activity** | **Planned Activity for 2022/23**  **Financial Year** |
| Prisoners in Maghaberry Prison Undertaking College-led courses | 347 |
| Prisoners in Hydebank Prison Undertaking College-led courses | 90 |
| Prisoners in Magilligan Prison Undertaking College-led courses | 324 |

Prison Service Delivery 22/23

***Table 4: Employer-led activity 2022/23***

| **Employers** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Area of Planned Activity** | **Planned Activity**  **for 2022/23** | **2021/22 Activity** |
| **InnovateUs**   * 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023 | 76 projects delivered through the InnovateUs programme  £290,000 of projects completed (budget spend) | 78 projects delivered through the InnovateUs programme  £300,200 of projects completed (budget spend) |
| **Skills Focus**   * L2+ * 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023 | 270 enrolments undertaking a Level 2 (and above) qualification through the Skills Focus Programme  £275,000 budget allocated | 322 enrolments undertaking a Level 2 (and above) qualification through the Skills Focus Programme  £355,937.96 spend |
| **Assured Skills**:   * L0-8 * 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023 | 18 Assured Skills Academies 360 enrols | 22 Assured Skills Academies delivered - 350 people trained |
| **Other Programmes** | | |
| **Innovation Boost** | N/A | N/A |
| **Innovation Voucher Scheme** | 12 Innovation Vouchers | 17 Innovation Vouchers |

Employer led activity 22/23

***Table 5 Social Inclusion activity 2022/23***

| **Social Inclusion** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Area of Planned Activity**  **(Data source: CDR)** | **Planned Activity**  **for 2022/23** | **2021/22 In-Year**  **Activity** |
| Enrolments within Quintiles 1 and 2 | 9,764 | 9,488 |
| Enrolments declaring a disability / long-term health problem | 3,037 | 2,891 |
| Enrolments on Entry Level and Level 1 Programmes (including Essential Skills) | 5,826 | 5,682 |
| Enrolments on Targeted Programmes eg College Connect, Prince’s Trust, Skill Up | 729 | 767 |
| Enrolments on ESOL Programmes | 1,816 | 1,739 |
| Overall number of individuals supported by above measures | 8,078 | 7,670 |
|  | (Skill Up enrols now captured under ‘Enrolments on Targeted Programmes’) |  |

Social Inclusion Activity 22/23

***Table 6: Overall College Planned Performance Rate***

| **Overall College Performance** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance Indicator** | **Planned Performance Rate for 2022/23** | **2020/21**  **Performance Rate** |
| **Retention Rate:**  The proportion of the number of enrolments who complete their final year of study to the number of final year enrolments. | 91.6% | 91.2% |
| **Achievement Rate:**  The percentage of the number of enrolments who completed their final year of study and achieve their qualifications to the number of enrolments who completed their final year of study. | 87.7% | 86.9% |
| **Success Rate:**  The proportion of the number of enrolments who complete their final year of study and achieve their qualification to the number of final year enrolments. | 80.3% | 79.3% |

College Planned Performance Rate

[end]

1. Department for Education – Institution Search (2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. NISRA (2020) 2018-based Population Projections for Areas within Northern Ireland. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. UUEPC (2022) UUEPC Outlook: Strong growth, but risks abound [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. UUEPC (2022) UUEPC Outlook: Strong growth, but risks abound [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. UUEPC (2022). The Future of Remote Working in Northern Ireland. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. UUEPC (2022). The Future of Remote Working in Northern Ireland. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Dingel & Neiman (2020). “How Many Jobs Can be Done at Home?” [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. UUEPC (2022). The Future of Remote Working in Northern Ireland. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. UUEPC (2022). The Future of Remote Working in Northern Ireland. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. UUEPC (2019) Sub-Regional Skills Barometer: Belfast City Council. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. UUEPC (2019) Sub-Regional Skills Barometer: Belfast City Council. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. UUEPC (2019) Sub-Regional Skills Barometer: Belfast City Council. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. UUEPC (2019) Sub-Regional Skills Barometer: Belfast City Council. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. NISRA (2022) Interdepartmental Business Register (2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. UUEPC (2019) Sub-Regional Skills Barometer: Belfast City Council. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. NISRA (2020) 2018-based Population Projections for Areas within Northern Ireland. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. NISRA (2020) 2018-based Population Projections for Areas within Northern Ireland. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. NISRA (2011) Census 2011: Key Statistics for Northern Ireland. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Department for Education (2022) Newcomer Pupils 2001/02 – 2021/22 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee (2022) [Minority communities have often been overlooked in Northern Ireland (shorthandstories.com)](https://ukparliament.shorthandstories.com/minority-ethnic-and-migrant-people-experiences-NIAC-report/). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Department for Communities, Households Below Average Income Northern Ireland 2018/19 (published September 2020). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Department for Education. (2022) Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2020/21 School Leavers. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. NISRA (March 2022). Labour Force Survey. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Office for Statistics Regulation (2021). Review of mental health statistics in Northern Ireland [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
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31. The Priority Sector Area and / or STEM performance measure incorporates, not only the Priority Sector Areas as previously measured, but STEM subjects. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)