

Strategic Plan 2021/22 – 2024/25

**(Addendum to Strategic Plan 2021/22 – 2023/24 and
Roll Forward Plan 2024/25)**

July 2024

Background

'Choose Success', Belfast Metropolitan College's Strategic Plan 2021/22 – 2023/24, sets out our vision for the future, our objectives, what we will do and what we will achieve by 2024.

Our plan is ambitious as we strive to position Belfast Met at the forefront of economic growth, partnering with leaders in business, across Further Education and the wider public sector, to deliver for learners, employers and our employees.

In particular we want to see:

- Learners choosing Belfast Met as the best place to come to enable them to compete in the labour market and succeed in work and life;
- Our city's talent choosing to work and thrive as Belfast Met employees; and
- Businesses seeing the College as a partner of choice for business development, innovation and apprenticeship solutions.

10 strategic targets allow us to measure progress towards achieving our ambitions, priorities and objectives. The College reports performance on these each year through an annual Impact Report, all of which are available to view on the College's [website](#), under the sub-heading 'College documents'.

The 10 agreed targets crosscut each of the strategic objectives which all College Directorates are collectively responsible for achieving and are regularly reviewed.

Roll Forward Plan 2024/25

In September 2023, the College's Governing Body received an interim progress update report against the 10 strategic targets for 2022/23. During this period of review and discussion, Governors reflected on college performance, as well as the significant financial and wider pressures currently facing further education colleges and the public sector, including the ongoing review of the Further Education (FE) delivery model. With this in mind, the College recognises that as financial pressures are expected to continue in subsequent years, reform is likely to be required, which has the potential to influence our strategic ambitions and deliverables for the future.

As such, Governing Body agreed in September 2023 to extend the College's existing Strategic Plan 2021/22 – 2023/24 by one further year to 2024/25, to allow time for the outcome of the FE Delivery model review to be known. During the discussion, Governing Body also determined that, despite the many internal and external challenges facing the Further Education sector at present, the following aspirations of our Strategic Plan continue to be relevant and therefore will remain unchanged during the 2024/25 academic year:

- **Vision**
 - College of Choice for learners.
 - Employer of Choice for talent.

- Partner of Choice for employers & business.
- **Purpose**
 - Equipping learners, driving innovation, transforming lives.
- **Values**
 - Collaboration
 - Ambition
 - Respect
 - Excellence
- **Strategic Objectives**
 - College of Choice
 - Employer of Choice
 - Partner of Choice
 - Digital by Design
 - Sustainable by Nature

To ensure progress can be tracked consistently for the duration of the Strategic Plan, it was agreed that the 10 existing strategic targets would remain unchanged, and targets would be updated for the 2024/25 academic year. Strategic targets will be revisited entirely in the strategic planning process for 2025/26 onwards.

Our Targets

1. Learners on main programmes: we will aim to meet all our enrolment targets for our main programmes as agreed in our annual College Development Plan for each year of this Strategic Plan.

2. Learners on targeted inclusion programmes: we will aim to increase the percentage of enrols on targeted programmes by 5% from the baseline position in 2020/21 for the first year of this Strategic Plan. For subsequent years, we aim to increase the percentage value by 5% per year.

3. Learner retention, achievement and success rates: we will maintain a 91.6% retention rate, 87.7% achievement rate and an 80.3% success rate for the first year of this Strategic Plan. For subsequent years of this plan, we will aim for improvements (up to 1%): 92% for retention, over 88% for achievement and over 81% for success.

4. Learner satisfaction: we will consolidate a satisfaction rate of 90% in the first year of this Strategic Plan, with subsequent years demonstrating improvements on 90%.

5. Employer satisfaction: we aim to develop a baseline of Employer Satisfaction, in the first year of this Strategic Plan. We will derive an Employer Satisfaction Performance Indicator for the College. We have established the baseline position for year 1 as an average of 80% employer satisfaction and in subsequent years will improve employer satisfaction to 85%.

6. Employee satisfaction: we aim to develop a baseline of Employee Satisfaction in the first year of this Strategic Plan. For subsequent years of this Strategic Plan, we will increase employee satisfaction by 2% per annum.

7. Sustainable finances: we will live within our budget allocation for all years of this Strategic Plan.

8. Corporate governance and accountability: we will comply with all obligations placed upon us as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), for all years of this Strategic Plan.

9. Businesses upskilling and reskilling: we will produce a baseline across our business engagement during the first year of this Strategic Plan. For subsequent years the College will improve upon the baseline performance by 5% for total number of businesses and employees engaged.

10. Learner progression: we will aim to consolidate our position with at least 90% of both our FE and HE leavers going into further learning or employment, by the end of the first year of this Strategic Plan. In the subsequent years of this plan, we will aim to increase this to over 90%.

Equality Screening

The Strategic Plan 2024/25 has been equality screened in accordance with our equality obligations under [s75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998](#) and the [College Equality Scheme 2022](#) commitments. The Equality Screening documentation can be viewed in **Appendix 1**.

Contact Details

For further information please contact:

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Belfast Metropolitan College EQUALITY SCREENING Strategic Plan 2024/25

Background

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Further Education Sector is required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- **between men and women generally.**
- **between persons with a disability and persons without; and,**
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to the obligations set out above, the FE Sector is also required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, or racial group.

Belfast Metropolitan College's (Belfast Met) 2nd Generation Equality Scheme was approved by the Equality Commission in January 2012. The College is committed to equality screening all policy decisions.

Equality Screening

The College uses the tools of screening and equality impact assessment to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.

The screening procedure should lead to one of three conclusions:

- **The policy being screened does not have a significant impact on equality of opportunity and therefore does not require an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)**
- **The policy being screened has a minor impact which can be mitigated and does not require an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA).**
- **The policy being screened has (or is likely to have) a significant impact on equality of opportunity and will require an EQIA.**

Mitigation – Where an assessment (screening in this case) reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact (or is likely to have an adverse impact) on equality of opportunity and good relations, the College must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories including looking at alternative policies.

Policy Title:	Strategic Plan 2024-25
Equality Screening Date:	14/11/2023
Screening Outcome (to be inserted after the completion of this form):	Screened out
Date signed off by the Policy Holder:	14/11/2023
Date submitted to	
Corporate Development after screening:	14/11/2023

1.0 Information about the policy (Scoping Stage)

The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy under consideration. The purpose of policy scoping is to help prepare the background and context and set out the aims and objectives for the policy, being screened. At this stage, scoping the policy will help identify potential constraints as well as opportunities and will help the policy maker work through the screening process on a step-by-step basis.

Aim and Description of the policy

Reflecting on College performance and impact at the end of 2022/23, the medium-term financial operating environment, and the recently reconstituted Governing Body, the Executive Leadership Team and Governing Body agreed in September 2023 to extend the Strategic Plan 2021/22 – 2023/24 by 1 year to 2024/25. The decision was taken that the following continue to be relevant and therefore will remain unchanged:

- Vision
- Purpose
- Values
- Strategic Objectives

NI FE Colleges have a dual mandate of economic development and social inclusion. The Strategic Plan 2024-25 sets out the College Vision, Purpose, Values and Objectives for delivering on this dual mandate.

The Strategy 'aims to position Belfast Met as the leading educational establishment in the provision of vocational and technical teaching and learning' (Page 17 of the [Strategic Plan](#)).

The Strategy has 5 objectives:

- 1** To be a **College of Choice**, providing learners with an excellent learning experience on relevant, high-performing and flexible skills and education programmes that enable them to progress into work or further study.
- 2** To become an **Employer of Choice** committed to attracting and developing talented people to realise the College's purpose.
- 3** To be a **Partner of Choice**, playing a central part in developing and supporting the delivery of education, skills, employability and business development programmes regionally, nationally and internationally.
- 4** **Digital by Design:** Belfast Met will use digital solutions to enhance teaching and learning to improve how we work
- 5** **Sustainable by Nature:** To use our role as educators to inspire, celebrate and advance the sustainability agenda, maximising our positive impact on the environment, economy and communities we serve.

Achievement of these objectives will be measured by these 10 indicators:

- 1** We will aim to **meet all our enrolment targets for our main programmes** as agreed in our Annual College Development Plan for each year of this Strategic Plan.

- 2 **For the first year of this Strategic Plan, we will aim to increase the percentage of enrols on non-core targeted programmes by 5% from the baseline position in 2020/21.** For subsequent years of this plan, we aim to increase the percentage value by 5% per year up to a total target of 15% in year 3, working in partnership across the City Region to develop and deliver new solutions.
- 3 For the first year of this Strategic Plan, we will aim to consolidate our rates for retention, achievement and success. This means **maintaining a 91.6% retention rate, 87.7% achievement rate and an 80.3% success rate.** Given that a large proportion of the academic year 2020/2021 has been affected by the pandemic, we believe this will be challenging.
- 4 For the first year of the Strategic Plan, we hope to **consolidate a satisfaction rate of 90% (average of LSS and NSS results),** with the second and third years demonstrating improvement on 90% (average of LSS and NSS).
- 5 For the first year of this Strategic Plan, we aim to **develop a baseline of Employer Satisfaction,** based on similar questions used in other UK regions' surveys that measure employers' satisfaction. We will aim to **derive an Employer Satisfaction Performance Indicator for the College.** This will also consider employers' views of engagement with the College not only on terms of training and support for business development and innovation, but also with those that they employ or support with work placements from the College regarding preparedness to work (technical, IT and soft skills etc.). We have established the baseline position for year 1 as an average of 80% satisfaction performance indicator and in years 2 and 3 we will work to improve the overall level of employer satisfaction to 85%.
- 6 For the first year of this Strategic Plan, we aim to **develop a baseline of Employee Satisfaction.** For the second and third years, Belfast Met aims to increase employee satisfaction by 2% per annum.
- 7 For the three years of this Strategic Plan, we aim to consolidate our financial position to live within our budget. Over the three years of the plan we will seek to:
 - **increase the total value and contribution of non-core funded programmes (including all apprenticeship programmes).**
 - ensure we maximise the opportunities for additional funds we will seek to ensure that **all our non-core programmes draw down at least 95% of total budgets throughout the period of this plan.**
8. We will **comply with all obligations placed upon us as a non-departmental public body.** Through our **College Development Plan,** we will ensure that we **meet the required targets to justify our public funding.** We will **adhere to the requirements set out in our MOU with the DfE** as well as provide **timely annual accountability returns.** These will be reviewed during the **annual accountability meeting** with our parent Department.
9. For the first year of this Strategic Plan, the College will **produce a baseline across our business engagement programmes,** including the **number of businesses reached with an opportunity to upskill through business programmes.** For the second and third years, the College will target improvement upon the baseline performance in terms of business skills and innovation programmes by 5% for the total number of businesses and employees engaged by the end of year 3, with the percentage increase linked to the overall funding available.

10. By the end of the first year of this Strategic Plan we will aim to have consolidated our position, with **at least 90% of both FE and HE leavers going into further learning or employment and the number of those going into unemployment reduced**. In the second and third years, we will aim to see an increase, i.e. over 90%.

The Strategic Plan is high level document and delivery will be through operational plans/policies that are subject to equality screening in accordance our equality obligations under [s75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998](#) and the [College Equality Scheme 2022](#) commitments.

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

Revised

Who owns and who implements the policy?

The Governing Body, the Principal and Chief Executive and Executive Leadership Team own the Strategy – implementation is shared across College departments.

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?

Religious Belief	ü
Political Opinion	ü
Racial Group	ü
Age	ü
Marital Status	ü
Sexual Orientation	ü
Men and Women generally	ü
Disability (with or without)	ü
Dependants (with or without)	ü

If so, explain how each of these groups selected above will benefit:-

The Strategic Plan has the potential to benefit all Section 75 groups. The Plan aims to help the College achieve their dual mandate of economic development and social inclusion which is broadly positive for all in society.

The Strategic Plan aims to increase College reach, learner engagement and progression whilst addressing gaps in educational attainment/economic participation. This will be measured through the strategic indicators set out on page 65 & 66 of the [Strategic Plan](#) which include increasing enrolments generally and specifically, such as:

- Within quintile 1 & 2
- Declaring a disability/long term health condition
- ESOL
- NI Prisons

Pg 47 of the [Strategic Plan](#), the College commits to signing up to the Sustainable Development Goals Accord for colleges and universities. The Sustainable Development Goals include:

- Gender equality
- Reduced inequalities
- Peace, justice and strong institutions.

1.1 Implementation factors

a) What are the factors that would detract from the achievement of the aims of the Policy (add; remove from the list; or tick as appropriate from the list below)?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Financial | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Legislation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Communication | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Staff Development | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Consistent approach | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other – please specify below: | |
| 1. Political | |
| 2. Policy | |
| 3. People | |

1.2 Main stakeholders affected

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon and who need to be consulted with as part of the equality consultation (tick relevant options below)?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Governing Body: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Managers/staff: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Trade Unions: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Students/service users: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Members of the public: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Third Party Stakeholders: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Other, please specify below: | |
| Representative organisations, community groups, businesses/employers etc. | |

Detail below any consultation that has taken place with stakeholders:

In the development of the Strategic Plan 2021/22 – 2023/24 specific consultation on the Plan was undertaken with:

- Staff in April 2021 (workshops and surveys)
- Governing Body, including student governor
- Executive Leadership Team
- Strategic Leadership Team
- Corporate Development staff

The formulation/articulation of the Strategic Plan was informed by stakeholder engagement with a range of strategic partners and mechanisms – for example:

- Principals' group
- Sector groups
- Businesses/employers
- NIPS
- Universities
- Awarding Organisations
- Learner/leaver surveys
- Employer/employee satisfaction survey
- Government organisations, including sponsor organisation the Department for the Economy
- Other delivery partners/organisations.

1.3 Other College policies that relate to this policy

Please outline all local College Policies and documents which relate to this policy: College Development Plan, Whole College Quality Improvement Plan, Equality Scheme 2022, Disability Action Plan, Widening Access and Participation Plan, Risk Management Policy, Business Continuity Plan.

Please state all External/Government/Sector Policies and documents which relate to this policy: -

- Skills for 10X Economy – Skills strategy for NI
- NI 10X Economic Strategy
- NI Economic Strategy
- NI Economic Recovery Plan 2022-25
- DfE Transformation Programme
- 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.
- DfE strategic/corporate plan

1.4 Available evidence

Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Colleges should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data. This can be obtained from MIS (quantitative data) or evidential/qualitative data (surveys, reports, conversations etc).

The Commission has produced a guide to [signpost to S75 data](#).

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy?

See Appendices:

Appendix 1: Appendix 1 Student S75 Equality Screening Stats October 2023

Appendix 2: Staff S75 Equality Screening Oct_23

1. Meetings – Governing Body, Executive Leadership Team, Strategic Leadership Team
2. Engagement Sessions with Staff April 2021
3. Staff Survey 2021
4. Learner Profile
5. Staff profile
6. Impact reports 2021/22 and 2022/23
7. CDP and CDP progress reports
8. Annual reports 2021/22 and 2022/23
9. Staff, learner and employer satisfaction surveys
10. UUEPC (2019) Sub-Regional Skills Barometer: Belfast City Council.
11. NISRA Interdepartmental Business Register .
12. NISRA (2020) 2018-based Population Projections for Areas within Northern Ireland.
13. Department for Communities, Households Below Average Income Northern Ireland 2018/19
14. Department for Communities, Households Below Average Income Northern Ireland 2019/20
15. Department for Communities, The Northern Ireland Poverty and Income Inequality report (2021/22)

16. Department for Education. Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2018/19 School Leavers.
17. Department for Education. Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2021/22 School Leavers.
18. NISRA Labour Force Survey 2021.
19. NISRA Labour Force Survey 2022.
20. NISRA (2019) Labour Market Structure: Employment Activity and Qualifications by LGD 2009–2018.
21. Mental Health in Northern Ireland: Fundamental Facts (2016).
22. Mental Health in Northern Ireland: Fundamental Facts (2023).
23. The consultation on the draft Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland was published on the 27th May 2021.
24. Skills for a 10X economy – Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland
25. UUEPC (2021) Outlook Summer 2021.
26. UUEPC (2021) Outlook Spring 2023.
27. UUEPC (May 2020) Potential economic consequences of COVID-19 in Northern Ireland: Revised estimates and a Council-level view.
28. UUEPC (July 2020) COVID-19 and the NI Economy: Which jobs are vulnerable and how do social distancing relaxations help?
29. UUEPC (2023) Job Creation in Northern Ireland Firms.

1.5 Needs, experiences, and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the section 75 categories outlined below, in relation to this policy/policy decision?

We recognise that the needs, experience and priorities of people within each of the S75 categories will vary significantly according to the specific programmes/policies that result from this plan and that these are subject to screening in accordance with our equality obligations under [s75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998](#) and the [College Equality Scheme 2022](#) commitments.

The College has a range of established policies and plans that promote equality between each of the Section 75 Categories as outlined below, such as:

- Equal opportunities policies (staff and students)
- Disability action plan
- Equality Scheme and action plan
- Students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities policy.

It is currently envisaged that the Strategic Plan will be communicated to all staff via the staff intranet, in the Principal's Welcome Back briefing in August 2024 and through the new staff induction.

Religious Belief

Detail Needs, Experiences, and priorities to be considered
Some anticipated differentiated needs, experiences and priorities.

Detail actions to promote Equality for this category below: -
The College offers a range of specific/targeted programmes – e.g. Futures, Essential Skills programmes etc to increase access and progression.

Political Opinion

Detail Needs, Experiences, and priorities to be considered
Some anticipated differentiated needs, experiences and priorities.

Detail actions to promote Equality for this category below: -
The College offers a range of specific/targeted programmes – e.g. Futures, Essential Skills programmes etc to increase access and progression.

Racial Group

Detail Needs, Experiences, and priorities to be considered
Some anticipated differentiated needs, experiences and priorities
We know that there was a 30% increase in enrolments on ESOL programmes from 2021/22 to 2022/23.

Detail actions to promote Equality for this category below: -
The College offers a range of specific/targeted programmes – e.g. specific increased ESOL provision, Futures and inclusion of ESOL into relevant programmes.

Age

Detail Needs, Experiences, and priorities to be considered
Some anticipated differentiated needs, experiences and priorities

Detail actions to promote Equality for this category below: -
The College offers a range of provision and delivery formats, for instance:
Whilst the majority of our provision is full time, we have a significant offer of part-time and evening programmes to encourage lifelong learning.
Adult Education and Community Based Learning are delivered by Dept of Academic and Continuing Education. The College has a dedicated department for Economic Development & Social Inclusion (including Community Programmes)
Age targeted funding through partner organisations (Free School Meals for under 18s via Student Finance NI for e.g.)

Marital Status

Detail Needs, Experiences, and priorities to be considered

No differentiated needs, experiences or priorities due to Marital Status

Detail actions to promote Equality for this category below: -

No differentiated needs, experiences or priorities due to Marital Status

Sexual Orientation

Detail Needs, Experiences, and priorities to be considered

Some differentiated needs, experiences or priorities due to sexual orientation.

We are aware from the [Census](#) that people who identify as LGB+ are more likely to be located in urban areas in Northern Ireland. As an urban College there will be some anticipated differentiated needs, experiences and priorities in terms of sexual orientation, particularly when considering our student demographic as set out in Appendix 1.

Detail actions to promote Equality for this category below: -

The College has an established range of policies and procedures/processes to support our learners, such as:

- Student Union clubs and societies such as LGBT Club
- Student support and wellbeing teams
- Establish Transgender policy and procedures to support someone transitioning or identifying as transgender.

Men and Women generally

Detail Needs, Experiences, and priorities to be considered

Some anticipated differentiated needs, experiences and priorities between men and women.

Detail actions to promote Equality for this category below: -

The College offers specific/targeted programmes, e.g.

- increasing women's participation in STEM
- Press Refresh: Women Returners programme
- Futures

For people with or without a disability

Detail Needs, Experiences, and priorities to be considered

Some anticipated differentiated needs due to Disability.

We are aware of the low employment rate, high economic inactivity rate and the high disability pay gap for people with disabilities in Northern Ireland.

In 2022/23 we saw a 44% increase in people enrolling who declared a disability or long-term health condition from the preceding year, as well as increased numbers of our learners presenting to the Student Wellbeing Team for mental health support.

Detail actions to promote Equality for this category below: -

The College offers:

- Accessible provision – estates/facilities/IT
- Dedicated centre for inclusive learning, student wellbeing who provide additional learning support/general support (such as dedicated learning support officers)
- dedicated Centre for Supported Learning within Dept of Health, Wellbeing and Inclusion
- Students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities policy and established processes for declaring disabilities and seeking learner support.
- Equal opportunities policies (staff and students)
- Disability action plan
- Equality Scheme
- Support groups and processes
- Funding via partner organisations (Disabled Students Allowance through Student Finance)
- Belfast Met also has accreditation with Accessible and is certified as Disability Confident Committed.

For people with or without dependants

Detail Needs, Experiences, and priorities to be considered

Some anticipated differentiated needs due to dependants

Detail actions to promote Equality for this category below: -

- The College offers a range of targeted interventions as follows:
- Funding available for childcare (Learner Support (Hardship Fund)
- Support to access funding through partner organisations (Student Finance NI – Childcare Grant/Parents Learning Allowance/Adult Dependents Grant for e.g.) Range of family-friendly benefits for staff (flexi-time, flexible working etc.)
- Staff Carers Leave policy
- Whilst the majority of our provision is full time, we have a significant offer of part-time and evening programmes to maximise access to provision.
- Adult Education and Community Based Learning are delivered by Dept of Academic and Continuing Education.
- The College has a dedicated department for Economic Development & Social Inclusion (including Community Programmes)
- The College offers a range of targeted provision e.g. Women returners

Part 2

Introduction

In making a decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment, the public authority should consider its answers to the questions 1-4 which are given on pages 66-68 of this Guide.

If the public authority's conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then the public authority may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, a public authority should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.

If the public authority's conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure.

If the public authority's conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality categories and/or good relations categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an equality impact assessment, or to:

- measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or
- the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of a 'major' impact

- a) The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by

groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;

- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

In favour of 'minor' impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of none

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.
- b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Taking into account the evidence presented above, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this policy, in any way, for each of the equality and good relations categories, by applying the screening questions given overleaf and indicate the level of impact on the group i.e. minor, major or none.

2.0 Screening questions

- 1** What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? (major/ minor/ none)

The Strategic Plan 2024-25 sets out the College Vision, Purpose, Values and Objectives for delivering on the College’s dual mandate of economic development and social inclusion. The Strategic Plan aim is to impact positively and address gaps in educational attainment/economic participation and has the potential for positive impact on each of the S75 equality categories. The Strategic Plan is supported by a number of operational plans e.g. Widening Access and Participation Plan, Disability Action Plan, Equality Scheme and action plan.

Religious Belief

Identify the level of impact on this category None
 Provide details of the impact on this category As above and in section 1.5

Political Opinion

Identify the level of impact on this category None
 Provide details of the impact on this category As above and in section 1.5

Racial Group

Identify the level of impact on this category None
 Provide details of the impact on this category As above and in section 1.5

Age

Identify the level of impact on this category None
 Provide details of the impact on this category As above and in section 1.5

Marital Status

Identify the level of impact on this category None
 Provide details of the impact on this category As above and in section 1.5

Sexual Orientation

Identify the level of impact on this category None
 Provide details of the impact on this category As above and in section 1.5

Men and Women generally

Identify the level of impact on this category None
 Provide details of the impact on this category As above and in section 1.5

With or without a disability

Identify the level of impact on this category None
 Provide details of the impact on this category As above and in section 1.5

With or without dependants

Identify the level of impact on this category

None

Provide details of the impact on this category

As above and in section 1.5

2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories below?

Yes to all S75 categories below. The Strategic Plan aims to extend College reach generally to increase economic development and social inclusion through the strategic indicators set out on page 65 & 66 of the Strategic Plan which include increasing enrolments generally and specifically, such as:

- Within quintile 1 & 2
- Declaring a disability/long term health condition
- ESOL
- NI Prisons

Pg 47 of the Strategic Plan , the College commits to signing up to the Sustainable Development Goals Accord for colleges and universities. The Sustainable Development Goals include:

- Gender equality
- Reduced inequalities
- Peace, justice and strong institutions.

See section 1.5 above that outlines the College's established specific, targeted programmes and funding.

Religious Belief Yes No

If you have answered Yes above please provide details in the section below:-

As above and Section 1.5. **Political Opinion** Yes No

If you have answered Yes above please provide details in the section below:-

As above and Section 1.5.

Racial Group Yes No

If you have answered Yes above please provide details in the section below:-

As above and Section 1.5.

Age Yes No

If you have answered Yes above please provide details in the section below:-

As above and Section 1.5.

Marital Status Yes No

If you have answered Yes above please provide details in the section below:-

As above and Section 1.5.

Sexual Orientation Yes No

If you have answered Yes above please provide details in the section below:-

As above and Section 1.5.

Men and Women generally Yes No

If you have answered Yes above please provide details in the section below:-

As above and Section 1.5.

With or without a disability Yes ✓ No

If you have answered Yes above please provide details in the section below:-
As above and Section 1.5.

With or without dependants Yes ✓ No

If you have answered Yes above please provide details in the section below:-
As above and Section 1.5.

3 To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion, or racial group? minor/major/none

The Strategic Plan aims to help the College achieve their dual mandate of economic development and social inclusion. Economic development and social inclusion create the conditions for increased social participation and therefore the potential positive impact on good relations between people of different religious beliefs, political opinions or racial groups.

The Strategic Plan may impact on good relations through projects that are implemented as a result of the Plan. Pg 47 of the Strategic Plan , the College commits to signing up to the Sustainable Development Goals Accord for colleges and universities. The Sustainable Development Goals include:

- Gender equality
- Reduced inequalities
- Peace, justice and strong institutions.

Historically Belfast public services provision has been organised along political/religious/community lines. The centralisation of our campuses promotes social cohesion and community integration.

Racial groups – additional supports, ESOL provision and progression into other provision.
Futures – ESOL incorporated, ess skills

Religious Belief

Identify the level of impact on this category None
Provide details of the impact on this category As above and as per section 1.5

Political Opinion None

Provide details of the impact on this category As above and as per section 1.5

Racial Group

Identify the level of impact on this category None
Provide details of the impact on this category As above and as per section 1.5

3 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion, or racial group?

The Strategic Plan aims to help the College achieve their dual mandate of economic development and social inclusion. Economic development and social inclusion creates the conditions for increased social participation and therefore could improve good relations between people of different religious beliefs, political opinion or racial group.

See section 1.5 above that outlines the College's established specific, targeted programmes and funding.

Religious Belief Yes No

If you have answered **Yes** above please provide details in the section below:-

As above and Section 1.5 **Political Opinion** Yes No

If you have answered **Yes** above please provide details in the section below:-

As above and Section 1.5

Racial Group Yes No

If you have answered **Yes** above please provide details in the section below:-

As above and Section 1.5

If you have answered **No** above please provide reasons in this section:-

Additional considerations

Multiple identity

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities?

(For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).

Yes

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned in the section below.

The Strategic Plan has the potential to benefit people with multiple identities. The Plan aims to help the College achieve their dual mandate of economic development and social inclusion which is broadly positive for all in society. The Strategic Plan aims to increase College reach, learner engagement and progression whilst addressing gaps in educational attainment/economic participation. This will be measured through the strategic indicators set out on page 65 & 66 of the [Strategic Plan](#) which include increasing enrolments generally and specifically, such as: Within quintile 1 & 2 Declaring a disability/long term health condition ESOL NI Prisons Pg 47 of the [Strategic Plan](#), the College commits to signing up to the Sustainable Development Goals Accord for colleges and universities. The Sustainable Development Goals include: Gender equality Reduced inequalities Peace, justice and strong institutions. See section 1.5 above that outlines the College's established specific, targeted programmes and funding. Underpinning the Strategic Plan are a range of supporting delivery plans such as the Widening Access and Participation Plan which specifically addresses the multiple and complex barriers to education faced by our HE learners.

Part 3

3.0 Screening decision

Select below the outcome of the equality screening exercise

Option 1 (no impact) tick

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment and mitigation is not necessary, please provide details of the reasons in the text box below: -

Click or tap here to enter text.

If Option 1 is identified proceed to Part 4 of the form.

Option 2 (minor impact) tick

The decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, but the policy should be mitigated, or an alternative policy be introduced. Detail the reasons for this assessment in the text box below: -

Click or tap here to enter text.

If Option 2 is identified proceed to 3.1 Mitigation (minor impact and/or alternative policy).

Option 3 (major impact) tick

If the decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

Click or tap here to enter text.

If Option 3 is identified proceed to 3.2 EQIA - Timetabling and prioritising

3.1 Mitigation (minor impact)

When the college concludes that the likely impact is 'minor' and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, the college may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any negative equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed, or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

Choose an item.

If yes, give the **reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy.

Click or tap here to enter text.

3.2 EQIA - Timetabling and prioritising

An EQIA is a mechanism, where existing and proposed policies are assessed to determine whether they have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity for the relevant Section 75 categories EQIA's require the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Factors to be considered in timetabling and prioritising policies for equality impact assessment.

If the policy has been '**screened in**' for equality impact assessment, then please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

Priority criterion (1-3)	Rating
Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations an item.	Choose
Social need an item.	Choose
Effect on people's daily lives an item.	Choose
Relevance to a public authority's functions an item.	Choose
Total Rating Score tap here to enter text.	Click or

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the public authority in timetabling. Details of the Public Authority's Equality Impact Assessment Timetable should be included in the quarterly Screening Report.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? Yes No

If you answer yes above, please provide details in the text box below: -
Click or tap here to enter text.

Part 4

4.1 Monitoring

Equality monitoring is a legal obligation under our Equality Scheme. Equality monitoring is more than data collection, it is also about analysing information that is relevant to, and necessary for, promoting equality of opportunity and good relations. Monitoring is an ongoing process, the objective of which is to highlight possible inequalities and why these might be occurring. Monitoring will allow the college to demonstrate that its services are accessible to all sections in the community and how it has adapted services to better meet the needs of specific users and community groups thereby widening participation.

More detailed guidance can be provided by the Equality and Good Relations Officer 90265456 equalityservices@belfastmet.ac.uk or through the [Equality Commissions' Monitoring Guidance](#).

The College should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

The Commission recommends that where the policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, the public authority should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Effective monitoring will help the college identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy which may lead the college to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

As part of the monitoring qualitative and quantitative data may be used.

Please state monitoring proposals in the section below: -

What will be monitored? Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2024/25 through the 10 Strategic Indicators (pages 64-71 of the [Strategic Plan](#)) and the Impact Report

What is the timescale? 01/08/24 – 31/07/25

Who will monitor the impact? Governing Body, Principal and Chief Executive and the Executive Leadership Team

Part 5

Signing off of Screening form for the policy.

A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened should be 'signed off' and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made easily accessible on the College website as soon as possible following completion and made available to anyone who requests a copy.

Signed:	Jennifer McIlwaine	Date:	09/10/2023
Signed:	Aidan Sloane	Date:	14/11/2023
Signed:	Lisa McCartney	Date:	14/11/2023