



*Belfast Met
Final College
Development Plan
2019/20*

Submitted to DfE – 12 June, 2019

Executive Summary

Belfast Metropolitan College continues to play a leading role in the skills system for Northern Ireland, providing education, technical and professional skills at all levels to learners from all socio-economic backgrounds.

As a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) of the Department for the Economy (DfE), Belfast Met has a dual mandate to promote economic growth and social inclusion through the delivery of its further and higher education and apprenticeship training to the people in the city and region. This plan is a requirement of Article 20 of the Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997.

Our vision, mission, aims and values are unique to history and current context. Belfast Met's activities help to deliver on the goals and ambitions of the Programme for Government and the Industrial Strategy through a large range of education and training provision in priority skills sectors. We are delivering on all the policy commitments in FE Means Success. All our activity is informed by the findings of the Skills Barometer and we will continue to use the findings to improve how our work responds to the needs of employers, the labour market and the economy. We are a key partner in the Belfast Region City Deal, leading on the Skills and Employment Proposition strategy that will help create 20,000 new jobs by 2030.

The regional context for Belfast Met is distinct in that we are the FE college for the capital of Northern Ireland, responding to the opportunities afforded by growth, jobs and diversity alongside dealing with the challenges of areas with some of the highest levels of poverty, economic inactivity and deep-rooted social problems.

Our role is threefold:

- Equipping people in the region with the skills that are needed to help propel economic growth in areas where NI is a world-leader;
- Providing the skills necessary to enable people to work where the majority of jobs exist and will continue to exist in the economy; and
- Helping those who are hardest reach and furthest from the labour market to get the skills needed for employment.

As the largest and longest established further and higher education college in Northern Ireland, we attracted 23,345 student enrolments in 2018/19. Student satisfaction rates were 90% in 2018. Over 40% of students enrolled in courses at Belfast Met come from the poorest two quintiles in society.

At the heart of how we will continue to deliver on this scale and ambition is our new Delivery Framework 2019-2021 which sets out how the College will meet its mandate within the context of the Belfast Region City Deal.

We will deliver core programmes from Essential Skills through to Higher Level Apprenticeships and degrees that will improve economic growth, as well as on specific projects e.g. the Connected programme, a collaborative programme between Higher and Further Education partners, led by local industry needs to identify research for innovative solutions to support economic growth. We will continue to make Northern Ireland more socially inclusive e.g. through the Futures' programme to help young people not in education, training or employment to build their skills and confidence. We will also continue to build on the success of our recent WBL inspection that determined outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management as all being 'very good'.

Belfast Met will strengthen its already extensive partnerships with a large number of employers, community organisations and other public sector organisations to provide tailored education and training support. The College has ambitious plans to build on its international programme to secure new projects, contracts and attract students to studying at Belfast Met.

Concluding Remarks

This paper synthesises Belfast Met's operating environment, scale of opportunities, challenges, risks and options for the future. It evidences:

1. Belfast Met's performance and contribution to FE Means Success and Programme for Government commitments.
2. That the FE sector has experienced 26% funding cuts in real terms since 2010.
3. The scale of demand for education and skills that exists from both employers and individual learners in Belfast.

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Belfast Met: Our Context, Purpose and Strategy

The aim of further education (FE) is to strengthen and enhance the skills profile of Northern Ireland by addressing the skills deficit and so underpinning the creation of a successful regional economy. Its core purpose is to link individuals to work, assisting them in finding a job, keeping a job and getting a better job. FE also assists businesses to innovate and grow, so increasing competitiveness across the region. FE delivers successfully at all skills levels and has a particular role in providing a bridge to mainstream education for those furthest away from the labour market, creating opportunity for all. The sector provides a strong collaborative offering across the region aligned strongly to economic priorities at regional and sub-regional levels. It does this with strong governance, a track record of financial efficiency and a state-of-the-art estate, meeting the needs of the present and future economy.

Belfast Met was founded as the Belfast Municipal Technical Institute in 1906 at the height of the city's industrial might and in direct response to the demands of industry. It provided the knowledge, creativity and innovation that drove industry forward, equipping the workforce with the technical skills on which the city thrived. This proud heritage endures today in our increasingly agile, employer-led approach to meeting current and future skills demands, as Belfast Met plays its full part in 'Leading the City to Work'.

Belfast Met is a non-departmental public body of the Department for the Economy. It is one of six Regional Colleges in Northern Ireland and covers the geographical area of Belfast District Council and the wider Belfast city region.

As an arm's length body of the Department, the College is responsible for delivering further and higher education and apprenticeship training to the people in the city and region. The College also provides an important dual role of supporting economic engagement and working with partners in the area of social inclusion.

We are committed to ensuring that every learner, irrespective of background gains the skills to get a job, keep a job or get a better job; that every business is supported to grow and innovate; and, that those with barriers to learning have the opportunity to learn and grow to achieve their potential. This is the Belfast Met ethos.

We will do this by providing the skills that will serve to broaden opportunity, narrow inequality and create an economy that works for everyone: an economy for the common good.

Further Education Requirements

Article 20 of the Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 requires that each college should prepare a College Development Plan (CDP), otherwise referred to as a business plan, for submission to the Department. This document fulfils that statutory requirement.

Vision

Belfast Met's Vision is to be a world-class college that nurtures the ambitions of the city of Belfast and beyond.

Mission

Belfast Met's mission is to make a fundamental impact on the economic and social success of the city of Belfast and beyond, by equipping its people, employers and communities with the skills for work.

Strategic Aims

Our four strategic aims are:-

- Determined Relevance;
- Valued Reputation;
- Agile Response; and
- Distinctive Reach.

Values

Our own core values are:-

- Collaboration;
- Ambition;
- Respect; and
- Excellence.

Factors Impacting on CDP Business Planning Process

Belfast Met's own mission of working to strengthen the economic and social success of the city of Belfast and beyond fully supports the ambition of the Northern Ireland Executive.

Our provision is aligned with key government policies which set the policy and delivery context for Belfast Met. These are the Programme for Government and the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Outcomes Delivery Plan 2018/19, the draft Industrial Strategy for Northern Ireland, FE Means Success and the Northern Ireland Strategy for FE. For Belfast Met, the Belfast Region City Deal is also critical to the work of the College. Direction and delivery are informed by the findings of the Skills Barometer.

Northern Ireland Programme for Government and Outcomes Delivery Plan

Belfast Met contributes directly to three of the Programme for Government's 12 outcomes:

- We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy (Outcome 1);
- We are an innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their potential (Outcome 5);
and
- We have more people working in better jobs (Outcome 6).

The College also contributes indirectly to a further two:

- We have a more equal society (Outcome 3); and
- We give our children and young people the best start in life (Outcome 12).

The College has a dual mandate of economic development and social inclusion. Belfast Met's goal is to assist learners develop the knowledge and skills needed for the workplace and/or further study and thereby support them progress through education and training in order to gain a job or get a better job. In addition, the College seeks to assist businesses innovate and grow, therefore increasing competitiveness across the region.

Northern Ireland Industrial Strategy - 2030

The Northern Ireland Industrial Strategy underpins the Programme for Government and aims for 80,000 new jobs across Northern Ireland by 2030. Belfast Met will play a key role in the delivery of one of the "Five Pillars of Growth" within the strategy focused on "Enhancing education, skills and employability". Of the three areas identified under this pillar, Belfast Met's activities will support proposals aimed at 'ensuring we have the necessary skills pipeline to meet business needs now and in the future'.

Our work is already delivering on the commitments made in the Industrial Strategy. Over 70% of enrolments at the College are on courses related to five of the six priority sectors for economic growth identified in the Industrial Strategy. For example, through our delivery of the Assured Skills Academy programme on behalf of the DfE, we are helping to strengthen the current and future talent pool of digital skills. We are the Digital IT Curriculum Hub for the FE sector in NI. We have also developed specialist courses and qualifications in Cyber Security Belfast Met have a range of specialist programmes across a range of sectors and industries including, Cyber Security, DATA Analytics, Internet of Things.

Northern Ireland Strategy for Further Education: FE Means Success (FEMS)

Belfast Met works closely across the further education sector and other key stakeholders in the development and implementation of FEMS. It is structured around nine themes and 21 policy commitments. Belfast Met is helping to deliver on all 21 policy commitments and in many areas is leading the FE sector in NI. All of the activities will continue under the lifetime of this CDP. A full list of how Belfast Met is meeting those commitments is included in **Appendix 1**.

Further Education in Northern Ireland – Corporate Plan to 2021

The plan sets out the FE sector's shared purpose, values and vision. With a combined turnover of £260m, serving 90,000 learners and over 10,000 employers, the sector plays a major part in providing the skills demanded for economic growth and social inclusion. The plan recognises the unique strengths and geographical location of each college. Belfast Met is helping to lead the sector in a number of areas. We are not only as the Curriculum Hub for two major sectors, Tourism and Hospitality and Digital ICT, but are leading the development of a communications strategy for the sector and building a stronger evidence base about the economic and social impact of FE.

Northern Ireland Skills Barometer 2017¹

The Skills Barometer provides invaluable data and analysis about future skill needs and gaps by level, sector and subject area. The findings of the Skills Barometer 2017 underpin the provision offered by Belfast Met, demonstrating a clear role for FE colleges in delivering the Level 3 and above curriculum, STEAM subjects and the wider employability skills developed through work experience.

Skills Barometer 2017 – Key findings impacting on FE provision

- 28,600 job opportunities will become available each year, which will have to be filled from the education system and migration;
- There is low and decreasing demand for low skills, so achieving higher level qualifications is becoming more important to getting a job;
- STEM related subjects will be in greatest demand reflecting the anticipated growth in the ICT, professional services and advanced manufacturing sectors. STEM qualifications will also be demanded by a wider range of sectors across the economy;
- More people will be needed with foundation degree level/ higher level apprenticeships in Nursing, Science, Engineering, ICT and Creative Arts; and
- Wider employability skills are essential to securing employment. Placements, internships and work experience are key to developing employability skills and increasing chances of a job offer. Over half of graduate employers would be unlikely to recruit a candidate with no work experience.

More recent analysis of the Skills Barometer findings focuses on the needs of Belfast City Region in the 2019 report 'Belfast City Region, Future Skills Needs'². Belfast Met will be helping to meet the skills requirements of the next decade through its role in both educating the future workforce and upskilling the current workforce. Key findings include:

- *Skills Levels:* There is an oversupply of low-level skills at NQF level 2 and below and a shortage of mid-level skills at NQF level 3-5. Enrolments at Belfast Met on courses at levels 3-5 have steadily increased as a proportion of total enrolments, from 38% in 2013/14 to 49% in 2018/19³.
- *Growth sectors:* The sectors expected to contribute the largest increase in jobs in absolute terms over the period 2017-2027 are: professional scientific and technical services (15,930); information and communication (10,250); and restaurants and hotels (7,600). 54% of enrolments at Belfast Met are in five of the six priority sectors for growth in the Industrial Strategy (excluding agri-food⁴).
- *Occupations:* In the Belfast City Region science and technology professionals will provide the most job opportunities over the coming decade requiring 2,140 individuals per annum. The next largest 'high demand' occupations are: elementary administration and service occupations (1,930); business and public service associate professionals (1,420);

¹ <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/NI-Skills-Barometer-2017-Full-Slide-Deck.pdf>

² https://www.ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/354218/UUEPC-BCR-Skills_FINAL.pdf

³ Data extracted from Belfast Met QlikView on 6/3/19: % of total enrolments at levels 3-5 including FT, PT, Essential Skills and excluding Enrichment for 13/14-18/19 using; Student Retention, Achievement and Success, FELS tab

⁴ Belfast Met does not offer any courses related to the growth area of agri-food. These are offered by other FE colleges in NI.

administrative occupations (1,290); and health professionals (1,230). Belfast Met will be providing a range of courses at all skills levels in these areas.

Belfast Region City Deal

The conclusion of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) in February 2019, has seen Belfast Met lead on the development of a region wide Skills and Employability Proposition Strategy which is linked into a £850 million capital investment programme. The College chairs the cross-sectoral working group and is developing an action plan which will include the roll out of new employability programmes for economically inactive, youth engagement, hospitality works, digital skills and upskilling for SMEs.

The BRCD will have significant impact on the future collaborative delivery model for Work-Based Learning (WBL) and Employability Programmes across NI over a 10-year period from 2020-2030 with a target for the creation of 20,000 jobs. The BRCD Employability and Skills Proposition Strategy includes three other FE Colleges (NRC, SERC and SRC). It has two themes at its heart – Skills for Growth and Skills for Inclusion. The skills strategy will be aligned to the current and future business needs of the city region and will seek to create an exemplary system of education, skills and employability. The strategy will seek to build a platform for talent and skills which will match the needs of our new and future priority industries in digital, renewables, life sciences and creative industries, while also ensuring the ongoing success of our older and crucial industries in tourism, hospitality, manufacturing, retail and health and social care.

UNESCO Learning City

Belfast has joined the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, the first in NI to join the network in 2018. A learning city promotes lifelong learning for all. As part of the global network connecting with 200 cities around the world, it demonstrates Belfast's commitment to using learning to improve the lives of citizens by sharing good practice, creative solutions and ideas in addressing barriers to social inclusion which impact on communities. Belfast Met is represented on the Belfast Lifelong Learning Thematic Group which sits under the Belfast Strategic Partnership⁵. We are a signatory to the Learning City Charter 2015 and subsequently contributed to the establishment of the annual Festival of Learning. Now in its fourth year, the week-long festival was held in February 2019 in venues across Belfast, celebrating the city's UNESCO status. As part of the festival, Belfast Met held three events, including one celebrating World Book Day.

Brexit

Belfast Met is working closely with other FE colleges in NI Colleges on preparatory activity for Brexit, covering planning and future policy and finance arrangements for Brexit. We are part of the working group led by South West College (SWC) on behalf of the DfE and inputting to all areas of work including the three main work-streams: -

- Continuity of EU Funded Programme Activity;
- Cross-border and International Students; and
- Identification and Rapid Response to Acute Skills Shortages.

⁵ The Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP) was established by the Public Health Agency (PHA), Belfast City Council (BCC), and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) to provide a collaborative approach in addressing life inequalities in Belfast

With regards to Brexit, the terms of the deal that follows in the coming years is a key driver. The potential loss or severe reduction in EU funding will reduce Erasmus projects and mobility opportunities for staff and students. We will need to diversify international opportunities as the EU deal will have an impact on visas that may affect EU students and as well as the supply of educational services by our institutions overseas. Belfast Met has its own internal working group to look specifically at the potential impacts of Brexit on activities of the college.

Concluding Remarks

While all Government policies summarised in this section clearly articulate the importance of skills and of having a talented workforce to creating a better Northern Ireland, the FE Sector in NI has faced significant funding cuts in the last decade. As a result, it is becoming more difficult to deliver against all policy commitments.

Belfast Met Profile

Regional Context - Challenges

As the capital city, Belfast is the economic centre of NI but growth, jobs, diversity and opportunity sit alongside greater levels of poverty, inactivity and some persistent and deep rooted social problems. The economic and social trends outlined below reflect the challenges as well as opportunities within which Belfast Met operates.

From mid-2016 to mid-2026, Belfast's **population** will grow from 339,400 to 346,200. There will be more older people, fewer working age people and about the same proportion of children. Belfast's share of NI's population will decrease from 18.2% to 17.8%⁶. In NI, Belfast is the most diverse in terms of ethnicity and has the highest rates in outward and inward migration⁷. Belfast is the fourth highest area where people have a long-term health problem or disability⁸.

Although the Northern Ireland **economy** has grown since the recession of 2008 and jobs have reached a high of 765,880, an increase of 2,240 jobs over the quarter and 14,700 jobs over the year in September 2018, productivity lags behind that of other regions in the UK⁹. However, Belfast as the capital city has the highest productivity per head of all local government districts¹⁰.

Belfast is still the area in NI with the most **businesses** (10,560) in 2018, accounting for 14% of all registered businesses in Northern Ireland. Almost half (49%) of all businesses in NI were found in four District Council areas, including Belfast. Agriculture, forestry and fishing remain the largest industry group in all areas with the exception of Belfast, where professional, scientific and technical businesses constitute the largest group of businesses¹¹.

NI **digital** ICT sector comprises over 1,200 companies, over 100 of which are international businesses such as Allstate, SAP, Citi and Cybersource, many of which are based in Belfast. Belfast also has the highest concentration of cyber-security jobs in Europe¹². A Tech Nation report published in 2015 highlights Belfast as a leading data management and analytics region¹³.

Mirroring the trends in the UK economy, **unemployment** has declined to 3.8% in NI¹⁴. Despite this, the **economic inactivity** rate in NI remains high at 26.8% although in recent months it is starting to fall¹⁵. In Belfast it is higher than the NI average at 32.7%, falling only behind Derry¹⁶. Inactivity

⁶ <https://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/interactiveMaps/DataVis/Population%20Projections%20forAreaswithinNI%202016.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/long-term-international-migration-statistics-northern-ireland-2017>

⁸ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/communities/benefit-statistics-summary-may-2018.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/labour-market-and-social-welfare/quarterly-employment-survey>

¹⁰ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossvalueaddedgva/bulletins/regionalgrossvalueaddedbalanceduk/1998to2017>

¹¹ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/IDBR-Publication-2018.pdf>

¹² <http://matrixni.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2016-Matrix-Digital-ICT-Report.pdf>

¹³ <http://www.techcityuk.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Tech%20Nation%202015.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/news/labour-market-report-february-2019>

¹⁵ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/news/labour-market-report-february-2019>

¹⁶ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/quarterly-labour-force-survey-tables-february-2019>

persists in the face of job growth. In 2017, there were 224,149 jobs in Belfast, 26.6% of all jobs in Northern Ireland. As a capital city and economic driver of NI, Belfast not only employs residences from within the local government district but also serves as a main commuter hub. The largest increase in employee jobs in NI is in Belfast where an additional 5,631 jobs or 2.6% growth was observed¹⁷. The vast majority (92%) of employee jobs in the Belfast area are in the services sector¹⁸.

Belfast remains characterised by relatively high levels of **poverty** compared to other areas in NI. 26% of the population are in the bottom income quintile for the UK¹⁹. Nearly 30% of the poorest 100 areas in NI in terms of the measures of multiple deprivation are in Belfast, the highest proportion of all LGDs²⁰. 38% of school leavers in Belfast are entitled to free-school meals, compared to 26% in NI as a whole²¹.

Belfast is a tale of two cities and **education and skills attainment** also reflects the extremes that co-exist in the region. In Belfast there are both relatively high proportions of people aged 16-64 with no qualifications (18.8%), and qualified to degree level and above (35.2%). For both those with no qualifications and those with Level 6 and above, Belfast is the top three across all LGDs and higher than the levels for NI²². Belfast is also distinctive in that there is a significant difference between the skills profile of people working in the city compared to residents. For example, 28% of Belfast's working age residents have a level 4+ qualification, yet 44% of people employed in jobs located in Belfast had achieved at least a level 4 qualification²³.

Belfast has the lowest proportion of **school leavers** who achieve 5 GCSEs including English and Maths for all LGDs at 63.3% compared to the NI average of 69.9%²⁴. In terms of where school leavers from Belfast go, 39.2% go into higher education, 28.6% into further education, 11% into training, 14.6% into employment and 6.7% are unemployed. Compared to other NI regions, a slightly higher proportion go into employment and unemployment reflecting the immediate economic opportunities afforded by the capital but also its levels of deprivation²⁵.

In light of this context, Belfast Met's role is threefold. Firstly, we have a crucial role in equipping people in the region with the skills that are needed to help propel economic growth in areas where NI is a world-leader, such as cyber-security. Secondly, we have a role in providing the skills necessary to enable people to work where the majority of jobs exist and will continue to exist in the economy, for example in retail and health and social work²⁶. And thirdly, we have a role in helping those who are hardest to reach and furthest from the labour market to access employment to reduce inequality in the region and promote more inclusive growth.

¹⁷ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/BRES-2017-publication.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/BRES-2017-publication.pdf>

¹⁹ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/communities/hbai-2016-17.pdf>

²⁰ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/NIMDM17-%20with%20ns.pdf>

²¹ https://www.ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/354477/UUEPC-Belfast-City-Council-Skills_FINAL2.pdf

²² <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/labour-force-survey-annual-report-2017>

²³ https://www.ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/354477/UUEPC-Belfast-City-Council-Skills_FINAL2.pdf

²⁴ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/qualifications-and-destinations-of-northern-ireland-school-leavers-20161.pdf>

²⁵ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/qualifications-and-destinations-of-northern-ireland-school-leavers-20161.pdf>

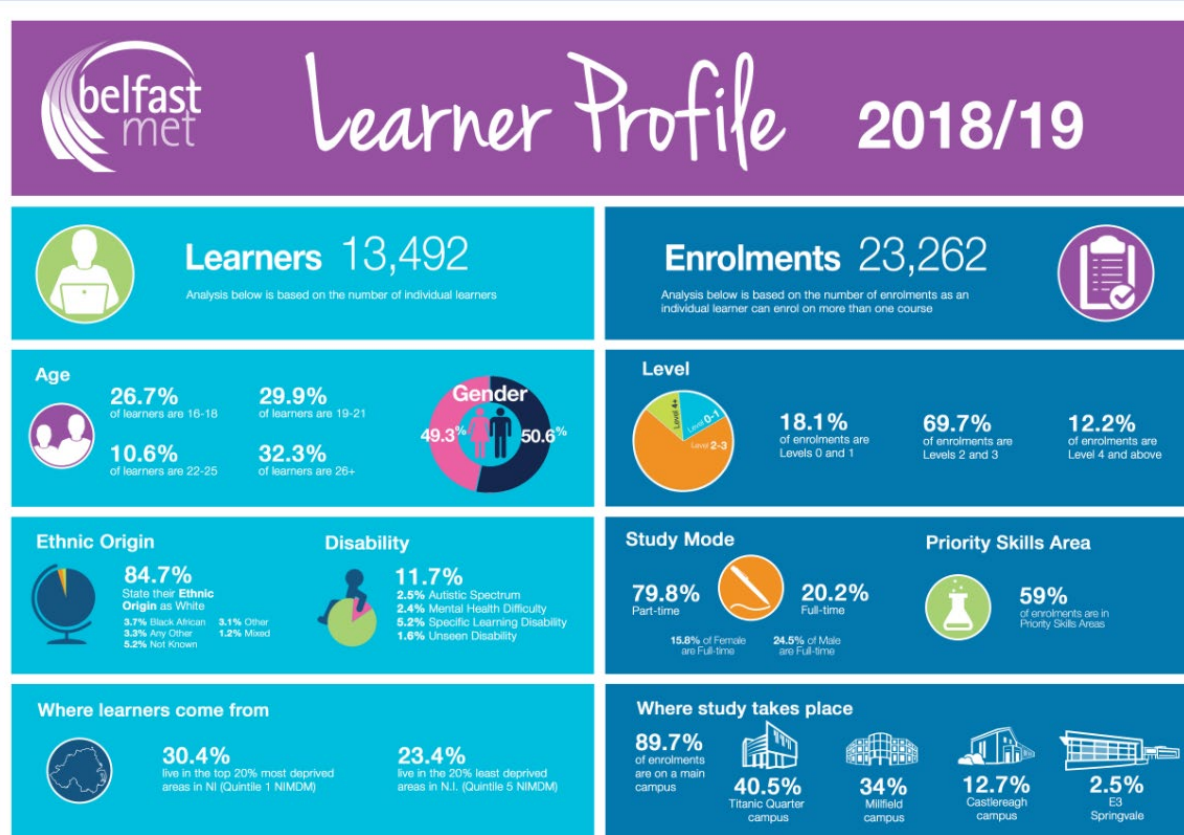
²⁶ https://www.ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/354218/UUEPC-BCR-Skills_FINAL.pdf

College Profile

Belfast Met is the largest and longest established further and higher education college in Northern Ireland. To fulfil our dual mandate of economic development and social inclusion, our annual budget is approximately £60mn.

We attracted 23,262 student enrolments in 2018/19, from people aged 16 and over²⁷. Overall student satisfaction rates were 95% in January 2019²⁸.

Over 40% of students enrolled in courses at Belfast Met come from the poorest two Quintiles in society²⁹. Several of our programmes target those who are marginalised or at risk of marginalisation, such as people with special needs, refugees and offenders as well as those who are economically inactive.



Source: Belfast Met Learner Profile, Qlikview

Delivery Framework³⁰

During 2019-20 Belfast Met developed a College-wide Delivery Framework 2019-21 which sets out how the College will meet its dual mandate within the context of the Belfast Region City Deal. It has

²⁷ Data extracted from Belfast Met QlikView on 7/3/19: Total enrolments tab.

²⁸ Belfast Met Learner Satisfaction January Survey 2019.

²⁹ <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/FE-Activity-Statistical-Bulletin-13-14-to-17-18.pdf>

³⁰ This was previously called the Curriculum Strategy.

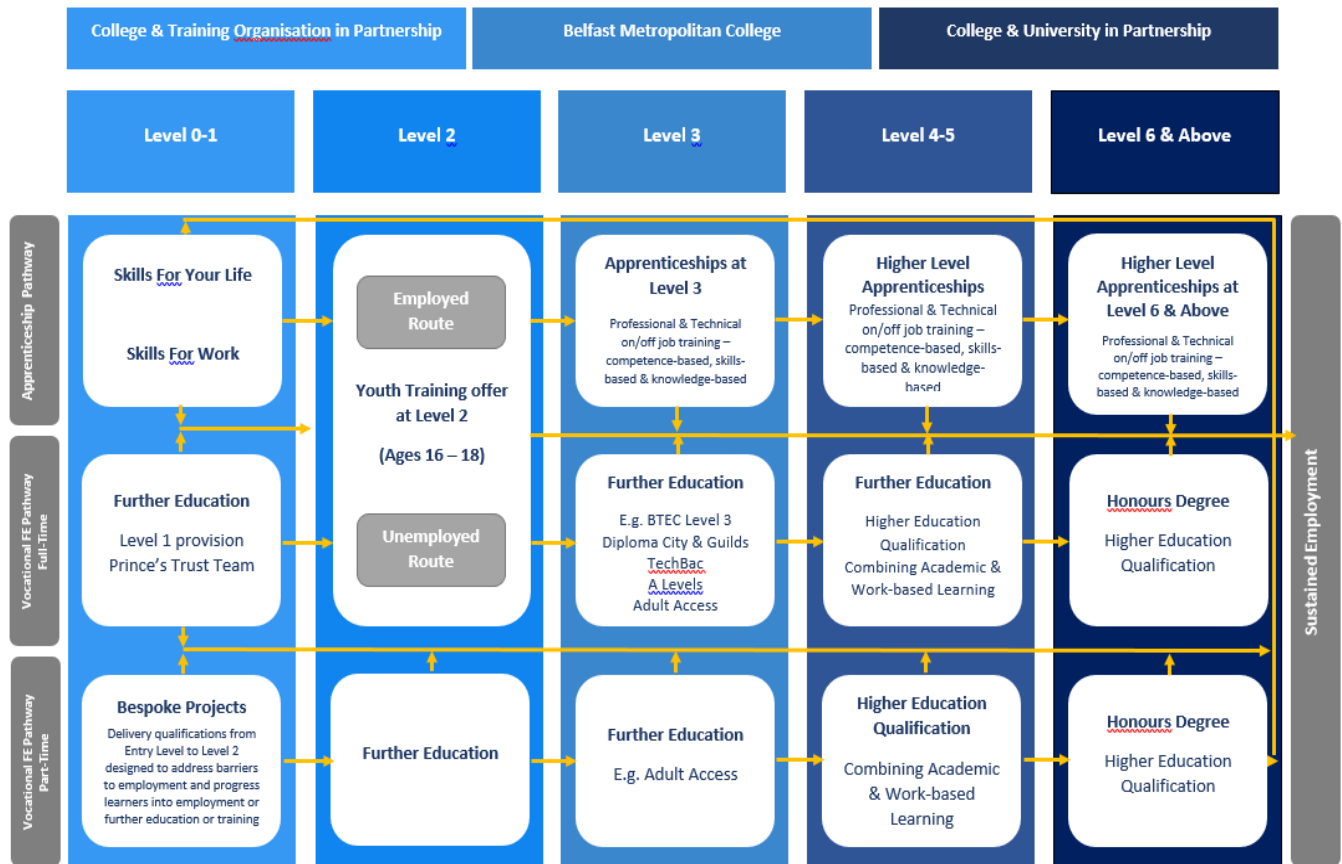
been developed to recognise both the current and future contexts in which the College exists, taking into consideration local, regional and, indeed, international knowledge and skills requirements. These requirements are not static, and the College's curriculum will necessarily adapt to reflect the emerging priorities over the 3-year period of the framework and beyond.

Delivery Framework 2019-2021: Leading the City to Work: Key activities over the next 3 years

- Lead the FE sector through the work of the Digital ICT Curriculum Hub and the Tourism and Hospitality Curriculum Hub.
- Realign all delivery to ensure that curriculum meets the needs of learners, industry and provides sustainability for the College by following curriculum guiding principles. This will entail ensuring that every programme delivered is the best fit for learners and/or industry.
- Introduce Youth Training programmes in line with the Department for the Economy roll-out across all areas to replace Level 2 Training for Success and where appropriate Further Education programmes.
- Undertake a pivotal role in the delivery of the Belfast Region City Deal skills strategy.
- Develop new apprenticeships and Higher-Level Apprenticeships including Public Sector apprenticeships in new areas to expand the College's offer.
- Improve the quality of Belfast Met's leadership and management, academic standards, and teaching and learning through CPD and performance management. This will be facilitated through the Excellence Hub.
- Drive Scheduled Online Learning and Assessment (SOLA) throughout full-time curriculum to facilitate self-directed learning and greater flexibility.
- Undertake a full review and refresh of the College's part time and evening provision to encourage and facilitate lifelong learning.
- Implement a new College-wide Customer Relationship Management (CRM) approach which will facilitate customer relationship management of all customers including learners, businesses and other stakeholders. This will include developing a new approach to engaging and tracking engagement of our learners, from application to completion.
- Ensure that all substantive programmes will offer learners appropriate opportunities for work-based experience and project-based learning to develop industry focused skills.
- Provide a catalogue of fully online and blended programmes for learners to undertake at any time to enable greater flexibility for learners.
- Reconfigurable space and technology solutions to facilitate Project-Based Learning and group working.

Our curriculum allows learners to progress upwards or alternatively move across from one pathway to another depending on their personal circumstances and employment status. The College will continue to review the range of academic, professional and technical courses to ensure that these sit within our defined progression pathways. The diagram below illustrates those pathways and the main provision at each skills level.

Progression Pathways to Sustained Employment



Economic Growth

Belfast Met delivers a number of flagship programmes in areas which directly support the achievement of the Programme for Government 's desired outcome of economic growth. Many of the programmes are run jointly with the Department for the Economy, employers and community partners.

Further detail on how these programmes as well as other activities support the achievement of our targets are included in the three accompanying Report Cards, in particular the Qualifications and Business Engagement report cards.

Essential Skills and Training for Success (TFS): Belfast Met delivers Essential Skills in all of our main campuses as well as in Northern Ireland's Prisons, community and employer settings, demonstrating our extensive partnerships and networks. There are over 4,000 annual enrolments across all age ranges with 32% taking place off campus. All full time (FE & TFS) learners starting on a Level 1, 2 or 3 programme will engage in English, Maths or ICT if they have not already achieved at GCSE grades A*-C. Part time Essential Skills/GCSE adult learners without a C grade at GCSE in maths, English or ICT will be offered a place to improve their skills in order to improve their opportunities for employment and further study.

Youth Training and Apprenticeships: Belfast Met will continue to develop a range of opportunities for work-based learning and associated qualifications. We will:

- Lead through the Curriculum Directors Group and the Training Managers Group proposals for reform of the non-employed youth training programmes for implementation from September 2020.
- Work to reach agreement on new approaches and regulation of qualifications and accreditations for professional and technical programmes in Northern Ireland.
- Pilot new approaches to underpin the development of professional and technical training for Youth Training, Apprenticeships and Higher-Level Apprenticeships.
- Support the operation of sectoral partnerships to enhance employer engagement and decision making around curriculum solutions for traineeships and apprenticeships.
- Support the development of the specification for the new Education Business Services Management Information System, which can underpin the Data and Reporting requirements for funded FE and Training provision.

Higher Level Apprenticeships: The College is currently moving into year 2 of steady state in in Higher Level Apprenticeships in Accountancy, Civil Engineering, ICT Software Engineering and ICT Infrastructure. New HLAs have been developed and approved for delivery in 2018/19 for the economically important areas of Cyber security and Cloud Development through The Open University.

HE in FE: Belfast Met currently offers full-time and part-time HE programmes in association with 4 university partners and 10 awarding bodies. In 2018-19 Belfast Met enrolled 2,698 learners onto HE programmes: 1,280 onto part-time programmes and 1,444 onto full-time programmes. This is the largest HE in FE provision across the six FE colleges and Belfast Met is proud to have achieved target in HE demonstrating once again that demand for HE places exist in Belfast.

Skills Focus: Over the past 3 years, the College has been delivering the Skills Focus programme. The purpose of Skills Focus is to meet business needs by increasing the skills levels of the existing workforce to Level 2 and above qualifications. Working across all sectors, bespoke training has been delivered in a wide range of areas such as: Health Care, Community Education and Life Skills, Applied Science, Engineering and Construction, Business, Management and Finance, ICT and Creative Services. This training is tailored to the employers' needs. Over the course of 2018-19 we have delivered 13 bespoke courses to 113 students. Over the course of the 2019-20 year we are hoping to increase our provision through engagement with 100 companies and targeting approximately 20% of the delivery in the Curriculum Hub areas (ICT and Tourism & Hospitality), upskilling 120 people.

Assured Skills Programme: The College has been a key deliverer of the Assured Skills programme. This is an academy type model that typically involves an eight to ten-week bespoke pre-employment training programme, many of which have been delivered by Belfast Met. The academy model is flexible and versatile and is used to help companies recruit new staff in areas such as cyber security, data analytics, project management and consultancy, financial services, software development and testing and 2D animation. Success is measured by the number of participants who progress to full time employment with the company. Those academies which Belfast Met has delivered has resulted in 93% success rates that is 93% of participants have progressed into full time employment. Belfast Met have and are continuing to deliver a number of Assured Skills Academies for various employers in Belfast including Deloitte, PwC, EY, Alexander Mann Solutions, FinTrU and Metaswitch.

InnovateUs: InnovateUs is a skills development programme, funded by the Department for the Economy, delivered across Northern Ireland by the six Further Education (FE) Colleges. The

programme provides 30 hours of fully funded mentoring to companies with less than 50 employees. Over the past year, the College has delivered 80 InnovateUs projects across a range of businesses in the following sectors – Food Development, CAD/Product Design, Fashion/Textiles, Composites, IT, Programming and Digital Marketing.

Over the 2019-20 academic year, the College aims to undertake similar levels of activity for the year and is proposing to deliver approximately 70 projects with businesses which are valued at £300k and will upskill 70 people.

EU-funded programmes: The College also has a significant portfolio of EU funded projects and programmes including:-

- Erasmus Plus KA1 – ICE GRIT with Koning Willhelm – will bring together 160 students to share experiences in ICE - Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship and GRIT – Growth, Resilience, Independence and Tolerance);
- Erasmus KA1 – Belfast Budapest Digital Media;
- Erasmus Plus KA2 – Blend4Vet;
- Erasmus Plus KA2 - Migrants Take Care – aimed at enhancing social inclusion of female migrants and is running with partners in Spain, Greece, Italy and Germany;
- EU Sector Skills Alliance led by the British Council;
- Gencomm -An Interreg North-West Europe-funded project aimed at addressing the energy sustainability challenges of North-West European communities; and
- BIM Cert - a European training and qualification scheme for the skills required to support the implementation of BIM (Building Information Management) across the construction supply chain.
- College Connect - part funded by the EU and the DfE through the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme.
- Futures – a Peace IV funded project providing those in NEET categories the opportunity to improve confidence and self-esteem, develop leadership skills, gain better awareness of other cultures and gain an OCN Level 2 award in Personal Success & Well-Being.

Curriculum Hubs: Belfast Met is a designated Curriculum Hub in two areas, for Digital ICT and for Hospitality & Tourism. The aim of the Hubs is to enhance existing capability within Colleges in Northern Ireland, to ensure excellence in industry validated curriculum; staff and sector continuous professional development, economic engagement; stakeholder engagement and future scoping.

For the Hospitality and Tourism Hub, for example, Belfast Met's initial focus is on: -

- Youth traineeships and Apprenticeships at Levels 2 and 3: Over the past two years FE colleges have been collaborating with People 1st as the appointed Development Partner and Sectoral Partnership Forum on the review and design of qualification frameworks across Levels 2 and 3 chef and hospitality job roles. Belfast Met will now ensure providers are ready for the launch of new qualifications from September 2020; and
- Foundation Degree in Hospitality, Tourism and Culinary Arts Management: This new Foundation Degree is currently being developed in consortium with five of six FE colleges in terms of concept, curriculum design and content, and in collaboration with Ulster University. The target is that this sector will have a Higher Level Apprenticeship first intake commencing in September 2019.

Social Inclusion Agenda

The College seeks to build social inclusion and opportunity through widening economic participation. We work with local communities in creating capacity, developing knowledge and skills, raising self-esteem and providing pathways into further training or employment. Belfast Met is involved in a huge array of activities that promote social inclusion, through programmes and activities related to college community outreach, developing an inclusive curriculum and student support initiatives, for example:-

- The College will be delivering an ESF funded Prince's Trust TEAM Programme which is co-financed through core funds and ESF;
- Together with NWRC, we will be responsible for Offender Learning and Skills Programmes across three prisons;
- We are one of the largest provider of ESOL programmes in Northern Ireland which makes significant contribution to integration of migrant communities; and
- Belfast Met is the largest provider of programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the region.

In particular, Belfast Met has a number of flagship programmes focussed on those young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

College Connect: Belfast Met, in partnership with five Northern Ireland Further Education Colleges, is currently delivering the College Connect programme. The Programme targets young people aged 16-24 across NI who are NEET and will be operational until 2022. College Connect provides a bridge into Level 2 provision and further apprenticeship opportunities with a focus on developing employability skills and vocational skills relevant to the hospitality sector. Delivery is underpinned by a comprehensive 'wrap around' support network provided by two mentors. College Connect will work with approximately 32 participants per year. College Connect is part funded by the EU and the Department for the Economy through the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme.

Futures: The College works with a wide range of partners to strengthen pathways for learners. In the summer of 2018 we launched a Peace IV funded project 'Futures' in partnership with NIHE and Start 360. Futures is a six-month personal development programme providing those in NEET categories the opportunity to improve confidence and self-esteem, develop leadership skills, gain better awareness of other cultures and gain an OCN Level 2 award in Personal Success & Well-Being. The project has just completed its first phase with 142 participants and 102 fully completing all aspects of the project. In 2019-20 the College will be implementing Phase 2 and the targets established are 185 participants recruited and 140 to complete.

Skills for Industry: Skills for Industry (Sfi) will target the economically inactive and long term unemployed and will be operational during 2018 – 2022. During this period our target will be to reach out to over 200 people a year through Sfi initiatives supporting programme participants' aspirations to further their journey into education and employment. The project will provide a bridge into level 2 provision and further apprenticeship opportunities. Delivery will be underpinned by a comprehensive support network provided by Skills Support Coaches. The first phase of subjects being offered to participants includes Business Administration, Hospitality and Engineering.

Further detail on these and other social inclusion initiatives are included in the Social Inclusion report card.

Partnerships

Belfast Met works with hundreds of partners including large and small employers and community groups. In terms of wider stakeholder and employer engagement a selection of the groups which the College is represented on is shown below: -

CBI Business Council for Northern Ireland	Lead the Digital ICT Skills Hub for FE	Lead on Work+ Civil Engineering Apprenticeship Working Group
Institute of Directors Regional Board	Lead the Tourism and Hospitality Hub for FE	Lead on Digital ICT Sectoral Employers Group
CBI Education and Skills Committee	Chair the Belfast City Region Employability and Skills Group	Lead on the Belfast Working and Learning Group in Community Plan
PEACE IV Programme Steering Committee	On Board of Northern Ireland Centre for Competitiveness	On Board UK Skills Partnership Group for International Development
Belfast Area Learning Community	Co-ordinator for Vulnerable Person Relocation Scheme for Northern Ireland	Lead on Senior Management Team for Learning and Skills in Northern Ireland Prisons
Member of the global community college association, RC-2020	Member of Collab Group colleges	Achieved STEM Assured commendation in 2017

International³¹

Our international ambitions rely on collaboration with a range of partners including the DfE, Belfast City Council, Invest NI, the universities and others with shared ambitions to bid for projects, contracts and attract students to studying with Belfast Met.

Belfast Met holds the Highly Trusted Status UKVI Tier 4 Sponsor Licence for student study visas from the Home Office's UK Visa and Immigration Department.

The College has been accredited by the British Council for the teaching of English since 2010. Belfast Met works directly with global companies such as Deloitte, PWC, and EY to support innovative training solutions for businesses, graduate conversion employment academies and community development programmes.

Last year, the International department welcomed 15 delegations from 10 countries and over 200 visitors, as well as organising 11 visits to 9 countries for partner meetings.

³¹ Belfast Met, Draft International Framework, 2018/19

Belfast Met is active in 6 EU Erasmus projects, including mobility projects for staff and students and projects for the exchange of innovation and good practices. In September/October 2018, Belfast Met enrolled 832 individuals from outside Europe, including 563 individual asylum seekers and refugees. Most of these enrolments were for classes in English as a Second Language or Essential Skills (basic IT, Maths or English), but students also study other courses, including A-levels, GCSEs, IT, Care, Hair/Beauty, Tourism, Catering and Car Maintenance.

Belfast Met Performance 2017-18

As is evident from Table 1 below, College performance has improved across retention, achievement and success over the 5-year period to 2018.

According to ETI grading, success rates for full-time learners are very good, on the cusp of outstanding and are good, on the cusp of very good for those studying part-time.

Further Education success rates are at 79% and Higher Education and Essential Skills are the highest in the sector.

Across all levels of study, success rates are good, very good and outstanding and when consideration is given to the fact that 30% of our learners come from areas of multiple deprivation, this is a significant achievement.

Table 1: Belfast Met Performance rates of final year regulated enrolments 5-year trend (Whole College)

	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18
Retention %	87	87	89	90	90
Achievement %	83	86	87	88	88
Success %	73	75	78	79	79

FE Activity in 2013-14 to 2017-18 tables as provided by DfE based on Consolidated Data Return

Table 2: Belfast Met Performance rates of final year regulated enrolments by mode of attendance in 2017/18

	Retention %	Achievement %	Success %
F/T	91	98	89
P/T	89	86	77

FE Activity in 2013-14 to 2017-18 tables as provided by DfE based on Consolidated Data Return

Table 3: Belfast Met Performance rates of final year regulated enrolments by provision area in 2017/18

	Retention %	Achievement %	Success %
FE	90	88	79
HE	97	95	92
Essential Skills	82	82	67

FE Activity in 2013-14 to 2017-18 tables as provided by DfE based on Consolidated Data Return

Table 4: Belfast Met Performance rates of final year regulated enrolments by level of study in 2017/18

	Retention %	Achievement %	Success %
Entry and Level 1	86	87	75
Level 2	90.4	88.3	79.9
Level 3	89.1	83.6	74.6
Level 4 and above	97.0	95.0	92.1
Total	89.6	87.5	78.5

FE Activity in 2013-14 to 2017-18 tables as provided by DfE based on Consolidated Data Return

Belfast Met Performance 2018-19

Given that targets for 2018/19 were set with a known £2m funding gap, the College could not afford to recruit the “buffer” in full time FE learners that has enabled us to successfully meet targets since 2014/15. This has meant that FT FE enrols are c2% below target (97 enrols). Had the £2m income reduction been applied against FT FE enrols the reduction would have been much more significant at over 1,000 FT learners. College actions during 2018/19 mitigated against this.

In relation to core funded further education, higher education and Essential Skills programmes, actual enrolments for combined full time and part time courses as at 26 March, 2019 are ahead of target.

Essential Skills programmes are 73 enrols behind year-end target however recruitment will continue and the target will be met.

In relation to TFS, Apprenticeships and HLA programmes TFS is 100 enrols behind target, Apprenticeships are 30 behind target and HLAs are 15 behind target.

With regard to Assured Skills, the annual enrolment target has been exceeded. We have enrolled 113 learners onto Skills Focus and delivered 80 projects with companies through InnovateUs and expect to meet associated targets by year-end.

While not funded from core DfE monies, but for the purposes of completeness in line with the ERC, ESF projects continue to recruit as do FCR courses (FCR leisure is head of target, FCR public is slightly behind target and FCR private is 52% behind target. This is as a result of significant changes in food safety certification requirements which have moved from an annual renewal to a 4-year renewal cycle resulting in over 500 fewer enrols).

1. Budget

Overview of College Financial Performance

Belfast Met prides itself on its performance, both financial and in terms of meeting delivery targets. Since 2014/15 Belfast Met has consistently met all financial targets, FLU targets and supported the achievement of policy commitments, while living within approved budget and allocation limits.

This has not been without consequence.

Belfast Met's financial position, based on Statutory Accounts has been deteriorating with increasing deficits, declining cash levels and a weakening balance sheet. Table 1 below shows Belfast Met's three-year financial performance trend over the period to July 2019.

Table 1 – Summary Belfast Met Financial Position

	2016/17 Actual £'000	2017/18 Actual £'000	2018/19 Forecast £'000	Movement £'000
Statutory Year end Deficit (to 31 July)*	4,022	4,450	5,000	978
Cash Balance at Year end (31 July) (BMC cash only, excludes EU Project & Support funds)	3,329	3,785	2,104	1,225
NDPB Allocation (to 31 March)	39,784	38,942	39,582**	202
<i>Reduced funding coupled with the college continuing to deliver targets and absorb unavoidable cost increases (eg inflation, NIC, pay and pension increases) has meant declining deficit in stat accounts along with declining cash balances.</i>				

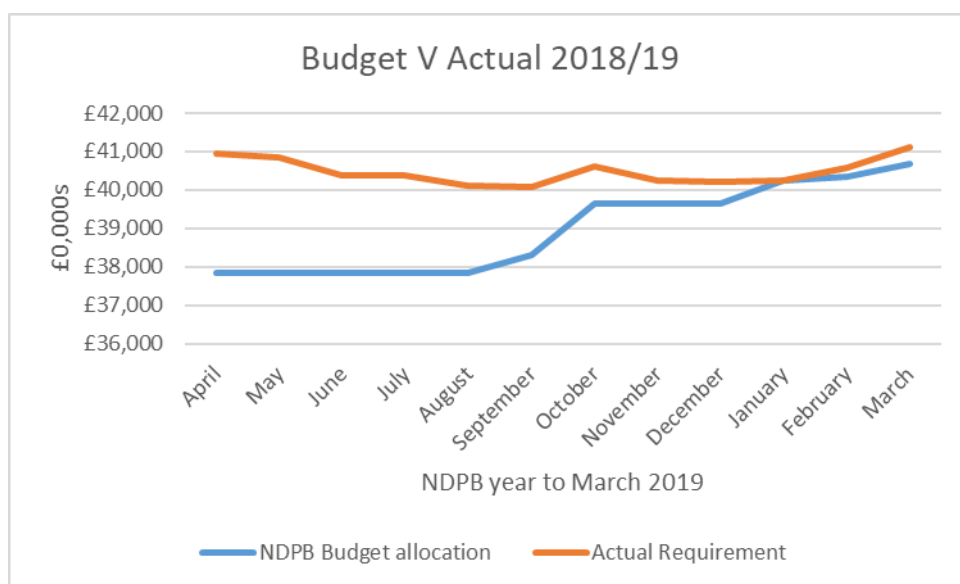
** - Excludes Whiterock Campus, Travel & Tourism Hub and Lecturer's Pay Award funding as one offs

Table 1 clearly demonstrates that this position is not sustainable in the medium/long term.

2018/19 performance

Despite initial funding allocations of c£2m less than that estimated to deliver approved targets the final NDPB return for March showed a pressure of just **£442K** which DfE have approved. Movement on funding vs budget is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – Budget V Actual 2018/19 NDPB Year



Source: NDPB returns for 2018/19

Increases in budget allocation include EYF monies, Whiterock Campus monies, Curriculum Hub money and allowance for lecturers pay rise. This 2018/19 position has been achieved through:

- Restricting student recruitment levels to actual targets rather than to hold “buffer” (c 2% of target) to protect delivery against targets, saving **c £250k in staff costs**. This has resulted in the College falling short against target in some specific areas although overall enrolment levels have been met.
- Significant work by the College to drive down costs e.g. holding vacancies and deferring non-essential spend, equating to **£450k**. These actions are not sustainable in the medium term as staff recruitment is needed to support delivery and spend on estate maintenance, refurbishment and IT replacement/ development cannot be deferred indefinitely without creating a backlog and/ or the College falling behind industry need. These savings have been offset by pressure on income where targets have fallen short by **£250k**.
- The benefit of windfalls arising from settlement of the TQ dispute (**£800k**).
- Increased funding allocation being secured, with the assistance of the DfE, through monitoring rounds. Amounting to **£600k** – excluding Whiterock.
- An approved overspend of **£442k** to compensate for reduced income on FCR activity and a potential revalorisation for Lecturers in 2018/19.

Note these actions are not sustainable given the one off nature of windfalls and the impact of investment/ replacement deferrals on the colleges financial sustainability.

One consequence of the constrained financial position has been performance against targets. While enrols overall exceeded the targets set, variations exist within modes of attendance and levels offered.

The performance section on Page 22 above provides an overview of performance against targets.

2019/20 Forecast Position

The revised budget allocation for 2019/20 from DfE is £43.478m. This equates to the opening allocation for 2018/19, plus EYF, ESOL, pay and pension allocation and the bid for 125 additional MASN being met as detailed in the letter from DfE dated 5 June 2019.

2019/20 has significant pressures relating to various pay remit components factored in to the budget requirement and these pressures total c£1.7m. Details are as follows:

Pay Remit Pressures	£'000
Lecturers - Recurring impact from 3 year pay deal	199
Lecturers - Pay Remit 1.27% Increments	196
Lecturers - Potential Revalorisation at 1% from Sept 18 (less accrual)	189
Non-Lecturing staff - Recurring impact from pay deal	503
Non-Lecturing staff - Assimilation in New Bands	580
2019/20 pressure	1,667

Belfast Met welcomes the closure of the £1.8m gap that was identified with our draft budget. In order to achieve the initial indicative budget settlement projects were deferred that can now be reinstated to protect the medium /long term sustainability of the College. The profiling of income and expenditure is set out in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2 – Actual 2018/19 Vs Requirement 2019/20 NDPB Year

Record Description	A 2018/19 Actual outturn	B 2019/20 Approved budget	C Variance 2018/19 actual V 2019/20 budget	D 2019/20 DfE allocation 5th June	E Variance budget V allocation	Comment
Completed by DfE						
FEC PFI Contracts Interest Element	3,212	3,065	-147			PFI remodelled however increase on this will be largely offset by Departmental contribution
FEC Income	-14,491	-15,647	-1,156			Forecast based on latest budget position
FEC Consultancy	5	0	-5			Forecast based on latest budget position
FEC Contributions to NILGOS scheme	1,853	1,950	97			Increase in NILGOSC calculations of 1% factored in
FEC Current expenditure financed by EU receipts	1,662	1,149	-513			Taken from latest forecasts on EU grants
FEC Grant income (EU)	-1,662	-1,149	513			Taken from latest forecasts on non EU grants
FEC Grant income (non EU)	-177	-175	2			Taken from latest forecasts on EU grants
FEC Interest receivable	0	0	0			
FEC Other operating expenses	13,370	14,530	1,160			Assumes essential IT and Estates projects have been reinstated
FEC PFI Contracts Service Element	4,889	5,310	421			PFI modelled however movement on this will be largely offset by Departmental contribution so limited impact
FEC Provisions - Utilisation	0	0	0			
FEC Staff costs	32,327	34,445	2,118			Pay increases for lecturers, senior staff, support (per NJC agreement) and pension increases. Partly offset by savings in staffing due to the outsourcing of catering.
EU Exit Resource	43	0	-43			Excluded
Curriculum Hub Initiative	100	0	-100			Excluded
	41,131	43,478	2,347	43,478	-0	
Notes:						
Column	A	Actual outturn submitted to DfE in March, including £442k approved overspend				
Column	B	Latest NDPB resource requirement modelled using approved budgets				
Column	C	Increase in funding requirement compared to last years outturn				
Column	D	Based on allocation letter for 2019/20 received 5 June 2019				
Column	E	Variance between requirement and funding allocation				

1. Educational Outcomes and Performance Measures – Report Cards

Government has adopted an outcomes'-based accountability methodology for planning and reporting. Belfast Met has developed three report cards that provide evidence, detail the story behind the evidence and set the performance measures for the year ahead.

The following section provides a more detailed breakdown of the deliverables during the 2019-20 academic year.

Belfast Met is committed to leading the city to work and to achieving our dual mandate. To achieve this, funding must follow need.

To reflect the funding environment, the Educational Outcomes and Performance Measures section of the plan are detailed below.

Objective: Increase the number of companies involved in innovation activity and increase business competitiveness.

Defined Service Users: Business and Industry

PfG Outcome 1: We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy.

PfG Outcome 5: We are an innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their potential

Indicator 22: Increase innovation in our economy

Indicator 14: Improve the skills profile of the population

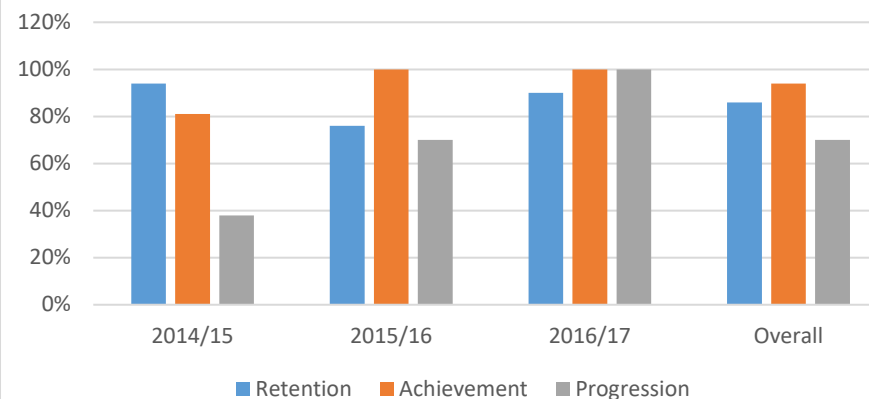
PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Assured Skills	5	15	11	15	8	11
Connected		5	10	5	210	120
KTP	0	1	1	2	1	1
InnovateUs	40	116	48	36	79	85
Innovation Vouchers	11	5	4	8	11	13
Skills Focus	*	*	*	63	74	113
Student Placements				383	269	186
Apprenticeships				257	566	514
TFS				213	259	168
HLA				71	86	95
Total no of Unique Clients	56	142	74	1,282	1,563	1,306

A number of the above statistics have been lifted directly from the College's monthly performance dashboard.

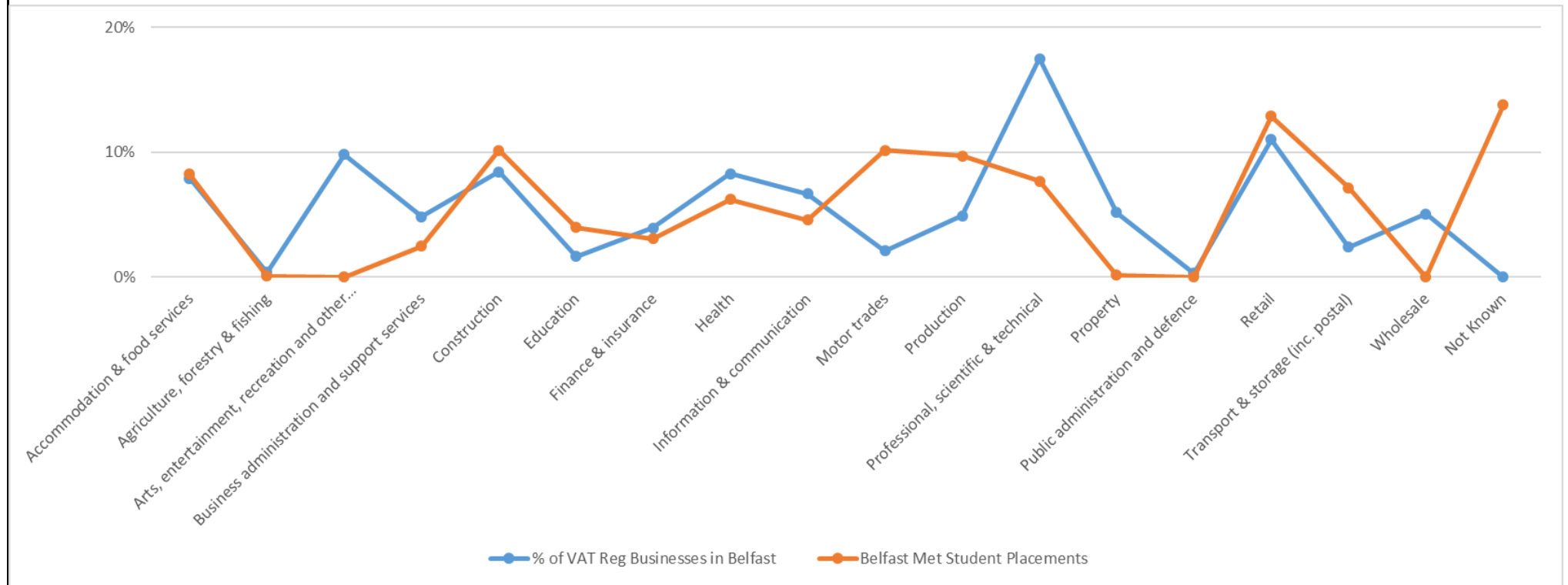
It should be noted that TFS has reduced due to alternative ESF programmes being in place and also due to the panned introduced of Youth Training.

Chart 1: Routeways trends (TfS Level 1)



Source: Qlikview, 12/03/19

COMPARISON OF THE PROPORTION OF BUSINESSES BELFAST MET ENGAGED WITH 2016-17 AND THE BELFAST PROFILE OF VAT/PAYE REGISTERED BUSINESSES 2016 (PLACEMENTS, APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS)



ECONOMY: ECONOMIC GROWTH (2)

- GVA for Belfast City Region compared to other UK city regions in UK is low.
- But GVA for Belfast City is now in the top 10 local areas in the UK in terms of GVA at 2.8% in 2017.
- Belfast GVA is the highest per head compared to other counties

GVA) for UK capital city regions, 2017

Capital City Region	Population	Total GVA ³ (£ million) ⁴	Annual growth in total GVA (%) ⁵	Real GVA growth since 2009 (%) ⁵
Greater London Authority ⁶	8,825,001	431,164	4.2	28.4
Cardiff Capital Region	1,524,557	31,807	3.4	13.0
Edinburgh and SE Scotland City Region	1,375,880	32,300	4.6	13.7
Belfast City Region	1,101,803	27,399	2.6	9.5

GVA per head by NI local authority, 2016

Belfast	£31,999
Mid and East Antrim	£21,835
Antrim and Newtownabbey	£20,230
Lisburn and Castlereagh	£19,312
Mid Ulster	£19,205
Fermanagh and Omagh	£17,357
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	£16,961
Derry City and Strabane	£16,450
Newry, Mourne and Down	£15,508
Causeway Coast and Glens	£14,481
Ards and North Down	£13,209

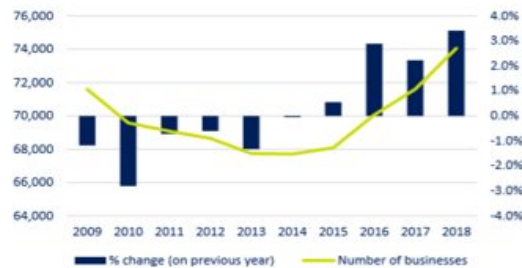
Source

ONS Regional economic activity by gross value added (balanced), UK: 1998 to 2017 (released December 2018; annually)
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossvalueaddedgva/bulletins/regionalgrossvalueaddedbalanceduk/1998to2017>
 New figures due in December 2018 but not yet published.

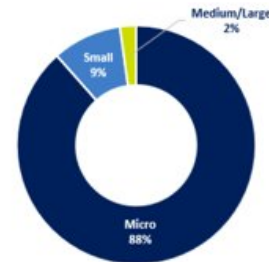
ECONOMY: BUSINESSES: SIZE AND COMPOSITION

- 2.7% of all business in the UK are in NI.
- The number of Value Added Tax (VAT) and/or Pay As You Earn (PAYE) registered businesses operating in NI in 2018 has risen by 2,445 (3.4%) since 2017 to 74,060. The largest increases in the number of businesses over the year were in the construction (535 businesses) and agriculture, forestry and fishing (440) industries.
- The business birth rate in NI continues to grow steadily (11.3%) but remains lower than birth rates in the other UK countries. The business death rate in NI (8.2%) also increased over the year and remains lower than death rates in the other UK countries.
- Of the 74,060 businesses operating in NI in 2018, 2.4% were non-NI owned. However, these businesses accounted for almost one quarter (24%) of employees.
- Most businesses are micro-businesses (less than 10 employees). Small businesses, or those with 10 to 49 employees, accounted for 9.4% of all businesses in NI. Medium and large businesses (more than 50 employees), accounted for 2% of all businesses. Of the 1,615 medium and large businesses 310 (19%) had more than 250 employees.

Number and annual percentage change of businesses operating in Northern Ireland, 2009 to 2018



Percentage of businesses operating in NI by employment size band, 2018



Source

NISRA Interdepartmental Business Register (2018) <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/IDBR-Publication-2018.pdf> (Annual)

BUSINESSES: BY INDUSTRY

- The largest industry, in terms of the number of businesses, was agriculture, forestry and fishing which accounted for one quarter (25%) of all VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses in NI in 2018.
- The largest increases in the number of businesses since 2017 were in the construction (535 businesses); agriculture, forestry and fishing (440 businesses) and professional, scientific and technical (240) industries.
- The largest proportional increase in the number of businesses was seen in property, which increased from 2,075 businesses in 2017 to 2,280 businesses in 2018 amounting to a 10% increase.
- Of the 17 industry groups only health experienced a decline (-1.6%) in the number of businesses since 2017, whilst the number of businesses within public administration and defence remained the same.
- The number of businesses in agriculture, forestry & fishing has seen the largest increase (1,920) from 2009 to 2018.
- The largest percentage increase was seen in the information and communication industry (49%).
- There were 12,270 construction businesses in NI in 2009. This number had fallen to 10,215 in 2018 which is a decrease of 17%.
- The retail industry has also seen a significant decrease in the number of businesses, decreasing by 10% over the period 2009 to 2018.

Percentage change of businesses operating in NI by industry
2009 to 2018

Industry	Number of Businesses ¹		% Change
	2009	2018	
Information & communication	1,330	1,980	49%
Education	520	665	28%
Professional, scientific & technical	4,870	5,870	21%
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	16,365	18,285	12%
Arts	4,015	4,505	12%
Production	4,615	5,100	11%
Property	2,050	2,280	11%
Finance & insurance	1,105	1,210	10%
Motor trades	2,365	2,585	9%
Accommodation & food	3,710	4,000	8%
Health	2,630	2,830	8%
Transport & storage	2,550	2,445	-4%
Wholesale	3,405	3,275	-4%
Business administration	2,890	2,645	-8%
Retail	6,820	6,120	-10%
Construction	12,270	10,215	-17%
Public administration & defence	70	50	-29%
Total	71,590	74,060	3%

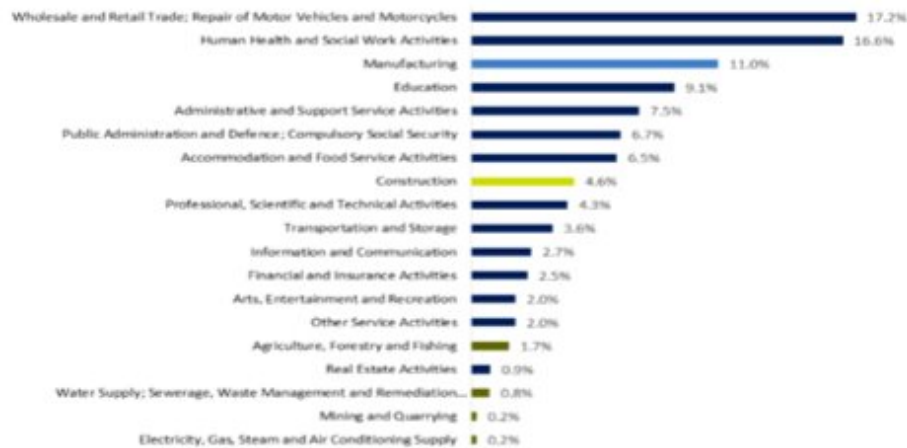
¹ Figures may not add due to rounding

Source

NISRA Interdepartmental Business Register (2018) <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/IDBR-Publication-2018.pdf> (Annual)

LABOUR MARKET: QUARTERLY EMPLOYMENT SURVEY (QES) & BUSINESS REGISTER AND EMPLOYMENT SURVEY (BRES)

- This is a business survey which samples approx. 6,000 companies who are asked to provide employment data for each of their business activities.
- The seasonally adjusted employee jobs total in NI(Sep 18) was 765,880, an increase of 2% over the year (statistically significant).
- The number of employee jobs in the services sector (621,970 jobs) reached the highest level on record in September 2018 in the seasonally adjusted series.
- In 2017, there were 224,149 jobs in Belfast with the most (70,922) in Central ward. This accounted for 29.6% of all jobs. The largest increase in employee jobs was in Belfast where an additional 5,631 jobs or 2.6% growth was observed
- The sectors experiencing the largest growth in jobs are wholesale and retail trade, human health and social work, manufacturing, and education, with these four sectors accounting for over half the jobs.



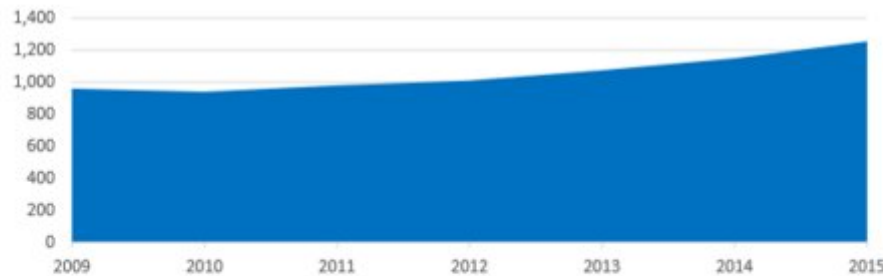
Source

NISRA Labour Market Bulletin January 2019 - <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/labour-market-report-january-2019.pdf>. Figures are from the Labour Market Survey and updated monthly.
 NISRA Business Register and Employment Survey 2017 published September 2018 - <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/annual-employee-jobs-surveys/business-register-and-employment-survey>

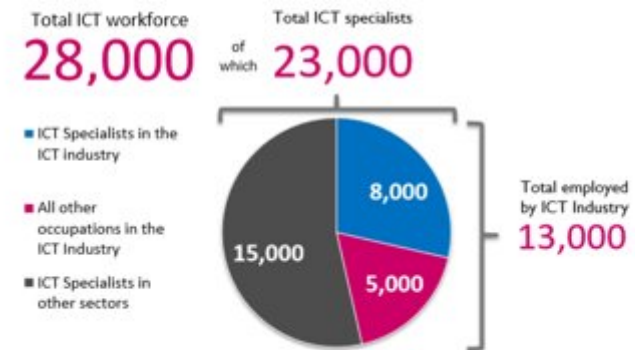
DIGITAL ECONOMY:

- The NI Digital ICT sector comprises over 1,200 companies, over 100 of which are international businesses such as Allstate, SAP, Citi and Cybersource.
- The sector in NI offers particular strength in its software engineering expertise and has clusters in mobile telecoms, financial software, information management, cyber security and connected health.
- The sector employs around 13,000 people, with the total ICT workforce (including ICT specialists in non-ICT businesses) standing at around 28,000 - 2% of NI employees.
- GVA for digital ICT employees is nearly £65k, 28% above the NI average (2014 figures).
- From 2009-2015, while the overall number of businesses registered for VAT and/or PAYE in NI has decreased by 5%, the number of Digital ICT companies has increased by 31%.
- 25% of all NI companies report gaps between the skills in their ICT specialists and the skills needed by the business for these workers. This proportion is slightly higher amongst ICT (26%) than non ICT (23%) firms
- Significant undersupply in mid-level skills (NQF L4-5) in engineering & manufacturing, science & mathematics, arts, media and publishing & ICT (see charts in skill section).

Growth in Digital ICT Businesses



Total workforce



Source

MATRIX NI Science Industry Panel Matrix Digital ICT Report 2016 <http://matrixni.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2016-Matrix-Digital-ICT-Report.pdf> (Adhoc)

Story behind the baseline

There are 10,560 VAT/PAYE registered companies in Belfast and Belfast Met engaged with 1,563 individual companies during 2017-18 – 14.8%.

To grow the NI Economy, it is essential businesses are supported to innovate and grow to provide more job opportunities. As business needs change it is crucial that the workforce is able to support business expansion by having appropriate skills. FDI also requires a skilled workforce to be available. Therefore, it is very important that students are upskilled in areas relative to demand (Skills Barometer, 2017) and that the existing workforce is developed to ensure local business can compete in a global market.

In addition, statistics show that 23% of Belfast's working age population have no qualifications and in parallel there is a low and decreasing demand for low skills. Therefore, upskilling the existing workforce will be an increasingly important role for Belfast Met.

Belfast Met has a key role to play in responding to business need through reskilling and upskilling their existing workforce through courses delivered for employees. Through providing trainee placements, businesses are supporting Belfast Met to provide invaluable training for a new workforce.

Data analysis demonstrates that in many business sectors Belfast Met is providing support in line with Belfast business profile. There are exceptions such as Arts, Entertainment Recreation & Other, Motor Trades, Production, Professional, Scientific & Technical, Property and, Wholesale. This is most likely due to the fact that students studying Tourism (which could map to the Recreation sectors) are being classified under Business Administration & Support Areas and those studying in Professional, Technical & Scientific areas are being placed in other business sectors such as Health. Likewise, there is a correlation between Retail and Wholesale and it is likely that these learners and securing placements categorised as Retail.

Belfast Met has increased its efforts to engage with businesses and has found that often businesses are not aware of the support they can obtain from Colleges. This is also true of other statutory sector partners such as Councils and Government Departments. Further awareness raising of support available is necessary and the College has strengthened an Economic Development team to deliver this. A number of programmes are being delivered to help support business growth, innovation and engagement such as those listed below. Please note this is not an exhaustive list of support.

InnovateUS is a fully funded programme to provide bespoke innovative training to companies with under 50 employees to develop new product, services and processes. Companies can avail of 10 hours, 30 hours and up to 60-hour interventions and have up to 6 months to complete their tailored training; This can be carried out in the College or in the workplace.

Skills Focus aims to support, promote and facilitate collaborative working between business and FE colleges in order to provide tailored skills provision to small to medium sized enterprises with less than 250 employees. The purpose of Skills Focus is to meet business needs by increasing the skills levels of the existing workforce to Level 2 and above qualification. The targeted stakeholders include local start up referrals agents i.e.) esparks, Invest NI, Local Councils, Local Enterprises Agencies,

Catalyst Inc, Banks & Building Societies, Internal BMET Students, QUB, UU, Women in Business, Chamber of Commerce, FSB, IOD. Since April 2018, we have submitted 50 baselines with 50 companies, with 113 students enrolled across a range of key courses including Welding, Steel Polishing, 18th Edition, Social Media, ILM Level 3, 5 and 7.

Innovation Vouchers offer £5,000 worth of funding to assist a company in the development of prototypes, research and testing. This is a competitive fund whereby local businesses submit an online application for review. Invest NI release 4 calls throughout the year. They are funded by Invest NI (NI and Enterprise Ireland (ROI)). The College completed 6 vouchers in 2018/19 and worked with 6 Companies across key areas such as Prototyping/CAD design, Composites, Fashion/Textile and Advance IT.

Connected is a HE/FE industry led programme that provides Colleges and Universities with the opportunity to develop new, upcoming and innovative areas that the College has identified as growth areas for industry. Aligned staff in the College have specific targets within their sector and work closely with university staff to support companies, develop industry relevant courses and deliver workshops. The funding allows for global horizon scanning and assessment of potential curriculum trends. In 2018/19 the College worked on a number of key areas which are linked to our Hub designation: - Smart Tech, New Product Development with particular emphasis on Data Analytics, Artificial Intelligence, Immersive technology (AI/VR/AR), Information Security, Software Robotics and IT and Blockchain.

FUSION is InterTradeIreland's all-island technology transfer programme to help you to bolster businesses bolster their bottom line and get ahead of the competition by partnering their company with a third-level institution with the specialist expertise needed and a high calibre science, engineering or technology graduate.

The College has been a key deliverer of **Assured Skills** programmes since 2013. The Academy typically involves an eight to 10-week bespoke pre-employment training programme. The Academy Model is flexible and versatile, and has been used to help companies recruit new staff in areas such as:

- cyber security
- data analytics
- project management and consultancy
- financial services
- software development
- software testing
- 2D animation

The Academies we have delivered have a 93% success rate of participants progressing into full time employment. Belfast Met have and are continuing to deliver a number of Assured Skills Academies for various employers in Belfast including Deloitte, PwC, EY, Alexander Mann Solutions, FinTrU, Neueda, Novosco, Black Duck and Metaswitch to note a few.

The **International Office** plays a role within the college to forge strong collaboration with a range of partners including the Department for the Economy, Colleges NI, Belfast City Council, Executive Office, Invest NI, US Consulate, British Council, Collab Group, AOC and the universities. The International Office seeks to bid for projects

and contracts, and to attract students to study with Belfast Met. Current projects are funded through Erasmus + Key Actions 1 & 2 and the British Council International Skills Partnerships and Leadership Exchange programme.

The International Office also works with students from outside the UK who need advice on visas, the UK education system, qualifications equivalencies, opportunities for future study and career routes, queries about finances, accommodation and about living in the city. Our international students range from ages 16-71 and come from many diverse backgrounds with very different expectations of what is possible in the UK and what the future can hold for them.

Who are our partners that will help us to do better?	Business Sector organisations, Department for the Economy, Invest NI, Businesses/Employers, Local Government
<p>What works to do better?</p> <p>Low cost-</p> <p>No cost-</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote services available from Colleges more widely • Promote services available at Community Planning meetings so that other Statutory Bodies can link businesses they engage with College services. • Develop more integrated approaches to promoting business support and skills programmes through Invest NI and through Council working to deliver the skills and employability strand of the City Deal.
What do we propose to do?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will deliver £160k of Skills Focus training with employers, 70% of which will be at Level 3 and above, 80% of which will be on QCF qualifications and 20% of which will be in the College hub areas. 2. We will deliver £320k of InnovateUs projects of which a minimum of 20% will be delivered in the college hubs areas and a maximum of 5% will be on Option 1 projects. 3. We will engage with 400 businesses to provide Training for Success and FE/HE Full Time student placements. 4. We will engage with business to deliver over 1,045 Apprenticeships and HLAs, including 188 TFS. 5. We will draw down £350k of EU funding for research and innovation. 6. We will engage with 10 businesses to deliver 10 academies with a view to 200 enrolments at Level 0 and 200 people upskilled as a result.
Is anyone better off?	<p>We will see an increase in those in the workplace skilled to Level 3 and above.</p> <p>We will see a growth in employers who have increased rates of innovation.</p> <p>400 students will benefit from work based placements.</p>

Over 1,000 learners will be in employment as Apprenticeships or HLAs.

Support local employers in research and innovation.

200 people will be reskilled through Assured Skills Academies, +90% of whom will secure employment.

Qualifications outcomes based on projected enrolments across all areas of activity by mode of attendance (MOA) including: Further education, Higher education, Training and apprenticeships, and schools' engagement

Defined Service Users: Qualification outcomes as a measure of improvement in skills

PfG Outcome 1: We prosper through a strong, competitive regionally balanced economy

PfG Outcome 6: We have more people working in better jobs

PfG Outcome 14: We give our children and young people the best start in life

Indicator 14: Improve the skills profile of the population

Indicator: 41: Increase the proportion of graduates moving into employment, or onto further study

Indicator 12: Reduce educational inequality

Indicator 11: Improve educational outcomes

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Income levels are commonly used as the main proxy for poverty levels. However, the indices of multiple deprivation are used to give a broader definition of poverty. The NI Multiple Deprivation Measures 2017 (NIMDM 2017) identify small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across Northern Ireland. It produces a ranking of ward-level areas (Super Output Areas) rather than a measure of individual or group level poverty. Areas, called Super Output Areas (SOAs), are the same as the old local government wards. Areas are ranked from 1-890 in terms of their combined level of deprivation across all indicators and for each indicator.

Where are the 100 most deprived SOAs according to the Multiple Deprivation Measure?

- 50 are in Belfast, accounting for 29% of its 174 SOAs; the highest proportion of all LGDs
- None of the 67 SOAs in Lisburn & Castlereagh are among the 100 most deprived SOAs
- East, located in Derry City & Strabane, is the most deprived SOA according to the MDM
- 5 of the 10 most deprived SOAs are in Belfast with the other 5 in Derry City & Strabane

Multiple Deprivation Measure 10 most deprived SOAs are in Belfast and Derry

- 1 East, Derry City and Strabane
- 2 Water Works 2, Belfast
- 3 Crevagh 2, Derry City and Strabane
- 4 Ardoyne 2, Belfast
- 5 Strand 1, Derry City and Strabane
- 6 The Diamond, Derry City and Strabane
- 7 New Lodge 2, Belfast
- 8 Woodvale 1, Belfast
- 9 Ardoyne 3, Belfast
- 10 Creggan Central 1, Derry City

Source

NISRA (2017) NIMDPM - <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/NIMDM17-%20with%20ns.pdf> (Annual)

POVERTY: MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION: BELFAST

- Many of the wards in Belfast rank highly in terms of all the indices across the whole of NI. The ranking relates to the position out of 890 wards, with 1 being the most deprived. The numbers at the end e.g. Woodvale 1 related to a specific ward.
- Note that for Education, Skills and Training, the top 10 most deprived in NI are in Belfast. Belfast falls down the rankings in the Access to Services indices primarily because it's a city and people can reach public services relatively easily.



Source

Department for Communities - <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/poverty#toc-0> Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 (NIMDM2017) -

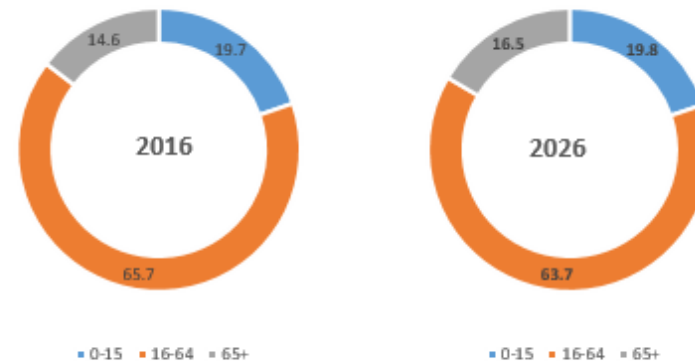
POPULATION PROJECTIONS – BELFAST

- The population of Belfast at mid-2026 is projected to be 346,200.
- There will be more old people, fewer working age people and about the same proportion of children.
- Between mid-2016 and mid-2026, the population of Belfast is projected to increase by 6,600 people (1.9%) but decreasing its share of NI from 18.2% to 17.8%

Projected Change by Age (mid-2016 to mid-2026)

Children (0-15)	+1,600 people	Up 2.4%
Working Age (16-64)	-2,500 people	Down 1.1%
Aged 65 and over	+7,500 people	Up 15.2%

Change in Age Distribution



Source:

NISRA (2017) <https://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/interactiveMaps/DataVis/Population%20Projections%20forAreaswithinNI%202016.pdf> (Biennial)

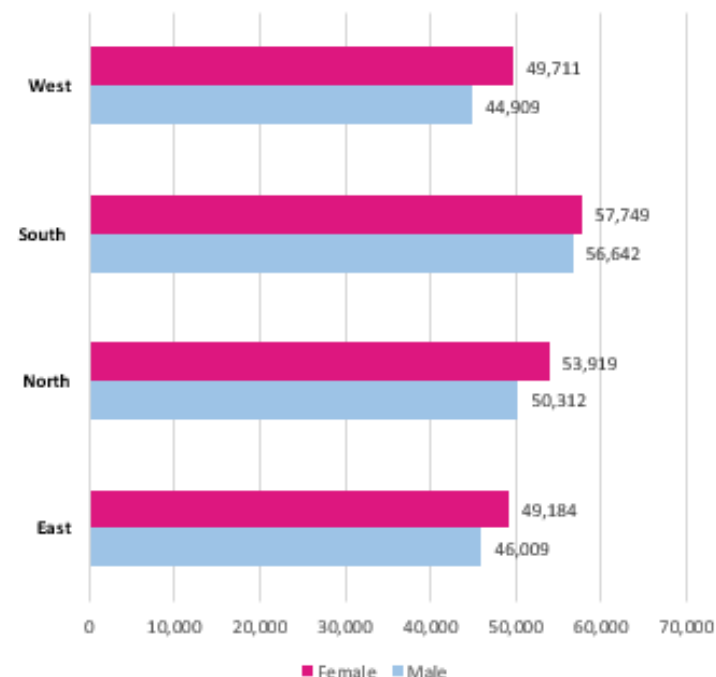
BELFAST POPULATION – GENDER AND AGE

- South Belfast has the largest 16-39 year old population (47,425); the lowest sub area of this age band is East Belfast (30,194).
- The highest number of 0-15 year olds are concentrated in North Belfast (22,110) and West Belfast (21,893).
- South Belfast has the highest number of females (57,749) and the lowest male count is in Belfast West (44,909).

Age Bands by sub-area

Area	0-15	16-39	40-64	65 YEARS AND OLDER
EAST	17,972	30,194	30,759	16,268
NORTH	22,110	33,139	32,267	16,715
SOUTH	18,931	47,425	32,218	15,817
WEST	21,893	31,589	28,187	12,951

Gender and Population by sub-area



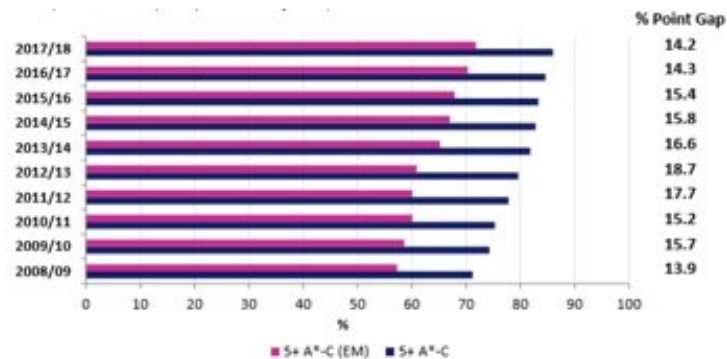
Source:

Area Profiles (2017): <https://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/AreaProfileMapView.aspx> (Annual)

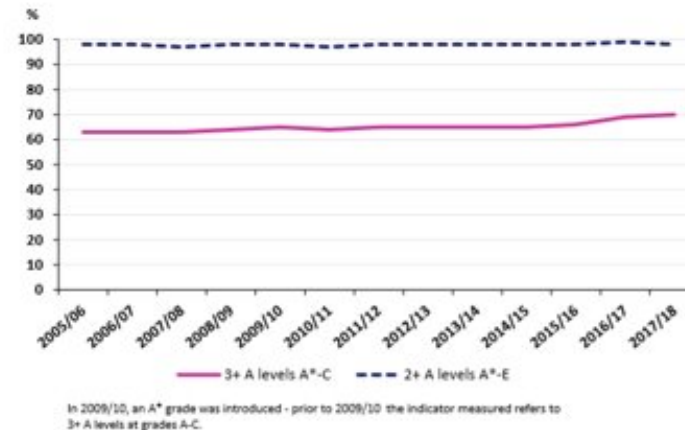
EDUCATION: PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT GCSE AND A LEVEL

- In 2017/18, 86.0% of year 12 pupils achieved 5 or more GCSEs (including equivalents) at grades A*-C.
- In 2017/18, 71.8% of year 12 pupils achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C (or equivalent) *including GCSE English and Maths*.
- 76.5% of female pupils in year 12 achieved 5 or more GCSEs (including equivalents) at grades A*-C including GCSE English and GCSE maths compared with 67.1% of males, a gap of 9.4 percentage points (see Figure 6 and Table 6).
- 70.2% of pupils in the final year of an A-level (or equivalent) course achieved 3 or more A-levels at grades A*-C.
- 72.8% of female pupils in year 14 achieved 3 or more A levels (including equivalents) at grades A*-C compared with 67.0% of males in 2017/18

Achievement gap between year 12s achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C (inc. equivalents) and achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C (inc. equivalents) including GCSE English and GCSE Maths: 2008/09 to 2017/18



Percentage of pupils eligible for A levels (or equivalent) achieving 3 or more grades at A*-C, and two or more A levels (or equivalent) at grades A*-E 2005/06 to 2017/18 (academic years)



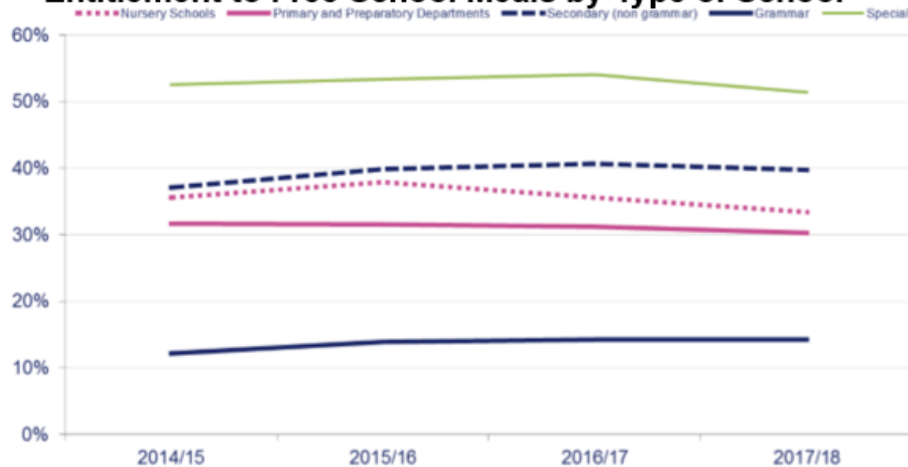
Source

Year 12 and 14 Examination Performance at Post Primary Schools in NI 2017/18 (2018) <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Year%202012%20and%20Year%2014%20examination%20postprimary%20schools%20in%20Northern%20Ireland%20201718.PDF> (Annual)

POVERTY: MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION: FREE SCHOOL MEALS

- Over 184,000 school meals, both free and paid, were taken by pupils on census day, which equates to a school meals uptake level of 59.5% by pupils present for lunch on the day. School meals uptake level for 2017/18 is 1.6 % lower than the previous year.
- 100,254 pupils in grant-aided schools are entitled to free school meals; this represents 29.9% of pupils. The uptake level for free school meals by entitled pupils is 80.8%.
- In 2017/18 51.6% of year 12 FSME pupils achieved 5 or more GCSEs (including equivalents) at grades A*-C including GCSE English and GCSE maths. This is an increase since 2016/17 when it was 49.6%, and from 33.9% in 2012/13.

Entitlement to Free School Meals by Type of School



¹ Nursery only includes pupils in nursery schools
² Primary includes pupils in reception and nursery classes
³ Data taken from Table 6

Gap between % of non-FSME school leavers and % of FSME school leavers achieving at level 2 or above including English and maths

GRAPH FROM DATA TO BE CREATED – CHECK RE BELFAST DATA

DESTINATION OF SCHOOL LEAVERS CAN BE BROKEN DOWN BY FSME BUT IN EDUCATION SECTION

Source

School Meals in NI 2017/18 Statistical Bulletin (2018) DoE <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/school-meals-statistical-bulletin-2017-18.pdf> (Annual)

Entitlement means when an application for free school meals is made on behalf of a pupil and the application is successful. Uptake is when the free meals are taken Year 12 and 14 Examination Performance at Post Primary Schools in NI 2017/18 (2018)

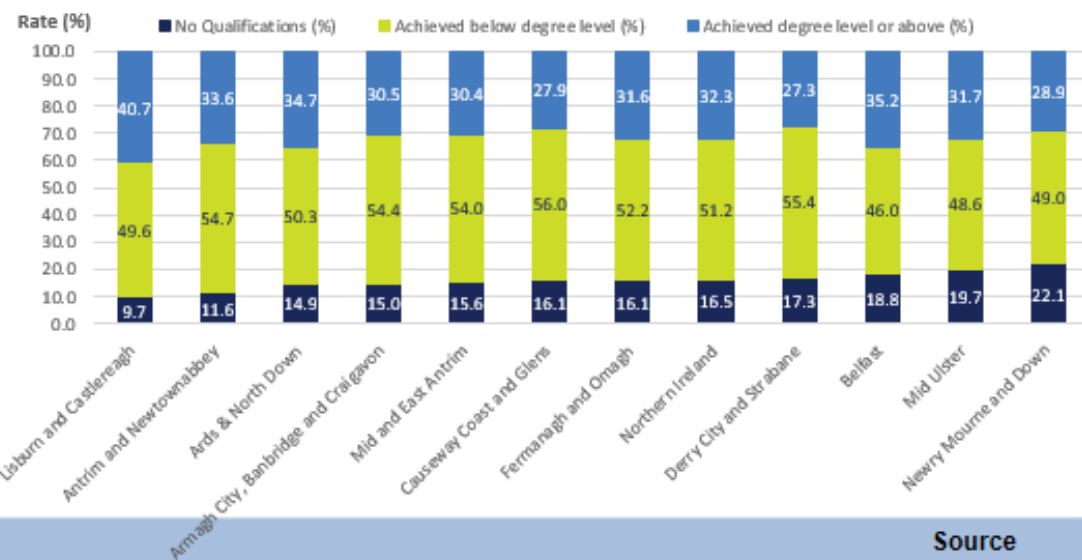
<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Year%202012%20and%20Year%2014%20examination%20post-primary%20schools%20in%20Northern%20Ireland%20201718.PDF> (Annual)

48.4% of pupils in receipt of free school meals did not achieve 5 GCSE's including Maths and English.

SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS: OVERVIEW OF SKILLS LEVELS (Geographic)

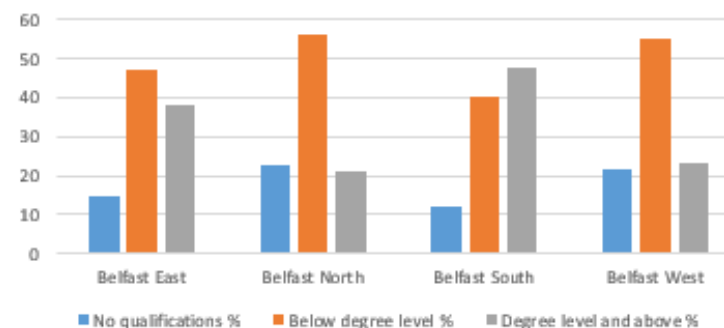
- 32.3% of those aged 16-64 years in NI were qualified to degree level or above.
- 16.5% of those aged 16-64 years in NI had no qualifications
- Lisburn and Castlereagh had the lowest proportion of 16-64 year olds with no qualifications (9.7%) and the highest proportion qualified to degree level and above (40.7%).
- Newry Mourne and Down and Mid Ulster had the highest rates of 16-64s who had no qualifications (22.1% and 19.7% respectively).
- In Belfast there were both relatively high proportions of people aged 16-64 with no qualifications (18.8%), and qualified to degree level and above (35.2%).

Highest level of qualification attained (16-64) by local government district, 2017



Belfast North has the highest number of people with no qualification and the lowest % with degrees

% of Parliamentary Constituency in Belfast by qualifications

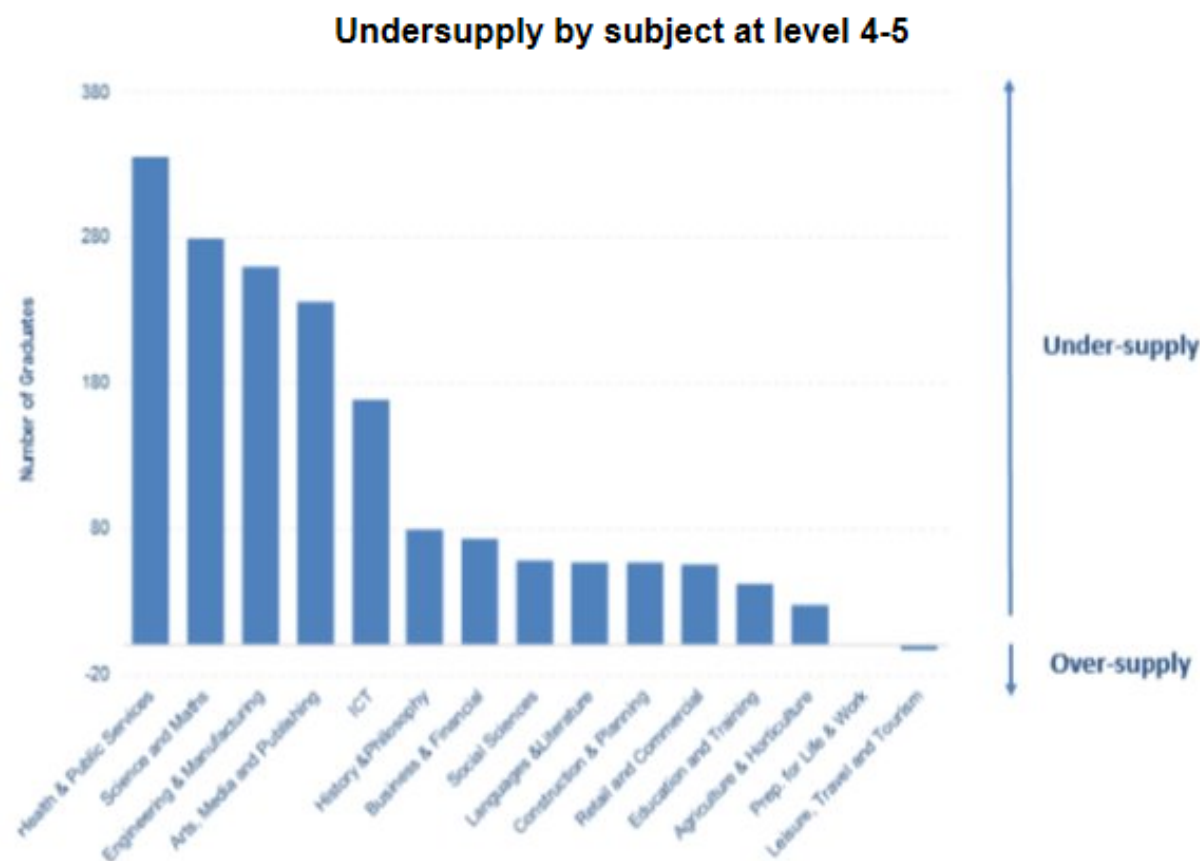


Source

Labour Force Survey Annual Report 2017 (2018) - <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/labour-force-survey-annual-report-2017> and Annual Report tables - <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/annual-report-tables-2017> (Annual)

SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS: SKILLS DEMAND AND SUPPLY BY SUBJECT – AT SKILLS LEVELS 4-5

- The subject areas with the largest under-supply are STEM related
- Two reasons for the undersupply:-
 - Significant growth potential and STEM skills are in demand across a wide range of sectors and occupations
 - Some STEM jobs e.g. engineering need a specific qualification whilst other jobs e.g. accounting take people from a range of disciplines
- Under-supply of STEM qualifications is identified across many developed economies not just in NI
- Undersupply is potentially being met by graduates unable to secure graduate level employment



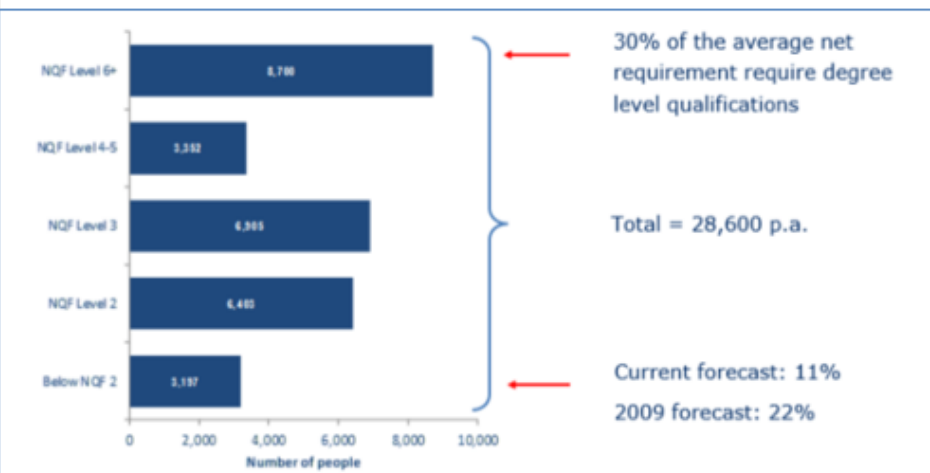
Source

UUEPC (2017) Skills Barometer <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/NI-Skills-Barometer-2017-Full-Slide-Deck.pdf> (every 2 years, first conducted in 2015)

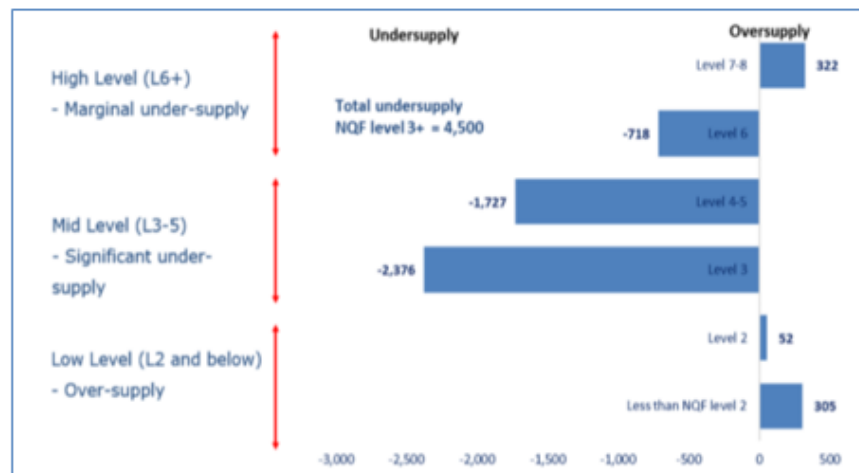
SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS: SKILLS DEMAND AND SUPPLY BY SKILL LEVEL

- The NI economy currently has total employment levels of approximately 840k people, which is forecast to increase to approx. 924k people by 2026. Furthermore, it is estimated that over the next 10 year period approx.
- 80k job opportunities will become available each year (annual average gross demand).
- However, most of those job opportunities (52k) will be filled by people already in the labour market (i.e. people moving from one job to another), but the additional 29k people must be filled from the education system.
- If the supply from education is insufficient to meet demand, then the balance would typically have been met by inward migration.
- The biggest undersupply of skills is at levels 3-5

Demand: Average annual net requirement for skills



Supply: Average annual net supply of skills



Source

UUEPC (2017) Skills Barometer <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/NI-Skills-Barometer-2017-Full-Slide-Deck.pdf> (every 2 years, first conducted in 2015)

Story behind the baseline

Evidence shows that the higher a person's level of education, the more employable they are. In addition, the higher the level of education, the higher the level of earnings and their ability to contribute to the local economy.

It is evident that there is a direct correlation between the highest level of education and the highest quintile. Just 15% of Quintile 5's working age population have no qualifications compared with 43% of Belfast's Quintile 1 population.

Equally there is a correlation between the highest success rate and the highest quintile with an 8pp gap between the success rate for Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 learners demonstrating that learners from Quintile 1 require enhanced support to achieve their learning outcomes.

38% of Belfast's Year 12 pupils do not achieve 5 GCSEs A*C including English and Maths (compared with 32% across Northern Ireland). Interestingly 85% of these 16-year olds progress to Further Education or Training programmes.

The Northern Ireland workforce is estimated at 840,700 and is forecast to grow to 924,700 by 2026. The NI Skills Barometer concludes that there will be 80,400 additional posts to be filled each year: 51,800 will be filled from churn within the existing labour market and these postholders may require support to reskill or upskill and the remaining 28,600 will be filled from the education sector and, or from migration.

Statistics show that 16.5% of Northern Ireland's working age population have no qualifications and in parallel there is a low and decreasing demand for low skills. Therefore, upskilling the existing workforce will be an increasingly important role for Belfast Met.

Belfast Met has a key role to play in responding to business need through reskilling and upskilling their existing workforce through courses delivered for employees. Through providing trainee placements, businesses are supporting Belfast Met to provide invaluable training for a new workforce.

The 28,600 net posts will require the following skills profile:

- L6+ = 8,700
- L4-5 = 3,352
- L3 = 6,905
- L2 = 6,403

- ≤L1 = 3,197

It is apparent from the research that demand from employers for people with ≤Level 1 qualifications is declining. In 2009, 20% of the posts advertised required qualifications below Level 2. Forecasts predict that just 10% of future posts will require qualifications below Level 2.

Interestingly, forecasts predict demand for 6,905 individuals skilled to Level 3 per annum. However, each year only 4,529 people exit education at this point. Not addressing this may result in an undersupply of 2,376 people skilled to Level 3 per annum or conversely 2,376 people filling Level 3 posts whose skills profile is higher than the post requires.

Opportunities to retrain, develop new skills, diversify, and change career are paramount to lifelong wellbeing and fulfilling our potential. Life-long learning opportunities are essential to allow individuals to upskill and progress to higher level opportunities. Belfast Met will play a key role in providing individuals with the ability to upskill/reskill and move across sectors as economic needs change in Belfast and Greater Belfast.

STEM, Health and Public Services, Media and ICT remain undersupplied in skills terms and employability skills are increasingly required by business.

Belfast Met gained STEM Assured Status from the STEM Foundation in August 2017. As part of that accreditation, a series of recommendations were formed through the STEM Foundation's programme, STEM in Development (SiD), in order to assist development of the new College STEM development framework.

Over the next three years, the College is expecting to deliver on the following outcomes: -

- Lead the FE sector through the work of the Digital IT Curriculum Hub and the Travel and Tourism Curriculum Hub.
- Realign all delivery to ensure that curriculum meets the needs of learners, industry and provides sustainability for the College by following curriculum guiding principles. This will entail ensuring that every programme delivered is the best fit for learners and/or industry.
- Introduce Youth Training programmes in line with the Department for the Economy roll-out across all areas to replace Level 2 Training for Success and where appropriate Further Education programmes.
- Undertake a pivotal role in the delivery of the Belfast Region City Deal skills strategy.
- Develop new apprenticeships and Higher-Level Apprenticeships including Public Sector apprenticeships in new areas to expand the College's offer.
- Improve the quality of Belfast Met's leadership and management, academic standards, and teaching and learning through CPD and performance management. This will be facilitated through the Excellence Hub.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive Scheduled Online Learning and Assessment (SOLA) throughout full-time curriculum to facilitate self-directed learning and greater flexibility. • Undertake a full review and refresh of the College’s part time and evening provision to encourage and facilitate lifelong learning. • Implement a new college-wide CRM approach which will facilitate customer relationship management of all customers including learners, businesses and other stakeholders. This will include developing a new approach to engaging and tracking engagement of our learners, from application to completion. • All substantive programmes will offer learners appropriate opportunities for work based experience and project based learning to develop industry focused skills. • A catalogue of fully online and blended programmes for learners to undertake at any time to enable greater flexibility for learners. • Reconfigurable space and technology solutions to facilitate PBL and group working. 	
<p>Who are our partners that will help us to do better?</p>	<p>Department for the Economy, Invest NI, Employers, Local Government, Department for Communities</p>
<p>What works to do better?</p> <p>Low cost-</p> <p>No cost-</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum developed to enhance achievement in undersupplied sectors. • Highly qualified teaching staff recruited from industry • Ongoing staff training to ensure industry level standards are being taught • Project Based Learning techniques utilised to enhance the problem solving and employability skills of students.
<p>What do we propose to do?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will deliver 3,782 Level 0-1 qualification enrols. 2. We will deliver 6,949 Level 2 qualification enrols. 3. We will deliver 6,540 Level 3 qualification enrols. 4. We will deliver 3,069 Higher Education (Levels 4, 5, 6) enrols. 5. We will work with business to deliver 866 Apprenticeships. 6. We will work with business to deliver 179 HLAs. 7. We will engage with 400 businesses to provide Training for Success and FE/HE Full Time student placements. 8. We will deliver 354 Schools’ Partnership enrols.

	9. We will develop a new College STEM development Framework.
Is anyone better off?	Based on the 2016/17 FE Leavers Survey, 39.5% of our learners were in employment six months after completion of their course; 49.3% progressed to further in learning and 4.4% were unemployed. We would expect to maintain similar destination results.

Objective: Addressing economic inactivity and barriers to education

PfG Outcome 3: We have a more equal society

PfG Outcome 6: We have more people working in better jobs

Indicator 12: Reduce educational inequality

Indicator 42: Increase quality of life for people with disabilities

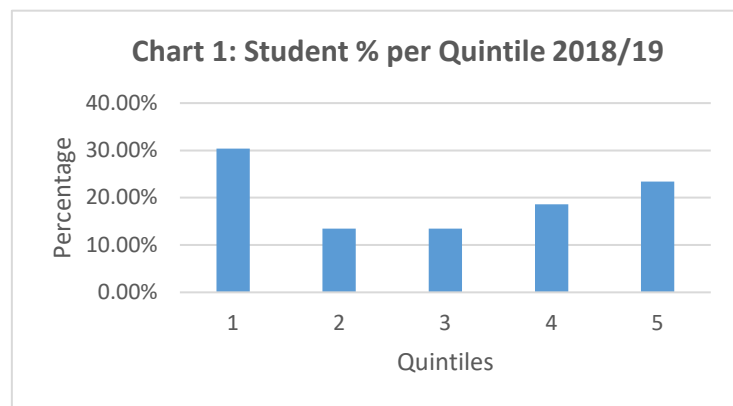
Indicator 17: Reduce economic inactivity

Indicator 32: Increase economic opportunities for our most deprived communities

Measure: Gap between % non-Free School Meals (FSME) school leavers and % FSME school leavers

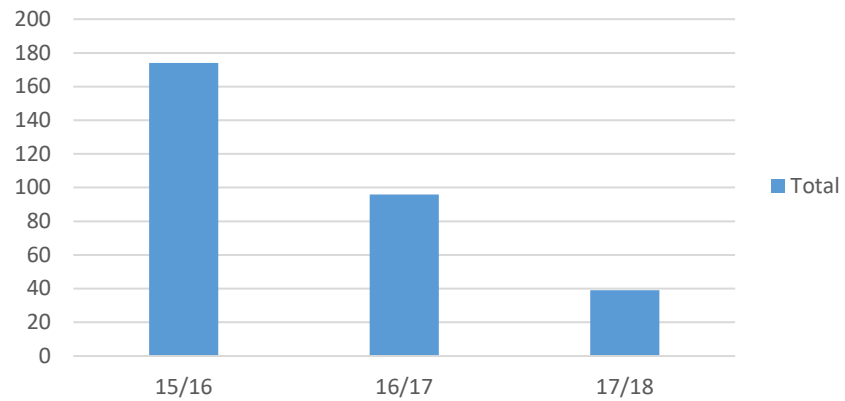
Measure: % care leavers who, aged 19, were in education, training or employment

PERFORMANCE MEASURES



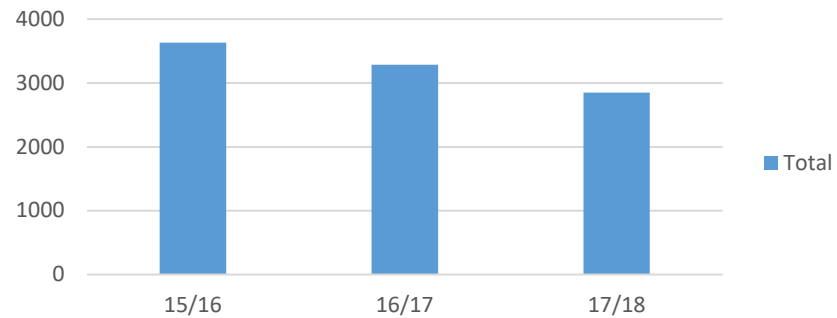
Source; Belfast Met CDR, Quintile tab, data extracted 12/03/19

Chart 2: Prince's Trust Trends

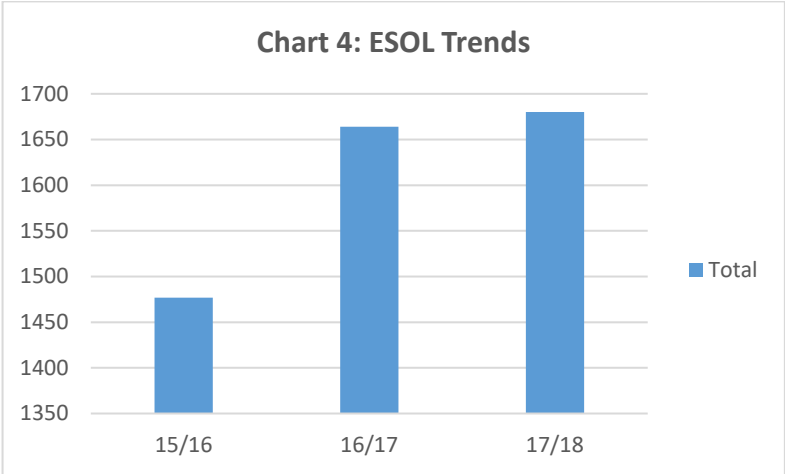


Source: Qlikview, Prince's Trust three-year analysis 08/03/19

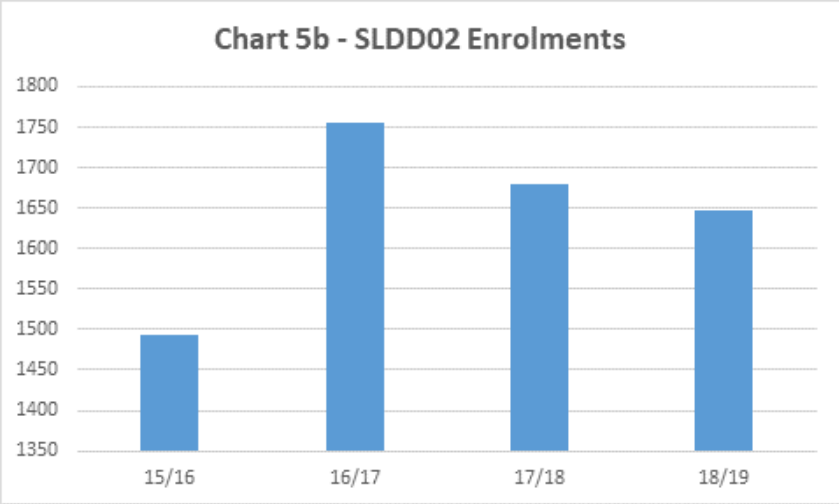
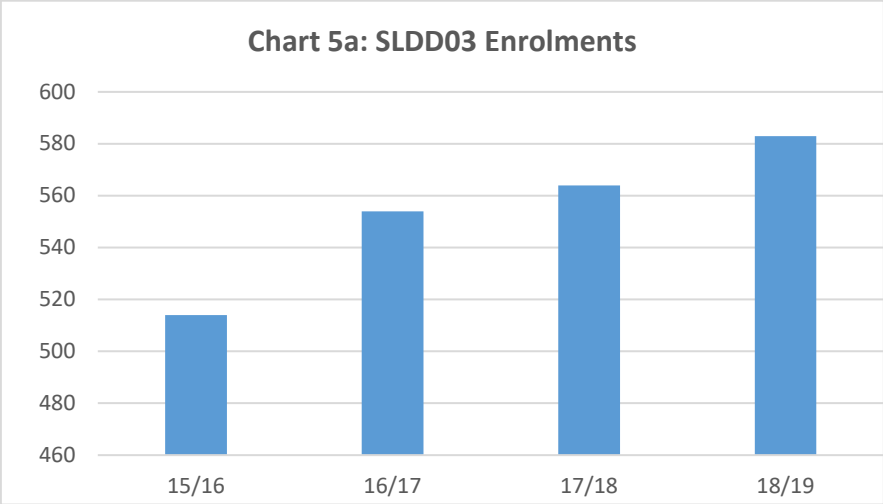
Chart 3: Essential Skills Trends



Source: Qlikview March 2019

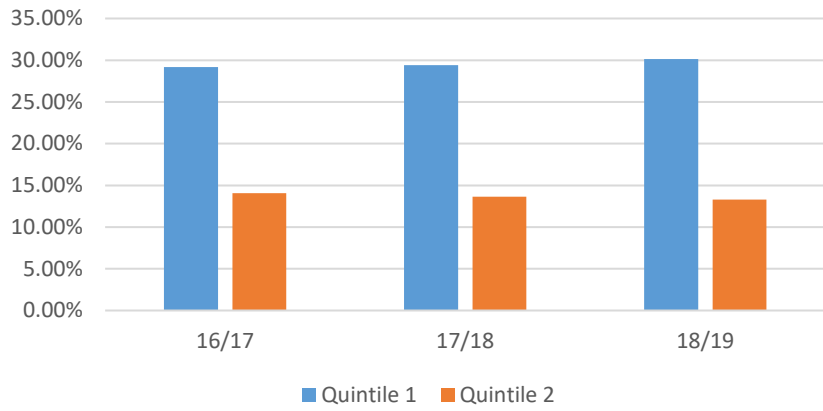


Source: Qlikview March 2019



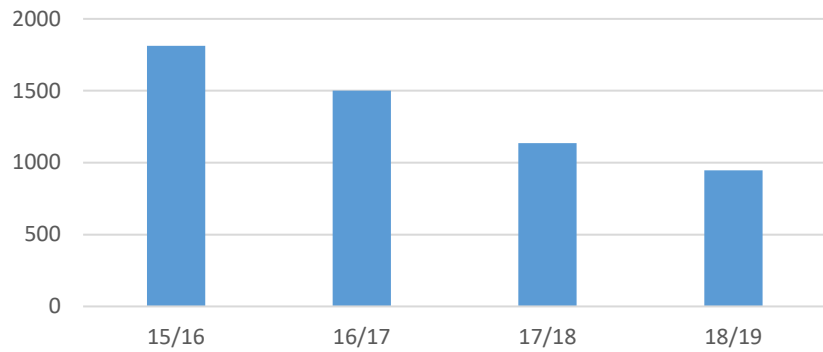
Source: QL, 20/03/19

Chart 6: % Uptake of PEAG sessions by Quintile



Source: Qlikview March 2019

Chart 7: EMA Uptake



Source: QL 21/03/19

Table 1: Supported Learning Expenditure

FUND	2017/2018		2016/2017		2015/2016	
Hardship Fund	Assisted:	845	Assisted:	735	Assisted:	598
	Spend:	£693,357.69	Spend:	£778,448.00	Spend:	£740,040.34
Care to Learn	Assisted:	5	Assisted:	6	Assisted:	8
	Spend:	£21,751.14	Spend:	£21,457.63	Spend:	£26,140.92
HE Bursary	Assisted:	425	Assisted:	357	Assisted:	406
	Spend:	£119,435.00	Spend:	£100,254.00	Spend:	£112,480.00
Family Action	Assisted:	97	Assisted:	28	Assisted:	NA
	Spend:	£22,102.00	Spend:	£4,224.00	Spend:	NA
Total For Year:	Assisted:	1372	Assisted:	1126	Assisted:	1012
	Spend:	£856,645.83	Spend:	£904,383.63	Spend:	£878,661.26

Source: Supported Learning database March 2019

Table 2 – Belfast Met Counselling Uptake Trends

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Referrals	50	74	92	136	110	155
Total Sessional Activity	160	241	393	449	350	509
% Increase of referrals on previous year	N/A	48%	24%	47%	-19%	45%

Table 3 – Trends, Careers and Employability Support

Pre Entry

Pathways to Education	
2017	22 Organisations attended the event
2018	41 Organisations attended the event
2019	25 Organisations attended the event
Widening Participation Visits to Belfast Met	
2017	2 visits, 26 participants
2018	2 visits, 30 participants
2019	27 March 2019 event and 3 April 2019 event planned
Recorded Widening Participation 1:1 Guidance	
2017	8
2018	25
2019	22 to date

Current

Students Receiving 1:1 Guidance		
2017	638	
2018	675	
2019	409 to date	
Number of Workshops Delivered to Curriculum		
2017	117	
2018	110	
2019	92 to date	
Programme of Events		
	Fairs	Other Events
2017	11	73
2018	10	65
2019	10 to date	44 to date

Story behind the baseline

According to the NIMDM data, of the 890 Super Output Areas in Northern Ireland, 5 out of the top 10 most deprived are in Belfast. This correlates to:

- 3 out of the top 10 most deprived in terms of income
- 9 out of the top 10 most deprived in terms of health
- 9 out of the top 10 most deprived in terms of living environment
- 5 out of the top 10 most deprived in terms of crime and disorder
- 4 out of the top 10 most deprived in terms of employment
- And 10 out of the top 10 most deprived in terms of education and skills.

The data demonstrates that a significant number of individuals from deprived backgrounds have no or a low level of education which negatively impacts their ability to gain employment.

Unfortunately, as the data shows many of those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds face multiple deprivation and significant barriers to education and often do not achieve as well as those from less disadvantaged backgrounds.

30.4% of all College students in 2018/19 live in the top 20% deprived areas in Northern Ireland referred to as Quintile 1 (**Chart 1**). 49% of College students who live in Belfast come from Quintile 1. Belfast Met recognises the significant barriers to education and learning that these students face and has in place a wide range of student support

services designed to enable students to overcome these barriers and go on to be successful in their chosen programme of study. The most recent addition to the portfolio of student support services is the Student Wellbeing Team. This service offers a responsive support provision tailored to each student's individual need. The College also provided innovative and creative educational and vocational skills programmes tailored to meet the individual needs of students with moderate, severe and complex learning difficulties and it continues to grow its provision of education and skills in Northern Ireland's Prisons.

With cooperation and support from Local Government and Community Planning Partners we will engage with the most disadvantaged in our society and provide guidance to restart education and where possible to help them overcome barriers to education.

We will provide innovative and creative educational and vocational skills programmes tailored to meet the individual needs of our learners with moderate, severe and complex learning difficulties. We will continue to grow our provision of education and skills in Northern Ireland's Prisons.

Community Outreach - NEETs

The College continues to engage with disadvantaged people through a number of programmes which specifically target individuals not in education, employment or training (NEETS).

In the summer of 2018 the College launched our Peace IV funded project 'Futures' in partnership with NIHE and Start 360. Futures is a 6-month personal development programme providing those in NEET categories the opportunity to improve confidence and self-esteem, develop leadership skills, gain better awareness of other cultures and gain an OCN Level 2 award in Personal Success & Well-Being. The project has just completed its first phase with 142 participants and 102 fully completing all aspects of the project. In 19-20 the College will be implementing Phase 2 and the targets established are 185 participants recruited and 140 to complete.

The College also delivers the Skills for Industry programme which targets the long term unemployed and economically inactive and will target 200 participants in the incoming year. The College Connect programme also targets NEETs and the target for the incoming year in relation to participants is 34.

The Prince's Trust continues to work with young people from areas of disadvantage (**see Chart 2**). For example, the North Belfast Team 34 won the National Community Impact Award at the Princes Trust awards. This was achieved for their work with the HOPE project, designed to help young people recognise signs of suicide in their peers. The project was sponsored by the PSNI and is now being rolled out in schools, youth groups and clubs all over Northern Ireland. The outcome of the work has been job creation to deliver the programme full time by their partner organisation, PIPS. 38 students engaged with the programme in 2017/18.

Inclusive Curriculum

Essential Skills provision is a particular strength within the College, with the team having turned around the provision and now delivering a curriculum offer in which standards achieved are at least good and often very good, ranking 2nd highest in the FE Colleges sector for adult Essential Skills in 2017/18. The use of the peer the mentoring programme

model within this team continues to embed very good practice across the team and enables maintenance of high standards across all provision. Trends in Essential Skills delivery is demonstrated in **Chart 3**.

The College also continues to provide English Spoken as an Other Language (ESOL) courses. The uptake of these courses continues to rise as demonstrated in **Chart 4**. Likewise, uptake of courses for students with severe learning difficulties (SLDD02/03 students) continues to trend upwards (**Charts 5a and 5b**). These students are entitled to be considered for extra support through application to the Additional Support Fund (ASF).

Student Support

30.4% of Belfast Met's student intake in 2018/19 come from Quintile 1 (**Chart 1**).

The Department for Learner Success provides a range of services to ensure all learners, particularly those who face barriers to their education and learning, are enabled to achieve success in their chosen programme of study via timely student support service interventions. Thereby fulfilling the College's dual mandate of economic development and social inclusion. The following provides a brief overview of the support given to learners by the College.

Belfast Met has a dedicated Centre for Inclusive Learning which provides support to our students who have a disability, learning difficulty or long term medical condition. The well-established Initial Assessment process for our students with disabilities ensures that curriculum support recommendations in support of them are in place ahead of the three week KPI timeframe. The following shows the number of referrals for the last three years: -

2018-2019 YTD:	1187 referrals, including 65 non Belfast Met students
2017-2018:	1225 referrals, including 48 non Belfast Met students
2016-2017:	1129 referrals, including 37 non Belfast Met students

The Inclusive Learning Team were awarded the Autism Impact Award 2018.

New to the portfolio 2018/19 is the establishment of the Student Wellbeing Team as a core student support service and key to enhancing the health and wellbeing of our student body. Each Curriculum Department now has a dedicated Student Wellbeing Officer in support of their students.

The student funding team achieved expenditure of £856,645 (2017/18) in support of our students from backgrounds of economic hardship enabling their retention and success.

- Hardship Fund The aim is to assist student facing Financial Hardship as a result of studying with fees, living costs, travel and equipment (see **Table 1**).

- Care to Learn The aim is to assist young mothers aged 16 – 19 with childcare costs enabling them to continue their education.
- HE Bursary The aim is to reward Full-Time Higher Education students with high attendance and academic achievement with a £268 Bursary in line with the Belfast Met Access Agreement
- Family Action The aim is to obtain assistance for asylum seekers who currently have no access to funds through government funds
 - Student Funding assisted 97 applicants from the 104 applicants that applied, resulting in a £22,102.00 spend which for our Asylum Seeker students which was an outstanding return on the moderate affiliation fee of £600 (3583% increase), which greatly benefited the Asylum Seeker community that attends the College.

The College engages the services of Inspire Wellbeing to provide student counselling to learners on a 24/7 basis. In addition, we provide a student counselling drop in service on each of our campuses on a weekly basis. We have a critical incident response plan, should the worst happen, so that our students are comprehensively supported through the critical incident period, and the impact of its aftermath (see **Table 2**).

The HYPE Clinic works in partnership with Belfast Met to promote the sexual health of young people under 25. It uses a peer education model to gain access to vulnerable and isolated young people and develops innovative methods to address young people's health needs. In 2017/18 1,865 learners had attended clinics on all campuses.

Belfast Met has a dedicated transgender disclosure process and supporting policy which aims to assist transgender students to enrol onto their programme of study whilst offering personal and emotional support throughout their educational journey. The College has assisted and supported 17 transgender students in 2018/19.

The College's Admissions and Enrolment process facilitates the on-boarding of approximately 15,000 students a year. A particular strength in this process is the provision of the Pre-Entry Advice and Guidance sessions, which clearly advise students of the nature of the programme of study that they have applied for. Uptake of these services is shown for the last three years in **Chart 6**.

In terms of careers and employability, the College has a Matrix accredited Careers and Employability team that inspires our students to reach and fulfil their ambition through an annual programme of careers events, 1-2-1 career planning advice and guidance, and curriculum specific Careers and Employability support initiatives. Trends in relation to these initiatives are detailed in **Table 3**.

In relation to examinations, Belfast Met has a centralised examination service which registers students, administers examinations, and processes results for over 20,000 learners annually. A particular strength of the service is the facilitation of student examination access arrangements. Trends in this regard are detailed below.

Number of students requiring exam access arrangements:

16/17	443
17/18	441
18/19	532

The College also administers the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) which entitles students from low income families to apply for a payment of £30 per week to stay in further education (age restrictions apply). The trends in relation to uptake are detailed in **Chart 7**.

Widening Access and Participation Plan (WAPP)

The College's WAPP initiative is designed to increase or maintain the number of students from underrepresented groups participating in higher education. It aims to increase uptake of those most able, yet least likely, to achieve in a higher education programme of study. The initiative aims to achieve this by raising aspirations, by encouraging applications, and by ensuring progression, retention and successful outcomes. Bespoke targets have been developed to measure the success of the initiative including: -

- Increasing participation of those (especially young males) from NI MDM Q1;
- Increasing the number of students who declare a disability;
- Increasing the number of adult learners participating in HE;
- Increasing the number of enrolments for those from a care background (outcome 2017/18, 25 engaged);
- Increasing applicants with a criminal background (outcome 2017/18, 6 engaged) and;
- Increasing applications from homeless students (outcome 2017/18, 25 engaged).

To achieve these targets, the College has developed a number of activities in relation to outreach and retention including student taster workshops, an annual Pathways to Education event, a Wellbeing Project, inclusive learning/disability support, and bursaries.

We also provide pastoral care to support our students to engage in their courses and achieve a qualification through our Learning Mentors and Cause for Concern support services building on the successful Learning Mentor Pilot (FE Level 2).

Who are our partners that will help us to do better?

Partnership is key to the success of our community engagement and social inclusion initiatives. Working with our local community & voluntary sector, other statutory partners and local government is crucial to ensuring that the skills and qualifications required to address economic inactivity and supporting diversity and social inclusion across the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland

	<p>will remain a priority for Belfast Met. We will continue to target our resources to support the needs of the wider population including those who require support and second chance opportunities.</p> <p>The College has identified the following key partners who are key to us delivering skills relevant for the local and regional economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Boards (NRPBs), • Community & Voluntary Sector Organisations, • Department for Communities, • Department for the Economy, • Employers, • Local Government, • Department for Education/Education Authority, • Area Learning Communities, • Belfast Health and Social Care Trust • Special Schools and School Learning Support Units, • The Housing Executive and • DEA Forums.
<p>What works to do better?</p> <p>Low cost-</p> <p>No cost-</p>	<p>Curriculum developed to enhance achievement in priority skills areas</p> <p>Highly qualified teaching staff recruited from industry</p> <p>Additional support provided to support those who require additional support, receive support.</p> <p>PBL techniques utilised to enhance the problem solving and employability skills of students.</p>
<p>What do we propose to do?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will enrol 437 learners with moderate, severe and complex learning difficulties. 2. Dependent on securing match funding, we will deliver NEETs and adult skills' programmes targeting 368 of the long term unemployed from the most deprived quintiles. 3. We will deliver 417 Access qualification enrols. 4. We will deliver 3,180 Essential Skills enrols.

5. We will deliver 1,571 ESOL enrols.
6. We will increase the number of prisoners registering for accredited qualifications by 7%.
7. We will maintain retention rate of +90% for students who have engaged with Learning Mentors/Students at Risk Services.
8. We will maintain our Widening Access and Participation Programme.
9. We will deliver NEETs and adult skills' programmes targeting 398 of the long term unemployed from the most deprived quintiles (using PEACE IV and ESF funds).
10. Belfast Met will assess and meet the additional support needs of all students with recognised disabilities, learning difficulties and long term medical conditions in line with operation guidelines*. During the 2018/19 year 1,011 learners have been provided with support to date.

The indicative ASF budget for 19-20 indicates a potential reduction of c £50k which will have a negative impact in support offered to those in need.

Is anyone better off?

437 learners with moderate, severe and complex learning disabilities will be engaged in meaningful and fulfilling study, 368 of the long term unemployed will develop skills that will prepare them for further study or employment. Hundreds of asylum seekers will benefit from English language skills. Prisoners will acquire skills to support employment and reduce chances of reoffending. Based on the 2016/17 FE Leavers Survey, 39.5% of our learners were in employment six months after completion of their course; 49.3% progressed to further in learning and 4.4% were unemployed. We would expect to maintain similar destination results.

Appendix 1 - FE Means Success Policy Commitments and Belfast Met

This table provides examples of how Belfast Met is supporting each of the Policy Commitments in FE Means Success. It is not an exhaustive list of all the work that the College is undertaking to support each commitment. Some projects may be subject to budget revisions in 2019/20.

Policy	Policy Commitments	Description	What is Belfast Met doing? Examples
1.ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
1	Priority Skills	Colleges will have a crucial role working with employers and other key stakeholders to ensure that the professional and technical qualifications and curriculum they provide support the rebalancing and rebuilding of the Northern Ireland economy.	<p>Skills Focus: Over the past three years, the College has been delivering the Skills Focus programme. Skills Focus aims to support, promote and facilitate collaborative working between business and FE colleges in order to provide tailored skills provision to SMEs. The purpose of Skills Focus is to meet business needs by increasing the skills levels of the existing workforce to Level 2 and above qualifications. Working across all sectors, bespoke training has been delivered in a wide range of areas such as: Health Care, Community Education and Life Skills, Applied Science, Engineering and Construction, Business, Management and Finance, ICT and Creative Services.</p> <p>Over the course of the past year (2018-19) we have delivered 13 bespoke courses to 113 students. Over the course of the 2019-20 year we are hoping to increase our provision through engagement with 100 companies and targeting approximately 30% of the delivery in the Curriculum Hub areas (ICT and Tourism & Hospitality), upskilling 120 people.</p>

Policy	Policy Commitments	Description	What is Belfast Met doing? Examples
2	Levels of College Provision	Further education colleges will have a particular focus on further developing provision at Level 3 (A level equivalent) and above in areas that will support the rebalancing and rebuilding of the Northern Ireland economy. Progression for learners who wish to study at higher levels will be encouraged and facilitated through the qualifications system, and through innovative delivery and clear pathways.	<p>Training and Apprenticeships: Belfast Met has worked with DfE to develop and test the structure and content of new traineeships and apprenticeships, supporting the work with sectoral employer groups, to update the apprenticeship frameworks in line with national occupational standards. The College is further developing the curriculum and models of delivery via the delivery of Youth Training and Apprenticeships pilot programmes at Level 2 and Level 3 respectively, as well as Higher Level Apprenticeships at Level 4/5, since 2015. In order to pilot the new solutions, DfE has worked with Colleges to develop and test the structure and content of new traineeships and apprenticeships and to support the work with sectoral employer groups to update the apprenticeship frameworks in line with national occupational standards.</p> <p>Belfast Business School has developed its Leadership and Management offer, targeting upskilling of those in middle and senior managerial positions and now offers Levels 3, 5 and 7. The Level 7 programme also offers a postgraduate level qualification to those who complete the BA (Hons) in Professional Development (Leadership & Management), validated by Dundee University.</p>
3	Up-skilling the Existing Workforce	Colleges will support indigenous companies and new companies which are being established in Northern Ireland, to ensure that employees have the required knowledge, skills and qualifications. In doing this, colleges will operate in flexible ways in terms of where, when, and over what period of time up-skilling activities are provided, so that the needs of	<p>Assured Skills: The College has been a key deliverer of the Assured Skills programme. The Academy typically involves an eight to ten week bespoke pre-employment training programme, many of which have been delivered by Belfast Met.</p> <p>The Academy Model is flexible and versatile, and has been used to help companies recruit new staff in areas such as cyber security and data analytics.</p>

Policy	Policy Commitments	Description	What is Belfast Met doing? Examples
		employers can be met effectively and in a manner which suits business needs.	
4	Support to Employers	Colleges will be at the forefront of providing support to employers to enable them to innovate, grow, operate more effectively and efficiently, develop new products and to identify new markets for their products.	<p>Centre for Economic Development and Social Inclusion (CEDSI): Belfast Met’s dedicated team supports a range of interventions, which underpin economic development and social inclusion. Working alongside the Centre for Skills and Apprenticeships in the College, CEDSI has secured £14.5 million in EU funding to work on a range of business, research and development, employability and skills programmes. The College is shortlisted for the final of the March 2019 AOC Beacon Awards for Innovation around approaches to employer engagement.</p> <p>The Centre for Skills and Apprenticeship also has a dedicated Employer Engagement team which proactively connects with employers to understand their training and apprenticeship requirements. In order to enhance the connection to employers and apprentices the College now hosts an Annual Apprentice Awards Ceremony which celebrates both employers and apprentices.</p> <p>InnovateUs is a skills development programme, funded by the DfE. The programme provides 30 hours of fully funded mentoring to companies with less than 50 employees. Over the past year, the College has delivered 80 InnovateUs projects across a range of businesses in the sectors such as Fashion and Textiles, Composites, IT, Programming and Digital Marketing.</p> <p>Innovation Vouchers: The College is an academic delivery partner for the Invest NI Innovation Voucher programme. Over the past year, the</p>

Policy	Policy Commitments	Description	What is Belfast Met doing? Examples
			<p>College has completed six Innovation Vouchers across a range of areas including Prototyping/CAD design, Fashion/Textiles and advanced IT.</p> <p>Connected: The Connected Programme is a collaborative programme between HE and FE partners, led by local industry needs. College and University academic specialists work in collaboration with local employers to identify research needs for innovative solutions to support economic growth. The collaborative funding allows for global horizon scanning and assessment of potential curriculum trends and supports an innovative employer led, relevant curriculum.</p>
5	College Specialism and Regional Capacity	Centres of specialism and expertise will be developed in each college to enable the further education sector as a whole to deliver high quality professional and technical provision to employers. Through a collaborative approach, individual colleges will have identified sectors where they will be recognised for their expertise and specialism. As well as identifying specialisms, all colleges will develop networks of experts who will share the latest developments in curriculum and skills training across Northern Ireland.	<p>Curriculum Hub for Hospitality & Tourism. The aim of this Hub is to enhance existing capability within Colleges in Northern Ireland, to ensure excellence in:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • industry validated curriculum; • staff and sector continuous professional development; • economic engagement; • stakeholder engagement; and • future scoping. <p>Belfast Met's initial focus is on curriculum development.</p> <p>Youth Traineeships and Apprenticeships at Levels 2 and 3: Over the past two years FE colleges have been collaborating with People 1st as the appointed Development Partner and Sectoral Partnership Forum on the review and design of qualification frameworks across Levels 2 and 3 chef and hospitality job roles. Belfast Met will now ensure providers are ready for the launch of new qualifications from September 2020.</p> <p>Foundation Degree in Hospitality, Tourism and Culinary Arts Management: This new Foundation Degree is currently being</p>

Policy	Policy Commitments	Description	What is Belfast Met doing? Examples
			developed in consortium by five of six FE colleges in terms of concept, curriculum design and content, and in collaboration with Ulster University. The target is that this sector will have a Higher Level Apprenticeship first intake commencing in September 2019.
2.SOCIAL INCLUSION			
6	Increasing Economic Participation through Engagement	Colleges' distinctive contribution to social inclusion will be to provide learners with the knowledge, skills and qualifications required to find, or progress within employment, in order to avail of the benefits of economic participation. Working in partnership with others, colleges will support diversity and social inclusion through widening access to provision for those with low or no skills or other social barriers to learning. They will work with other organisations in the voluntary, community, public and private sectors to strengthen pathways for learners that can open up their ambition and develop their talents.	<p>College Connect: Belfast Met in partnership the other FE colleges, is currently delivering the College Connect programme, targeting NEETs. It will be operational until 2022. College Connect provides a bridge into Level 2 provision and further apprenticeship opportunities with a focus on developing employability skills and vocational skills relevant to the hospitality sector. Delivery is underpinned by a comprehensive 'wrap around' support network provided by two mentors.</p> <p>At Belfast Met, College Connect will work with approximately 32 participants per year. College Connect is part funded by the EU and the DfE through the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme.</p> <p>Futures: Belfast Met launched its Peace IV funded project 'Futures' in partnership with NIHE and Start 360 in Summer 2018. Futures is a six-month personal development programme providing those in NEET categories the opportunity to improve confidence and self-esteem, develop leadership skills, gain better awareness of other cultures and gain an OCN Level 2 award in Personal Success & Well-Being.</p> <p>The project has just completed its first phase with 142 participants and 102 fully completing all aspects of the project.</p>

Policy	Policy Commitments	Description	What is Belfast Met doing? Examples
			Centre for Excellence (CfE): The CfE provides parallel provision to both staff and students around mental health & wellbeing, utilising the same voluntary and community organisations to ensure same messages and parity of delivery/standards e.g. ASCERT. CfE is developing a suite of supportive online modules to meet core issues such as resiliency and support for students, mental health and other relevant modules to enable better retention and earlier identification of need/intervention.
7	Improving Literacy, Numeracy and Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	Colleges will raise the level of literacy, numeracy and ICT competence in Northern Ireland by adopting the new qualifications that are being developed through the refreshed Essential Skills strategy and the reviews of GCSEs in English and mathematics in Northern Ireland.	Essential Skills: Belfast Met delivers Essential Skills in all of its main campuses as well as in prisons, community and employer settings. There are over 4,000 annual enrolments across all age ranges with 32% taking place off campus. All full time (FE & TFS) learners starting on a Level 1, 2 or 3 programme will engage in English, Maths or ICT if they have not already achieved at GCSE grades A*-C. Part time Essential Skills/GCSE adult learners without a C grade at GCSE in maths, English or ICT will be offered a place to improve their skills in order to improve their opportunities for employment and further study.
3. CURRICULUM DELIVERY			
8	Using Technology to Enhance Learning	Colleges will adopt international best practice in the use of technology enhanced learning to support and improve their teaching and learning, and will adopt flexible approaches to learning to meet the needs of learners and employers.	Canvas: Belfast Met now use Canvas, an IT platform to enable us to become world class in relation to blended and online learning. Our newly accredited Level 5 Award in Blended Learning will go live in October 2019.
9	Developing Employability and Enterprise Skills	A distinctive element of provision delivered by colleges will be the development of employability skills,	ICE with GRIT: The Centre for Business has secured Erasmus funding for a project entitled ICE with GRIT. The focus is on developing entrepreneurial skills (Innovation, Creativity and Enterprise) through

Policy	Policy Commitments	Description	What is Belfast Met doing? Examples
		<p>through high quality and relevant work placements and the use of virtual reality technology to simulate work placements in innovative and effective ways. Through their teaching strategies and approaches, colleges will also seek to develop enterprising learners, who are innovative and creative, and are able to adapt to change.</p>	<p>student engagement in a two- week student experience in DenBosch with our partner college, Koning Willem. Each student is required to complete 30 hours volunteering as part of their commitment to the project. This aims to build resilience through a wider perspective on society.</p> <p>Heart of Worcester College Blended Learning Consortium: Belfast Met has had access to a wide range of blended materials around the area of employability, since 2017, via Heart of Worcester College Blended Learning Consortium. All of these are available to all lecturers on Canvas. Additionally, Belfast Met provides both training in Articulate Storyline, a package where materials are developed to enable lecturers to develop their own materials.</p>
4.EXCELLENCE			
10	Embedding High Quality Teaching	<p>Through a new teacher education framework, there will be a renewed focus on high quality initial teacher education and continual professional development for all lecturing staff, with minimum standards for pedagogy and subject qualifications put in place. The Department will support the development of research in pedagogy to inform best practice in professional and technical education and training to establish Northern Ireland as an internationally renowned centre for excellence in teacher education in professional and technical subjects.</p>	<p>Centre for Excellence (CfE): CfE provides over 90 courses to align skills development/CPD with identified needs of staff with a clear focus on Teaching & Learning through our mini-module-masterclasses (17+ pedagogic modules addressing core skills development), plus our QA modules, TEL training and supports such as Advance HE Fellowship, HE Induction etc.</p> <p>The Level 4 Teaching Excellence CPD certificate programme (150 hours) for part-time lecturers is highly rated in terms of both practical skills development and understanding and in building effective support networks. A Level 5 programme will launch in 2019-20.</p>

Policy	Policy Commitments	Description	What is Belfast Met doing? Examples
11	Ensuring Industrial Knowledge	College staff will also have the opportunity to undertake relevant and good quality industrial placements to ensure that they understand the needs of employers and workforce development.	Industry 4.0 @ the Met: CfE will be bidding for funds in its 2019-20 budget to enable a pilot programme Industry 4.0@theMet. Lecturers from across all of Belfast Met academic schools will have the opportunity to participate in an Industry Placement Programme, to revitalise skills and practice, and to enable cutting edge skills and thinking to be brought back into the classroom.
12	Reviewing Inspection and Quality Improvement	The quality improvement process, including the inspection regime, will be reviewed to ensure that it is appropriate for all aspects of delivery in colleges.	This commitment is already in train and the outcome of the March 2019 ETI WBL Inspection demonstrates Belfast Met's high level of capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of its learners.
13	Improving Performance	Standardised approaches to receiving and analysing feedback from learners and from employers will be developed and introduced. Additional performance measures will be adopted to enable colleges and the Department to monitor colleges' performance more effectively as part of quality management, including learner progression and learners' destinations after leaving further education. Colleges will publish information on learner retention, achievement, progression and destinations on their web sites in such a way as to inform learners' choice of courses on which to enrol.	Work-Based Learning: The College has demonstrated a high level of capacity to deliver sustained improvement, achieving year on year improvement across the key performance indicators within its WBL provision through the Training for Success and Apprenticeships NI. The WBL Learner & Employer surveys provided the following feedback: Learner Survey 2018:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 96% feel welcome at Belfast Met. • 92% feel safe & secure at Belfast Met. • 87% say Belfast Met is an excellent place to study. • 85% would recommend their course to a friend. Employer Survey 2018:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 % agree qualifications being delivered are appropriate for their business. • 100 % agree they would recommend working with Belfast Met to others.

Policy	Policy Commitments	Description	What is Belfast Met doing? Examples
5.COLLEGE PARTNERSHIPS			
14	Sectoral Efficiency through Collaborative Working	In order to ensure that their services are delivered with maximum efficiency, colleges will operate more collectively in the delivery of their corporate services through a more rigorous and comprehensive approach to collaborative (shared services) working. Where appropriate, the colleges will take advantage of their NDPB status by adopting collaborative working opportunities that are available across the public sector in Northern Ireland.	<p>Procurement: Belfast Met is a member of the Northern Ireland Procurement Officers Network (NIPON). The main purpose of this network is to improve the co-ordination of procurement activity across the sector, including the dissemination of best practice. The critical success factors being to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the timeliness of procurements across the sector thus minimising risk of non- compliance against procurement regulations; • Reduce the number of procurements and therefore related costs. • Enhance skills across the sector through knowledge sharing and collaboration. <p>Belfast Business School is currently leading on development of a sectoral FD/HLA in Hospitality, Tourism and Culinary Arts which will improve efficiency and standardisation across the sector.</p>
15	Sectoral Effectiveness by Sharing Best Practice	Colleges will share best practice, and learn from each other, in the innovative and imaginative delivery of services to learners and employers. In particular, colleges will work together to ensure that technology can be developed and used in	<p>Learning and Development Forum: Belfast Met’s CfE established a cross college forum for Learning and Development (L&D) that meets termly to discuss L&D related issues. This currently involves five out of the six colleges. TEL initiatives are also shared in this forum.</p>

Policy	Policy Commitments	Description	What is Belfast Met doing? Examples
		the most cost efficient and effective way to support learning.	
16	Delivery Mechanism to Drive Efficiency and Effectiveness	A mechanism will be established to stimulate, manage and oversee collaboration and sharing of best practice between colleges to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of services, and to maximise the level of resource that is available to fund front line services.	<p>Northern Ireland Finance Officers Network (NIFON): The Director of Corporate Services is a member of NIFON which meets monthly to discuss issues that impact the whole sector and work collaboratively on matters such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DfE/FE sector financial planning • FE Funding Model Review • Charitable status of FE Colleges • STS project and Agresso • Collaborative business cases on areas such as use of Properties Division and impact of VES.
17	Working in Partnership with Others	Colleges will strengthen their partnership working with a range of other organisations in the public, private and voluntary and community sectors in order to improve the services delivered to employers and individuals.	<p>Belfast Met with the Ashton Centre. Belfast Met has a strategic partnership and collaborative working to plan and deliver Level 2 Diploma and vocational qualifications and programmes for disadvantaged adult learners in disadvantaged communities in Childcare and in Health and Social care. This involved strong collegiate working between Belfast Met managers and staff with Ashton Centre in North Belfast particularly in relation to unemployed and economically inactive cohorts.</p> <p>Belfast Met engaged with 70 economically inactive adults and delivered cross-community programmes in Girdwood centre in North Belfast Peaceline. Retention, success and learner satisfaction is outstanding and feedback from Ashton is positive. Belfast Met, through this project enabled unemployed adults to step on to the learning ladder at Level 2 and to Progress to Level 3 professional and Technical qualifications which are required for employment in the childcare and H&SC</p>

Policy	Policy Commitments	Description	What is Belfast Met doing? Examples
			<p>industries and sectors, thus supporting these unemployed adults into employment.</p> <p>Positive Action Project: In collaboration with BH&SC Trust and over 15 other external providers of support services for people with severe and moderate learning difficulties, Belfast Met has developed the pilot Positive Action Project. Working in collaboration with Belfast Trust, a major public sector employer, the College has developed a brand new relevant and responsive qualification and a 12-week training programme for people with severe learning disabilities, delivered at Elliott Dynes centre at Royal Victoria Hospital.</p> <p>Nine new permanent paid posts have been secured by successful Entry level and Level 1 students with severe learning disabilities, providing them with permanent pensionable real employment with BH&SCT.</p> <p>The pilot project has been highly successful and Belfast Met intends to further develop this model with other major employers e.g. Belfast City Council and PSNI and other public and private sector employers.</p>
6. GOVERNANCE			
18	Further Education Governance and Business Model	Colleges and the Department will work together to maximise the benefits to colleges and their customers of the NDPB status, while also addressing any challenges posed.	Belfast Met understands the implications of being a NDPB, joining Sister Agencies Invest NI, Tourism NI and NI Screen as part of the NI DfE. The College produces assurance statements twice yearly for DfE Disclosing any matters relating to our organisation's governance, risk and control.
7. FUNDING MODEL AND COLLEGE SUSTAINABILITY			

Policy	Policy Commitments	Description	What is Belfast Met doing? Examples
19	Reviewing the Further Education Funding Model	In partnership with colleges, the funding model will be reviewed to ensure that it supports and incentivises colleges to deliver this strategy, that it supports a sustainable further education sector and that it aligns with the funding models that will be developed for other departmental programmes that further education colleges will deliver, in particular apprenticeships and youth training.	Belfast Met continues to work closely with DfE on future funding and College sustainability matters.
8. INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION			
20	Operating Internationally	Colleges will enhance the learner experience, and the professional development and industrial knowledge of their staff, through placements and exchanges with similar institutions in other countries. They will also build on the excellent partnerships that have already been created across the world to share best practice with, and to learn from, others. In addition, colleges will, with the Department, explore commercial opportunities to deliver more services in the international market.	<p>Partnership with St Ursula’s college Dusseldorf and St Mary’s Primary School and Fane Street Primary School, Belfast. Working in areas of high social deprivation and with low parental engagement, the programme shares professional development internationally regarding children’s care, learning and development. The College hosted and delivered an international symposium in December 2018 on Children’s play, learning and development. Academic papers and inputs prepared and delivered by Belfast Met staff and representatives from University of Krakow Poland and St Ursula’s University Dusseldorf. This has resulted in new additional Erasmus project applications with St Ursula’s to increase Belfast Met student mobility and develop the student enrichment experience by enabling 100 FT Level 3 and HE students to experience international perspectives on children’s care and development and to develop their own abilities and personal development.</p> <p>Gencomm: An Interreg North-West Europe-funded project, Gencomm will address the energy sustainability challenges of North-West European communities, through the implementation of smart</p>

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			<p>hydrogen-based energy matrixes. The three-year project led and delivered by Belfast Met, along with eight other academic institutions and companies, including Viridian and NUI Galway. This is the first time a College in Northern Ireland has been awarded funds from the Interreg North-West Europe Programme.</p> <p>BIM Cert: BIMcert aims to provide a European training and qualification scheme for the skills required to support the implementation of BIM (Building Information Management) across the construction supply chain. Funded by Horizon 2020, and led and delivered by Belfast Met, along with six other European academic institutions and private companies, including the Dublin Institute of Technology and IST in Portugal; BIM can reduce waste, inefficiencies in the supply chain, improve coordination and management, while incorporating better, more suitable and more sustainable design choices and decision-making.</p> <p>The BIMcert project will develop a blended, fully supported suite of Building Information Modelling learning tools, which will allow geographically dispersed construction project teams to use technology to enhance information exchange and collaboration. The project will have a particular focus on testing the BIM approaches to green and passive building design to contribute to the improvement of energy efficiency.</p>
9. PROMOTING THE FURTHER EDUCATION SECTOR			
21	Promoting Further Education Provision	Colleges Northern Ireland, individual colleges and the Department will work together to demonstrate the distinctive role that the further education sector has,	Bring IT on: The College has been delivering the Bring IT On (BiO) on behalf of DfE for the past few years. BiO is a programme designed to encourage and educate young people, parents, teachers and employers about the career pathways into the IT industry. The College provide

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		<p>as part of the wider education system, and the role that the sector plays in strengthening the Northern Ireland economy. More generally, the benefits and status of professional and technical qualifications will also be promoted.</p>	<p>talks and careers advice to Primary, Post Primary, Post University and Further Education students. We also help students with information about the qualifications required to obtain a job in technology as well as outlining the benefits of working in the sector, to help young people gain the necessary insight required to progress in the IT sector.</p> <p>Communications Strategy for the FE Sector: On behalf of DfE and for the sector, Belfast Met is leading the development of a communications strategy and the commissioning of associated research that will look at the evidence for the economic and social impact of the sector.</p> <p>The work commenced in January 2019 and will set out a programme of activity for the next three years.</p>

Appendix 2 - Educational Report Cards 2019-20

See separate excel spreadsheet



Belfast Met College

Development Plan 2019/20