

2021-2024




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WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COLLEGE
CURRICULUM STRATEGY



'The new core purpose of further education is to give people the technical skills they need to get good jobs and boost the UK's productivity.'

Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth (DfE, 2021)

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Curriculum Strategy is to ensure that what we teach and what our students learn is always aligned to our mission and ensures that we move rapidly towards our vision whilst living up to our values.

We want our curriculum, its development, its design and its delivery to ensure that we are held in high regard and valued as a core partner throughout our communities.

OUR MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

MISSION: To provide skills to enable students, employer partners and our community to thrive.

VISION: We will become a force for raising aspirations across our communities, where high-performing staff encourage students to stretch the boundaries of their potential and, in partnership with employers, develop the workforce of the future.

VALUES:

- R**espect
- I**ntegrity
- C**ollaboration
- H**igh **E**xpectations
- R**esponsibility



THE CURRICULUM STRATEGY HAS THREE UNDERPINNING COMMITMENTS:

- 1** To **develop** a curriculum which not only meets the needs of local, regional and national employers today but which helps them to embrace new technologies and practices to ensure they grow and prosper into the future. A curriculum which has an offer for everyone, regardless of their background, their academic achievement or their personal circumstances.
- 2** To **design** a curriculum in partnership with employers which puts the experience of our students first and prepares them fully and effectively for the future stages of their educational and working careers; which gives them not only the essential academic and technical knowledge and skills but also the personal attributes that will serve them well in the face of ever-changing workplace demands.
- 3** To **deliver** a curriculum which widens participation, is inclusive and engaging; which challenges students to raise their aspirations and then surpass them.

STRATEGIC AIMS

The College's strategic aims are set out below and from these we have identified the specific curriculum-focused priorities that will be fulfilled by the curriculum strategy.

AIM 1: **LEARNERS**

We will encourage and inspire our learners to aim high in life and at work and equip them to achieve these ambitions.

- We will develop a curriculum which meets the interests and ambitions of our learners at any starting point, whilst ensuring that each offer has a clear pathway into higher education (HE), apprenticeships or purposeful employment.
- We will use the ASPIRE Curriculum to design courses which are in their very nature aspirational and relevant to the ambitions of our learners.
- We will design courses which are inclusive for all students and adaptable to meet their individual needs, including the most disadvantaged and those with SEND.
- We will deliver courses in an inclusive way, which enables all students to participate and engage.
- We will provide a curriculum that prioritises the importance of learners acquiring essential literacy, numeracy and digital skills required to secure purposeful employment and achieve their career ambitions.
- We will provide a curriculum where learners are equipped with resilience and a positive mind-set so they are able to cope with the ever-changing demands of industry.
- We will deliver courses in a way which enables every student to find their strengths, to achieve something they can be proud of and motivate themselves to do even better.

AIM 2: **EMPLOYEES**

We will equip our staff to enable our learners to reach their full potential.

- We will support our curriculum leaders to thoroughly understand the current and future employment landscape for the subjects for which they are responsible.
- We will support our curriculum teams to understand the skill sets required by employers in the relevant sectors.
- We will seek to recruit staff with recent industrial experience in the relevant sectors, and we will develop our teachers to effectively design and deliver courses in accordance with this strategy.
- We will continue to provide regular, pertinent training and professional development sourced from relevant local and national expertise to equip our staff to improve their practice further.
- We will enable our student services staff to provide bespoke support and guidance for our learners, in particular the most disadvantaged and those with SEND.

AIM 3: **EMPLOYERS**

We will work with local employers to provide our learners with the skills they need today and those that will help them thrive in the future.

- We will engage strategically with employers and their representative groups to ensure that we develop a curriculum which meets the current and future needs of local, regional and national employers.
- We will engage strategically with employers and their representative groups to ensure that we develop an agile curriculum which is able to quickly meet the demands of employers and helps local businesses to embrace new technologies and practices.
- We will engage local and regional employers directly in the design of our curriculum to ensure that students benefit from their expertise and the curriculum is relevant and focused on future employer needs.
- We will engage local and regional employers directly in the delivery of courses both in college and in the workplace.
- We will work with employers to ensure the curriculum offer is clearly understood, coherent and mapped to their needs and that of their sectors.
- We will develop and offer a service to local employers which helps them create a skills plan which provides greatest impact of public funding to their productivity and competitiveness.
- We will use our assets, resources and expertise to support businesses in embracing new technologies and processes to support their productivity and competitiveness.





AIM 4: **COMMUNITIES**

We will be a significant force for raising aspirations throughout the communities we serve.

- We will develop a curriculum which aligns with local, regional and national strategies (e.g. LEP, local authorities, central government).
- We will provide a curriculum that enables people who have not been in education for some time to access welcoming non-accredited and accredited learning pathways.
- We will provide a curriculum that enables people who are unemployed or disadvantaged to acquire purposeful knowledge and skills to secure sustainable employment.
- We will critically review the impact of our offer and the way it is delivered from the perspective of those living in the communities we serve as part of our annual self-assessment cycle.
- We will work collaboratively with relevant partner organisations of all types including community organisations, local authorities and other education providers to maximise opportunities for local people to learn, achieve and secure employment.
- We will work productively with Nottingham Trent University to provide local, accessible pathways for local people to study to honours degree level and beyond across a broad range of subjects.

AIM 5: **FINANCES**

We will sustain the financial strength required to deliver high-quality services in response to new challenges.

- Our curriculum will be designed and delivered to provide at least a 50% contribution to overhead.
- We will prioritise the securement of available funding to ensure the curriculum provides 'state-of-the-art' and 'cutting-edge' 21st century resources to enable students to acquire the vital knowledge and skills demanded by employers.
- We will develop a curriculum investment plan with each head of department and in consultation with local employers.

AIM 6: **INFRASTRUCTURE**

We will continue to invest in efficient and well-managed facilities, systems and resources to support outstanding learning.

- We will provide the IT infrastructure and equipment to staff and students necessary to deliver this Curriculum Strategy and to ensure that students can access it.
- We will ensure that our buildings, facilities and equipment enable students to maximise their experience and accelerate their learning.
- Wherever possible, we will adapt our buildings, facilities and equipment to create a learning environment which closely resembles likely future workplaces.
- We will establish a College Business Centre as a focus for engagement between the College and local businesses that adds value to the local economy and helps generate jobs and growth.

1 | RANGE OF SUBJECTS ON OFFER



The **Curriculum Strategy** sets out how we will determine the range of subjects and type of courses that we offer. It describes the purpose of each of these courses and how they are constructed in order to achieve these purposes. Finally, it describes how they will link together to take students from their start point, wherever that is, to successful progression beyond the College.

The College will continue to offer a wide range of subjects in order to satisfy the demands of employers in a wide range of sectors and the interests and acumen of potential students. However, it is important that this offer continues to be refined in order to stay aligned to employer need and career opportunity.

STRATEGIC CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

In every spring term, the College will host a skills conference, involving all of its curriculum leaders, to which it will invite:

- **Governors**
- **LEP**
- **Local authorities**
- **Major employer partners**
- **Employer representative groups (M&A 2020, EMCC)**
- **University partners, including NTU.**

This conference will be informed by horizon-scanning exercises undertaken by curriculum assistant principals and their heads of department, to create outline options for consideration. This horizon scanning will include a review of labour market intelligence from a variety of sources.

This skills conference will critically review the College's offer and identify emerging areas of opportunity as well as those where demand may be diminishing. It will draw upon labour market

information and workforce modelling, as well as the perceptions of those engaged in the forum. The College will compare the outcomes of this forum with its own recruitment and destination data in order to determine the curriculum offer for subsequent years. It may be that existing courses are phased out or significantly reviewed, as well as new ones introduced.

This will result in a rolling three-year plan of curriculum development, which will be shared with the governing body as part of the annual strategic review cycle. This will inform further work, including equipment bids, awarding organisation approvals, staffing plans and estates planning.

RAPID RESPONSE:

It is critical that the College is able to respond with agility to emerging skills needs and opportunities to support our communities. Therefore, assistant principals and heads of departments are explicitly authorised to develop new courses in response to emergent need and to deliver them without higher authority so long as these additional programmes are in accordance with this strategy and do not require any of the following:

- **Additional long-term staff resource**
- **Equipment that cannot be procured from within their existing budget**
- **Marketing activity that cannot be procured from within their existing budget**
- **Estates work**
- **New approval from an Awarding Organisation.**

Where one or more of these is required then the assistant principal or head of department should submit a business case to the first available executive meeting so that the necessary approvals can be sought.

CURRICULUM PLANNING:

The planning of the curriculum for the following year will take place on an established cycle throughout the preceding year. This series of regular meetings will also incorporate the need to respond in-year with agility to meet immediate opportunities and establish new provision promptly. The curriculum planning cycle process includes regular cross-cutting scrutiny led by the Principal. The governing body has a wealth of expertise in a broad range of industry and will hold the College's leadership team to account through regular scrutiny of curriculum planning and delivery.

The Vice Principal – Curriculum and Quality will ensure that curriculum planning takes full account of the most up-to-date labour market data for the locality, region and nation mapped against each subject sector area, as well as input from local and regional employer partners and key representative groups (e.g. LEP, Chamber of Commerce, Local Authorities, Mansfield and Ashfield 2020). This is essential in informing the structure and breadth of the curriculum offer. Particular attention will be paid to ensure the college offers its students learning pathways that are both purposeful and 'cutting-edge' in meeting sector skills gaps and the needs of employers in the provision of both technical skills and softer transferrable skills. Our curriculum planning will be driven by the key performance indicator of the proportion of students who leave the College and progress to purposeful employment, higher education and apprenticeships linked to their study.

The curriculum planning process will fully align with the College's business and financial planning processes. Each curriculum planning meeting will be led by the Vice Principal – Curriculum and Quality and include attendance by members of the college's finance team who will work alongside assistant principals, heads of department and

apprenticeships managers from each curriculum area. The College's Finance Director will ensure that costs are adequately controlled within the planned curriculum and that it provides appropriate efficiency. The final curriculum plan will be endorsed by the executive team and presented to the governing body as part of the annual budget-setting process.

The planning of teaching and learning across the breadth of provision will be informed by a range of delivery models including direct teaching in classrooms and workshops, blended teaching, online teaching and dispersed teaching.

2 | 16-19 STUDY PROGRAMMES

We will exploit the full flexibilities of the study programme to ensure that we deliver this Curriculum Strategy.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of study programmes is as follows:

Level	Purpose
3	Develop knowledge, behaviours, experience, digital skills and technical skills to operate in a job role or occupation where Level 3 is a prerequisite or to progress to higher education or a higher or degree apprenticeship.
2	Develop knowledge, behaviours, confidence, experience, digital skills, technical skills and competence in English and mathematics to operate in a job role or occupation where Level 2 is a pre-requisite and/or to progress to a study programme or an apprenticeship at Level 3.
1	Develop key skills, confidence, self-esteem, learning behaviours and competence in English, mathematics and digital skills to successfully progress to a study programme or apprenticeship at Level 2.
Entry	Develop the key skills (including study skills), confidence, self-esteem, learning behaviours and competence in English and mathematics to successfully progress to a study programme at Level 1 or to secure employment or a supported internship.



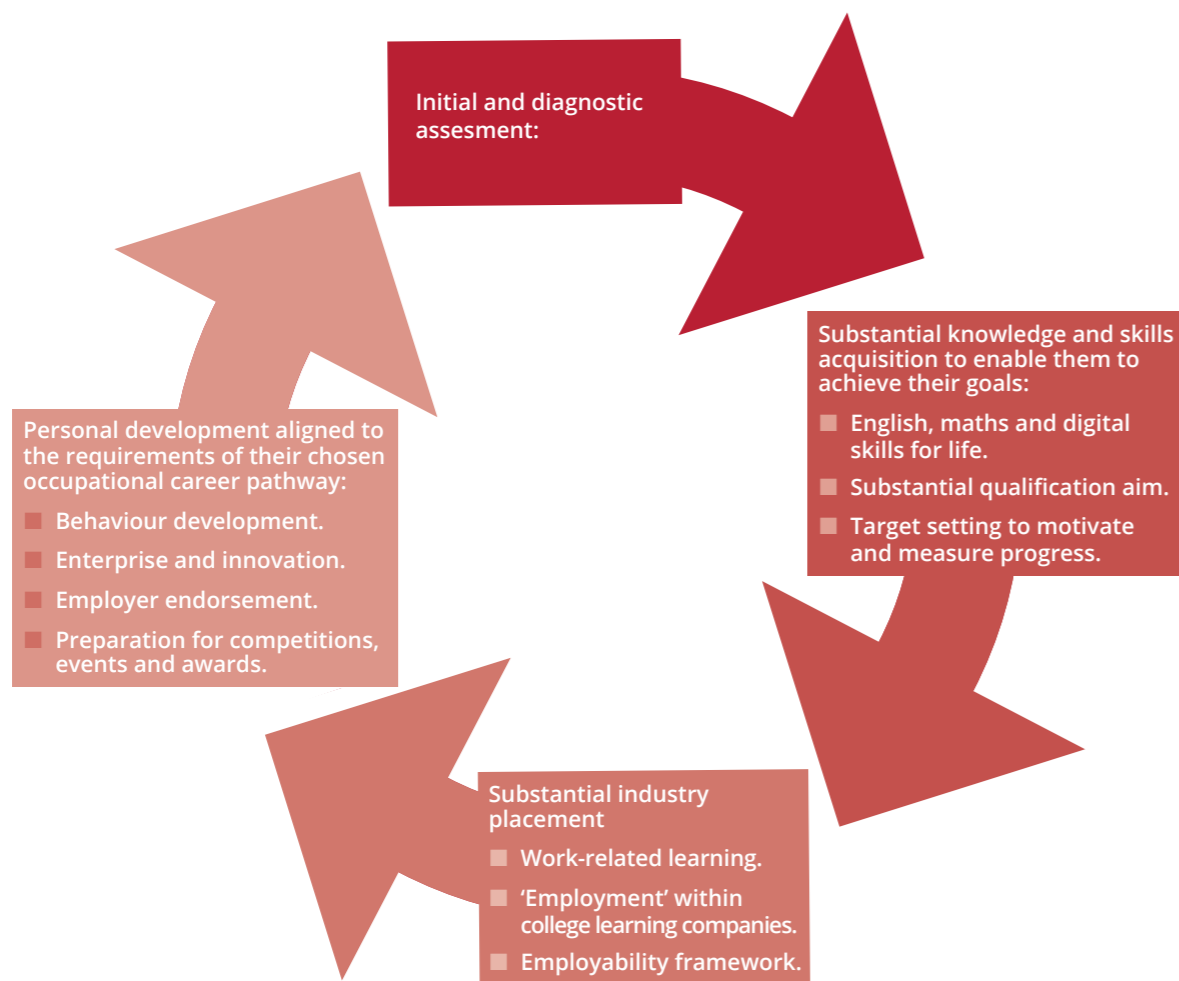


THE STUDY PROGRAMMES CURRICULUM:

All students will have the opportunity to study a broad range of technical, academic and applied general qualifications from Entry level to Level 3. Their industry-specific knowledge and skills will be further bolstered by employers and include relevant work experience, work-related learning, opportunities to take part in learning companies, careers information, advice and guidance, tutorials and purposeful enrichment. Every course will place emphasis on learners acquiring the digital knowledge and skills demanded in the world of work.

The College has worked with employers to develop an employability framework that provides a 'road map' for students acquiring the knowledge, skills and behaviours that employers demand. These competencies will be embedded into the core of curriculum delivery and will be used to identify those students ready for external work placement or an apprenticeship.

The curriculum aims to provide all study programmes students with:



We will develop and maintain clear pathways to employment and higher levels of learning in every subject from Level 1 to Level 3 and, in partnership with Nottingham Trent University and its subsidiaries, through to Level 6. In some cases, where the purpose is clearly best served by an apprenticeship route, the higher levels of these pathways may be restricted to apprenticeships only, although in most subjects they will include a full-time study option.

Pathways will be clearly set out for students during the application and enrolment process and at key points in their course. One-to-one and group tutorials together with careers information, advice and guidance will enable students to further understand available learning and employment routes and what they need to do to achieve their career aspirations. Tutorials will enhance their personal learning and thinking skills including embedding their understanding of British values.

Where student numbers permit, we will seek to offer programmes designed for specific progression pathways (e.g. one pathway for progression to the next level of full-time study and another aimed towards an apprenticeship or purposeful employment).

We will seek to minimise the number of students undertaking successive study programmes at the same level. For the avoidance of doubt, the College will accept a detriment to its data by withdrawing a student from a study programme with which they are unhappy and moving them onto one which they are likely to thrive, **at any point in the year**, if this is likely to enable them to move to the next higher level in the following year.

3 | APPRENTICESHIPS

The apprenticeships curriculum will prepare and enable apprentices to secure sustainable and purposeful employment by ensuring they have the key competencies, knowledge, skills and behaviours for their chosen careers.

All apprentices will benefit from close and effective partnership working between the College and local and regional employers underpinned by the central tenet of enabling apprentices to add value to their employers' businesses. Employers will be involved and engaged throughout every step of their apprentices' learning journey, including 'off-the-job' when apprentices study relevant theory and 'knowledge element' with the College. Employers will be fully involved in helping shape and structure their apprentices' learning throughout the programmes and play an active part in reviews of apprentices' progress.

The Employer Engagement Strategy will ensure frequent and

clear levels of communication with employers take place regarding the progress of their apprentices. Within the College's Segmentation Strategy, employers will be invited to contribute to the College's curriculum and wider strategic development.

We will work flexibly with employers to provide an 'off-the-job' delivery model that fits in with their work expectations of their apprentices. For example, extending the day-release teaching day or agreeing blocks of theory study time to meet work patterns. Emphasis will be placed on ensuring apprentices deepen their grasp of relevant and ever-more powerful knowledge, so that they are enabled to apply such complex knowledge proficiently to the needs of their workplaces and accelerate their practical skills development. Apprentices without the prerequisite English and mathematics qualifications will be taught these subjects in discrete groups. Those apprentices who already have achieved the relevant

English and maths qualifications will continue to develop their knowledge and skills in these essential subjects. Apprentices will also benefit from one-to-one and group tutorials that will enhance their personal learning and thinking skills including building a robust understanding of the dangers of extremism.

Timely emphasis will be placed on enabling apprentices to meet the demands of their 'End Point Assessment' and supporting and challenging them to excel and achieve high grades.

We will develop and maintain clear pathways across a broad range of sector skills and in particular in emerging industries such as automation and robotics. We will continue to promote and grow pathways to higher and degree-level apprenticeships including in those sectors traditionally reliant on higher education (HE).



4 | ADULT LEARNING

We will strive to increase the proportion of adults in local communities who take up education and training opportunities, including those in work who need to upskill and those adults who are not economically active. We will meet the needs of adults, employers and the local economy through a curriculum offer that will provide adults with the required knowledge and skills to meet their career aspirations and regional skills shortages. Emphasis will continue to be placed on engaging and upskilling adults residing across the Mansfield and Ashfield communities as well as those living in the D2N2 LEP area.

Adult learners will continue to access a broad and varied range of part-time and full-time provision.

This includes:

- Those learning alongside younger learners by infilling onto full-time study programmes.

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- Adults on a part-time basis to study formal qualifications including English, maths, digital skills, ESOL and vocational qualifications.
- Those returning to education for the first time for many years, including unemployed people, enrolling on 'first steps' non-accredited learning courses at both the College's sites and in accessible community venues.
- Adults enrolling on access to higher education courses in order to pursue degree-level and beyond pathways.
- Aspiring or current employees undertaking professional qualifications to bolster their industry practice and expertise.
- Adults returning to take up learning opportunities on 'high value' courses funded through the Lifetime Skills Guarantee.

We will ensure that those aged 18 at the start of a two-year programme are enrolled in such a way that they do not become liable for any fees in any way.

We are working in partnership with local authorities and Nottingham Trent University to establish learning hubs open throughout a six day/evening week that provide unemployed and employed adults with the opportunity to study cutting-edge technical skills to enable them to secure sustainable and purposeful employment in growth sector skills.



5 | HIGHER EDUCATION

The College is working in formal partnership with Nottingham Trent University to provide local people residing in Mansfield and Ashfield with access to increased, local learning pathways across a broad range of academic and technical subjects to honours degree-level and beyond. This partnership includes the university being sited on the College campus since September 2020 with its own building, multiple classrooms and facilities.

The College currently retains its HE provision in engineering and construction but has agreed in principle that this too will transfer to NTU over the next few years.

The College and university are committed to working collaboratively to provide a breadth of well-promoted and clearly understood routes for local people to study, achieve and secure their career ambitions through locally-provided foundation and honours degree qualifications. The offer includes expansion of higher technical qualifications to enable local people to acquire the knowledge and skills demanded by employers and meet sector skills shortages.

In the drive to increase the proportion of local people qualified to Level 4 and above, the College and university are committed to the continuous promotion to local communities of the local higher education offer. Students at the college who study Level 3 courses will continue to be provided with impartial information, advice and guidance to inform them of their next steps and choices that includes learning at foundation and honours degree levels.



NTU University Centre

ANDREW MARR
A HISTORY OF MODERN BRITAIN

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A HISTORY OF MODERN BRITAIN



6 | SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

The College will ensure that students with learning needs and disabilities are offered appropriate information, advice and guidance to ensure they take up the most appropriate programmes and courses of study to their wants and needs. There will be no barrier to any student with learning needs and disabilities enrolling on the right course, qualification and level that meets their skills, knowledge, aspirations and experience. This will include enrolment on full academic and vocational courses and programmes at all levels.

Students with learning needs and disabilities will be provided with clearly understood, sequential pathways and accredited learning where appropriate; the starting assumption being that these students can access the entire range of college courses and apprenticeships should they wish on the same basis as every other student. As such, college courses will be designed to be inclusive of all learners irrespective of any disabilities and teachers will be trained and supported to make adjustments as necessary to ensure this can be delivered.

The College will provide a comprehensive broad range of programmes and courses bespoke to the specific needs of learners. This will include the offer of supported internships with local employers to enable learners to improve their industry-specific knowledge and skills and further grasp the demands of the workplace in order to secure purposeful employment.

The College will continue to deploy its wide range of specialist staff to support each and every learner and work in partnership with all organisations and agencies relevant to students' needs in order to ensure students' holistic needs are fully met and they are empowered, supported and enabled to progress to independence.



7 | PREPARING FOR T LEVELS

The College has tendered to commence delivery of T Levels across six curriculum areas from September 2023. Participants from a broad and diverse range of partner stakeholders, together with governors, took part in a wide-ranging discussion on which T Levels should be provided in the first instance.

The College will prepare for its T Levels delivery through working in partnership with colleges judged at inspection to be 'outstanding' and who have been providing such qualifications for a minimum of a year.

The College will place particular emphasis on engagement and involvement of employers as a critical component within the delivery of every T Level qualification to be provided. This will include the establishment of substantial employer-set projects for students as a part of the teaching and assessment of core knowledge in the technical qualifications. It will also include employers shaping, monitoring and evaluating how effectively students improve their technical knowledge and skills through the substantial industry placements.

