NORTHERN
Regional College

Northern Regional College:
College Development Plan
2023/24

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Contents

1. Executive Summary

The six FE colleges in Northern Ireland (collectively the FE sector) are Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) and are a key delivery arm of the Department for the Economy (DfE). Under Article 20 of the Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, FE Colleges are required to produce and publish annual business plans (College Development Plans) which reflect the sector's dual mandate of:

- taking a pivotal role in generating a strong and vibrant economy through the development of professional and technical skills, increasingly at higher levels, and by helping employers to innovate; and

- supporting social inclusion by providing those with low or no qualifications, or who have other barriers to learning, with the skills and qualifications needed to find employment and to become economically active.

This College Development Plan 2023/24 reflects Northern Regional's College's (the College's) response to that requirement and is set in the context of our 2022-25 Strategic Plan which articulates the College's Vision, Values and Strategic Priorities to 2025 as follows.

Figure 1: College Vision, Values and Strategic Priorities

The Strategic Plan can be read in full at [Strategic Plan | Northern Regional College.](#) The College's strategic goal of providing a responsive, sustainable curriculum aligned to the 10x strategy and local business and community needs, with a success metric of 100%

demonstrates the College's commitment to working in partnership to deliver skills and qualifications to support the wider Northern Ireland economy.

The College is still in the recovery period after Covid, whilst enrolments have decreased, they have begun to bounce back over the last two years. From the low in 2020/21 (12,342) when lockdowns and restrictions were still in place, the enrolments have increased by 19% in 2022/23 (14,659) and a further 5% increase for 2023/24.

In 2023 the College has received institutional approval from the Open University (OU) and will commence working in partnership with OU on new Higher Education programmes for 2024/25, reaffirming the College's commitment to HE in FE as part of local communities in widening participation and a mechanism for accessible lifelong learning and progressive pathways.

The College Development Plan sets out the College's commitment to delivering skills aligned to the Department for the Economy's 10x Strategy to meet the needs of the Northern Ireland economy and those required by its local communities. The Governing Body fully endorses the 2023/24 College Development Plan and the planned activity set out for 2023/24.

2. Strategic Context

Executive's Draft PfG Outcomes Framework

Of the nine strategic outcomes included in the PfG's draft Outcomes Framework, the College supports the following draft outcomes:
- The College live and work sustainably – protecting the environment.
- Our children and young people have the best start in life.
- Everyone can reach their potential.
- Our economy is globally competitive, regionally balanced and carbon neutral.

Strategies / Priorities / Policies

The College is a key delivery partner in taking forward:

DfE's - 10X Economy, Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland - Skills for a 10X Economy, 10x Delivery Plan 2023/24 Trade and Investment for a 10X Economy, and Energy Strategy for Northern Ireland – The Path to Net Zero Energy

Review of the Further Education Delivery Model

The Department for the Economy agreed the following priorities for the FE Sector:
1. Improve the value for money provided by the sector through increasing enrolments and reducing costs;
2. Ensure the FE Sector is more clearly focused on delivering against the Department's objectives; and
3. Ensure the FE Sector has the necessary capacity and agility to respond to the changes in the economic context.

3. Financial Performance / Position

i. 2022/23 Forecast Position

The table below sets out the college resource and capital requirements of £64,759k for 2023/24.

Table 1: College Financial Position

	PROGRAMME / ACTIVITY					
	Further Education	Higher Education	Apprenticeships / Traineeships	Business Development	Social Inclusion	Total
	All Levels up to Level 3 not under any of the succeeding categories	Level 4-6	Programmes up to Level 3 including AppsNI; Traineeships; Skills for Life and Work; TfS	InnovateUs; Skills Focus; Assured Skills Academies; Flexible Skills; International Programmes; Innovation Voucher Scheme	Access NI; Essential Skills; ESOL; College Connect; Skill Up; NI Prisons Service; VEP; Princes Trust; UK Shared Prosperity Fund	
Direct Teaching costs - Pay	8,973	1,595	4,387	997	3,988	19,940
Direct Teaching costs - Non Pay	1,350	240	660	150	600	3,000
Non-Direct Costs*	5,400	960	2,640	600	2,400	12,000
Total Delivery Cost	**15,723**	**2,795**	**7,687**	**1,747**	**6,988**	**34,940**
Non-Grant in Aid income	2,376	422	1,161	264	1,056	5,279
Net Requirement	**13,347**	**2,373**	**6,525**	**1,483**	**5,932**	**29,661****

* Includes total support service/non-front-line activity overheads apportioned based on delivery hours.
** Per DfE 23/24 budget letter dated 22/12/23
The College expects to face budget pressures of £5.3m from April 2024 which will unless funded will impact significantly on College delivery and achievement of DfE 10X and Skills Strategies for the 23/24 academic year.

TOTAL RESOURCE REQUIREMENT (£ 000'S)		29,661
Capital expenditure		35,098
Capital receipts		
Net Capital requirement (£000's)		35,098***

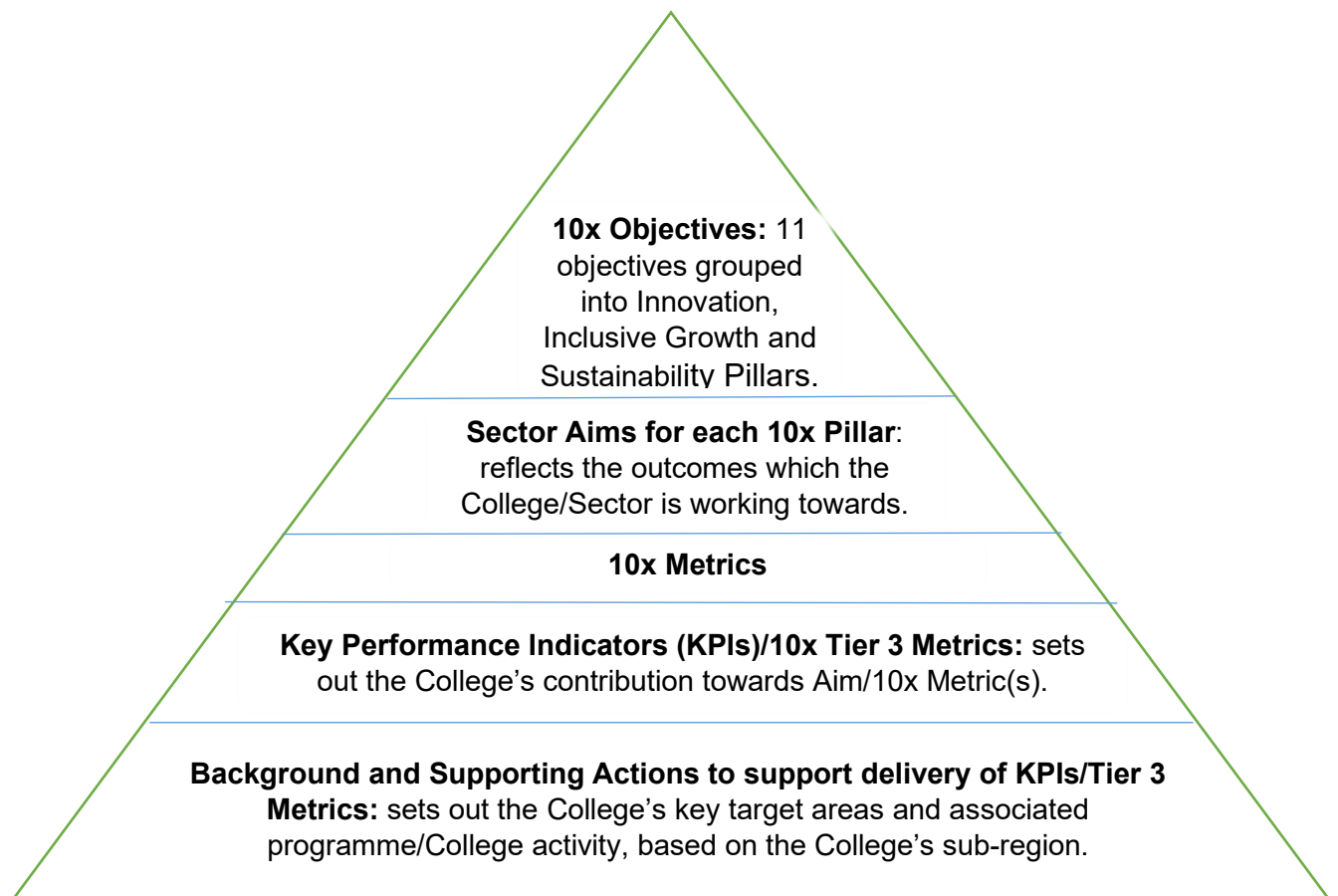*** Per DfE 23/24 Capital Budget letter dated 28/12/23

4. 2023/24 College Planned Delivery

a. Setting the Scene

In support of the Strategic Context, the College takes into account the College profile and Sub-regional Operating Context to prioritise resource utilisation to areas of greatest need.

To align with 10x Economy, the College Planned Delivery has been set out to show the College's contribution to 10x as follows:

Figure 2: College's Contribution to 10x

10x Objectives: 11 objectives grouped into Innovation, Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Pillars.

Sector Aims for each 10x Pillar: reflects the outcomes which the College/Sector is working towards.

10x Metrics

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)/10x Tier 3 Metrics: sets out the College's contribution towards Aim/10x Metric(s).

Background and Supporting Actions to support delivery of KPIs/Tier 3 Metrics: sets out the College's key target areas and associated programme/College activity, based on the College's sub-region.

In-year College Development Plan Progress Reports tracking *'how well'* the College is performing will be provided to the Department for the Economy. The Department for the Economy will publish reports on performance against 10x objectives demonstrating if *'anyone is better off'*, along with progress reports on the 10x delivery plan 2023/24.

b. College Profile
i. College Overview

The College currently operates out of six campuses (including 2 in Ballymena), delivering 14,659 enrolments in 2022/23 across the four Council Areas of: Antrim & Newtownabbey; Causeway Coast & Glens; Mid & East Antrim; and Mid Ulster.

Figure 3: College Overview

- 6 Campuses, 4 Locations
- 14,659 Enrolments
- 4 Council Areas

1. Coleraine & Ballymoney
2. Farm Lodge & Trostan Avenue
3. Magherafelt
4. Newtownabbey

The College will open the new Causeway Campus in Coleraine in August 2024, this will consolidate learning from the Ballymoney and Coleraine campuses into one state of the art campus. The following year the new Ballymena campus will open, merging the Ballymena campuses (Trostan Avenue/ Lamont and Farm Lodge) into one campus of the future. Both new build capital projects represent significant investment of £93m from the Department for the Economy into Further Education facilities. By 2025 the College will have transitioned from a six-campus model to a four-campus operating base. The four campuses will be aligned to the four councils outlined above i.e.: Coleraine with Causeway Coast & Glens; Magherafelt with Mid Ulster; Ballymena with Mid & East Antrim; and Newtownabbey with Antrim & Newtownabbey.

Staffing Profile

The College employs approximately 800 staff across the six campuses injecting over £22m in salaries and wages into the local economy. The breakdown of the staff profile is given in Figure 4. All six FE Colleges are currently working on a voluntary exit scheme which may launch in early 2024, any exits will not be in this current financial year.
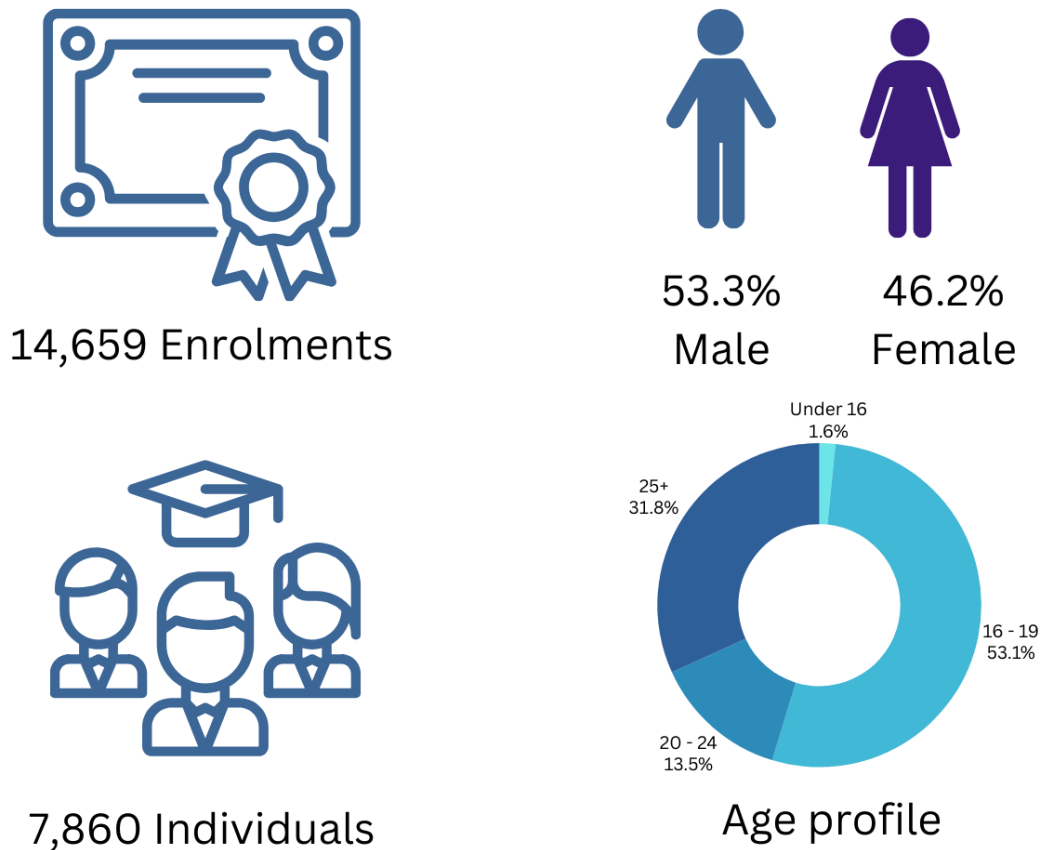
Figure 4: Staffing Profile

586 FTE

338 FTE Teaching Staff

248 FTE Professional Services Staff

Data Source: College Annual Accounts 2022/23

Student Profile

The College delivered over 14,500 enrolments in 2022/23 to almost 8,000 individuals. Figures 5 and 6 give further information on College learners and provision in 2022/23.
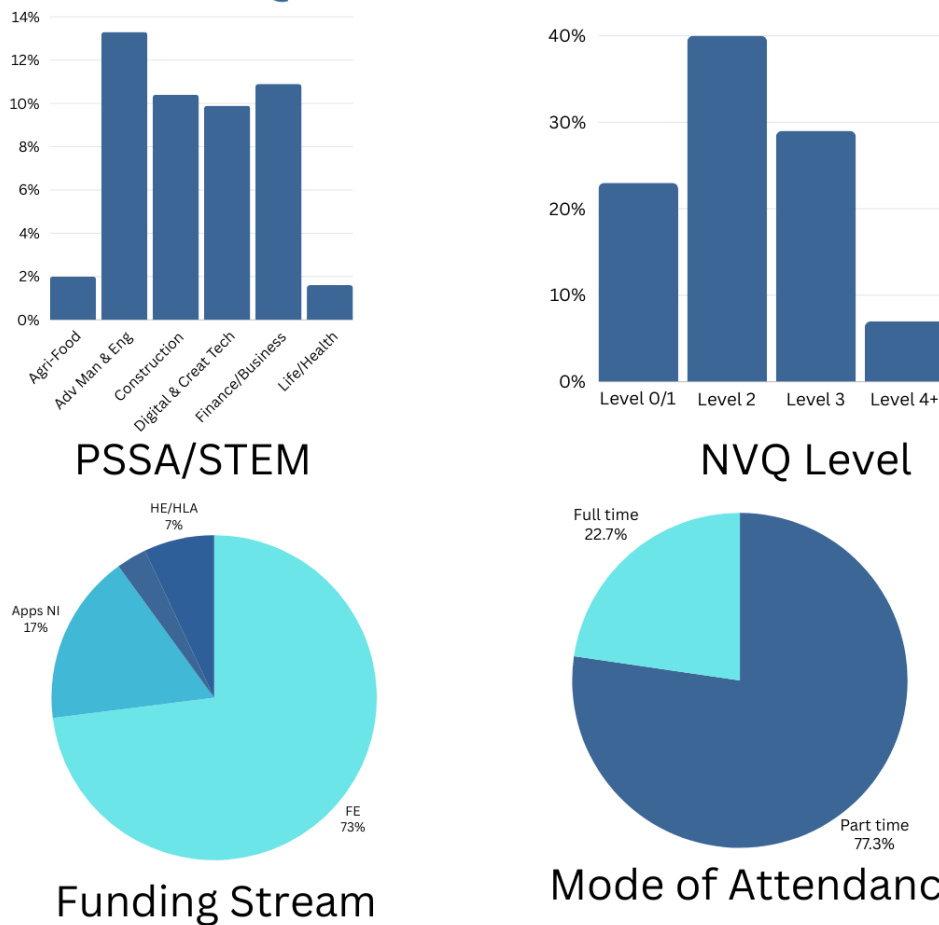
Figure 5: Student Profile

Student Profile

14,659 Enrolments

53.3% Male   46.2% Female

7,860 Individuals

Age profile

- Under 16: 1.6%
- 16 - 19: 53.1%
- 20 - 24: 13.5%
- 25+: 31.8%

Data Source: College CDP Progress Report 28.7.23

Figure 6: Qualification Overview

Qualifications

PSSA/STEM

NVQ Level

Funding Stream

Mode of Attendance

Data Source: College CDP Progress Report 28.7.23

Population and Industry Profiles

The College operates across four council areas covering a population that equates to 30% of the Northern Ireland total. Figures 7 and 8 give an overview of the population and industry profile across the College's catchment area. Further information by local council area can be viewed in Invest NI Council Briefing Statistics. The College aims to provide opportunities for the 12% of the local community without formal qualifications through delivery of Essential Skills, targeted programmes such as Step Up and ESOL. Whilst the local area sits above the Northern Ireland average for economically active the College will continue to work with partners to deliver focused academies which will create employment opportunities for those currently not in work. With an aging population the College is increasing lifelong learning opportunities including the rollout of bespoke Women Returner Programmes. Through Business Engagement the College works with local businesses in industries such as manufacturing, engineering and services which are the most prevalent across the four council areas.

Population Profile
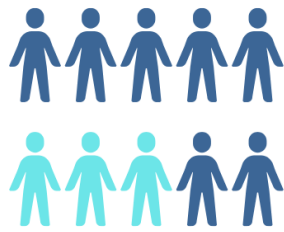
Population 576,695
30% NI Population

College Area
74% Economically Active

Northern Ireland
73% Economically Active

	College Area	NI
No Qualifications	12%	12%
NVQ Level 0 -3	57%	46%
NVQ Level 4+	32%	42%

64+ 18%
0-14 19%
15-39 30%
40-64 33%
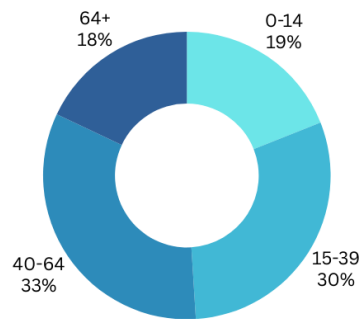
Age profile

Data Source: Invest NI Council Briefings 2023

Figure 8: Industry Profile

Industry Profile

25,080 Businesses
31% of NI Businesses

28% Agriculture

£25,606 Median Earnings vs NI Median £26,182

15% Construction

£56,702 Productivity vs NI £56,923

8% Production

202,703 Employee Jobs 25% of NI total

50% Services

Data Source: Invest NI Council Briefings 2023

ii. Retention, Achievement and Success Rates

The expected College 2022/23 rates, soon to be published in the Annual FE Sector Activity in NI Bulletin, are:

Figure 9: Performance Levels

Retention 89.2%   Achievement 80.3%   Success 71.6%

Data Source: Internal CDR Data 13.10.23

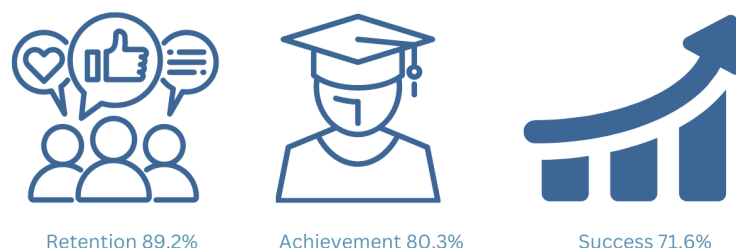In 2023/24, the College aims to maintain retention at 89% and increase achievement by 1.7% to 82% and increase success by 1.4% to 73%.

'How the well did the College do it' and 'Is anyone better off'

Students reported in the College's annual student experience survey (February 2023) that 92% felt their course met or exceeded their expectations and 96% felt they were on the right course. The College delivered 13,100 regulated qualifications in 2022/23 which aim to address the NI Skills Gap. In March 2023 the College engaged with ETI to complete the Level 3 review postponed from pre Covid. The scope of the inspection was widened to include all Level 3 Apps NI, Essential Skills, Level 3 Construction and Childcare. The full report can be viewed here with recommendations included in the QIP.

iii. College Strengths

Competitions

Northern Regional College embeds competitions into the core teaching and learning curriculum for students of all levels to improve transversal skills.   The college continues to demonstrate strengths in the area of competition and winning trends in World Skills competitions. Two students took part in the Robotic systems integration competition at WorldSkills Special Edition in 2022, the duo finished a commendable seventh place. Success has continued this year, with two further students securing top honours in the industrial Robotics category securing gold in the UK National finals and another two students securing bronze. The gold winners proceeded to represent team UK receiving Medallions of Excellence in Robotic Systems Integration reaching international standards on the skills at Euro skills.

Eight apprentices and students represented the College at WorldSkills UK and the SkillBuild UK national finals. The finalists were in Industrial Robotics; Mechatronics; Plumbing; Welding; Joinery; and Carpentry.

At the NI Apprenticeship Awards the College partnered to win three of the six NI Apprenticeship Awards: Large Employer Award with NIE Networks, Diversity and Inclusion with NIE Networks and Mentor Award for Apprentices at Mivan Ltd. Northern Regional College continues to be recognised across apprenticeship provision and has been shortlisted at the Northern Ireland Apprenticeship awards in 2023/24 in the following areas:

- Public sector apprenticeship award with Translink
- Mentor award with Harland and Wolff
- Large employer award with Ryobi.

At the OCN NI Learning Endeavour Awards the College again had multiple prize winners covering winner of FE Learner of the Year, highly commended in the same category. An inclusive Learning Lecturer was highly commended in the category of inspiring Tutor of the Year category.

The College Computing curriculum team has been recognised as a *Prodigy Learning* Outstanding Centre of Excellence 2022-23. Centre of Excellence Awards are presented each year to study centres across the UK & Ireland who deliver digital skills certifications to the highest of standards, advancing student employability through MOS, ITS and other internationally recognised programmes.

Further success came across the Apprenticeship provision, a Higher-Level Apprentice won 'Agricultural apprentice of the year' and was a finalist in the 'Higher Apprenticeship of the year' at the recent Northern Ireland Apprenticeship awards in October 2023. Eight apprentices across joinery, electrical installation, accountancy, plumbing, computing and engineering also received a Special Recognition Award in association with the Causeway Coast and Glens Labour Market Partnership at an event on 8 November 2023.

Student Experience

The College's Student Experience team retained its Matrix accreditation following assessment – endorsing the standard of support provided by the College across Education Support and Careers guidance.

The College's Student Support Services Team won the Volunteering Team of the Year award at the Good for ME Good for FE Awards. This award recognised the teams' significant and positive impact on the College community through a number of initiatives such as Wellbeing

Roadshow, breakfast clubs and 'winter warmer packs' to address the cost of living crisis, compounded by cold weather during the autumn/winter of 2022/23.

Demonstrating our engagement with the Council and community, the College won the Excellence in Local Planning Award at the Causeway Coast and Glens Business Awards 2023.

Student Survey Results

From the 2021/22 FE Leavers Survey, College leavers who completed the survey have a 91% positive outcome i.e., in learning or employment six months after leaving their course. This is in line with the sector trend, the College has the second highest rate of leavers in employment at 60%.

Figure 10: Student Survey Results

Student Feedback

96% of students rated their experience of applying for a course as positive

97% of students rate their experience at the College positively

98% of students feel they are on the right course

91% of College Leavers are in learning or employment six months after leaving their course

60% of College Leavers are in employment six months after their course

Data source: NISRA FE Outcomes Dashboard, accessed 23/11/23, Further Education Outcomes: Academic Year 2021/22 (nisra.gov.uk) and College Student Experience Survey October 2023

iv. Engagement

Employer feedback/Business Support Activity

The College's nine Industry Engagement Forums are aligned with the 10X priorities, the College's 29 Professional & Technical areas and the Council priority sectors. Each Forum provides a channel through which the College can receive input into new and existing curriculum delivery as the well as business development activity. This allows the outputs from these forums to be used as evidence for Self-Evaluation Reports and for any external awarding organisations, validation or inspections. The Forums also provide a valuable

communication channel through which to share information with employers on developments within the College.

Partnerships with Councils

The College is an active member of the four Labour Market Partnerships in each of the Council areas in which it has campuses; Mid and East Antrim, Mid Ulster, Antrim and Newtownabbey and Causeway Coast and Glens. In addition to contributing to each Labour Market Partnership the College has strong relationships with the Councils for example with the Manufacturing Taskforce in Mid and East Antrim which has led to delivery of Manufacturing Academies funded by the Gallaher Trust and also collaboration and funding for the delivery of the successful Hydrogen Academy project. The new Ballymena campus will also be located alongside the Council's planned i4c Innovation Centre with the intention of sharing facilities and expertise between the College and client companies. In Mid-Ulster there has been the joint development of a new engineering apprenticeship in collaboration with MEGA. A teaching assistant academy has been secured through Antrim and Newtownabbey Council and a joint employability programme with NWRC has been delivered for Causeway Coast and Glens. The College is an active member on the Belfast Regional City Deal (BRCD) and Causeway Coast & Glens City Deal Boards providing strategic oversight on the development on capital projects. The College is also an active member of the Ballymena and Causeway Chambers, ensuring FE representation and connectivity between curriculum and the local economy in these areas. The College also sits on the Mid Ulster Community Partnership Board and collaborates with the Northern Health & Social Care Trust on the OU Healthcare Practice programme.

Curriculum developments and associated resource allocation will be aligned to Skills Strategy priority clusters, particularly those where the College can achieve the greatest impact, and which are strategically important to regional development across the 4 Councils in the College catchment area.

Figure 11: 10X Priority Clusters
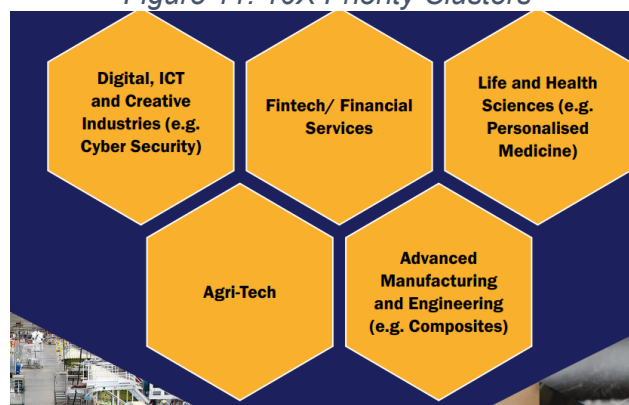
Data Source: DfE 10x Strategy

Table 2: Priority skills within our Council Areas.

	Mid and East Antrim	Antrim and Newtownabbey	Mid Ulster	Causeway Coast and Glens
Engineering			X	
Agriculture (Agri-food)	X		X	
Construction			X	
Tourism	X		X	X
Environment			X	X
Cultural Heritage			X	X
Retail		X		
Wholesale		X		
Transportation		X		

Data Source: College's Engagement Strategy

Key priority areas for the College include:

- Digital and Creative Industries, where the College will develop strategic partnerships through e.g., NI Screen, to strengthen curriculum alignment with career pathways from Level 3 to Higher Education, including apprenticeships (Newtownabbey/Coleraine Centres of Specialism)

- Advanced Manufacturing, where the College has an established reputation in robotics systems integration and emerging capability in green technologies (Ballymena Centre of Specialism)

- Life and Health Sciences, including Health & Social Care, where the College is working in collaboration with the curriculum hub to develop pathways up to Level 6, including HLA and where public sector/all age apprenticeships will offer significant growth potential (Newtownabbey Centre of Specialism) Hospitality and Tourism (Coleraine Centre of Specialism), aligned to Causeway Coast and Glens economy and Coleraine new campus facilities/estates strategy.

- Skills Centre for Adult Education, Health, Innovation and Enterprise (Magherafelt Campus)

Local Employers

The College works closely with employers across all provision to develop innovative curriculum opportunities and provide enrichment opportunities for students. Examples of local employer engagement include engagement with Harland and Wolff, Wrightbus, Caterpillar, Translink and Ryobi which has influenced curriculum delivery across Engineering and developed the College's apprenticeship provision.

The College works closely with accountancy companies including ASM and Moore Northern Ireland to develop the HLA in Accountancy qualifications and provide employment opportunities.

The College will lead the Sectoral partnership within Transport and Logistics, this will have input from a range of companies on the HLA in Supply Chain and Logistics including Henderson's, Montgomery Transport and Woodsides.

As part of the 10x Vision and Guiding principles the new build project is contributing to the Priority clusters through Apprenticeship, FE& HE and Social Inclusion.

Herons have 11 Apprentices who are all College students, 3 student placements and 2 Professional Trainees. Herons have employed a College student as an apprentice engineer, and they have already commenced working on the project.

McAdams, the new build Project Managers have appointed an Architectural placement student who will be working on both the Coleraine and Ballymena Projects and a Project Manager Graduate who will be working on both the Coleraine and Ballymena Projects.

The College will continue to deliver manufacturing academies in partnership with a range of employers in the Ballymena area including Wrightbus, Norbev, Clarke Facades, Moore Concrete, Grants Electrical Services and PCD Contracts. The College will continue to build on hospitality academies in partnership with local employers including Galgorm and other members of the Northern Ireland Hospitality School.

v. <u>Strategic Alliance</u>

A Strategic Alliance was formed in early 2023 between North West Regional College, South West College and Northern Regional College. This is based on the strong alignment of the respective colleges in terms of ethos, scale, geography, industry and community connectivity. The Alliance was approved by the respective Governing Bodies. The overall aim of the Strategic Alliance is to develop a strategic approach to curriculum development and delivery; to deliver standardized patterns of delivery including remote delivery options; to address duplication and further create and strengthen existing pathways for progression in line with the 10X Strategy.

In addition, objectives of the Strategic Alliance include:

- Developing a shared services plan (potentially to include all corporate services, such as Student Services, Strategic and Business Planning, Finance, HR, IT, Estates, MIS, Performance Management, Marketing).
- Developing a strategic estates model.
- Identifying interdependencies and inter-relationships of the three Colleges.
- Compiling research to demonstrate economic benefits of the Strategic Alliance.

The programme of activities is being taken forward through a set of workstreams with a view to the longer term programme.

Figure 12: Overview of the Strategic Alliance with NWRC, SWC and NRC

Data Source: NWRC, SWC & NRC College Development Progress Report 3 July 2023

c. 2023/24 Planned Activity

Innovation	
Aim – 1	**To increase the number of businesses in Northern Ireland engaging in innovation activities.**
10x Metrics	• **Number of R&D companies** • **R&D companies by (employee) size, ownership, location, sector** • **FTE of R&D workforce (Business)** • **Number of Innovation Driven Enterprises (IDEs) (subject to data availability)** • **Number of innovative active firms** • **Innovation accreditation**
KPI 1.1	**To deliver 50 innovation-based projects in SMEs in the 2023/24 financial year.**

Background

The College's External Engagement Strategy has established the targets and growth plan for delivering the College's objectives around business engagement and skills programmes. Since the start of the strategy, diversified income has increased from £730k in 2019/20 to nearly £2.2m in 2022/23. Over the same period InnovateUs actual spend has increased from £4,800 to £133,600 and Innovation Vouchers from £26,000 to £45,000. The Strategic Plan identifies a target by 2025 of 15% of income generated through bids for funding, diversified income or where delivery involves engagement with employers, with a target of 14% in 2023/24. The Business Engagement team, overseen by a Business Engagement Manager, directly manages the identification and delivery of funded skills programmes in the College. The team actively identifies skills and funding for companies and manages the delivery of programmes by curriculum staff across the College. Curriculum teams are responsible for the delivery of qualifications and for ensuring the quality of provision is aligned to and meets the requirements of Awarding Organisations. The team of Business Engagement Officers also promotes opportunities for innovation programmes to potential client companies.

Planned Activity

- The College aims to deliver £175k of InnovateUs by March 31, 2024, supporting approximately 50 companies.
- The College aims to deliver 8 Innovation Vouchers by March 31, 2024.
- The College will develop a pipeline for two potential projects for KTPs/Innovation Boost.
- The College will deliver a Connected-funded innovation project in manufacturing productivity sensors by 31 March 2024.
- The college will continue to engage with external stake holders through the Connected funding and showcase activities.

- The College will work with at least one of our four Councils to develop a proposal for one funded innovation project.
- The College will explore opportunities for innovation projects alongside the BRCD Digital Transformation Flexible Fund.

Innovation	
Aim – 2	**To meet the skills needs of businesses in Northern Ireland to support increased business productivity and growth.**
10x Metrics	• **STEM graduates** • **Number of R&D companies** • **R&D companies by (employee) size, ownership, location, sector** • **FTE of R&D workforce (Business)** • **Number of Innovation Driven Enterprises (IDEs) (subject to data availability)** • **Number of innovative active firms** • **Innovation accreditation** • **High growth businesses**
KPI 2.1	**To deliver tailored training programmes to 75 businesses in 2023/24 financial year.**
KPI 2.2	**To deliver 50% of tailored training courses at L2+ in Broad STEM related subject areas in 2023/24 financial year.**

Background

As noted above, the College's External Engagement Strategy has established the targets and growth plan for delivering the College's objectives around business engagement and skills programmes. Since the start of the strategy, diversified income has increased from £730k in 2019/20 to nearly £2.2m in 2022/23. The Strategic Plan identifies a target by 2025 of 15% of income generated through bids for funding, diversified income or where delivery involves engagement with employers, with a target of 14% in 2023/34. The Business Engagement team directly manages the identification and delivery of funded skills programmes in the College. The team actively identifies skills and funding for companies and manages the delivery of programmes by curriculum staff across the College. The team of Business Engagement Officers also promotes opportunities for innovation programmes to potential client companies. Curriculum teams are responsible for the delivery of qualifications and for ensuring the quality of provision is aligned to and meets the requirements of Awarding Organisations.

Planned Activity

- The College will deliver £300k of Skills Focus by 31 March 2024, supporting approximately 75 companies and 200 employees.
- The College will deliver 10 Skills Focus courses at Level 2 or higher in a Broad STEM-related area by 31 March 2024, this will equate to 50% of all Skills Focus Courses.
- The College will deliver 10 courses to 100 participants under full cost recovery including tour-guiding, hospitality, manufacturing, loneliness, electrician's aid, classroom assistant.

- The College will deliver the Ignite Your Skills programme to 52 participants.
- The College will support the delivery of four Productivity Booster projects by 31 March 2024.

KPI 2.3	To complete 3 Academies in 2023/24 financial year.

Background

The External Engagement Strategy has established the targets and growth plan for delivering the College's objectives around business engagement, including academies. The Business Engagement Team directly manages identification and delivery of all skills programmes in the College. The team actively seeks funding for companies and manages the delivery of programmes by curriculum staff across the College. Through Council LMPs and relationships with local employers and other organisations, the College has secured and delivered many academies.

Planned Activity

The College aims to deliver 3 academies by 31 March 2024 in the following areas:

- Hospitality;
- Manufacturing; and
- Teaching Assistant.

Inclusive Growth	
Aim – 3	**Creating a culture of life-long learning - Providing access to FE[1] and HE in FE[2], to those furthest away from the labour market and those with low or no formal qualifications.** **Encourage learners to progress to achieve higher industry relevant qualifications and employment.**
10x Metrics	• **Proportion of the working age population with qualifications at Level 2 and above or Level 3 and above.** • **Economic inactivity** • **Proportion of population aged 25+ who have engaged in education or training in the last 13 weeks.** • **Proportion of the population (16+) with no digital skills.** • **Women in narrow STEM - proportion of enrolments in narrow STEM.**
KPI 3.1	**The number of individuals will decrease from 7,358 no. in 2021-22 to 7,062 no. in 2023-24 academic year, equating to a -4% decrease.**
KPI 3.2	**To maintain FE retention rates[3] at 88.9% in 2023-24 academic year.**
KPI 3.3	**To maintain FE achievement rates[4] at 88% in 2023-24 academic year.**
KPI 3.4	**To maintain HE in FE retention rates[5] at 94.5% in 2023-24 academic year.**
KPI 3.5\	**To increase HE in FE achievement rates[6] from 88.5% in 2021-22 to 92% in 2023-24 academic year.**

Background

The College has a segmented approach to engagement across its key stakeholder groups with a complex matrix of relationships across a diverse range of stakeholders and business types. Each type of stakeholder and engagement requires a specific relationship management approach.

Employers

Employers are important stakeholders that benefit from the College in a number of ways including through the skilling, reskilling and upskilling of current and future employees. They also benefit from publicly funded programmes through which the College provides training and

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[1] Up to and including Level 3.

[2] At Level 4 and above.

[3] As Per the FE Sector Activity in Northern Ireland Bulletin: The percentage of final year regulated enrolments completed by students.

[4] As Per the FE Sector Activity in Northern Ireland Bulletin: The percentage of final year regulated enrolments completed by students who achieve a qualification.

[5] As per footnote 3 above.

[6] As per footnote 4 above.

innovation services including Skills Focus, InnovateUs, Innovation Vouchers and Assured Skills Academies. The College also provides training, innovation and rental services to companies and other organisations on a full-cost recovery basis. The relationship with companies is two-way as they provide apprenticeship, training and placement opportunities for students for which the College receives funding. Employer Forums are the College's primary means of engaging with employers in a structured way to source feedback and input on existing and future provision for each industry area, nine forums have been established, aligned to 10x priority areas.

Councils

At an operational level business with councils is primarily through Labour Market Partnerships and takes the form of training programmes, academies and other funded initiatives as the well as through partnership opportunities for engaging with companies or prospective students. Councils are vital strategic partners for engaging with local companies. A senior manager is assigned as the lead College representative for each council area. A Business Development Officer is responsible for managing the relationship with each council and supports the senior manager with that relationship.

Schools

Direct business with schools takes the form of Entitlement Framework (EF) courses (including Occupational Studies (OS)) offered exclusively to schools in local Area Learning Communities. EF is delivered both on College premises and in partner schools and is paid for by the schools. Indirect business with schools includes recruitment of students to further and higher education provision, including from EF. There is also an opportunity to provide training to teachers and parents and to deliver community education programmes on school premises. A dedicated Schools Partnerships Manager manages the relationships with schools.

Community

Community provision comprises Essential Skills (fully funded by DfE), the CALL Project (funded by DfC) and Step Up. A small number of Full Cost Recovery courses are also delivered in the community. Relationships with community and voluntary groups are managed by the School & Community Partnerships & Careers team. These relationships are important for support with recruiting to programmes aimed at widening participation and targeting those furthest from education and employment.

Insight provided through LMPs, Schools and Community organisations on the skills needs of local businesses and citizens is fed into our curriculum design and planning process via our

Business Engagement Managers to ensure that our offering remains relevant to local employers.

Internal and Corporate Stakeholders

The College has many other interested stakeholder groups both within and outside the College. Staff, students, parents, Governors, the Department for the Economy and elected representatives are some of the most engaged contacts who require effective and consistent communications. The Corporate Communications Manager leads in directly managing communications with these groups.

As part of the implementation of the Apprenticeships and Youth Training Strategies, the Department for the Economy established a range of Sectoral Partnerships (SPs) to provide fora for local employers, curriculum experts and policy advisors to engage with and agree the curriculum of apprenticeships (Level 2 to Level 8) and offer advice and support on the new Traineeships programme. Fifteen SPs have been established to date, to ensure the provision and content of apprenticeships and traineeships meet the needs of their industry sector and the wider economy. FE representatives are making a valuable contribution to the ongoing work of these partnerships. The

The College will lead the sectoral partnership in Transport & Logistics and will also have representatives across Engineering, Childcare, Health and Social Care, Hair and Beauty and Hospitality, all of which have a significant input in the development of traineeships and new provision working closely with employers in these areas. Examples of innovative curriculum development includes higher level childcare curriculum designed to upskill childcare workers in areas such as resilience and mental health, extension of Engineering Apprenticeship provision; and the hospitality sector partnership is key in the current development of a Foundation Degree.

The development of partnerships with local dentists has created the opportunity to extend dental nursing to Newtownabbey Campus, this is following a positive response in the Mid Ulster area to Dental nursing with 39 enrolments now within the area.

Working in collaboration with Mid Ulster rural learning partnership, has led to opportunities to contribute to the College's lifelong learning strategy, creating responsive curriculum in the area of specialist support work and giving adults the opportunity to reskill.

The College is represented on all established curriculum hubs across the following occupational areas (Engineering & Advanced Manufacturing, Digital IT, Construction, Health & Social Care, Life Sciences, Hospitality & Tourism and Entrepreneurship) focussed on priority skills and growth sectors of employment. The hubs are instrumental in the design of

curriculum and continue to contribute to new provision in all areas, across all levels. Relevant examples in development during the 23/24 academic year include level 3-5 qualifications in Housing and a Foundation Degree in Computing with specialities in cloud and cyber security in response to employer demands. The hubs help ensure curriculum delivered is high quality, consistent, current and responsive to the needs and demands of each industrial area thereby increasing opportunities for economic development and performance in each field.

The College's Lead Curriculum Hub contributes towards meeting the skills needs of the NI economy by implementing DfE's key objectives into the curriculum which include the following:

- Providing curriculum advice and development in entrepreneurship.
- Identifying and develop continuing professional development in the field of entrepreneurship;
- Increasing entrepreneurial economic engagement; and
- Communicating the activities of the entrepreneurship hub.

In practice, the College has successfully embedded Entrepreneurship by offering all students Exploring Entrepreneurship workshops, Practical guide on starting a Business, Project Based Learning training, transversal skills support, Enterprise challenges, an Entrepreneurship Club to develop skills further as well as the opportunity to participate in the FE Sector PBL competition allowing students to work in teams to produce end products or services for employers.

Digital Skills

The College remains committed to the development of digital literacy and this is promoted within the curriculum framework and within the College resources available to students. The continued implementation of traineeships to 5 more curriculum areas in the 2023/24 academic year demonstrates how the curriculum framework has evolved to meet the demands of the sector. With 54% of the full-time level 2 provision (excluding Apps NI) now delivered via the traineeship model, where the development of digital literacy within transversal skills is core, this ensures future students are well equipped to deal with the digital skills required for the future.

Key Mechanisms to Support Learners

The College introduced Northern Plus as a pilot during the pandemic and this initiative has continued to grow and become embedded as one of the main mechanisms for providing additional support to our learners in terms of educational achievement. The statistics in figure 13 give an overview of the programme and its success, further information can be found in Additional Northern Plus Statistics

The most notable indicators are the 22/23 outcomes for the 1,087 students who engaged with Northern Plus. There were 834 students (77%) who progressed to a full achievement of their qualification, which is an improvement from a 47% full achievement rate post intervention in the 2021 pilot year. Also, significant to note in terms of outcomes are the partial achievements declining from 29% in the pilot year to 14% in 22/23. This demonstrates the positive impact the Northern Plus intervention is having on full course completion and demonstrating a positive impact on overall improved learner outcomes.

Figure 13: Northern Plus 2022/23 Statistics
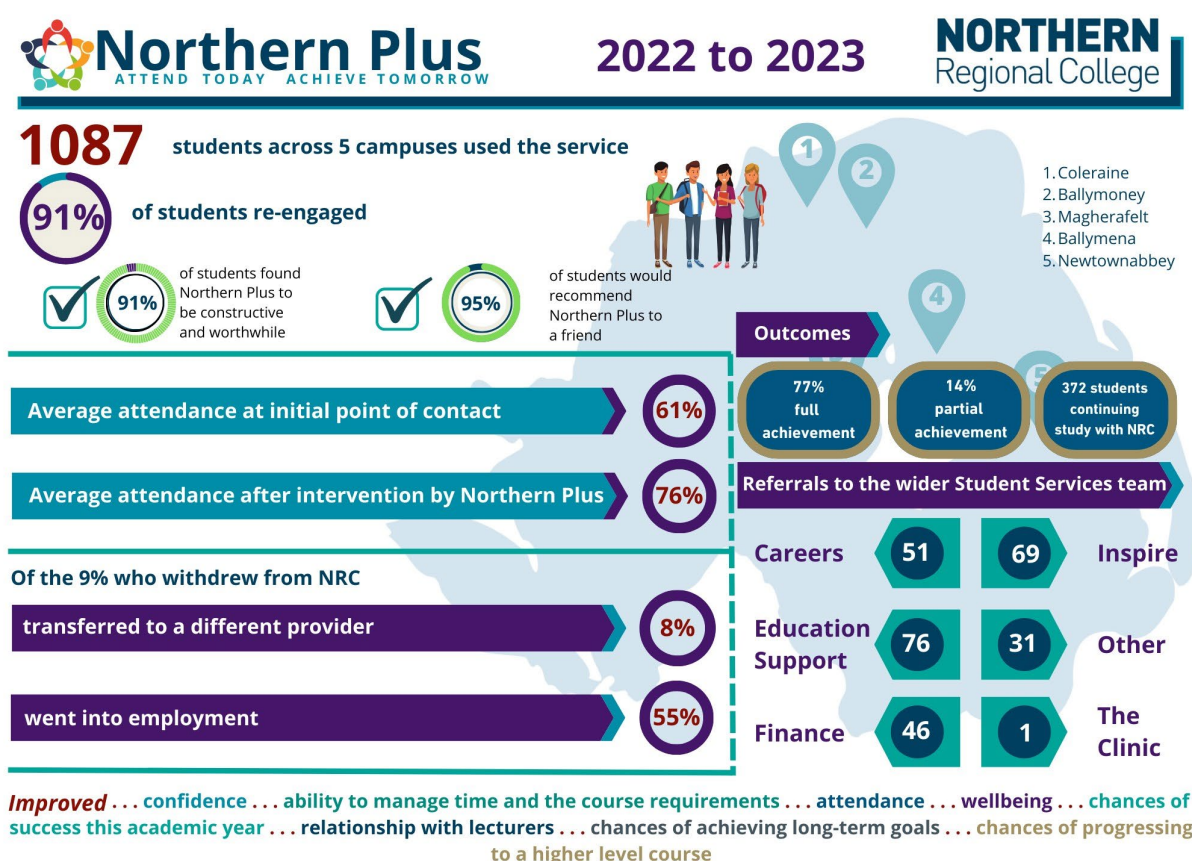
Data Source: Northern Plus Annual Report

The College has delivered GL PASS assessments to all Level 2 FT learners and all first year Level 3 FT learners in 2023/24 (approximately 1,000 learners). This twenty-minute assessment is an effective tool to exploring social and emotional wellbeing. It focuses on three broad areas – how a learner feels about themselves, their engagement with the curriculum and their feelings about College. It allows the College to identify learners who need further pastoral support that may not otherwise have been identified. Further information on the outcomes from the GL PASS can be viewed GL PASS Process

Figure 14: GL PASS Overview

What is GL PASS?

- An all-age attitudinal survey that helps us gain valuable insights into the mindsets of our students.

- A unique digital survey that provides a standardised measure of students' attitudes towards themselves as learners, and to the college.
  - Measures 9 factors:
    - Contextual: feelings about college; attitudes to lecturers; attitudes to attendance
    - Engagement with learning: preparedness for learning; response to curriculum demands; general work ethic
    - Self-perceived academic performance: perceived learning capability; learner self-regard; confidence in learning

- Helps identify students who:
  - need extra pastoral support;
  - are at risk of disengaging with their studies;
  - are at risk of underachieving.

- Opens windows into student thinking, allowing tailored interventions to be put into place and providing a benchmark to evidence progress.
  - Reports show individual and whole class attitudinal profiles. Using a traffic light system, we can see which students may need a high, medium or low level of support.

- Initial testing takes place for all full-time L2 and first year L3 FE students @8 weeks in to the new academic year, to allow them a settling in period before testing.
  - Follow-up testing to measure the effectiveness of any interventions can take place a minimum of 12 weeks after interventions take place.

Data Source: Northern Plus 2022/23 Annual Report

Key Target Areas for Delivery

The College currently has the same financial pressures which the wider public services in Northern Ireland face. The reduced budget allocation has necessitated a review of all services for financial viability and sustainability. The College implemented within the last year large scale efficiency savings on non-teaching spending to minimise the impact on delivery of provision. In 2023/24, there are no further non-teaching reductions that can be implemented and therefore additional scrutiny on delivery has been applied. Undoubtably the reduced College budget has impacted on the ability to sustain courses which are not viable in terms of minimum class size. Approximately 60 cohorts were cancelled due to non-viability. To minimise impact on learners, curriculum teams worked closely with the College careers team and learners were offered internal alternative provision that would not impact their progression opportunities. In cases where this was not appropriate, learners were signposted to provision at alternative Colleges. The College and the FE Sector as a whole are still in the recovery period after the Covid Pandemic and decisions taken during the enrolment period have meant it will be a challenge to maintain individual numbers in 2023/24.

Against this challenging financial situation, the College has reduced the additional qualifications full time Further Education students are enrolled on e.g., Microsoft Office Specialist and First Aid. These qualifications enhance the employability and progression opportunities for learners; however, they require additional teaching hours and Awarding Body

registrations, therefore, to maintain the full-time provision these qualifications have been rationalised and consequently there is a reduction in part-time FE enrolments.

The College in 2022/23 reviewed non accredited self-funded provision both in terms of alignment to the Department for the Economy's 10X Strategy but also in terms of financial viability to ensure they are not subsided by the mainstream funding. These courses have been significantly reduced and increased in cost. The total number of cohorts has been reduced from 28 to 8 this included Spanish and upholstery.

In 2022/23 the College increased retention by 1% from 88.4% in 2021/22 to 89%. It is the intention to maintain this rate in 2023/24, this however will be challenging due to the continued impact of industrial action through disengagement with the College Learner Management System. In 2022/23 the College achievement rate has decreased by 2.4% to 80.4% and the target of 82% has been set for 2023/24. The College will explore additional mechanisms to support learners in Level 2 programmes where the lowest achievement rates can be seen.

Recruitment to full time Higher Education continues to be disappointing. The College set an ambitious target of 225 enrolments/individuals for 2023/24, this however will not be met. The new provision in 2023/24 did not provide growth but did partially offset courses that were cancelled due to non viability. It is important to note that the HLA activity now equals the full-time figure with enrolments at 161/162 respectively. The HLA activity has increased by 29% from 2022/23 to 2023/24.

Essential Skills, FT FE and Apps NI planned activity is broadly aligned with the activity achieved in 2022/23.

With new curriculum areas coming onto the Traineeship Framework the number of individuals and enrolments has increased in this area.

Planned Activity

The number of individuals will decrease from 7,358 no. in 2021-22 to 7,062 no. in 2023-24 academic year, equating to an –4% decrease.

Table 3 sets out the College planned activity for 2023/24. The College expects to see a reduction in overall individual activity in 2023/24 due to the impact of increased budget pressures from 7,358 in 2021/22 to 7,062 in 2023/24. This reduction is mainly in PT FE and reflects the reduction in additionality. However, the College is committed to increasing individual activity through sustained growth in existing provision.

Table 3: Qualifications Summary

Level	Area of Planned Activity	Planned Activity for 23/24 Enrolments	Planned Activity for 23/24 Individuals	Achieved Activity for 21/22 Enrolments	Achieved Activity for 21/22 Individuals
EL – L3	ES	2,261	1,590	2,096	1,420
	PT FE	3,860	2,549	6,813	3,344
	FT FE	1,952	1,952	2,020	2,020
	Traineeships	642[7]	303	142	81
	TfS	0	0	128	80
	Apps NI	1,826	1,008	1,945	968
L4+	PT HE in FE	714	690	802	595
	FT HE in FE	225[8]	225	178	178
	HLA	161	161	83	83
	Total	11,639	6,924[9]	14,207	7,358

Data Source: 2021/22 CDP and CDP Progress Report 3, 29.7.22. 2023/24 based on internal CDR data 23.11.23

To maintain HE and FE retention rates in 2023/24 academic year.

To maintain FE achievement rate in 2023/24 academic year.

To increase HE achievement rate by 3.5% in 2023/24.

As referred to on page 27 in the key mechanisms for supporting learners, the College Northern Plus model along with GL Pass will contribute to achievement of the planned activity and the KPIs 3.2 – 3.5. Table 4 sets out the College's planned performance levels for 2023/24.

Table 4: Planned Performance Levels

Performance Measure	Achieved Rate in 2021/22	Planned Rate for 2023/24	Planned Increase
FE Retention Rate	88.9%	88.9%	0
FE Achievement Rate	88.0%	88.0%	0%
HE in FE Retention Rate	94.5%	94.5%	0
HE in FE Achievement Rate	88.5%	92.0%	3.5%

Data Source: College CDR Capture 13.10.23

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[7] The ERC does not permit level 3 enrolments to be included. There are 2 level 3 plumbing enrolments in NA. 642 is the correct total, the ERC shows 640
[8] Target submitted in MaSN planning
[9] This is the total at College level not the sum of the individual count in each funding stream

KPI 3.6	**3,652 No. of individuals enrolled who are furthest away from the labour market and/or with low or no formal qualifications in 2023/24 academic year.**

Background

The College seek to build social inclusion and opportunity through widening economic participation. The College works with local communities in creating capacity, developing knowledge and skills, raising self-esteem and providing pathways into further training or employment, this is demonstrated through delivery of programmes across Essential Skills, Access, College Connect, Discrete SLDD provision, flagship initiatives through Step up and community provision.

The College remains committed to widening participation of learners including those with difficulties and disabilities, those from under-represented groups in society and those not in employment, education and training, and woman returners. The College will access alternative funding to support social inclusion in partnership with other Colleges, where appropriate. The College will remove barriers to provide accessible and inclusive opportunities, remaining committed to raising literacy and numeracy competency of the wider population, including provision of English Language Skills for those where English is not their first language. The College spends £20,000 of funding each year on WAPP activities.

With a planned reduction in additionality and non-accredited leisure programmes the number of individuals in entry level and level 1 programmes will also decline.

Planned Activity[10]

To achieve 3,856 no. enrolments from Quintile 1 and 2 in 2023/24 academic year.

To achieve 1,714 no. enrolments declaring a disability/long term health problem in 2023/24 academic year.

To achieve 1,512 no. enrolments on Entry Level and Level 1 Programmes (including Essential Skills) in 2023/24 academic year.

To achieve 254 no. enrolments on Step Up and Skills for Life and Work[11] in 2023/24 academic year.

To achieve 753 no. enrolments on Targeted Programmes[12] in 2023/24 academic year.

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[10] It is acknowledged that enrolment activity in the below measures may be counted in more than one metric.
[11] Breakdown of activity by programme is included in the supporting Educational Report Card.
[12] College Targeted Programmes (excluding Step Up and Skills for Life and Work) are: **Access, Community ES, CALL**

To achieve 222 no. enrolments on ESOL programmes in 2023/24 academic year.

Table 5: Planned Activity for Inclusive Growth

Area of Planned Activity	2023/24 Planned Activity	2021/22 Activity Achieved
Enrolments within Quintile 1 and 2	3,856	4,595
Enrolments declaring a disability / long term health problem	1,714	3,225
Enrolments on Entry Level and Level 1 Programmes (including Essential Skills)	1,512	3,308
Enrolments on Step Up	254	0
Enrolments on Targeted Programmes	753[13]	822
Enrolments on ESOL Programmes	222	177
Overall number of individuals supported by above measures	3,652	4,373

KPI 3.7	To increase the percentage of women in narrow STEM related subjects from 236 (14%) in 2021/22 to 270 (16%) in 2023/24.

Background

In narrow STEM related subjects in 2021,22 there were 236 female learners, this is 14% of all participants. The College recognises there is progress to be made in areas such as Engineering and will seek to address this in 2023/24 by including this as an action in the QIP. One specific action to address this is the delivery in partnership with Mid and East Antrim Council and Wrightbus of a Manufacturing academy specifically for females in the area of Vehicle Electrician aid. This will give females experience in the area and introduce individuals to the practical aspects.

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[13] The College is currently bidding for Peace Plus funding which may create activity in the latter part of 2023/24

The College has established a cross college women in stem working group with a focus on increasing participation of woman and girls across all Stem relating programmes by organisation of various events across all campuses. An event in relation to this will take place as part of International Woman's Day.

Planned Activity

The College aims to increase the percentage of female learners in narrow STEM subjects from 14% in 2021/22 to 16% in 2023/24.

Inclusive Growth	
Aim - 4	**Upskilling and reskilling learners to progress in life-long learning and to meet employer skills needs through provision of focussed training, providing the skills and qualifications necessary to secure employment.**
10x Metrics	• **Proportion of the working age population with qualifications at Level 2 and above or Level 3 and above.** • **Economic inactivity by gender, age, disability, MDM** • **Proportion of population aged 25+ who have engaged in education or training in the last 13 weeks.**
KPI 4.1	**To upskill/reskill 2,483 no. of individuals on training programmes in 2023/24 academic year.**

Background

The College has grown its range of training programmes over the last number of years. Apprenticeships NI activity at both Level 2 and 3 has remained steady at around 1,000 apprentices, this stability is very positive given the challenges the College faces in recruitment of staff in specialist areas such as Electrical Installation.

With the continued implementation of Traineeships across new vocational areas the College has seen growth in one year from 129 Trainees to over 300 Trainees. The College now offers Traineeships in 11 vocational areas. The Level 3 Advanced Technical Awards have also been successful in areas such as Health & Social Care, IT and Business.

The number of Higher Level Apprentices in the College has continued to grow from 67 in 2020/21 to 162 in 2023/24 with ambition to increase provision in 2024/25.

Northern Regional College believes Skills competitions are an essential element in developing students' skills and abilities. The College will provide support for learners to succeed through access to competition, international projects, project-based learning and entrepreneurship.

Throughout 23/24 the College plans to deliver competitions across all curriculum areas. The College are sector-leading in development and delivery of robotics systems integration curriculum, evidenced in our WorldSkills competitions record of success.

Our competitors contribute to Northern Ireland FE's performance at UK, European and WorldSkills Levels.

The College received £58,000 from the Turing Programme to fund an IT Entrepreneurship mobility which will see 17 Level 3 Newtownabbey Computing students travel to Belgium in February 2024 for 2 weeks. They will visit prominent IT industry destinations including the European headquarters of Microsoft and will learn Entrepreneurship and Innovation techniques at the Irish College in Leuven, where they are staying. The application was a joint effort between the College Computing CAM and the Principal Lecturer for Entrepreneurship.

The College has a cautious delivery plan for tailored training programmes in line with current resource allocation, there is the potential for further growth should additional funding become available.

Planned Activity

Table 6: Training Programme Planned Activity

Area of Planned Activity	2023/24 Planned Activity (Individuals)	2021/22 Activity Achieved (Individuals)
Advanced Technical Awards	208	43
Traineeships	303	81
AppsNI	1,008	968
HLAs	161	83
Skill Up	679	496
Ignite Your Skills	24	N/A
Tailored training programmes	100	20

Support 1,000 no. learners[14] through participation in Skills Competitions in 2023/24 academic year.

The College will support 1,000 learners through participation in Skills Competitions in 2023/24.

Support 17 no. learners[15] through 1 no. Turing programmes in 2023/24 academic year.

The College will support 17 learners through the Turing Programme in 2023/24.

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[14] To reflect the range of competitions which individuals are registered on e.g., a learner registered on three competitions would be reflected as three learners.
[15] As per footnote 10

Sustainability	
Aim – 5	**To address the skills needs of the future workforce in green industries through upskilling and reskilling learners in support of a net zero economy in Northern Ireland.**
10x Metrics	• **Employment in the low carbon and renewable energy economy** • **Turnover in low carbon and renewable energy economy**
KPI 5.1	**In 2023/24 academic year, to develop curriculum and train staff for delivery on green sustainable skills in 2024/25 academic year.**

Background:

Sustainability is a core pillar of the 10x Economic strategy. The FE sector has secured £299,880 with an allocation of £49,980 per college for an integrated curriculum development project, which will enable colleges to develop a range of accredited provision which will support knowledge and skills aligned to sustainability to implement sustainability into everyday working practices.

Action 11.4 of the 10X Delivery Plan 2023/24, outlines the delivery of a Sustainability Programme, delivered by FE College to support businesses to realise the economic and Net Zero Sustainability ambitions set in the 10X Economic Strategy. The action point it details the importance of the development of new curriculum and skills support with core common content and approach. The six colleges will collaborate on content design and development in support of this programme and aligned with key industry and economic strategies.

Working collaboratively, the six Further Education colleges will develop a suite of Sustainability modules and short courses that support skills and knowledge transfer across every industry. The suite of materials will build a foundational resource, beginning at level 2 and work up to sector specific skills at higher levels, developing pathways throughout. When accredited the content can be used to support individuals through Skill Up, businesses through Skills Focus, as well as the wider student base, including apprenticeships, where sustainability modules and units can be incorporated into curriculum delivery.

The Sustainability Programme content developed will include a cross-sectoral, common, introductory strand that will form the foundation of knowledge for all businesses and will include topics such as:

- Understanding the different terminologies and their relationship to each other – Sustainability, Green Technology, Net Zero, Embodied Carbon, Circular Economy etc.
- UN Sustainable Development Goals & Economic Strategies – breaking down the strategic goals at local, national and international levels to show relevance and impact that can be achieved through changes to business practices

- Pathways to Success – Opportunities to review business strategies and processes, assess goals, implement available tools and develop roadmaps

This will set the scene with businesses and individuals, ensuring a core foundational knowledge prior to moving into business and industry specific areas.

Business/Industry Areas for Development

Each college is leading on a designated area, developing accredited provision at level 2 and at higher levels where possible. The College is leading on sustainable energy focusing on wind, solar, biomass, hydrogen and heat pumps. Figure 1 below indicates the range of areas where curriculum is required.

A number of standalone environmental programmes will continue to be offered by the College In addition to a broad range of programmes with an environmental component. Discrete programmes, which include progression from L2 to L3 are:

- L3 Hydrogen Applications and Technologies
- L2 Hydrogen Applications and Technologies (expected in the new year)
- L3 IMI Award Hybrid Electrical Vehicle Maintenance
- L2 Electric/Hybrid Vehicle Routine Maintenance Activities
- A Level Environmental Technology
- Electric Metering Operatives Training – delivered exclusively for NIE

The College has made a commitment within the Strategic Plan to increase sustainability, with the following goal: To provide facilities that support delivery of our refreshed curriculum and achieve environmental sustainability.

Planned Activity:

To improve the level of awareness and understanding of climate change through delivery of formal training to 5% of College staff in 2023/24 academic year.

Through Safety Hub the College will pilot in 2023/24 the Environmental Awareness training module, this module covers climate change, emissions, waste management and pollution. The rollout of this pilot will coincide with Sustainability week in March in 2024.

Sustainability	
Aim – 6	To deliver against the Public Body reporting duties of the Climate Change legislation delivering an energy efficient and sustainable estate.
10x Metrics	• Energy Related Green House gas emissions • Energy efficiency indicators • Circular Economy
KPI 6.1	In 2023/24 academic year, establish a baseline position for the College.
KPI 6.2	In 2023/24 academic year, establish the key actions to improve/maintain energy efficiency.

Background:

The College will open the first of its two major new build projects in August 2024 in Coleraine. This new campus is the first part of the £93m capital investment programme to create sustainable College facilities that support delivery of skills and qualifications aligned to 10x. The second phase will see the new build campus in Ballymena open in 2025. Both of these new buildings will move the College from a six-campus model to four. This will reduce consumption of energy/fuel/water. Through the College's Estates Strategy there will be continued investment in both Newtownabbey and Magherafelt: Campus Redevelopment | Northern Regional College

Planned Activity:

Apply for £300k towards minor works projects[16] in 2023/24 financial year contributing towards a sustainable College estate.

Through the Invest to Save Fund the College has had two successful bids: approval for £180k for EV charging points on the Newtownabbey campus; and £150k for roof insulation in the Newtownabbey campus.

In 2023/24 academic year, establish a baseline position for each College campus.

The College has commissioned Tetra Tech to undertake carbon and energy audits for each campus which will facilitate reporting on current emissions, set the baseline and develop associated targets. To date the College has collated information on energy/fuel/water consumption, asset register, and staff travel to form the baseline.

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[16] Includes Invest to Save Funded projects.

Figure 15: Carbon Footprinting

Data Source: Tetra Tech

In 2023/24 academic year, establish key actions to improve/maintain energy efficiency of College campuses.

When the baseline is established an action plan will be developed to support key actions in 2024/25.

5. Key Challenges/Constraints

The below table sets out the key challenges/constraints towards achievement of 2023/24 planned delivery set out in section 4.

Risk	Potential Impact	Mitigating Actions
Current political situation	Reduced budget for April 2024 Limited delivery options for April 2024	Conservative planning Pause on courses planned for opening in January 2024 onwards
Reduced budget	Reduced enrolments	Review of courses to ensure viability Review of all spending Improved efficiencies
Increased cost of delivery	Increased energy costs Increased cost of outsourcing	Reduced late nights Consolidated services
Industrial Action	Poor staff relations and culture Reduced data quality through lack of engagement with EBS	Engagement with Trade Unions Innovative methods to improve data quality such as student attendance self-marking
Cost of Living crisis	Reduced enrolments on fee paying courses	Continued communication with learners on financial support options
Ability to recruit and retain specialist staff	Limited capacity on specialist courses such as electrical installation	Collaborative approach to recruitment through the Strategic Alliance Fair pay rises for staff
Voluntary Severance/ Redundancy schemes	Reduced capacity Stretched services Poor staff relations and culture	Review of all offering to ensure provision is sustainable and impact of lost roles is minimised through redeployment
Falling enrolments	Curriculum areas and provision becomes unsustainable	Continued promotion of the benefits of FE Address the perceptions and stigma of FE Colleges Work in partnership with local employers
Competition from Higher Education Institutions, Private Training Organisations, Schools, Internal competition from FE Colleges	Reduced enrolments Curriculum areas and provision becomes unsustainable	Engagement with local partners to establish new opportunities Collaborative approaches through the Strategic Alliance
Aging infrastructure in Magherafelt and Newtownabbey	Buildings increasingly not fit for purpose to deliver skills aligned to 10x	Minor work projects to maintain buildings Development of capital projects to refresh both campuses in line with the Estates Strategy
Cyber security	Cyber attack could prevent access for all College systems	College is working towards Cyber Essentials accreditation to lower the risk of an attack.

The College has a Risk Management Framework in place including Corporate and Operational Risk Registers from which key risks are reflected. Strategic challenges/constraints affecting the Sector are highlighted with the use of 'Corporate Risk'.

6. Annex 1: College Data Analysis

i. College Data

Figure 16: College Enrolment Trends
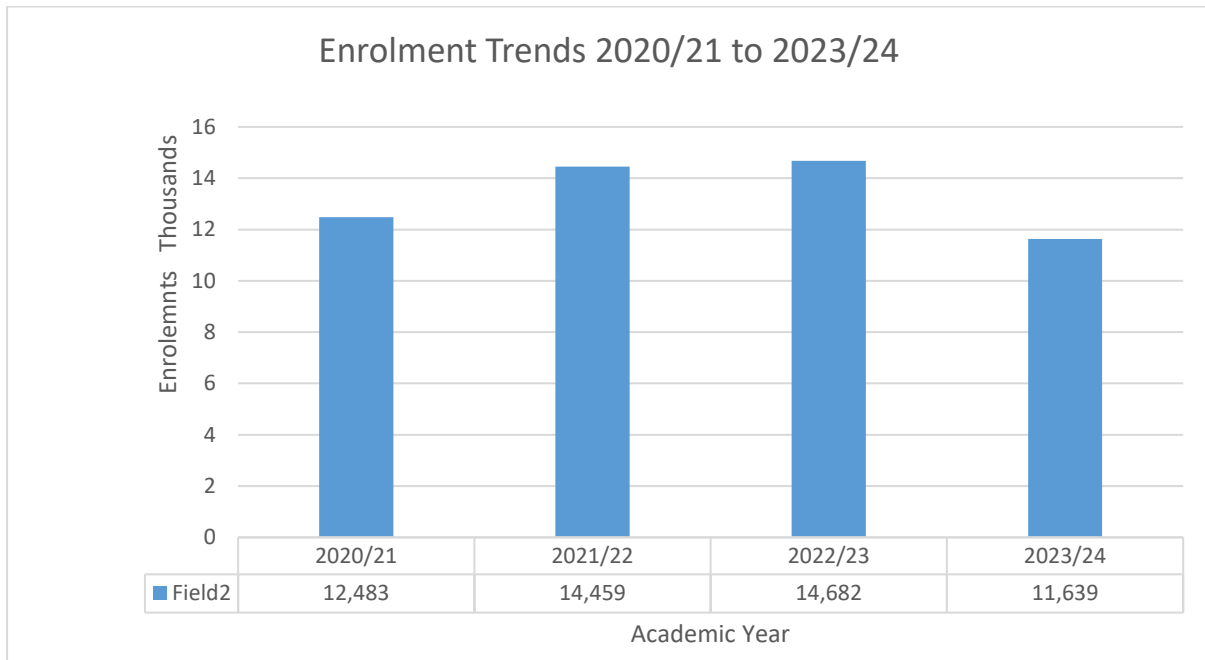
Enrolment Trends 2020/21 to 2023/24

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
■ Field2	12,483	14,459	14,682	11,639

Academic Year

Data Source: Internal CDR data, 2020/21 – 15th October 2021, 2021/22 – 14th October 2022, 2022/23 – 13th October 2023 and 2023/24 23rd November 2023.

Figure 17: Total Individual Trends
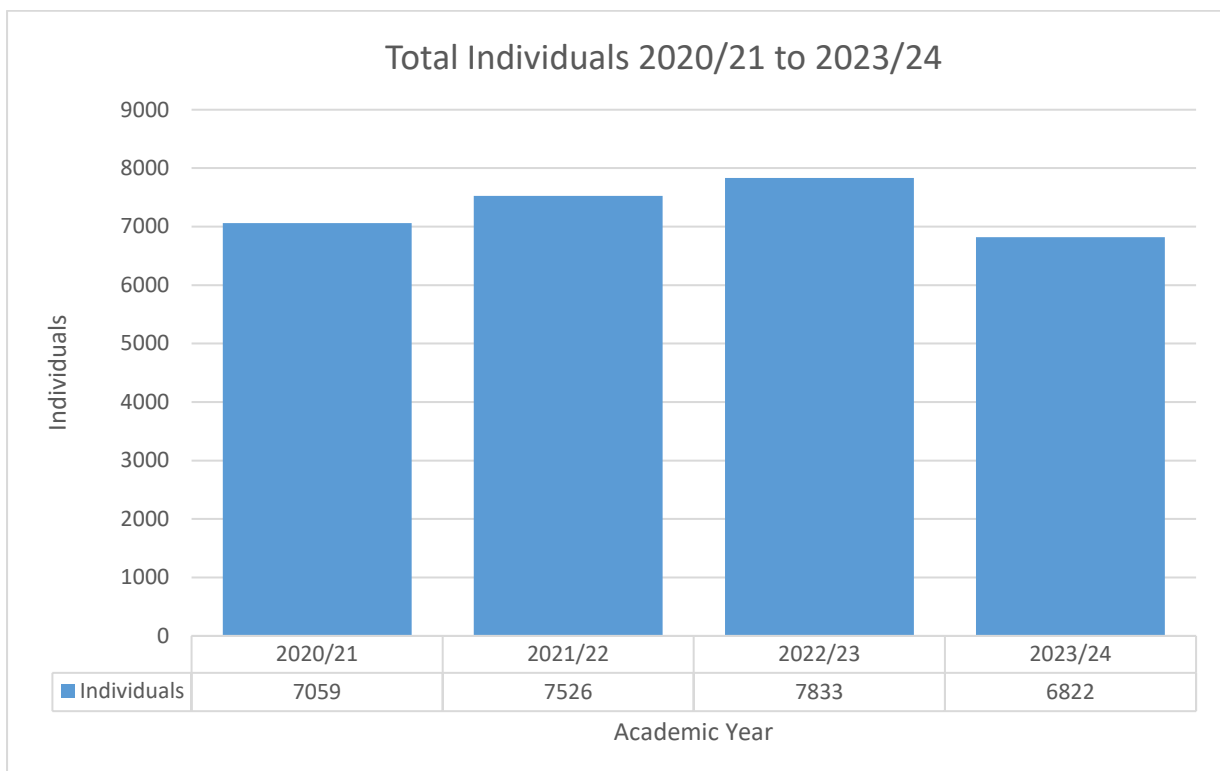
Total Individuals 2020/21 to 2023/24

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
■ Individuals	7059	7526	7833	6822

Academic Year

Data Source: Internal CDR data, 2020/21 – 15th October 2021, 2021/22 – 14th October 2022, 2022/23 – 13th October 2023 and 2023/24 23rd November 2023.

Figure 18: Enrolment Trends by Funding Stream

Enrolments by Funding Stream 2020/21 to 2023/24

Funding Streams	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
FE	8699	10439	10698	7069
Apprenticeship	1627	2305	2351	2317
HE	936	941	928	876
Traineeship-97		280	395	1065
TFS	1013	151	1	
HLA	67	83	126	161

Legend: FE, Apprenticeship, HE, Traineeship-97, TFS, HLA

Data Source: Internal CDR data, 2020/21 – 15th October 2021, 2021/22 – 14th October 2022, 2022/23 – 13th October 2023 and 2023/24 23rd November 2023.

Figure 19: Full Time Enrolment Trends

Full Time Enrolments 2020/21 to 2023/24

Academic Year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Enrolments	3,537	3,354	3,282	3,463

Data Source: Internal CDR data, 2020/21 – 15th October 2021, 2021/22 – 14th October 2022, 2022/23 – 13th October 2023 and 2023/24 23rd November 2023.

Figure 20: Part Time Enrolment Trends
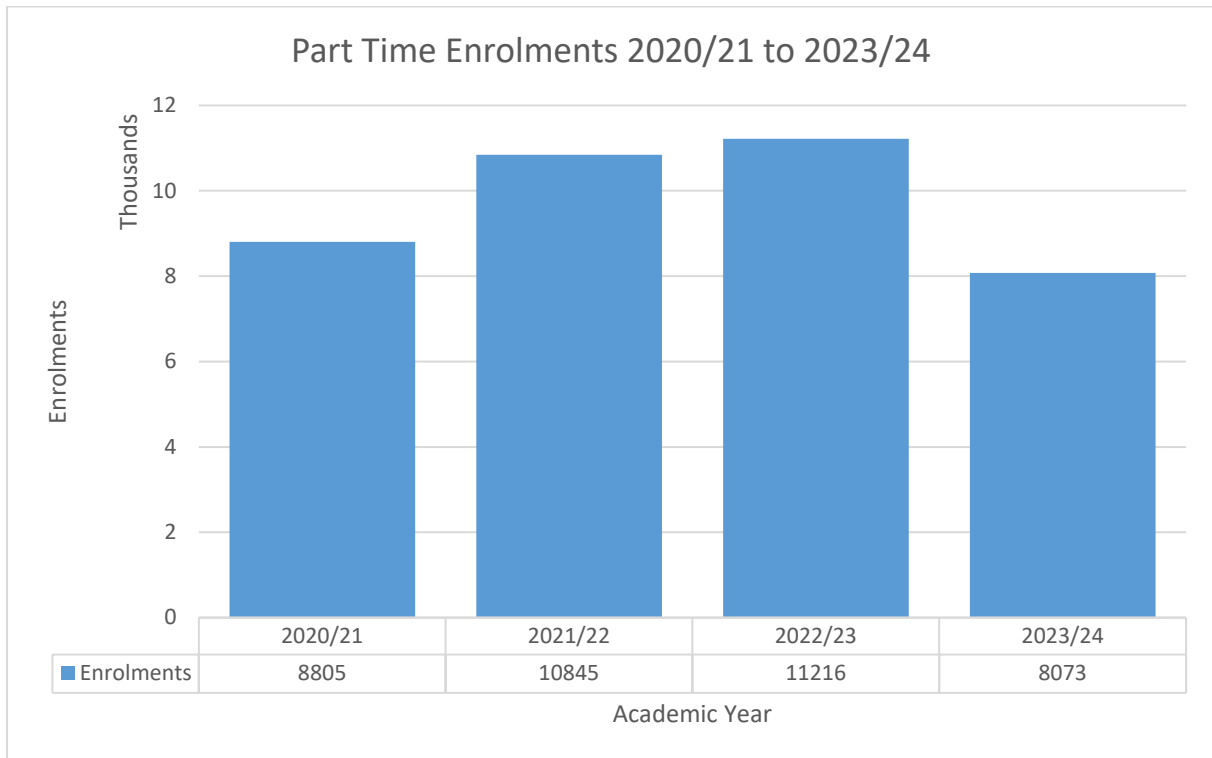
Part Time Enrolments 2020/21 to 2023/24

Academic Year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Enrolments	8805	10845	11216	8073

Data Source: Internal CDR data, 2020/21 – 15th October 2021, 2021/22 – 14th October 2022, 2022/23 – 13th October 2023 and 2023/24 23rd November 2023.

Figure 21: Performance Level Trends

Retention, Achievement and Success 2020/21 to 2022/23

Academic Year	Retention	Achievement	Success
2020/21	88.7	87.1	77.2
2021/22	88.4	82.4	72.8
2022/23	89.2	80.3	71.6
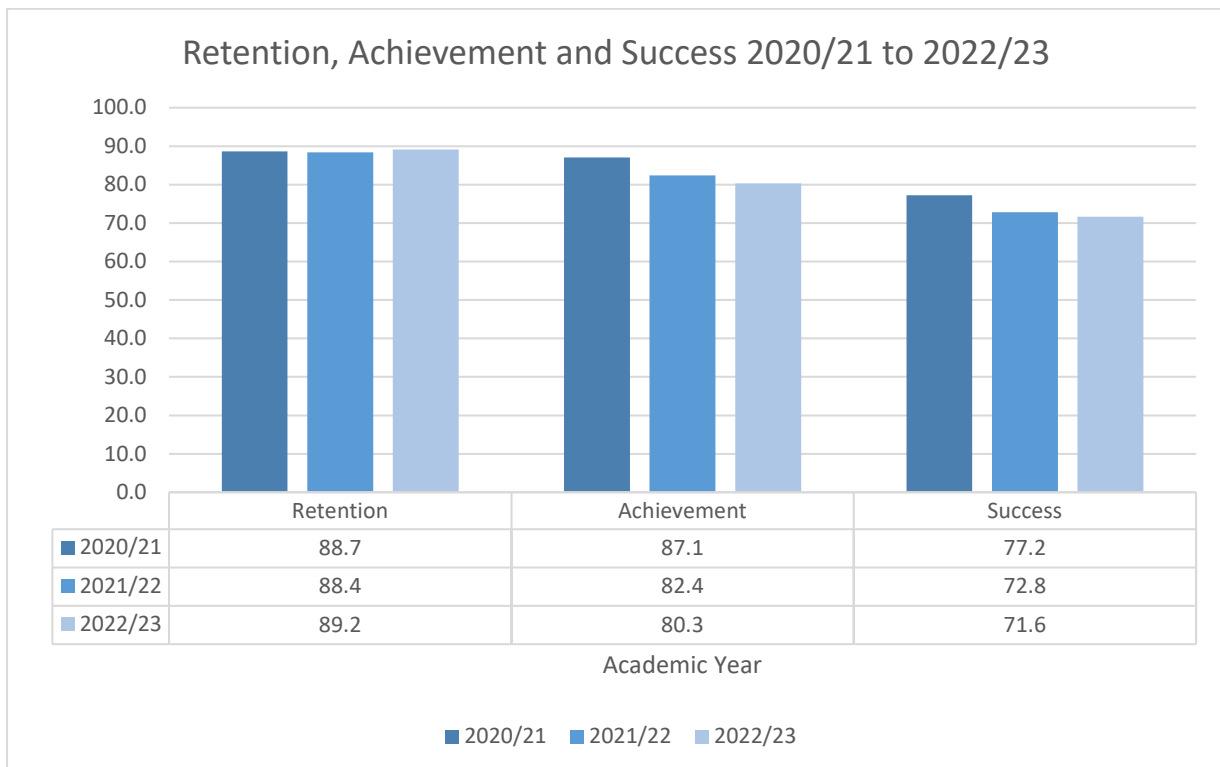
Data Source: Internal CDR data, 2020/21 – 15th October 2021, 2021/22 – 14th October 2022 and 2022/23 – 13th October 2023.

Figure 22: Inclusive Growth Trends

Inclusive Growth 2020/21 to 2023/24

Programmes	Enrolments in Quintile 1 and 2	Enrolments declaring a disability/long term health problem	Enrolments on Entry Level and Level 1 programmes	Enrolments on Step Up	Enrolments on Targeted Programmes	Enrolments on ESOL Programmes	Overall number of individuals supported by above measures
2020/21	3912	1699	2813	0	903	214	3855
2021/22	4592	3365	3421	0	800	174	4373
2022/23	4739	3412	3453	0	852	180	4635
2023/24	3856	1714	1512	164	900	222	3652

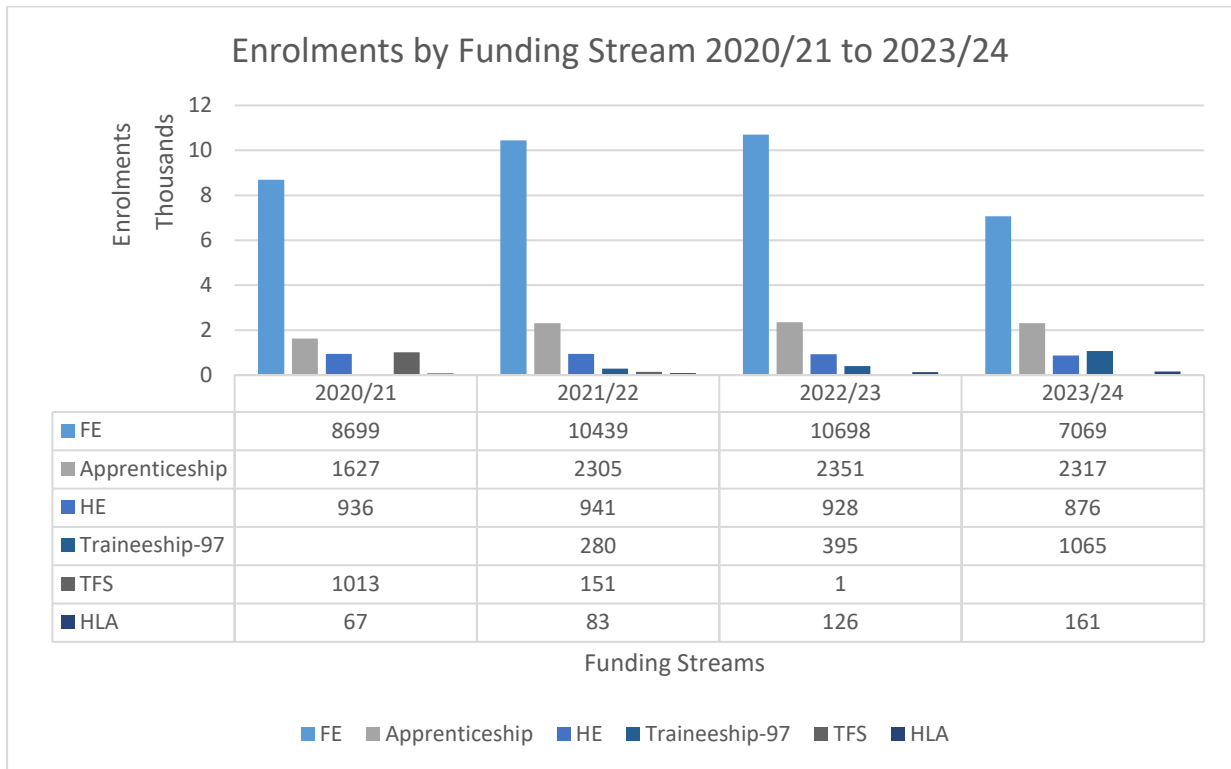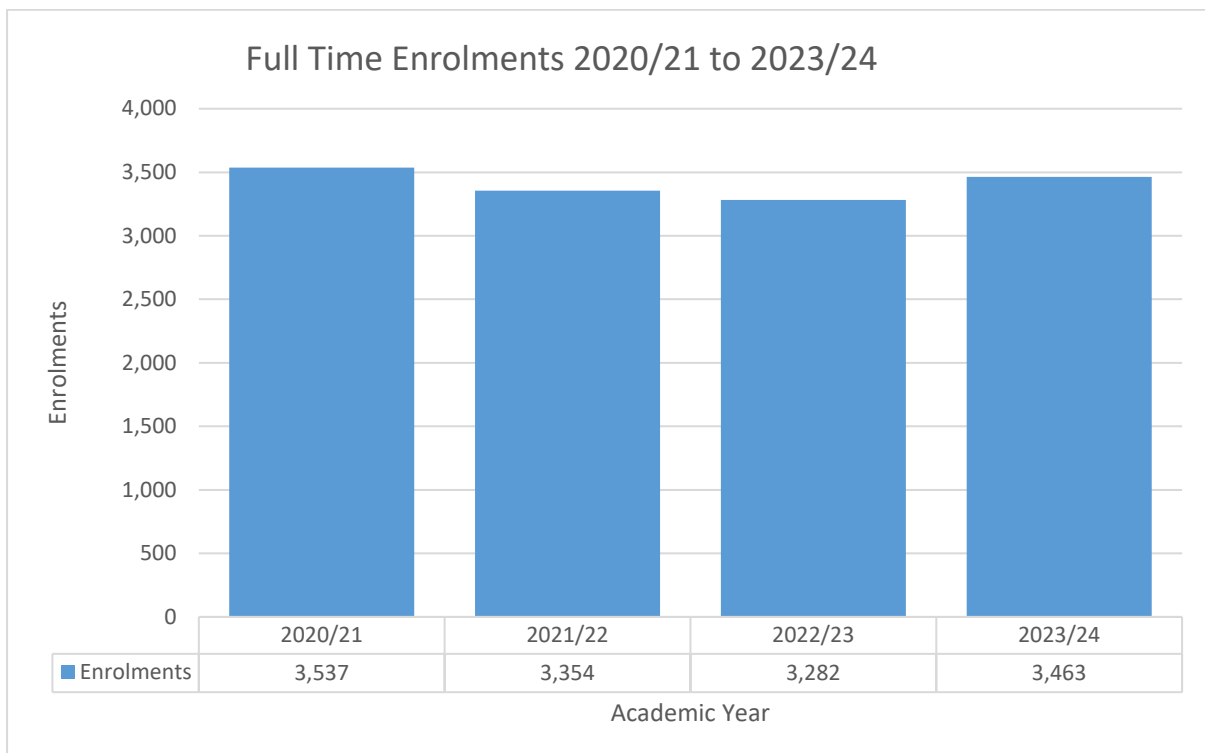Legend: 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24

Data Source: Internal CDR data, 2020/21 – 15th October 2021, 2021/22 – 14th October 2022, 2022/23 – 13th October 2023 and 2023/24 23rd November 2023.

Figure 23: Business Engagement Activity Trend

Skills Focus and Innovate Us 2020/21 to 2023/24

Thousands (£)

Progamme	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Innovate Us	0	£80,000	£134,000	£175,000
Skills Focus	£85,000	£259,000	£275,000	£300,000

Legend: Skills Focus, Innovate Us
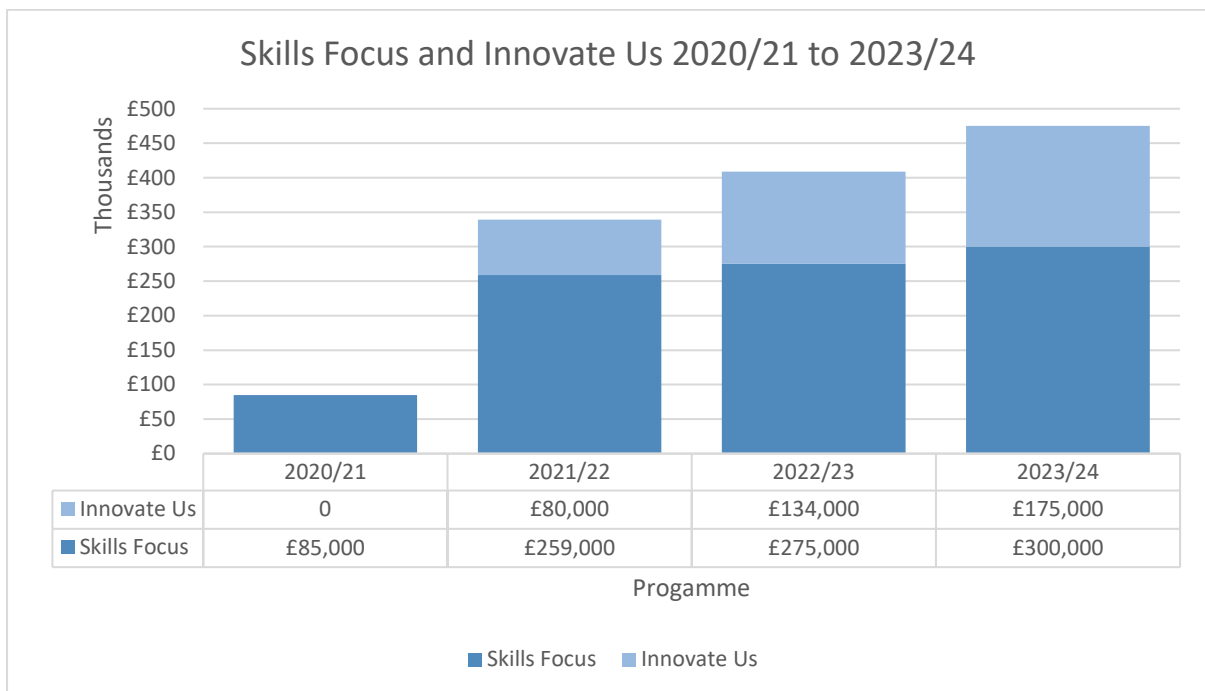
Data Source: CDP Progress Report 3 from 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24

Figure 24: Northern Plus Re Engagement
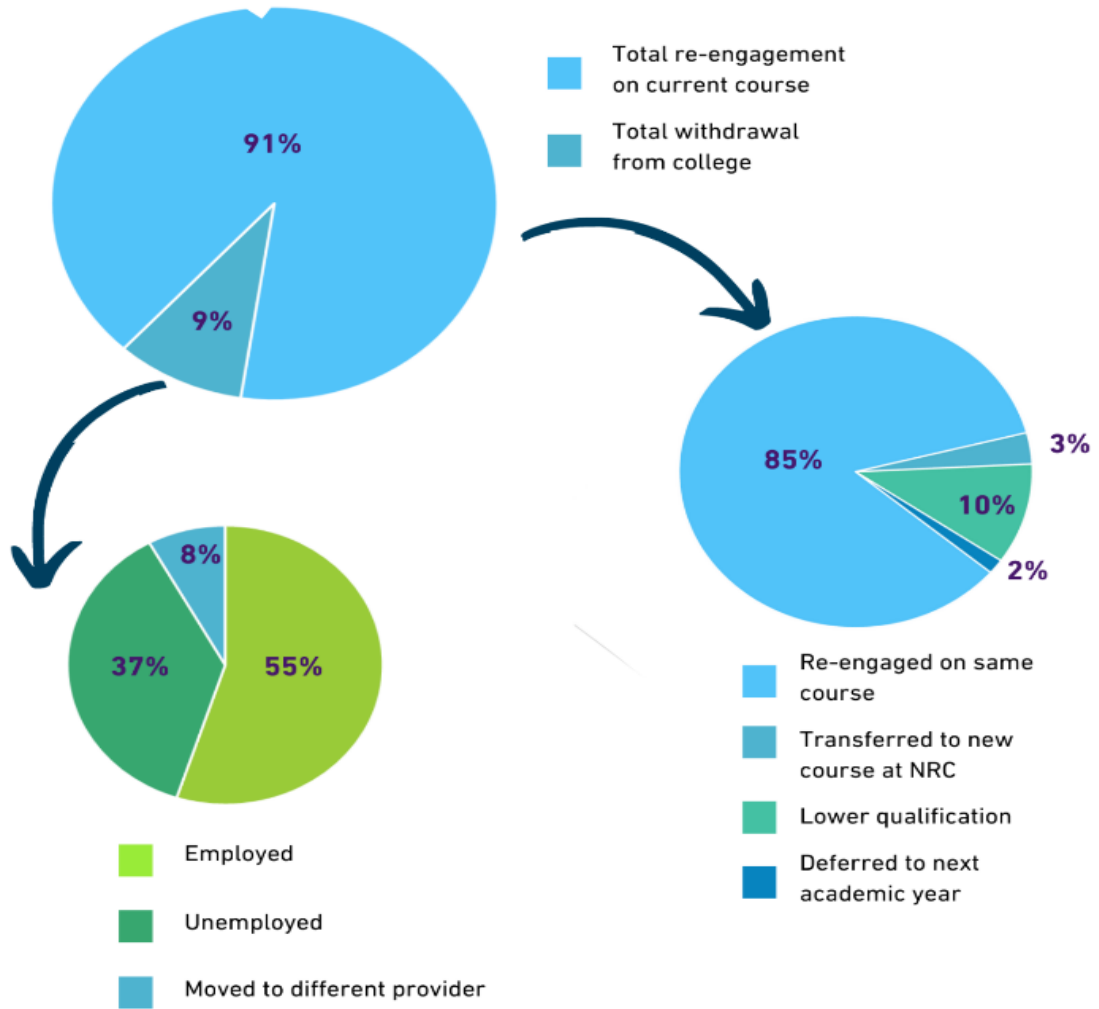
Data source: Northern Plus Annual Report 2022/23

Figure 25: Student Feedback on Northern Plus

Student responses to the benefits of engaging with Northern Plus
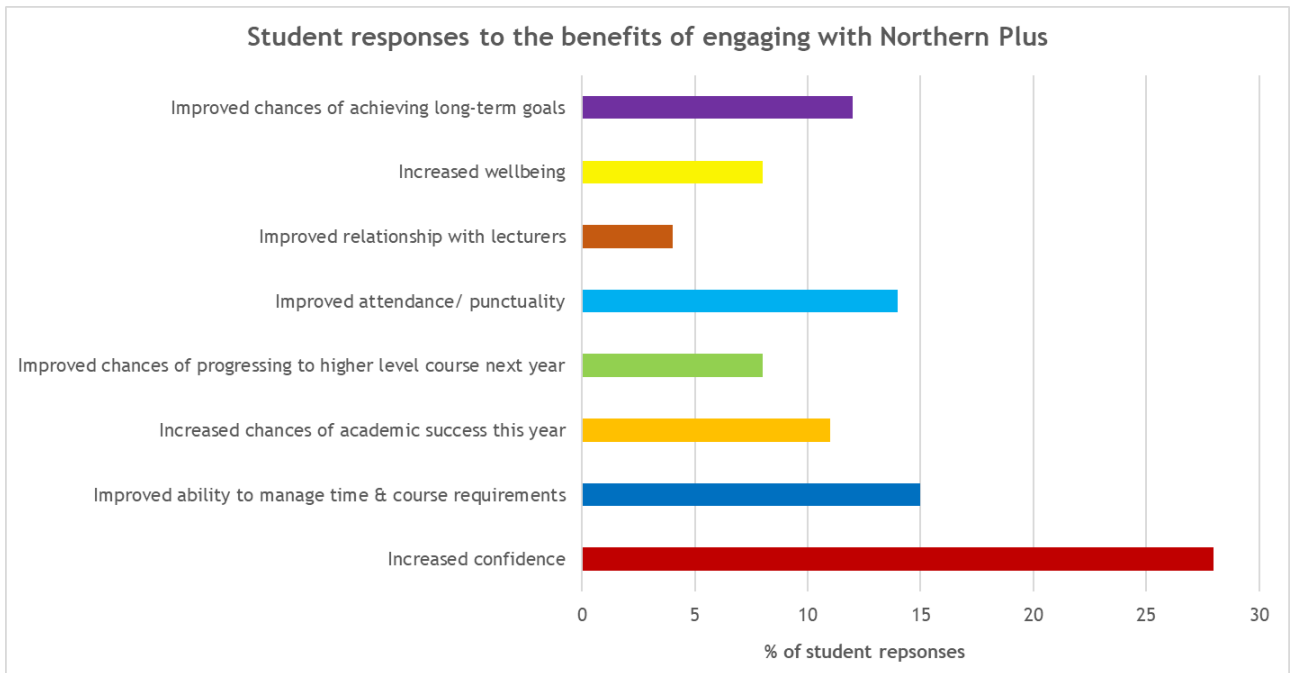
Figure 26: Rates of Student Leavers During 2022/23

Student leavers over the academic year 2022 to 2023.

Data source: Northern Plus Annual Report 2022/23

iii. GL PASS

Figure 27: Overview of GL PASS Process

GL PASS PROCESS

Libraries booked
Northern Plus block books libraries on all campuses for the 3 weeks up to half term

Assessments
Teaching staff book assessment sessions. Northern Plus administer sessions.

Feedback
Reports sent to CAMs for distribution. Northern Plus begin 1:1 interventions. Lecturers can book TLA and/or Northern Plus workshops as appropriate.

Weeks 2 - 3

Weeks 5 - 6

Weeks 7 - 9

Weeks 8 - 12

Week 12 onwards

Week 26 onwards

Student data
LMS provide student data on import template. Northern Plus creates sittings and student codes

Reporting
Reports generated. Students identified for Northern Plus intervention. Class issues identified.

Evaluation
Post-intervention testing carried out by Northern Plus. Potential returning students with low attendance factor scores identified for monitoring/contact by Northern Plus.

Data source: Northern Plus Annual Report 2022/23

Figure 28: Outcomes of GL PASS Assessments

GL PASS — **Factor strength by campus and course level** — NORTHERN Regional College

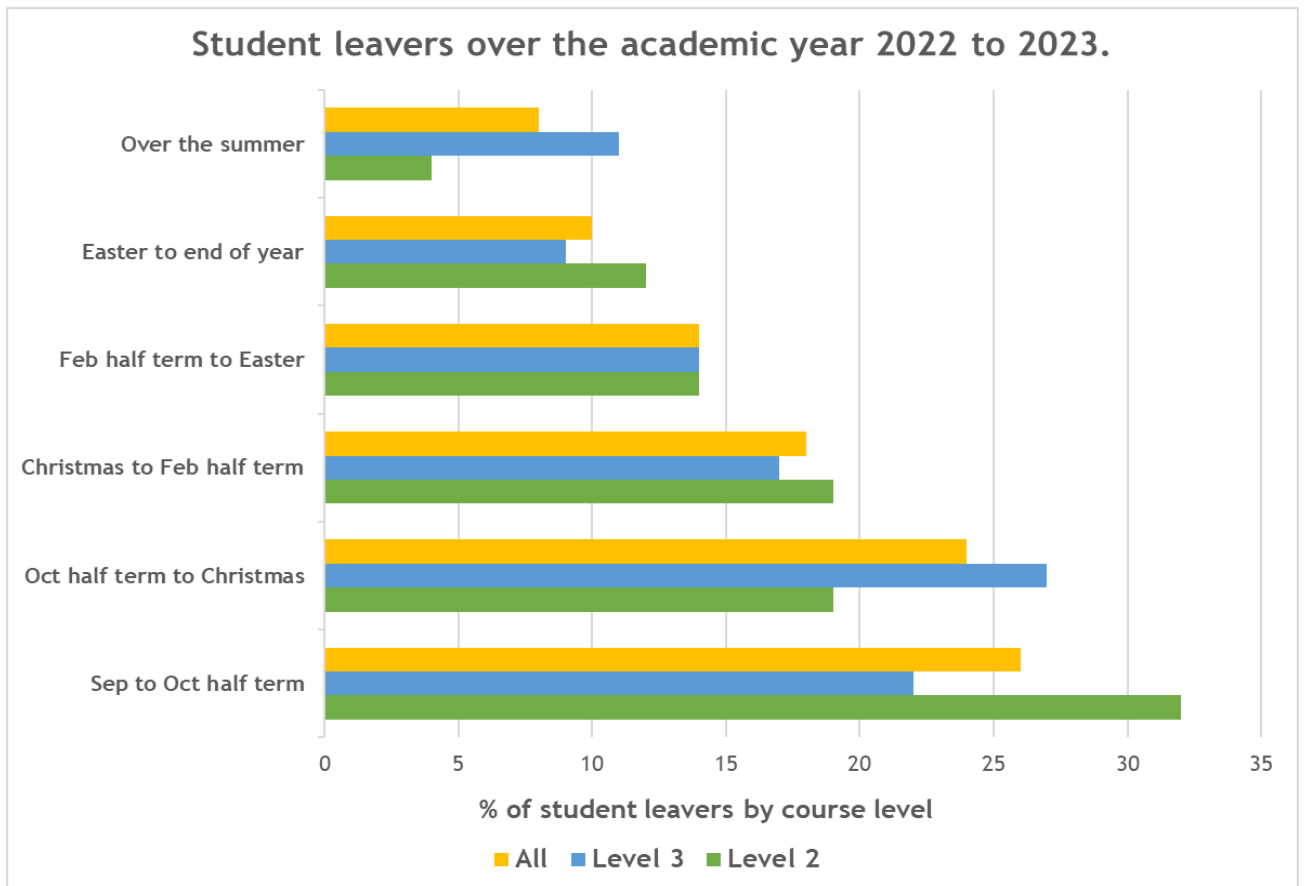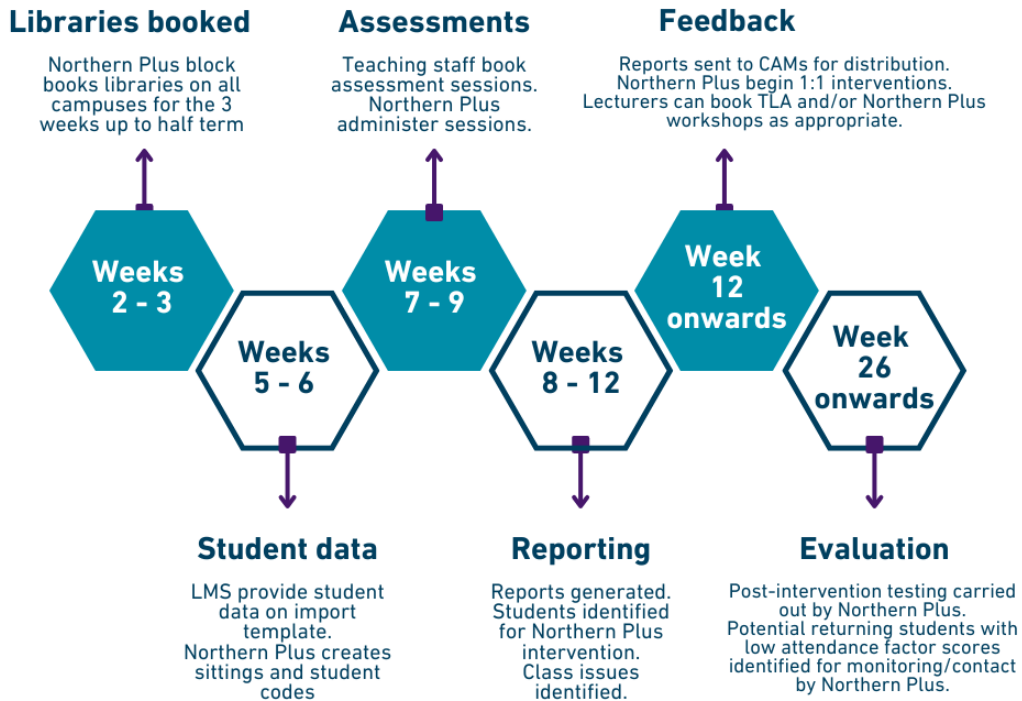|	BALLYMONEY			COLERAINE			MAGHERAFELT			NEWTOWNABBEY			FARM LODGE			TROSTAN		
	All	L 2	L 3	All	L 2	L 3	All	L 2	L 3	All	L 2	L 3	All	L 2	L 3	All	L 2	L 3
Strongest	ATL	ATL	ATL	ATL	ATL	FAC	ATL	ATL	ATL	ATL	ATL	ATL	FAC	GWE	FAC	ATL	ATL	ATL
	PFL	FAC	PFL	FAC	FAC	ATL	FAC	FAC	FAC	FAC	FAC	FAC	ATL	FAC	PFL	FAC	FAC	FAC
	FAC	GWE	FAC	PFL	PFL	PFL	PFL	GWE	PFL	PFL	PFL	PFL	PFL	ATL	ATL	PFL	PFL	PFL
	GWE	PFL	RCD	ATA	GWE	ATA	GWE	PFL	ATA	ATA	GWE	ATA	ATA	ATA	ATA	ATA	GWE	ATA
	ATA	ATA	GWE	RCD	ATA	RCD	ATA	ATA	GWE	GWE	ATA	GWE	GWE	LSR	LSR	GWE	ATA	RCD
	RCD	RCD	ATA	GWE	CIL	LSR	RCD	RCD	RCD	CIL	CIL	CIL	LSR	RCD	GWE	CIL	CIL	LSR
	LSR	LSR	LSR	CIL	RCD	CIL	LSR	LSR	LSR	RCD	RCD	RCD	RCD	PFL	RCD	GWE	RCD	GWE
	CIL	CIL	CIL	LSR	LSR	GWE	CIL	CIL	CIL	LSR	LSR	LSR	CIL	CIL	CIL	LSR	LSR	CIL
Weakest	PLC	PLC	PLC	PLC	PLC	PLC	PLC	PLC	PLC	PLC	PLC	PLC	PLC	PLC	PLC	PLC	PLC	PLC

FAC	ATL	ATA	PFL	RCD	GWE	PLC	LSR	CIL
Feelings about college	Attitudes to lecturers	Attitudes to attendance	Preparedness for learning	Response to curriculum demands	General work ethic	Perceived learning capability	Learner self-regard	Confidence in learning

Contextual factors			*Engagement with learning*			*Self-perceived academic performance*		

Data source: Northern Plus Annual Report 2022/23

iv. Invest NI Council Briefing Statistics

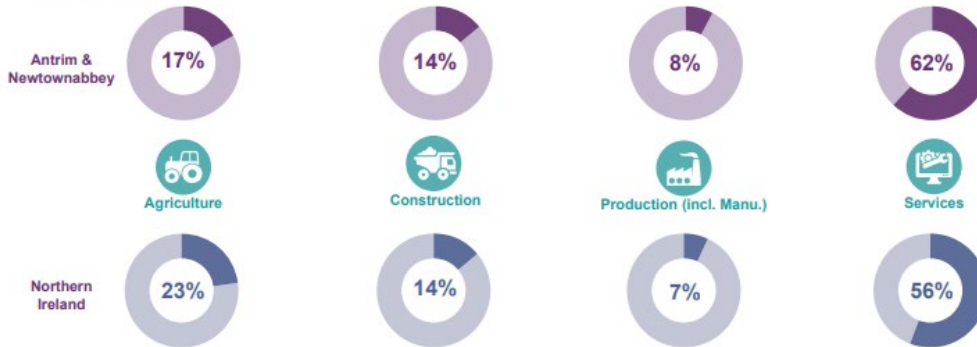investni-performance-council-area-antrim-and-newtownabbey.pdf

Number of Registered Businesses

4,315 businesses

This accounts for **5%** of all the businesses in Northern Ireland

Businesses by Size

Micro Businesses (0-9 employees)	Small Businesses (10-49 employees)	Medium Businesses (50-249 employees)	Large Businesses (250+ employees)
86%	10%	3%	1%

Businesses by Sector

	Agriculture	Construction	Production (incl. Manu.)	Services
Antrim & Newtownabbey	17%	14%	8%	62%
Northern Ireland	23%	14%	7%	56%

Source: Inter Departmental Business Register, NISRA

investni-performance-council-area-causeway-coast-and-glens.pdf

Number of Registered Businesses
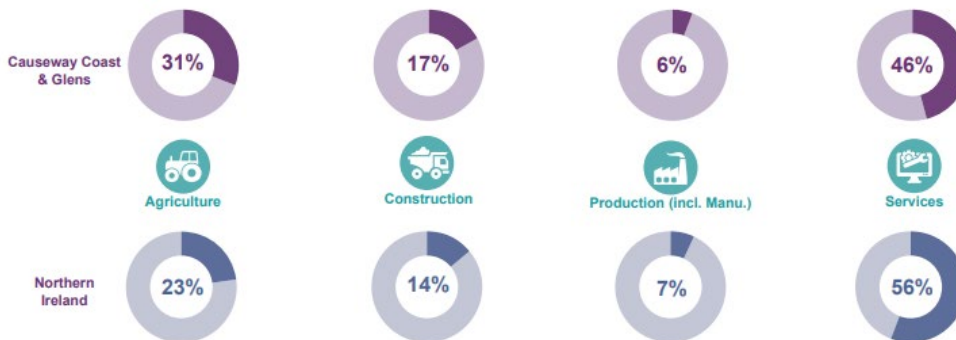
6,280 businesses

This accounts for **8%** of all the businesses in Northern Ireland

Businesses by Size

Micro Businesses (0-9 employees)	Small Businesses (10-49 employees)	Medium Businesses (50-249 employees)	Large Businesses (250+ employees)
91%	7%	1%	0.2%

Businesses by Sector

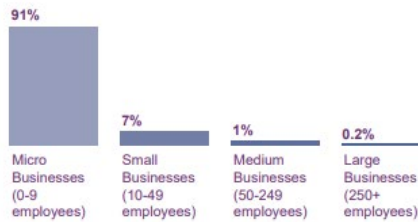|	Agriculture	Construction	Production (incl. Manu.)	Services
Causeway Coast & Glens	31%	17%	6%	46%
Northern Ireland	23%	14%	7%	56%

Source: Inter Departmental Business Register, NISRA

investni-performance-council-area-mid-and-east-antrim.pdf

Number of Registered Businesses

5,055 businesses

This accounts for **6%** of all the businesses in Northern Ireland

Businesses by Size

- Micro Businesses (0-9 employees): 91%
- Small Businesses (10-49 employees): 8%
- Medium Businesses (50-249 employees): 1%
- Large Businesses (250+ employees): 0.3%

Businesses by Sector

	Agriculture	Construction	Production (incl. Manu.)	Services
Mid & East Antrim	28%	13%	8%	52%
Northern Ireland	23%	14%	7%	56%

Source: Inter Departmental Business Register, NISRA
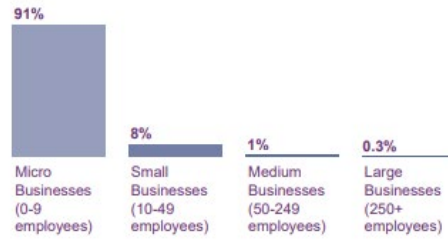
investni-performance-council-area-mid-ulster.pdf

Business Base (2022)

The business population is defined here by the Inter Departmental Business Register which excludes smaller businesses and the self-employed who fall below the VAT registered/PAYE thresholds.

Number of Registered Businesses

9,430 businesses

This accounts for **12%** of all the businesses in Northern Ireland

Businesses by Size

- Micro Businesses (0-9 employees): 92%
- Small Businesses (10-49 employees): 7%
- Medium Businesses (50-249 employees): 1%
- Large Businesses (250+ employees): 0.2%

Businesses by Sector

	Agriculture	Construction	Production (incl. Manu.)	Services
Mid Ulster	35%	17%	9%	39%
Northern Ireland	23%	14%	7%	56%

Source: Inter Departmental Business Register, NISRA