

**College
Development
Plan**
2020/2021

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1 Strategic Context

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

The six FE colleges (collectively the FE sector) are Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB) and a key delivery arm of the Department for the Economy (DfE). The FE sector is unique in that it has a dual mandate, taking a pivotal role in generating a strong and vibrant economy through the development of professional and technical skills, increasingly at higher levels, and by helping employers to innovate; and supporting social inclusion by providing those with low or no qualifications, or who have other barriers to learning, with the skills and qualifications needed to find employment and to become economically active. This College Development Plan (CDP) is for the financial year (1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021). It demonstrates how each of the colleges contribute to the aims included in the sector wide Corporate Plan; *'The Further Education in Northern Ireland Corporate Plan which covers the period to 2021, **Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives**'* which sets out:

- how the colleges contribute to the delivery of key Government Strategies and Policies including Programme for Government (PfG), the draft Industrial Strategy, FE Means Success, and the NI Skills Barometer; and
- the sector's shared values and vision embodying a commitment to collaborative working and with DfE to provide skills solutions that meet current and emerging demands of the economy.

It is vital that the Northern Ireland skills system supports economic growth that is socially inclusive and builds the skills base necessary to fulfil the Executive's PfG aspirations. The FE Sector directly contributes to the following PfG Outcomes –

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

The FE sector is an essential component to supporting the delivery of these outcomes as developing a highly skilled and motivated workforce will be at the core of our economic recovery through the provision of high quality education and training. In full support of these goals, the Department' has established seven Curriculum Hubs in key 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 Curriculum Hubs concept aims to ensure, as a result of the activity driven by the Hub

Action Plans, the 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 FE sector will support the 'New Decade, New Approach' deal which outlines a series of priorities and ambitions for a reformed Executive including the development of "an enhanced approach to careers advice, curriculum, training and apprenticeships to enhance employability and support economic growth" and the development of "a regionally-balanced economy with opportunities for all".

However, in a very short space of time the global pandemic, COVID-19, has completely transformed the way we live, work and learn. The Department for the Economy has been developing a new Skills Strategy to replace "Success through Skills – Transforming Futures" to address the skills needs across Northern Ireland over the next decade. FE Colleges have played a key role in the development of the strategy. Despite the change in economic circumstances and uncertainty created by the pandemic the underlying key policy objectives over the next decade remain consistent:

- Investing in our Digital skills across all sectors of our economy;
- Creating a culture of learning for all ages to include upskilling and reskilling in addition to innovation; and
- Reducing the skills imbalances in the workforce, with a particular focus on those with low or no skills.

What has changed is the pace and scale of the change that will be required and the need for investment in provision to deliver the new vision for our Economy. Creating a dynamic ecosystem where Government, Industry and Education providers can work in partnership will be a key priority.

Consideration has already been given to the key sectors in the Northern Ireland economy post COVID-19, as well as the need to improve productivity. Consistent in all of this work is the need to have a highly skilled and agile workforce. Providing support to those who face particular challenges and barriers to engaging in education will be important during the recovery phase of COVID-19. This includes students with a learning difficulty and or disability and learners in the 3 prisons in Northern Ireland.

This can only be achieved through investment in high quality skills provision including a renewed focus on Digital skills, particularly for those already in the workforce who will need to adapt to new working practices post COVID-19. We are also very conscious of the need to develop suitable skills interventions that assist all sectors to adjust to the impacts of COVID – 19. This includes those that will:

- contract and consolidate (Agri-food, Hospitality and Tourism);
- need to maintain in order to support recovery, (construction, social care);
and
- have potential for growth.

FE Colleges remain committed to maintaining standards and will contribute towards the recovery of the NI economy by providing the highest quality, economically relevant professional and technical education and training provision and delivering the skills needed for the economy. FE Colleges will assist employers to innovate and grow, developing suitable skills interventions that assist all sectors to adjust to the impacts of COVID-19, thereby increasing competitiveness and sustainability across the region.

2 Current Operating Environment in Light of COVID-19

The FE Sector has been impacted by COVID-19: social distancing has changed the delivery of college provision and will be the new normal for the first term and the basis of the current advice for the foreseeable future. However, the FE sector has demonstrated its agility in responding to shifting economic demands and employers' need. While not without its challenges, the FE sector moved swiftly to online delivery and more than 75% of FE learners engaged in remote learning.

A significant majority of the jobs which are keeping our economy afloat now are vocational including key trades like plumbing and joinery, health (and life sciences) and social care work, IT sector roles, manufacturing (including food manufacturing) and construction. These sectors are important now, will be central to economic recovery and are dependent on the FE sector to provide their talent pool. This CDP details how the FE Sector will capitalise on the achievements to date to ensure the needs of learners, employers and communities are met as NI responds to, recovers from and renews itself following the pandemic.

The impact of COVID-19 on the labour market is not yet fully understood however indicators relating to April 2020 show the number of people claiming unemployment benefits increased by 26,500 over the month to approximately 56,200. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has ensured thousands of workers remain in employment. The scheme will close in October after which we will understand the full impact on the labour market. Early indications of the impact have though been identified by expert groups:

- Ulster Bank Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) reported a severe contraction in the local private sector in April with a steep decline in staffing levels, while business confidence continued to fall;
- KPMG has projected the Northern Ireland economy to contract by 6.4% in 2020. However, it is expected to be the least affected region of the UK due to hosting a relatively large share of food manufacturing businesses, life science businesses and government employment; and
- ONS data based on a new fortnightly business survey, reveals that 73.8% of NI businesses are continuing to trade, however, 62.7% of businesses have recorded a decrease in turnover.

The UK Government's short to medium term approach to exiting COVID-19 charts three phases: **Response, Recovery, Renew**. This CDP is set in the context of the **Response** phase, focusing on ensuring the skills 'infrastructure' is maintained and that all learners are not disadvantaged, as well as moving as much delivery as possible on-line. In readiness for the Recovery and Renew phases, the wider FE sector will take a more medium term approach to planning.

NI's future economic and social success is predicated on its ability to access a highly skilled, talented and flexible workforce to deliver a vibrant economy and inclusive society. Further Education Colleges will play a crucial role in supporting NI to move through to the Recovery and Renewal Phases. We will realign delivery models and adopt a digital first approach that will maximise reach, provide value for money and close potential inequality gaps.

3 Guiding Principles

The below guiding principles have been developed to set the direction for the 2020/21 CDP in light of the current operating environment:

1. There will be immediate short term challenges, for example staff upskilling for delivery of high quality remote learning across all curriculum areas. This may limit the scale of delivery and our ability to achieve similar levels of value for money as we rapidly transition to remote delivery across the sector.
2. Social distancing is the new normal and delivery will be structured to reflect this. Classes will be balanced across the college week to optimise opportunities for students to enjoy face to face learning in line with the agreed set of principles and guidelines developed through the work of the Departmental Advisory and Oversight Group on the safe resumption of onsite delivery.
3. The FE Sector will deliver the planned curriculum to the maximum number of learners that is achievable in the current circumstances and will adopt a range of approaches including: face to face; blended; relayed and, peripatetic.
4. Level one and Level two programmes will mostly take place through on-campus delivery. However, all full-time Level two programmes will include some online delivery to prepare learners for progression.
5. Level three and Higher Education programmes must be blended for year 1 and year 2.
6. High quality and accessible on-line delivery will continue to be used during the phased return of on-site provision to deliver teaching and learning, provide student pastoral support, provide support to businesses, and upskilling programmes for individuals who wish to retrain or upskill.
7. Work with local employers will continue to provide apprenticeship and placement opportunities whilst ensuring the safety of staff and students.
8. Between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021 we will engage with businesses to:
 - Support employers through the provision of fully funded, tailored solutions through the Skills Focus Programme to increase the skills levels of the workforce; and
 - Facilitate small businesses in acquiring the skills to innovate, by delivering up to three InnovateUs upskilling projects per business, through which they work on developing new products, services or processes.
9. The FE Sector recognises that every student will not have the same access to broadband and IT facilities to support remote learning from home and as such we will explore appropriate strategies to ensure that these students are not disadvantaged.
10. The FE Sector will continue to support the most disadvantaged in communities across NI by ensuring access to learning opportunities that lead to sustainable career pathways.
11. The Curriculum Hub Action Plans, if required, will be reviewed and revised in agreement with DfE, to ensure that actions are reflective of the most pertinent needs of the economy in each curricular area. The quarterly reporting of progress against targets will continue to provide the Department with robust assurance of each Hub's performance.

4 Northern Regional College Operating Context

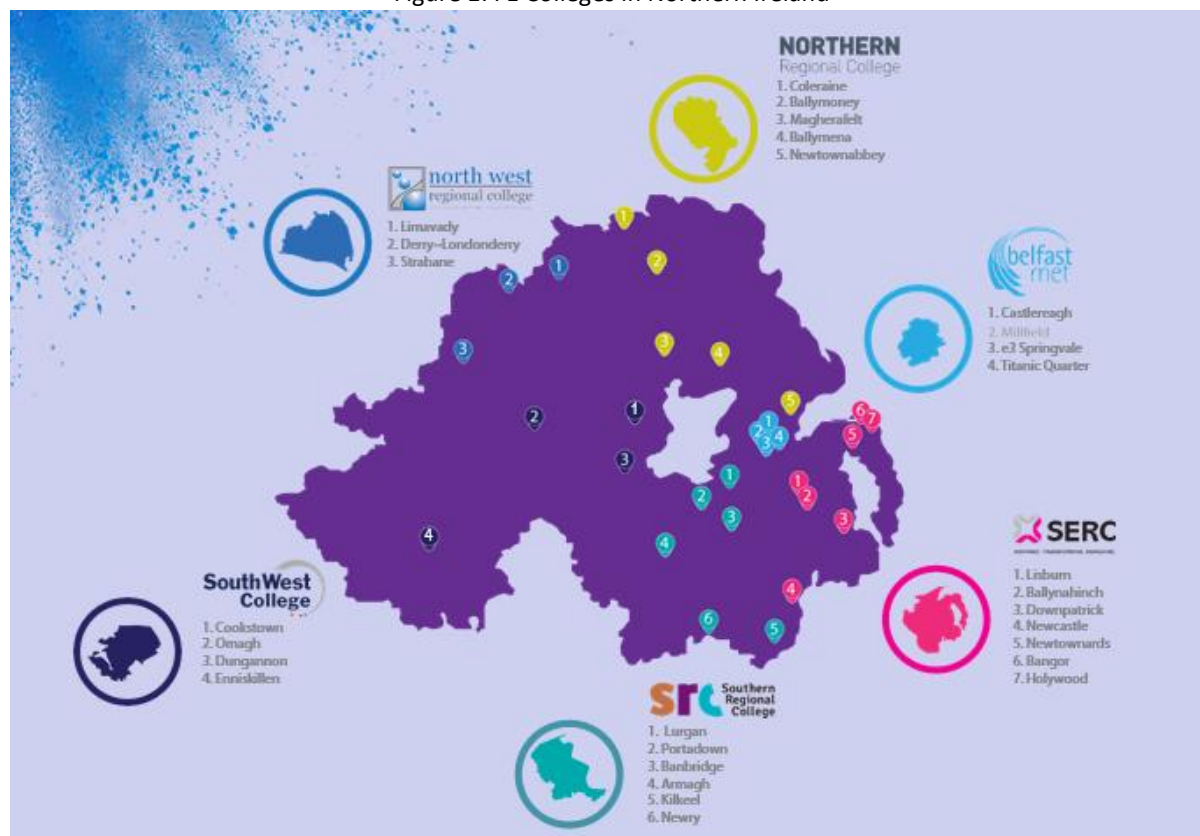
4.1 Background

Northern Regional College offers a wide range of courses resulting in approximately 17,000 annual regulated enrolments (including Essential Skills) [Department of Economy Further Education Statistics 2018-19](#). These courses are delivered in the College's six campuses in Ballymoney, Ballymena (Farm Lodge and Trostan Avenue), Coleraine, Magherafelt and Newtownabbey. In addition, we deliver community-based education in several outreach centres and have significant digital online learning capability.

4.2 Catchment Area

Our footprint stretches from the Causeway Coast in the north, through mid-Ulster to the outskirts of the Belfast Metropolitan area.

Figure 1: FE Colleges in Northern Ireland



4.3 Population

The diverse geographical catchment area of the College has a population of approximately 576,000 (NISRA, Population Estimates Bulletin 2019). In the College's catchment area, the population is due to increase (by 1.2%) up to 2022; its projected increase is less than Northern Ireland as a whole (2.6%). It is notable that within the 15-19 age group a small increase is anticipated in both Magherafelt and Ballymena.

4.4 Vision, Mission and Values

NRC's ambition is to make our College a partner of choice for students, staff, industry and other stakeholders. To help us achieve this, our vision and core values are outlined in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Our Vision, mission and values



Our strategic priorities and objectives through to 2022 are:

Figure 3: Our Strategic Priorities and Objectives



4.5 Curriculum Provision

The College's strategic priorities are supported by our Curriculum Strategy. We deliver a curriculum that is sustainable and relevant to stakeholder needs. For the 2020/21 academic year we will continue to align resources through planned provision and emerging economic requirements to ensure that the workforce in our catchment area contributes to the achievement of the draft PfG and the draft Industrial Strategy. These priorities are underpinned by a curriculum plan that is reviewed on an annual basis and allows for a quick response to changing and short term needs of the economy within the academic year.

The context for each report card in section 5 shows that a diverse curriculum is needed to meet the wide-ranging requirements of our catchment area. In terms of viable provision and class sizes, the College is constantly seeking new and flexible ways to deliver our provision. The establishment and success of our Digital Learning investment has raised capabilities and introduced new opportunities for staff and students alike.

Figure 4: 2019/20 Enrolment Figures

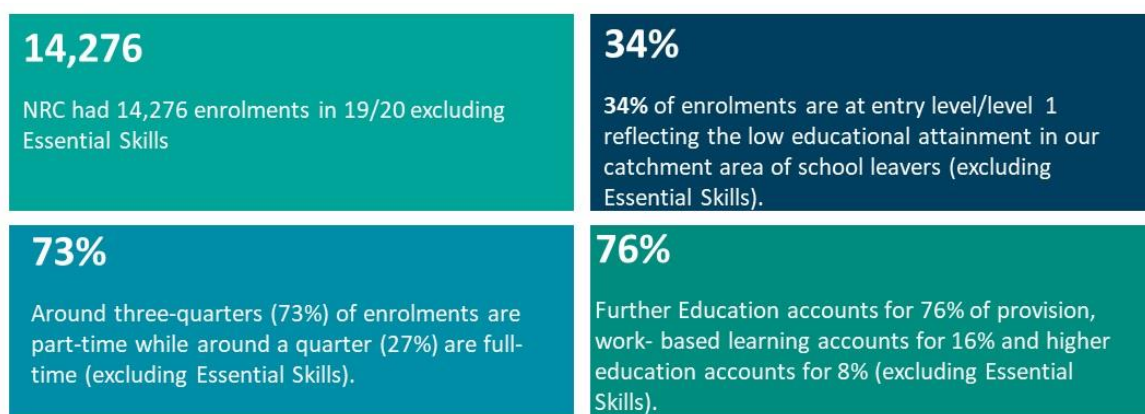
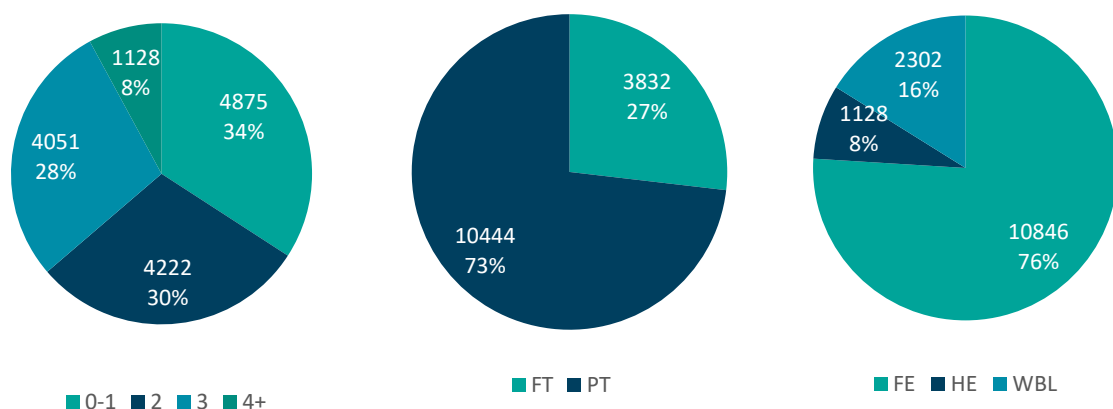


Figure 5: Breakdown of Enrolments by Level, Mode of Attendance and Funding

Level of Study Profile in 19/20 Mode of Attendance Profile in 19/20 Funding Stream Profile in 19/20



Source: CDP 30th June 2020

4.6 Operating Challenges and Opportunities in 2020/21

4.6.1 Impact of COVID 19

The College planning cycle starts early in each academic year for the following year, with the CDP completing the final stage. This year as the CDP and planned activity were in the process of being finalised COVID'19 was beginning to emerge in Northern Ireland. In the subsequent weeks and months, the College moved to a complete online delivery model for the completion of the 2019/20 academic year. The CDP figures that were included in the draft CDP 20/21 in March 2020 have now been revised in light of the continuing social distancing measures that are still in place six months later. The planned activity in Chapter 7 has taken the impact of the points in this section into consideration.

- **Social distancing of 2m:** Following Public Health Agency (PHA) guidance, all FE Colleges in Northern Ireland must adhere to social distancing of 2 meters in their facilities. Where 2m cannot be adhered to (for example in practical classes) then appropriate mitigation including use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be considered. Practical workspaces should have their capacity assessed in line with industry standards. An initial assessment by the College's Estates Team has indicated that in practical terms the overall physical capacity of the College is reduced to 35% – 40% at any one time. For a College which has older style buildings with smaller classrooms, in some areas this will mean physical class sizes are restricted to 4 or 5 students when face to face delivery is occurring, unless appropriate mitigations are put in place.
- **Blended delivery model:** Each qualification has been identified within the following categories; online; blended; face to face; and where necessary delayed. Where a qualification cannot be delivered through any of these modes then the viability of the course in 2020/21 has been considered.
- **Increased delivery cost:** The College must operate within its current allocated resources (see Section 6) and, where necessary, the enrolment numbers will be reviewed in order to accommodate this. This will include consideration of the costs to develop online materials and the potential cost of running smaller classes when delivering practical elements of course delivery. Additional costs of items such as PPE will also be taken into account.
- **Work placements:** The availability of work placements for courses within Health and Social Care and Early Years is yet to be fully appreciated. A number of areas have a significant number of work placement hours and the opportunity to complete these may be reduced considerably, with the latter half of the academic year being potentially the first time placements can be delivered.
- **Apprenticeships, furlough and redundancies:** Many of the College's apprentices were put onto furlough by their employers during March and April 2020, it is expected that the majority will return to employment once the furlough

scheme ends. However, there will be some for whom redundancy will become reality. The College will continue to support these apprentices to seek other opportunities. There will be a knock on effect for new applicants to the College seeking apprenticeships as the opportunities may be more limited, especially as Northern Ireland is expected to see an increase in the unemployment rate.

- **Traineeships:** It was anticipated that the new Traineeships would commence in September 2020, however the launch has been delayed. This means that trainees without employment will now be offered places on Training for Success programmes. The availability of suitable employer placements for Training for Success trainees will also be challenging due to the current economic climate and consequently the requirement for the College to provide 30 hours of weekly training provision.
- **Centre assessment grades:** All schools and FE Colleges had to use centre assessment grades for students due to the cancellation of exams and assessments in the 2020 academic year. It is anticipated that this will have a direct impact on the College's recruitment numbers in 2020/21. Students may achieve higher grades at GCSE than they may have attained through sitting exams, options to remain at school may now be available that would otherwise have been limited. Local universities have made unconditional offers and MaSN levels have been increased. The College expects the full time Higher Education enrolment figures to drop as a result. There is further potential for a negative effect on the College performance in 2020/21 as students may be enrolled onto a higher level of FE course based on centre assessment grades than they are academically suitable for, thus impacting on achievement and success rates.
- **Shielding:** As Government guidance on shielding changes throughout the year it is impossible to know the full impact on staff availability especially for courses that have practical elements and where staff skill sets are already difficult to recruit to. For students who have medical conditions which mean they must shield or could be required to shield later in the year, it may affect their ability to continue with their desired course.
- **Returners:** For over 1,200 students COVID'19 meant they could not complete some aspects of their qualifications in 2019/20 and must return at the start of the 2020/21 year to complete. Provision must be made available to complete these qualifications in parallel with starting the new academic year for all other students.
- **Opportunities for adult learners and upskilling:** As a result of COVID'19 opportunities have arisen through additional funding to support those who have been impacted by the pandemic. These short courses result in additional enrolments for the College and diversification of our provision with new awarding organisations. Unfortunately, with predicted redundancies there will be a need for the College to support upskilling to those affected and to increase learning opportunities for adults moving to different industries.

- **Opportunity for growth in part time Higher Education & HLAs:** With universities moving to online delivery and the associated cost of accommodation, there is an opportunity in the next few years for the College to increase its provision of part time HE programmes to suit those who wish to continue their education whilst working and remaining close to home, with lower enrolment fees. HLA programmes provide applicants the prospect of gaining qualifications whilst working and the College will seek to increase the breadth of vocational areas on offer. This will form part of the College's medium term strategic planning, however it is anticipated that in 2020/21 the planned activity for HLA may decline due to reduced employment opportunities.

4.6.2 Local Planning Constraints

The College reviewed the planned activity for 20/21 in mid-August after the confirmation of 2 meters social distancing in all FE Colleges. At a local level the following guidance has been issued to curriculum staff and planned activity for 2020/21 is now based on these constraints.

- The focus will be on ensuring all students achieve their main qualifications and returning students are prioritised. This may lead to reduced additionality until a relaxation in social distancing requirements is approved by the PHA;
- In the absence of mitigating actions, room capacity is effectively 35% across the campuses, although industry standards will be applied to practical rooms, including use of PPE, to maximise capacity in specialist areas;
- Any qualification that can be delivered online should be delivered in this way, regardless of level, to allow rooms with greater physical capacity to be freed for face to face timetabling;
- In developing student timetables, it is preferable to have the number of physical days on site minimised e.g. 3 full days rather than 5 half days as this will reduce the impact of a positive COVID'19 case; and
- When a new intake is reduced because of room capacity and blended delivery is not appropriate, then consideration must be given to the potential reduction in returners in 21/22 and subsequent years.

FE/HE Full Time classes

1. Additionality will be considered secondary to the core qualification and must be delivered online. This will be reviewed prior to semester 2 to assess further opportunities dependent on changes in social distancing;
2. Level 0-2 classes are capped to accommodate face to face provision. Effectively most classes will be cut to 8, although there will be instances where this will be lower. Where rooms based on estate's capacity recommendations are more than 8 then numbers can be adjusted up to meet the room capacity, but it is unlikely this will go above 10. By exception groups historically able to

cope with some blended learning may mean numbers can be increased slightly above room capacity. This will reduce new level 0-2 numbers to 40 – 50%;

3. New Level 3 and above will be capped at room capacity multiplied by two. This will allow for blended learning to be utilised and for student cohorts to have face to face delivery for 50% of the time; and
4. Where a second year group is greater than the room capacity then the same principle of splitting the class will apply.

Part Time Classes

1. Principles of FT provision also apply to PT with the additional caveats below.
2. In order to prioritise rooms for core provision, day time leisure courses will not be delivered in semester 1, this will be reviewed later in the academic year.
3. Night time leisure programmes can run but will be capped at the room capacity (plus any adjustment for blended learning).
4. Where it is not appropriate for night classes to have a blended approach, targets based on maximum room capacity may be used.

WBL

1. Year 1 enrolments will commence in week 2 due to DfE operational requirements.
 2. Year 2 and returning trainees will commence in week 1.
 3. Curriculum timetables will be determined from DfE guidance on contractual requirements for weekly attendance.
 4. Blended learning will be incorporated mostly for completion of NVQ qualifications, and potentially for L1 Personal and Social Skills and employability qualifications.
 5. Face to face curriculum delivery is essential for Technical Diploma qualifications due to practical content.
- 4.7 Impact of Guiding Principles and Associated Local Constraints on Planned Activity for 2020/21

The need to comply with PHA guidelines on social distancing has resulted in a reduction in room capacity impacting directly on recruitment to courses from Level 0 to Level 2. The primary focus of the College is to facilitate returning students into second year, followed by Level 3 and above provision and the continuation of Level 0 to Level 2 at lower levels. Furthermore, part-time activity has been significantly reduced due to the priority on the delivery of core curriculum with a corresponding reduction within the additionally provision.

Due to the nature of an ageing and inflexible estate and to ensure rooms are available to deliver core provision, day-time leisure courses are not scheduled for semester 1 to provide sufficient room space and comply with social distancing requirements. Applying social distancing requirements at 2 metres has reduced the capacity significantly, as the existing room size and layouts are not conducive to

alternations to achieve larger class sizes without endangering the health and well-being of staff and students.

In the paragraphs below, we have provided more information on how these constraints have impacted on each area of college provision.

Level 0/1: Within Inclusive Learning there will be a reduction in the number of full-time students due to reduced room capacity, with maximum class sizes of 8 or 9 (c70 students). A reduction of 70 full time students at level 0/1 will also reduce the number of part time enrolments across level 0/1 by approximately 500. Inclusive learning students complete one full time enrolment alongside six or seven part time enrolments. In addition, the Empower programme, which has been delivered in the College for a number of years (to provide support for parents of children with autism) is now coming to an end. This, together with the decision to prioritise core provision over day-time leisure activities has led to a reduction of c2,600 in unregulated PT enrolments.

Level 2: The College expects the planned activity for 2020/21 at Level 2 full time enrolments to reduce against 2019/20 activity due to the decreased room capacities associated with maintaining social distancing of 2m (c200 enrolments). Planned additionality is currently on hold, with a review point in December to determine the viability of part time additionality enrolments in January, this affects c1,000 PT enrolments. All part time leisure day courses have been postponed due to room capacity issues along with some community provision (where PHA recommendations could not be maintained), impacting approximately 1,000 enrolments.

Level 3: It is anticipated that full time and part time enrolments will be broadly similar to 2019/20 due to the blended approach, allowing similar class sizes to 19/20 to be accommodated in 20/21. However, falling demand for some FT classes (eg business and IT) have resulted in a reduction in enrolments of c150.

Essential Skills: It is expected that the number of enrolments for Essential Skills qualifications will drop for 16-19 year olds due to grade inflation within Centre Assessed Grades for GCSEs. The College expects a modest growth in enrolments for the 20+ age group due to the continued impact of Covid 19 on employment rates and the need to upskill adult learners.

Entitlement Framework: Due to the impact of social distancing regulations within the FE sector the College expects to see a downturn from the 2019/20 enrolment figure of 624 to 338 in 2020/21. In previous years, classes of 20+ have been accommodated at the College, but in 20/21 room constraints mean we are operating on class sizes of 8 or 9.

Work based learning: The College expects to see a broadly similar picture in 2020/21 in APPsNI, although there may be additional movement between Skills for Work Programmes and Apprenticeships due to the changing employment environment.

Level 4-8: It is expected that this will be an exceptionally challenging year for HE in FE due to grade inflation within A-levels and increased spaces within local universities. The overall impact may be as great as 20%.

4.8 EU Exit

On 31st January 2020 the UK left the European Union (EU) and has now entered a transition phase, planned to last until 31st December 2020. The impact of EU Exit is as yet unknown, however it has created uncertainty that is impacting on investment and business decisions by employers within our catchment area who recruit, train and upskill our learners. The College has completed risk-based exercises to determine the potential impact on operational delivery. At this time, all risk to the College has been assessed as low, given the College only has a small staff and student population who reside in the Republic of Ireland. The potential impact on EU funded projects is still unknown and the changing landscape may change the projects the College engages in. The impact on the local businesses with whom we engage on a daily basis is unknown and feedback to date confirms there will be impacts on employer and business engagement activities.

5 Planned Activity 2020/21 - Context

5.1 Qualifications – Report Card 1

Outlined below are the latest statistics relating to the educational profile of the College's catchment area:

Teaching

Across the four council areas, there are:

59 post primary schools

11 Special Schools

2 Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise campuses

3 University campuses

GCSEs

School leavers not achieving five plus GCSEs (A*-C) in 2017/18:

Antrim & Newtownabbey – 17%

Causeway Coast & Glens – 12%

Mid & East Antrim – 13%

Mid Ulster – 14%

NI – 15%

A levels

School leavers achieving two plus A levels (A*- E) in 2017/18:

Antrim & Newtownabbey – 56%

Causeway Coast & Glens – 49%

Mid & East Antrim – 60%

Mid Ulster – 55%

NI – 57%

Entering FE

School leavers entering institutes of Further Education in 2017/18:

Antrim & Newtownabbey – 30%

Causeway Coast & Glens – 43%

Mid & East Antrim – 30%

Mid Ulster – 33%

NI – 34%

Entering Training

School leavers entering training institutes in 2017/18:

Antrim & Newtownabbey – 12%

Causeway Coast & Glens – 8%

Mid & East Antrim – 9%

Mid Ulster – 12%

NI – 10%

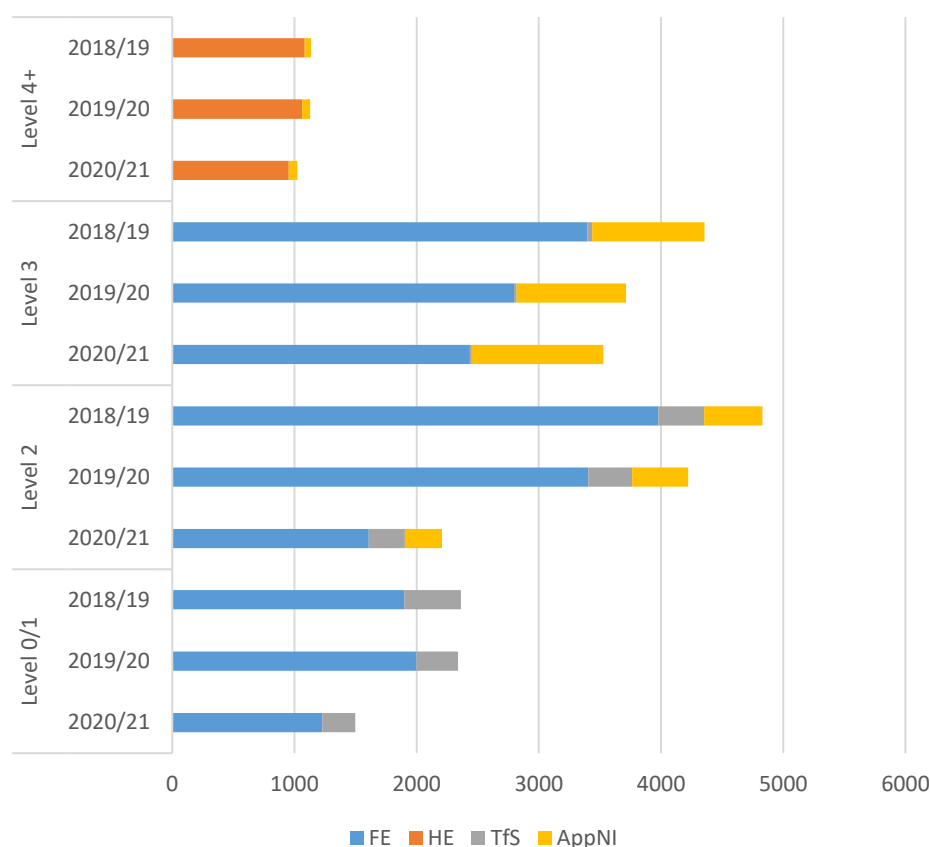
6 months after their course

In 2017/18, there was an 8% increase in Northern Regional College students in employment six months after their course. Conversely, there was a 3% decrease in the number of students in learning six months after their course

¹ •Teaching - Department of Education, School Enrolment - School Level PPS data, 2019/20
GCSEs/A levels/Entering FE or training - Department of Education, School Leavers Statistical Bulletin (May, 2019)
6 months after their course - DfE FE Leavers survey 2015/16 – 2017/18

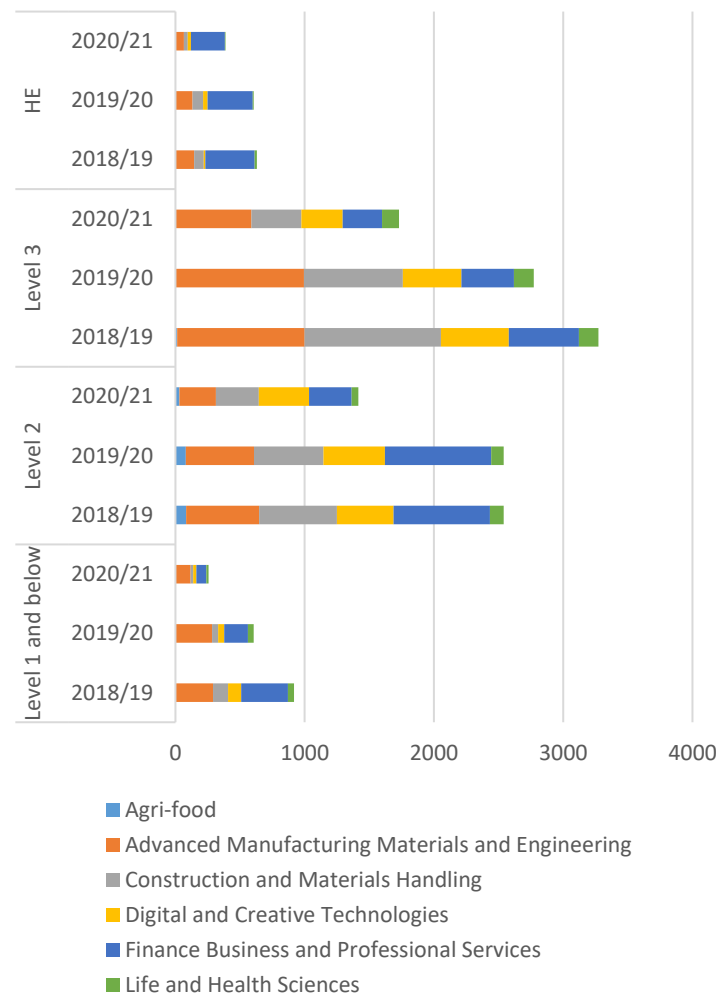
The NI Skills Barometer Summary Report (2019) shows the average weekly wage of employees is directly related to educational attainment. Those at Level 3+ earning on average £500 per week by the age of 40, compared to less than £400 per week for those with educational attainment at Level 2 and below. The higher the level of education, the higher the level of earnings and the ability to contribute to the local economy. Opportunities to retrain, develop new skills, diversify, and change career are paramount to lifelong wellbeing and fulfilling our potential. Life-long learning opportunities are essential to allow individuals to upskill and progress to higher level opportunities. According to the NI Skills Barometer, the workforce in Northern Ireland is expected to grow by around 84,000 by 2026. Of this growth, it is expected that 28,600 jobs will be filled from the education sector and/or from migration at the following levels: L6+ = 8,700; L4-5 = 3,352; L3 = 6,905; L2 = 6,403; ≤L1 = 3,197.

Figure 6: Enrolments at the College (2018/19 and 2019/20 actuals and 2020/21 targets)



Please note: 2020/21 targets do not include those students returning to complete their 2019/20 qualifications.

Figure 7 - Priority Skills and STEM Enrolments by Level and Year



Source: College Development Plan Dashboard
 20/21 – Targets
 19/20 - 6th March 2020
 18/19 - 18th October 2019

While the impact of COVID-19 on the labour market is not yet fully understood, early indications of the impact have been identified by expert groups:

- The NISRA Index of Services Q1 2020 bulletin reported services output in NI saw a quarterly decrease of 4.2% in Quarter 1 2020, and a decrease of 4.8% over the year, while the UK IOS output decreased over both the quarter (1.9%) and the year (0.9%).
- ONS data based on a new fortnightly business survey (Coronavirus and the economic impacts on the UK, July 2020), reveals that 85% of businesses have been trading for more than the last two weeks, while 4% started trading again within the last two weeks. In addition, 58% reported a decrease in turnover out of the normal range while 12% reporting that their turnover had increased.

- The InterTradeIreland Business Monitor Survey (Q2 2020) reported that 53% of businesses in Northern Ireland have seen a decline in business in quarter two of 2020, compared with 9% in quarter one of 2020.
- TourismNI COVID Impact Survey (April 2020) found that COVID would have a severe impact on 79% of tourism and hospitality business in the short term (0-3 months) and 63% in the longer term (4 months +) with 73% stating no business losses would be covered by their current insurance. In addition, 50% of all businesses responding to the survey had reduced staff numbers. 427 businesses indicated that they had furloughed, laid off with pay or made temporarily redundant, nearly 9,000 staff (full time, part time and seasonal). 418 businesses indicated that they had permanently laid off nearly 1,300 staff (full time, part time and seasonal). This equates to approximately 50% of the job growth achieved across the sector in the last 10 years.

5.2 Employers²

Outlined below are key statistics relating to employers and economic activity across the College's four council areas:

Economic activity

Economic activity rates are higher than the NI average in three out of four council areas in 2018:
Antrim & Newtownabbey – 80%
Causeway Coast & Glens – 71%
Mid & East Antrim – 75%
Mid Ulster – 77%
NI – 73%

Employee jobs

Employment from businesses by sector:

Council	Construction	Manufacture	Oth	Service
A&N	5%	11%	2%	82%
CC&G	5%	11%	2%	82%
M&EA	5%	17%	2%	77%
MU	9%	30%	2%	59%
NI	5%	11%	2%	83%

Registered businesses

With over 24,000 registered businesses in 2020, the economy of the catchment area is diverse with a number of specialisms. For example: Causeway Coast & Glens: tourism & hospitality; Mid Ulster: engineering & construction; Mid & East Antrim: manufacturing and Antrim & Newtownabbey: services.

Business Size

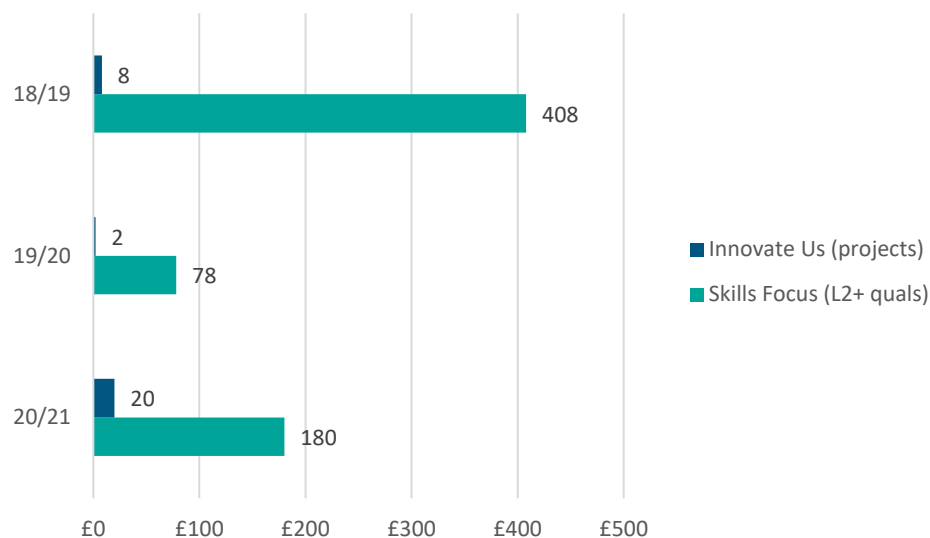
Business size (employees) by council area in 2020:

Council	Micro (0-9)	Small (10-49)	Medium (50-249)	Large (250+)	Total
A&N	3,620	430	105	25	4,190
CC&G	5,500	420	80	15	6,015
M&EA	4,520	360	60	15	4,955
MU	8,305	580	130	20	9,035
NI	67,915	6,485	1,365	325	76,090

² NISRA, Labour Force Survey 2018
Business Register and Employment Survey, 2019
Inter Departmental Business Register, 2020
Inter Departmental Business Register, 2020

To grow the NI Economy, it is essential that businesses are supported to innovate and grow to provide more job opportunities. As business needs change, it is crucial that the workforce is able to support business expansion by having appropriate skills. FDI also requires a skilled workforce to be available. Therefore, it is very important students are up-skilled in areas relative to demand (NI Skills Barometer, 2019) and that the existing workforce is developed to ensure local business can compete in a global market.

Figure 8: Skills Focus and Innovate Us - 2018/19 - 2019/20 against 20/21 targets



Source: College CDP
 20/21 Targets
 19/20 actual CDP SPICE Report
 18/19 actual CDP SPICE Report

5.3 Social Inclusion

Outlined below are key statistics demonstrating potential barriers to education and employment across the College's four council areas³:

No qualifications

No qualification rates (aged 16-64) are higher than the NI average in three out of four council areas in 2018:

Antrim & Newtownabbey – 7%
Causeway Coast & Glens – 20%
Mid & East Antrim – 17%
Mid Ulster – 19%
NI – 15%

Unemployment

In 2018, unemployment rates (aged 16-64) were higher than the NI average in the Causeway Coast and Glens council area:

Antrim & Newtownabbey – 22%
Causeway Coast & Glens – 33%
Mid & East Antrim – 29%
Mid Ulster – 26%
NI – 30%

Disabilities

Census 2011 predicted that the number of people with a long-term health problem or disability (bad or very bad health) is lower in all four councils areas when compared with the NI average:

Antrim & Newtownabbey – 5%
Causeway Coast & Glens – 5%
Mid & East Antrim – 5%
Mid Ulster – 5%
NI – 6%

Deprivation

While the College's catchment area would have lower rankings than the NI average in relation to deprivation, one of the 37 measures of deprivation is the proportion leaving school aged 16, 17 and 18 not entering Education, Employment or Training:

Antrim & Newtownabbey – 3.2%
Causeway Coast & Glens – 2.9%
Mid & East Antrim – 3.7%
Mid Ulster – 3.0%
NI – 2.7%

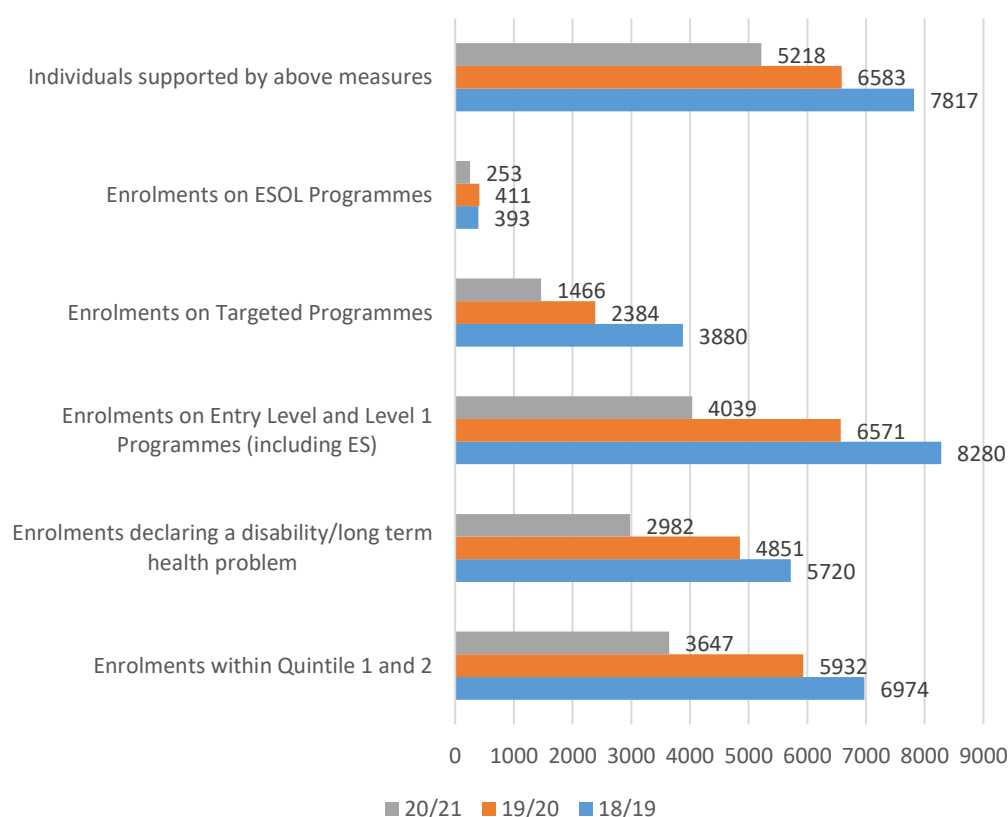
³ NISRA, Labour Force Survey 2018
NISRA, CENSUS, 2011
NI Multiple Deprivation Measures, 2017

It is important to ensure that opportunity is open to everyone, wherever they live. It is also important to develop a workforce that has the right, high quality skills to meet the demands of employers now and in the future. This can be achieved by helping people to address barriers they face to accessing high quality employment, including low or no qualifications, disability, social or language.

Within the College the following programmes aim to address social inclusion barriers:

- Our Access courses provide a bridge for those without the appropriate level of qualifications to aspire to and achieve success in higher education;
- We offer skills-based courses that do not carry a qualification, but provide participants with either specialist skills such as advanced welding, or the opportunity to re-engage with learning as a step to further learning or employment;
- The College continues to work with the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme to provide ESOL courses to support their integration to life in NI; and
- The Inclusive Learning programmes establish qualification pathways for individuals with disabilities or long term health problems.

Figure 9: Social Inclusion targets (20/21) and actuals (18/19 & 19/20)



Source: CDR 31st July 2018/2019

6 Budget

DRAFT (12/5/2020) CDP FOR 2020/21 - Northern Regional College							
				A		B	C
	Description	Draft Outturn Expenditure 2019/20		2020/21 DfE Draft Allocation	Note		
	Income	- 6,752		- 6,700	Note 1		
	Grant Income (Non EU)	- 380		- 250	Note 1		
	NILGOS	1,140		1,150			
	Other Operating Expenses	8,275		8,757	Note 2		
	Staff Costs	22,104		22,476	Note 3		
	Total DEL Resource Budget	24,387		25,433	Note 4		
	Total DEL Resource Budget	24,387		25,433			

Note 1	This figures includes the revised estimates for Skills Focus and Innovate US for this 2020/21 year. There will be pressure on external income due to Covid-19 and other factors, not factored into this draft figure.
Note 2	This figure includes additional pressures as a result of the Reval 2020 impact which is affecting all FE Colleges and cannot be absorbed within existing baselines. This figure does not include the £900k baseline budget short-fall - see Note 4 below. We will bid for this in-year.
Note 3	If MASN is reduced which could impact on DfE income (and potentially budget allocation) there may not be any scope to reduce staff numbers and costs. The College would have to look at the potential MASN impact, the courses affected, staffing, utilization and the potential for voluntary redundancy. In the absence of a VES scheme any budget savings with reduced staffing would not be in-year.
Note 4	The College submits the 2020/21 Draft College Development Plan at risk on the assumption additional funding will be secured in-year in line with the 2018/19 and 2019/20 approach to fund the documented £900k baseline budget short-fall in prior years. The College continues to operate its efficiency programme to reduce academic staffing costs in line with benchmarks within the Tribal report however the main savings will be realised when the College moves from 6 to 4 main campuses but due to capital funding restrictions and the capital new build phasing required within the Department this will take longer. Therefore in the short-term additional funding will be required in-year and the College will continue to work closely with NIFON and the Department on all in-year funding bids.
	The College has developed an in-year emergency efficiency plan to achieve the indicative opening budget allocation. The College has identified a number of pressures that require funding to deal with Covid-19 related emerging in-year requirements and will bid for these at the relevant monitoring round. The College acknowledges that at the date of submission of this plan a partial contribution has been made to cover the in-year covid-19 pressures and that the Department will provide an opportunity to bid for further funding.

7 Planned Activity – Report Cards

The tables below set out the College's planned activity for the year (in-light of a DfE budget allocation of £25.4m) in support of the PfG Outcomes.

Residual 2019-20 Qualifications			
PfG Outcomes to which we contribute: 1: We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy 6: We have more people working in better jobs			
Area of Planned Activity	Planned Activity ⁴		
FE Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L0-3 FT & PT Excluding Essential Skills 		Enrolment Targets	Individual Targets
	Level 2	504	277
	PT	345	125
	FT	159	152
	Level 3	289	267
	PT	218	197
	FT	71	70
	Total	793	544
HE in FE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L4-6 F/T 		Enrolment Targets	Individual Targets
	Level 4+ FT	9	9
HE in FE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L4-6 P/T 		Enrolment Targets	Individual Targets
	Level 4+ PT	48	46
TfS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L0-3 		Enrolment Targets	Individual Targets
	Level 2	63	35
AppsNI: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L2 - 3 		Enrolment Targets	Individual Targets
	Level 2	127	71
	Level 3	173	102
	Total	300	173

⁴ Individuals were worked out using the 19/20 ratio of enrolments to students (main programme of study) by funding type, level of study and mode of study.

HLAs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L4-5 		Enrolment Targets	Individual Targets
	Level 4+	2	2
Essential Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole College Provision 		Enrolment Targets	Individual Targets
	Essential Skills	0	0

2020/21 Qualifications (excludes 19/20 residuals)					
PfG Outcomes to which we contribute: 1: We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy 6: We have more people working in better jobs					
Area of Planned Activity	Planned Activity ⁵ For 20/21			19/20 Activity	
FE Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L0-3 FT & PT Excluding Essential Skills Data source: CDR 		Enrolment Targets	Individual Targets	Enrolment	Individual
	Level 0/3 total	5,362	4,039	10,870	7,047
	Level 0/3 FT	2,202	2,156	2665	2,606
	Level 0/3 PT	3,160	1,883	8,205 ⁶	4,441
HE in FE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L4-6 F/T Data source: CDR 		Enrolment Targets	Individual Targets	Enrolment	Individual
	Level 4+ FT	309	309	259	259
HE in FE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L4-6 P/T Data source: CDR 		Enrolment Targets	Individual Targets	Enrolment	Individual
	Level 4+ PT	644	618	804	772
TfS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L0-3 Data source: CRM 		Enrolment Targets	Individual Targets	Enrolment	Individual
	Level 1	269	24	341	31
	Level 2	295	164	358	199
	Level 3	17	3	115	3
	Total	581	191	814	233
AppsNI: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L2 - 3 Data source: CRM 		Enrolment Targets	Individual Targets	Enrolment	Individual
	Level 2	304	169	460	256

⁵ This is the expected end of year activity. It has been calculated using actual 20/21 enrolments on 14.9.20, any residual 19/20 enrolments have been excluded and then a 90% retention applied to the figure. The actuals were reviewed again on 19.10.20.

⁶ Includes 22 Higher Education Cost Recovery Enrolments

	Level 3	1,075	682	1,028	605	
	Total	1,379	851	1,488	861	
				Progression to final year	97⁷%	
HLAs <ul style="list-style-type: none">L4-5Data source: CDR		Enrolment Targets	Individual Targets	Enrolment	Individual	
	Level 4+	70	70	65	65	
				Progression to final year	85⁸%	
Essential Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none">Whole College ProvisionData source: CDR		Enrolment Targets	Individual Targets	Enrolment	Individual	
	Essential Skills	2,585	1,687	3,424	2,235	
Priority Sector Areas and / or STEM (PSSA)⁹: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Whole College ProvisionData source: CDR		Enrolment Actuals	Individual Actuals		Enrolment Actuals	Individual Actuals
	PSSA & STEM	3,689	2,886	PSSA & STEM	6,577	2,235
				No. of final year students enrolled in one or more PSSA subjects	4,922	1,521

⁷ Number of students progressing from penultimate year of study into final year.

⁸ Number of students progressing from penultimate year of study into final year.

⁹ The Priority Sector Area and / or STEM performance measure incorporates not only the Priority Sector Areas as previously measured, but also STEM subjects

Employers		
PfG Outcomes to which we contribute: 1: We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy 5: We are an innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their potential		
Area of Planned Activity	Planned Activity for 20/21	19/20 Activity
InnovateUs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021 Data source: SPICE 	20 projects delivered through the InnovateUs programme £60,000 of projects completed (budget spend)	2 projects delivered through the InnovateUs programme £4,800 of projects completed (budget spend)
Skills Focus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L2+ 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021 Data source: SPICE 	180 undertaking a Level 2 (and above) qualification through the Skills Focus Programme	58 undertaking a Level 2 (and above) qualification through the Skills Focus Programme
Assured Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L0-8 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021 	To deliver 1 No. of Assured Skills Academies	1 Assured Skills Academy
Other Programmes		
Fusion Projects	To deliver 1 project through Fusion £29,000 of projects completed (budget spend) 1 business supported through the programme	0 projects through Fusion in 19/20
Bridge to Employment Programme	N/A	N/A
Innovation Voucher Scheme	To deliver 4 projects through Innovation Voucher Scheme £20,000 of projects completed (budget spend) 4 businesses supported through the programme	0 projects through the Innovation Vouchers Scheme in 19/20

Social Inclusion		
PfG Outcomes to which we contribute: 1: We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy 6: We have more people working in better jobs		
Area of Planned Activity (Data source: CDR)	Planned Activity for 20/21	19/20 Activity
Enrolments within Quintile 1 and 2	3,647	5,932 ¹⁰
Enrolments declaring a disability / long term health problem	2,982	4,851
Enrolments on Entry Level and Level 1 Programmes (including Essential Skills)	4,039	6,571
Enrolments on Targeted Programmes e.g. Collect Connect, Prince's Trust	1,466	2,384
Enrolments on ESOL Programmes	253	411 ¹¹
Overall number of individuals supported by above measures	5,218	6,583 ¹²

¹⁰ Deprivation was worked out using MDM2010 due to MDM2017 not being included in the CDR

¹¹ Includes ESOL and Pre-ESOL

¹² Distinct student count of all of the above enrolments

Overall College Performance		
Performance Indicator	Planned Activity for 20/21	18/19 Performance
Retention Rate: The proportion of the number of enrolments who complete their final year of study to the number of final year enrolments.	86%	84.9%
Achievement Rate: The percentage of the number of enrolments who completed their final year of study and achieve their qualifications to the number of enrolments who completed their final year of study.	81%	79.3%
Success Rate: The proportion of the number of enrolments who complete their final year of study and achieve their qualification to the number of final year enrolments.	69.7%	67.3%