

NORTHERN Regional College

Northern Regional College

College Development Plan 2022-23

Version Final 1.0

Date 24.1.23

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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.

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 draft Programme for Government \(PfG\)](#) aspirations.

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". In addition, the sector plays a key role, along with other education and training providers, in helping to address the links between deprivation and lower educational outcomes. FE colleges continue to contribute to the development of a more joined up approach to education and training provision for 14-19-year-olds with the aim of enhancing the 14-19 education and training landscape so that our young people reach their potential and maximise their contribution to our economy and society.

The global pandemic, COVID-19, completely transformed the way we live, work, and learn. The FE sector digital platforms provide learners with a flexible delivery model taking into consideration the capacity and capability of the learner and the needs of the specific course. This flexibility will allow the sector to respond quickly to any future restrictions. [The Northern Ireland Skills Barometer 2021 update](#) provides a detailed understanding of the future skills needs and skills gaps by qualification level, subject area and sector for Northern Ireland covering the period up to 2030. This helps form the basis of future curriculum plans in the FE Sector.

Creating a dynamic ecosystem where Government, Industry and Education providers can work in partnership is a key priority. The FE sector will support delivery of the Department's '[Economic Recovery Action Plan](#)' which sets out a range of actions to kick-start economic recovery in Northern Ireland and build a more competitive, inclusive and green economy. It reflects the colleges' contribution to raising skills levels and increasing productivity of the future workforce and aligning study to the needs of the economy in supporting a highly skilled and agile workforce. This included the introduction of Skills for Life and Work and Traineeship programmes from September 2021, replacing Training for Success.

The following visions and strategies have been published by the Department, building on the 'Economic Recovery Action Plan' which the FE sector is a key partner in taking forward:

- A [10X Economy](#) – an economic vision for a decade of innovation in delivering a ten times better economy that will ultimately result in a 'positive impact on our economy, societal and environmental wellbeing', 'creating jobs', 'increase incomes', 'improve productivity levels' and 'provide opportunities for all'.

Through focusing on the five priority clusters identified in '10X Economy', the FE sector will support the Department's economic vision to 'recover, rebuild and rebound back stronger than ever', meaning 'better jobs with better wages, in a more flexible working environment and a better overall quality of life'. The five priority clusters identified are:

- Digital, ICT and Creative Industries (e.g., Cyber Security);
- Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering (e.g., Composites);

- Agri-Tech;
 - Life and Health Sciences (e.g., Personalised Medicine); and
 - Fintech / Financial Services.
- [Trade and Investment for a 10X Economy](#): focuses on equipping individuals and business with the information and skills to exploit emerging trade and investment opportunities in the priority clusters and in providing ‘a world class talent offering’.
 - [‘Tourism Recovery Action Plan’](#): The FE sector supported the development and continues to support the implementation of phase two of the action plan to support the development of a solid foundation for the recovery of the Northern Ireland tourism industry and hospitality industry, and the development of Northern Ireland as a sustainable and competitive tourism destination that meets the needs of both future visitors and local communities alike.
 - [Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland - Skills for a 10X Economy](#): This strategy replaces “Success through Skills – Transforming Futures”, addressing 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 period 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.

The NI Traineeship is the new flagship Level 2 vocational education programme that delivers the commitments set out within ‘Generating our Success’ the NI Strategy for Youth Training for a non-employed route. The programme aims to create a pathway through vocational education that offers participants the opportunity to achieve qualifications equivalent to five GCSEs through a combination of vocational training, structured work placement and numeracy and literacy qualifications, to support an individual’s progression into employment or higher levels of education and training. An

Advanced Technical Award at level 3 is being piloted, which will build on the Traineeship model and assist to deliver a consistent full time vocational pathway at this level. Both programmes will prioritise those skills that are most economically relevant and contribute to increasing the proportion of working age population with qualifications at level 2 and level 3.

Aligned with the 'Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland – Skills for a 10X Economy', the FE sector has begun delivering Skill Up – The Flexible Skills Fund (Skill Up) across multiple levels and sectors, focused on the priority sectors and accredited qualifications at level 3, 4 and 5 where there is the greatest need, as highlighted by the Skills Barometer. Through Skill Up, we aim to skill, upskill, and reskill individuals to meet the needs of the economy as we emerge from the pandemic and continue to grow the economy whilst boosting participation in lifelong learning and reduce key skills imbalances in areas such as digital technologies, advanced manufacturing, leadership, and healthcare. As Skill Up prepares to enter Year 2 of the programme, proposal requests for Year 3 are also being sought from course providers.

Developing a highly skilled and motivated workforce will be at the core of our economic recovery and the FE sector plays a key role by providing high quality learner education and training. The establishment of seven Curriculum Hubs in key occupational areas focused on priority skills and growth sectors of employment, fully supports these goals.

The FE sector will contribute to the Review of Level 4 and 5 Provision and Higher Education (HE) in FE and as the review concludes, work towards implementation of agreed recommendations.. This includes ensuring that HE in FE qualifications and progression pathways through HE remain appropriate for meeting the needs of learners and the economy. In addition, input from colleges will be vital to ongoing work looking at the reform of vocational qualifications and responding to developments across the UK in this area.

The FE sector is also represented on the Tertiary Education Sector Senior Leaders Forum. The core purpose of the Forum is to foster greater collaboration between all those involved in post-compulsory school-age education and to help move towards a unified tertiary education sector in Northern Ireland. The Forum seeks to advance the principal aims of supporting all learners to reach their potential and in doing so, support the skills needs of the Northern Ireland economy.

Throughout, the FE sector will provide support to those who face particular challenges and barriers to engaging in education. This includes learners with a learning difficulty and / or disability and learners in the three prisons in Northern Ireland.

Aligned to the Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership statement “Safeguarding is everyone’s business” colleges’ safeguarding, care & welfare policies are built upon a foundation of ‘zero tolerance’ and have a shared objective to keep children, young people, adults at risk of harm and adults in need of protection safe from harm. The FE sector is committed to ensuring that all students, staff, and stakeholders of the colleges experience an inclusive, enjoyable, and safe environment, in which they feel respected and valued.

The Department is investing £224 million in delivering seven new FE campuses providing modern facilities from which to deliver new and evolving curriculum provision addressing the needs of learners, industry, and the wider economy, with new campuses at Armagh, Banbridge, Ballymena, Craigavon, Coleraine, and Enniskillen along with expansion of existing Newry East campus via re-development of the former Newry Sport Centre. The new iconic Erne campus in Enniskillen is constructed to the highest environment standard of Passiv Haus Premium, a world first for an educational building. In addition, a major £10 million refurbishment of North West Regional College’s Springtown campus has recently been completed.

In conjunction with the City Deals programme, further capital projects are being considered at North West Regional College and South West College.

The FE sector is an essential component to support delivery of the Executive’s PfG Outcomes and the Department’s vision and the strategies outlined above. 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. FE colleges will play a crucial role in supporting NI to move through the Recovery to the Renewal Phases.

In order to carry out that role effectively, the FE sector needs to be able to flex delivery to adapt to the changing economic and strategic environment in which it operates. While the current six-college model does provide the ability to adapt provision to meet the skills need of specific areas, the associated governance required can constrain the

sector's ability to act quickly and cohesively to meet the challenges it faces including its increasing cost base and the recent decline in enrolments.

The Minister has therefore approved the initiation of the first stage of a Review of the current FE Delivery Model which will seek to develop an evidence base on current delivery in the sector and to bring forward alternative delivery models to help inform how the Review will be taken forward. An external contractor, Tribal has been commissioned to carry out a benchmarking exercise as part of this initial stage which is expected to be completed by Summer 2022. A submission will then be developed to the Minister summarising the current position and seeking approval for proposals on how the Review should be taken forward. The Department has been meeting with Colleges to seek their initial views and that engagement will intensify if the Minister decides the Review should progress to the next stage.

2 Current Operating Environment

This College Development Plan has been progressed against a backdrop of a non-functioning Northern Ireland Executive, absence of longer-term budgets, a world-wide recession, a cost-of-living crisis, and rising energy costs, ongoing turmoil within the UK Government, and continued uncertainty on the world stage emanating from the Ukrainian crisis. This creates uncertainty in NI generally, significant financial pressures for government, businesses and citizens and impacts on the services required from the FE sector

Expert analysis for the recovery of the NI economy reflects the following:

- Ulster Bank Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) June 2022 reported a sharp decrease in output and new orders as severe price pressures caused demand to contract. Business confidence also fell, but companies continue to expand staffing levels.
- Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (Spring 2022) noted NI growth prospects are still relatively good with anticipated growth of 4.2% in 2022, although global uncertainties remain a challenge for the NI economy. The inflation projections for 2022 are 5.9%. The issue of the Northern Ireland Protocol provides opportunities and challenges, giving NI manufacturers access to both UK and EU markets, however, import of goods from GB is causing significant challenges for many firms and adding to costs.

Despite these uncertainties it is recognised that Northern Ireland's future success is predicated on its ability to access a highly skilled, talented, and flexible workforce, giving people access to better jobs across different sectors by providing more opportunities through Lifelong Learning, supporting personal development, addressing the issues that lead to underachievement and strengthening links between industry and academia. The future demand for skills is particularly relevant to Colleges across Northern Ireland as the Skills Barometer highlights that delivering on Northern Ireland's economic potential will require a significant uplift in the number of people undertaking professional and technical qualifications.

The demand for skills in NI will outstrip supply but the nature of the skills gap varies across NQF levels. The largest supply gaps are likely to emerge in the mid-tier skills levels across most subject areas, linked primarily to a supply issue. NQF level 4-5 qualifications represent only 7% of the overall supply of labour from the education

system. The Skills Barometer also suggests that addressing this undersupply could be met by either increasing the course offering and participation in mid-level qualifications at FE or increasing the number of apprenticeships which achieve at least mid-level qualification. A significant majority of the jobs which supported our economy during the lockdown were vocational, and remain essential to continued growth, particularly at levels 3-5, across all sectors of the economy. These sectors 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 students, employers and communities are met as NI responds to, recovers from, and renews itself following the pandemic.

The drive for higher skills and relevant professional and technical qualifications is also being progressed by Colleges through the delivery of a new Vocational Education and Training (VET) system. The new VET system includes the well-established apprenticeship pathway and a non-employed pathway based on Level 2 Traineeships and Level 3 Advanced Technical Awards. The implementation of this non-employed pathway is central to the transformation of the VET landscape of Northern Ireland. The FE sector is committed to developing qualifications that will underpin the new VET system in Northern Ireland. The introduction of the new Traineeships/Advanced Technical awards are based on a new pedagogy underpinned by Project Based Learning that aims to create a new system of learning that will:

- Simplify the overly complex vocational offer;
- Reduce the number of vocational qualifications;
- Establish clear pathways based on apprenticeships (employed) and non-employed routes – providing seamless transition and progression for learners;
- Address the risks created by change across the qualifications market and ensure the availability of qualifications which meet our needs; and
- Address the forecasted skills shortfall at Level 3

The Further Education Colleges successfully adjusted to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic over recent years including shifting to new delivery models, centre assessed grading and assessment and enhanced support for learners. However, the downward trend in full time further and higher education enrolments remains a significant concern across all Colleges. Whilst recognising that the number of school learners at 16 years of age has dropped, the extent of the decline is attributed to the

outworking of education policy across NI and in particular the growth in 6th form provision and a funding model that has incentivised schools to retain learners leading to increased levels of duplication of provision between schools and colleges.

The joint DE and DfE 14-19 Framework was approved by both DE and DfE Ministers in June 2022. It is critical that the Framework, 'Developing a More Strategic Approach to 14-19 Education and Training', progresses a range of actions to deliver a more effective partnership delivery model between schools and FE Colleges that provides value for money and addresses the shortage of vocational skills at mid-tier levels. The Colleges are committed to progressing any actions that may emerge from the 14-19 Framework to ensure that the needs of all young people are met.

A further challenge which will impact College delivery is the cessation of EU funding in particular in the area of social inclusion. Over a number of years, Colleges have secured funding for substantial programmes to support disadvantaged young people to progress to education, training, and employment. As a result of EU Exit, there is risk of a reduction in this provision if no replacement funding is secured through new schemes such as Peace Plus and Shared Prosperity Fund.

This CDP is set in the context of the **Recovery** phase, focusing on ensuring the skills 'infrastructure' is maintained. Further Education Colleges will play a crucial role in supporting NI to move through the Recovery to the Renewal Phases.

3 Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles have been developed to set the direction for the 2022/23 CDP in light of the current operating environment:

1. Social distancing will not be in place at the start of the academic year (however good practice and Covid hygiene measures will still be promoted) and recruitment capacity will return to pre Covid levels. However, the residual impact of Covid 19 will result in smaller class sizes for years 2 and 3. Delivery will continue to adhere to any updates from the Departmental Advisory and Oversight Group on the safe resumption of onsite delivery.
2. The FE Sector will use its allocated resource budget to maximise the curriculum offer across the region. We will be proactive in developing and delivering an innovative curriculum provision in line with a range of departmental funding streams to deliver on the 10X and Skills Strategy.
3. Colleges will engage appropriate strategies to reset themselves as 'face to face' institutions.
4. Colleges will use the experiences of the pandemic to build on the use of technology to support more flexible forms of learning to businesses, and for individuals who wish to retrain or upskill.
5. Work with local employers will continue to develop new apprenticeship and placement opportunities.
6. We will engage with businesses to:
 - Support employers through the provision of fully funded, tailored solutions through the Skills Focus Programme and use the Skill Up Initiative 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.
7. The FE sector will continue to work with relevant stakeholders in the development of a new Vocational Education and Training system through the further expansion of Traineeships, Advanced Technical and Apprenticeships.
8. 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.

9. The FE sector will continue to support local schools in the delivery of the Entitlement Framework through on-site delivery and in accordance with DfE guidelines on safe resumption.
10. The FE sector will play its role in implementing key policy initiatives and recommendations from:
 - The 14-19 framework 'Framework Developing a More Strategic Approach to 14-19 Education and Training'
 - Review of Level 4 and 5 provision and HE in FE; and
 - Vocational Qualifications Reform.
11. The FE Sector will continue to build on its programme of collaboration aimed at ensuring the delivery of a more coherent and responsive sector and making best use of existing resources and expertise.
12. The FE sector will use the ETI review of Curriculum HUBs to continue to build the effectiveness and responsiveness of all HUBs.
13. FE Colleges will continue to play a key role in supporting the work of City and Growth deals across Northern Ireland.
14. FE Colleges will support the work of local Labour Market Partnerships and other cross department initiatives.

4 Regional Operating Context - Challenges

4.1 Background

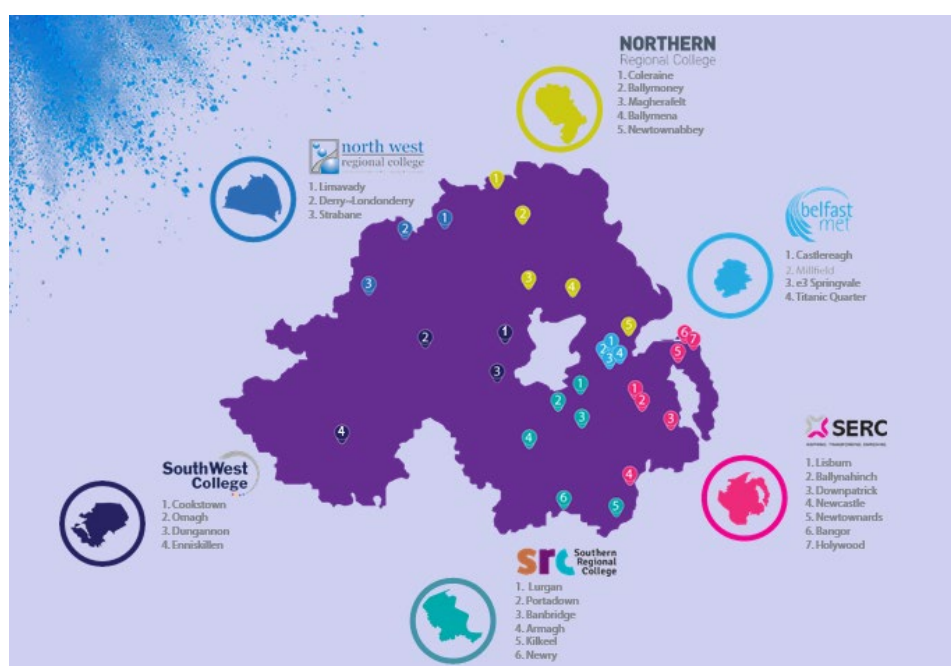
Northern Regional College offers a wide range of vocational and professional courses resulting in approximately 12,100 annual regulated enrolments (including Essential Skills) [Department of Economy Further Education Statistics 2020-21](#). These courses are delivered in the College's six campuses in Ballymoney, Ballymena (Farm Lodge and Trostan Avenue), Coleraine, Magherafelt and Newtownabbey. The College also works in partnership with local schools to deliver qualifications up to Level 3. In addition, we deliver community-based education in several outreach centres and have significantly grown our digital online learning capability and presence.

4.2 Catchment Area

The College serves communities from the Causeway Coast in the north, through mid-Ulster to the outskirts of the Belfast Metropolitan area, giving the College one of the largest geographical spreads of the six Colleges. Within the catchment area the College engages with four diverse local councils:

- Mid and East Antrim;
- Antrim and Newtownabbey;
- Causeway Coast and Glens; and
- Mid Ulster.

Figure 1: FE Colleges in Northern Ireland



4.3 Population

The diverse geographical catchment area of the College has a population of approximately 577,000 (NISRA, Population Estimates Bulletin 2020). According to [NINIS Population Projections](#), the population in the College's catchment area is due to increase by 1% from 2022 to 2026, identical to the projected increase for Northern Ireland as a whole (1%). In terms of 15-19-year-olds, the College's catchment area population is due to increase by 9.3%, slightly less than Northern Ireland as a whole (11.4%). It is notable that within the 15-19 age group a slightly higher increase is anticipated in both Mid Ulster (12.7%) and Antrim and Newtownabbey (11.8%).

4.4 Vision, Values and Goals

During the 2021/22 academic year the College's Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team developed a new Strategic Plan covering the three-year period 2022/23 to 2024/25, "Skills, Innovation & Excellence". This is an ambitious plan to further enhance the College and the services it provides as recovery from the impact of Covid-19 continues. That said, the Strategic Plan also recognises the difficult financial climate that persists. The plan will be published at the start of the 2022/23 academic year pending final consultation with stakeholders.

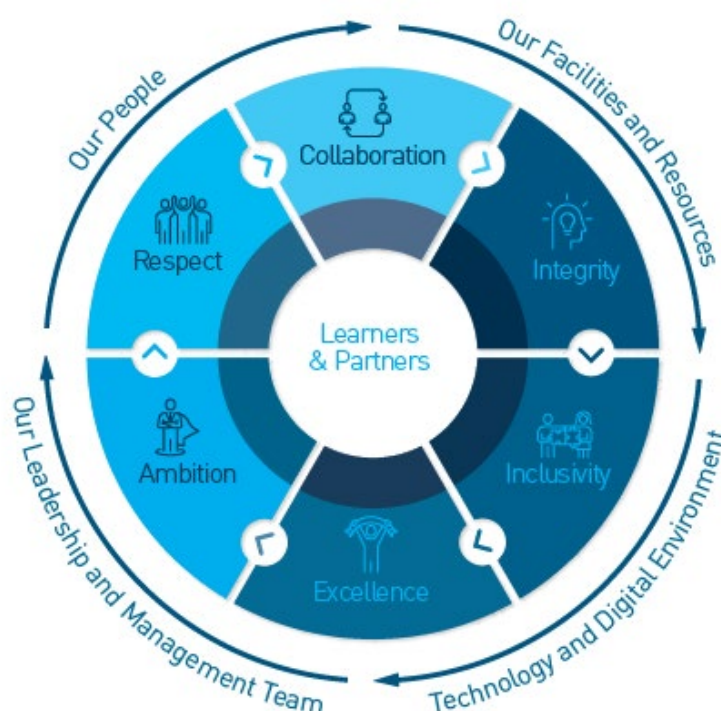
The Governing Body's Strategic Planning Group developed an enriched vision statement replacing the previous vision and mission statements which will underpin the new corporate values.

Figure 2: Our Vision



The College is embracing six values which are a blend of previous and new during the next three-year period. These are supported by our four drivers.

Figure 3: Our Values and Drivers for Success



To help us realise our vision for 2025 we have identified twelve key goals, structured around three core themes of Learners, Professional Services and Partners.

Figure 4: Our Priority Themes and Goals



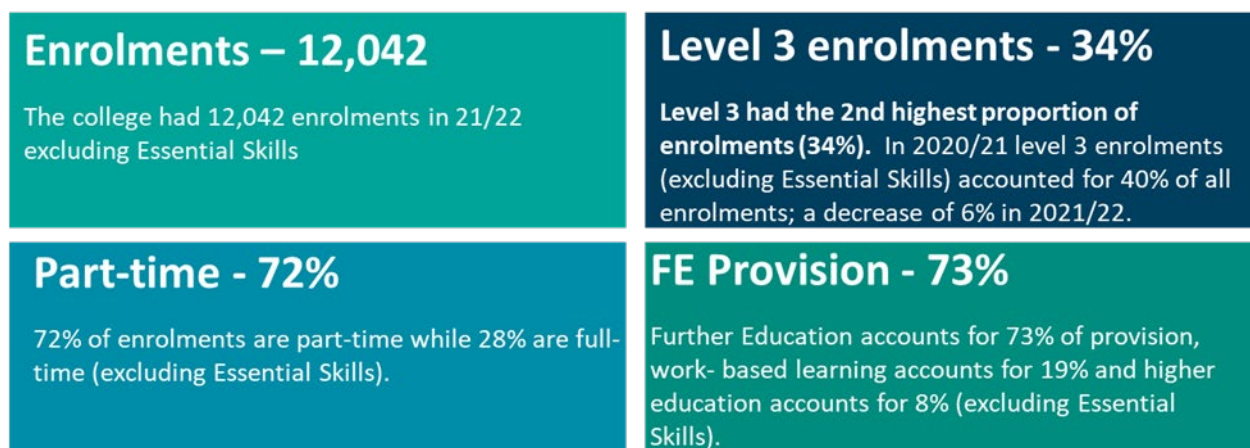
4.5 Priority Theme: Learners

The College Development Plan 2022/23 is drafted in line with the year 1 objectives set for the Priority Theme Learners. Enrolments in 2020/21 saw a dramatic decline due to the impact of the pandemic. The College not only stabilised the downward trend in enrolments in 2021/22 but saw growth of almost 25% from 9,659 enrolments (excluding essential skills) at the end of 2020/21 compared to 12,042 enrolments (excluding essential skills) at the end of 2021/22 (data source 2020/21 and 2021/22 CDP Progress Report 3). Figures 5 and 6 give an overview of the College enrolment profile.

It has long been the expectation that ES enrols will decline each year as more of the population should have achieved GCSE English and Maths or ES. This has been the case year on year, from 2018/19 to 2021/22 ES enrolments have dropped by 30%. The College has no control over how many students leave post primary school without GCSE English and Maths, where despite 5 years on GCSE pathways they do not achieve. The impact of stronger performance from Teacher and Centre Assesses Grades has further impacted this. During the enrolment process all prospective students have their qualifications on entry verified and those without GCSE English and Maths are enrolled on ES. All learners in FE FT and WBL programmes regardless

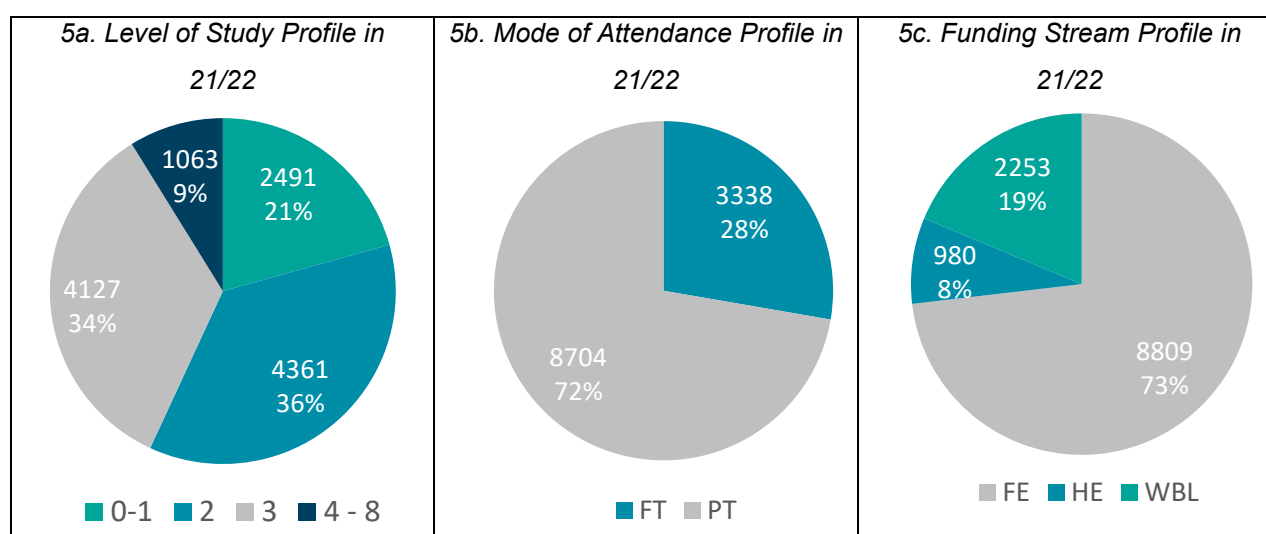
of qualifications on entry sit an initial diagnostic assessment during induction to determine the level of support they require for literacy and numeracy. As such ES are not included within the performance narrative in terms of enrolments.

Figure 5: 2021/22 Enrolment Figures



Source: CDP Progress Report 3, 29th July 2022

Figure 6: Breakdown of Enrolments by Level, Mode of Attendance and Funding



Source: CDP Progress Report 3, 29th July 2022

4.6 Operating Opportunities and Challenges in 2022/23

4.6.1 Opportunities

Increase in applications: At the start of August 2022, the College had received over 7,700 applications for the 2022/23 academic year. This is more than for the whole of 2021/22, when the College received 7,270 applications, an increase to date of 6%. In 2020/21, the College received 36% of the total applications in August and September. Therefore, it is expected that the College will see this trend in 2022/23. In order to meet this clear need, it is critical that the College is able to deliver the anticipated course programme, despite challenging budget allocations. This increase does not reflect a further “bounce impact” anticipated from the completion of the new builds in Coleraine and Ballymena. By the end of September, the College had received over 9,200 applications, this is an increase of 25% from the previous year, however this has not resulted in an increase of 25% in enrolments and reflects the difficult recruitment environment.

Responding to the Executive’s Covid-19 Recovery Plan and NI Skills Strategy: the publication of “Skills Strategy for NI: Skills for a 10X Economy” referenced in the Strategic Context above, gives a clear indication of the key priorities for skills development across NI. This strategy has highlighted the undersupply of skills at level 3 and oversupply of individuals with low/no qualifications, as well as the clear need for skills development at levels 4 & 5. In addition, the commitment in the Covid-19 Recovery Plan to growing apprenticeships across a wider range of sectors (including public sector) and the focus on development of innovation and employability skills presents real opportunities for the College. We will continue in 2022/23 to work as a fully integrated partner in the new Local Labour Market Partnerships in our four Council areas to ensure that we respond to the skills needs arising from businesses in our area. We are working with businesses to provide a skilled workforce through innovation mentoring and skills programmes for current and future employees. Tailored solutions through the Skills Focus Programme and InnovateUs support this development along with Innovation Voucher projects, knowledge transfer programmes and Assured Skills and other academies. We will also draw on the expertise made available to us through our Economic Engagement Advisory Forum, chaired by Dr Norman Apsley (Chair of LEDCOM and former CEO of Catalyst Inc), to access sector specific knowledge of the skills gaps that need to be addressed in the short, medium,

and longer term. Effectively, the College is getting people into work by delivering education and training focused on jobs, employability and work readiness. Recognising our dual mandate, we will also provide entry points for individuals with low or no qualifications at levels 1 and 2. The College is developing new bespoke NEET programmes to complement the current College Connect and Prince's Trust offerings.

Opportunities for adult learners and upskilling: The NI Executive's Covid-19 Recovery Plan has clearly demonstrated the need to provide upskilling and lifelong learning opportunities for those currently in employment as well as those who have been impacted by the pandemic. The College continues to participate in the Department's Skill Up Programme which will provide flexible learning opportunities for those who wish to upskill on a part-time basis, and we wish to build on the success of this programme over the last two years and further enhance our online offer. These short courses provide an opportunity for us to develop and refine our online provision; they result in additional enrolments for the College and enhance the diversification of our provision with new awarding organisations. They also provide an opportunity to reach audiences that may not have previously engaged with the College and may lead to further enrolments on mainstream provision. Graduate conversion programmes will also help to further diversify our offering.

Opportunity for growth in Higher Education & HLAs: The College has increased its provision of HE full-time and HE part-time professional programmes to suit those who wish to continue their education whilst working and remaining close to home, while enhancing employability and career prospects. In the CDP 2021/22 the College stated its intention to increase the number of HLAs and the planned numbers for 2022/23 clearly demonstrate this, growing from 82 to 109, an increase of 25%. HLA programmes provide applicants with the prospect of gaining qualifications whilst working and the College will seek to increase the breadth of vocational areas on offer. The College is currently developing an Early Years HLA for roll out in 2022/23 or 2023/24 depending on approval timeframes.

Opportunities for new partnerships: During 2021/22, the College further embedded our strategic partnerships with external stakeholders such as Harland and Wolff, Translink, the Gallaher Trust, MEGA, and the four District Councils in our area, working with them to develop training and innovation programmes. Last year we

launched a new HLA in Logistics and Supply Chain in conjunction with industry bodies and we will continue to develop strategies to enhance this programme. New opportunities have also been developed in hospitality and tourism and manufacturing with Gallagher Trust; we have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Mid & East Antrim and Antrim and Newtownabbey Councils, developed opportunities to collaborate on Health & Social Care with Northern Trust, and introduced new apprenticeship opportunities with Translink. We are currently working closely with LEDCOM and Belfast Met to identify opportunities associated with Peace Plus funds and we are considering how to further develop the successful relationship established with Bytes in 2021-22. We are working closely with Mid & East Antrim Council and Belfast Met in the development and roll out of hydrogen training academies. We will continue to strengthen our relationships through active participation in the four Labour Market Partnerships established in our region in 2021/22 and membership of the Community Planning Boards in our area.

Curriculum Hubs: NRC leads the FE Sector entrepreneurship hub and the College is committed to driving excellence in innovation across entrepreneurial delivery evidenced by the recruitment of a Principal Lecturer in Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Teaching and Learning. This post will ensure the College maximises entrepreneurship engagement and will help drive change in pedagogy across the College curriculum and Sector to deliver on DfE skills strategy.

We will use our entrepreneurship clubs and zones and hub industry links to fully embed entrepreneurial attributes in our students and develop entrepreneurial competence with curriculum staff.

The College also collaborates across the FE sector through curriculum hubs for Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing, Construction, Hospitality & Tourism, Life Sciences, Health & Social Care and Digital Information Technology. This collaboration has had a positive impact and has been instrumental in curriculum deep reform and development of Traineeships. Other examples of developments achieved as a result of the work of the curriculum hubs include the following:

- **Engineering:** Sector wide training and development led by the Hub to upskill staff, training included Siemens and robotics. Development of qualifications including Railway Apprenticeship, supporting Translink and On Track Technicians. Direct

entry of level 3 AppsNI for candidates with 5 GCSEs or other approved level 2 qualifications.

- **Construction:** Supports the development of high-quality curriculum ensuring provision is aligned with the current and future needs of the construction sector through partnerships and increased collaboration between FE Colleges. The hub contributes to the ambition to attract more students, in particular females, into construction, through development of high-quality careers advice and modernising the appeal of the industry to young people in line with future industrial trends. Sector wide CPD and development led by the hub.
- **Hospitality & Tourism:** Standardised qualifications across the Sector, examples include the introduction of FDQ Food Safety aligning with the FDQ Professional Chef qualification and OCN Barista qualification. Upskilling of staff through sectoral wide CPD events led by the curriculum hub. Sectoral marketing relating to hospitality including the development of an E-Zine magazine highlighting progression pathways from level 1 to level 5.
- **Digital Information Technology:** Centralised bidding for CPD funding which has resulted in extensive CPD carried out through 21/22. This is key to upskilling staff across the Sector. Centralised curriculum planning for RQF, Advanced Technical and validation of the Foundation Degree across the six colleges. This includes workshops to support content, teaching materials and cross college assessments.
- **Health and Social Care:** Strong regional presence working together as colleges and with regulators, particularly in relation to the development of the Traineeship framework. Upskilling of staff regionally, this is centrally organised by the Hub. Examples include manual handling, first aid trainer assessor and dysphagia management. Collaborative working in further development of international conference, raising profile, and creating valuable opportunities for student participation. Curriculum planning including development of short courses for online delivery in partnership with Hub, consortium revalidation of Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care.
- **Life Sciences:** The Hub has been key in curriculum planning for the changeover to RQF and Level 2 qualifications going forward. Successful practices have been shared and a resource data base established.

Growth Deals: We will use the opportunities presented by our role in the Belfast Region City Deal (which includes two of our Council areas, Mid & East Antrim and Antrim & Newtownabbey) to support the roll out of the Education & Skills pillar. We will work with Causeway Coast and Glens, and Mid Ulster councils to explore how we can provide greatest input to the growth deals currently being developed in their areas. We will continue to engage with the Mid Ulster Council and the Department for the Economy to seek alternative funding opportunities for new build facilities for the Magherafelt campus complementary to those proposed for South West College and North West Regional Colleges as outlined on page 7 of this document.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund, New Deal and Peace Plus funding: we will work collaboratively with colleagues across the tertiary education sector and with our local councils and enterprise centres to identify opportunities to take forward joint bids for funding for cross sector projects aligned to the objectives of the draft Programme for Government, 10X Economy, the Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland – Skills for a 10X Economy and the NI Skills Barometer.

Level 2 Traineeships and Level 3 Advanced Technicals: The 2022/23 academic year will see the College continue to deliver and expand Level 2 Traineeships and Level 3 Advanced Technicals. With 72% of enrolments at level 2 and level 3, implementation of these sectoral strategies is key to the FE sector's market positioning going forward.

ESOL: The College continues to deliver much needed ESOL provision both on campus and in local community outreach centres. The College welcomes the opportunity to continue to support the Syrian and Afghan Resettlement schemes. We are well positioned to accommodate Ukrainian refugees and take on board their views regarding access to ESOL courses ([Ukraine war: Refugees in Northern Ireland call for more language classes - BBC News](#)). The College has included anticipated activity in the ESOL targets.

Blended delivery model: in 2022/23 the College will deliver a suite of programmes through a 100% online delivery model based on student feedback over the last couple of years. These will be mainly HE part time programmes which allow the student to have a flexible approach to study to suit their personal commitments. The success of delivering Skill Up programmes online has allowed the College to recruit students outside of its physical catchment area.

Skills Competitions: The **WorldSkills UK National Finals** are being hosted in 6 main locations around the UK and will take place week beginning 14th November. This year there are 500 finalists in 62 different competitions, 63 of the finalists are from NI, 7 of these are from the College in the areas of CNC Milling, Industrial Robotics, Web Design, 3D Digital Game Art and IT Software Solutions for Business and Joinery. This places the College in joint second place within the NI FE Colleges and 9th in the UK league table for 2021/22 for World Skills. The College has a Lecturer trained as the training manager in robot system integration. The College fully endorses the competitions and will expand areas going forward for 22/23 to include Hair, Beauty, Health And Social Care And Dental Nursing.

WorldSkills International has taken on a revised format after the cancellation of WorldSkills Shanghai in May. The competitions will be held over 12 weeks, starting in September, and ending in November 2022. Team UK for International WorldSkills 2022 is comprised of 39 competitors, 6 of these are from NI, and 2 of these are from the College in the skill area of Robotic Systems Integration. The final will be held in Luxembourg from 31st October to 4th November. Karla Kosch, a College lecturer has been appointed Deputy Chief Expert in Robotics for Euroskills in 2023.

Sectoral Partnerships: The College is represented on a range of Sectoral Partnerships, demonstrating the importance to the College. Examples of these links expand from Engineering to Childcare. The relationships are key with the main focus being on curriculum development. Sectoral Partnerships determine how the frameworks meet the needs of industry, ultimately feeding into the curriculum hubs. Through the partnership employers, DfE and standards setting bodies who have been co-opted onto the group guide the development of apprenticeships to ensure the needs of the economy are met. An example of this would be the deep reform process which needs the support of the employers to approve the developments as fit for purpose for the needs of the economy, e.g. there are two College representatives on the engineering sectoral partnership.

4.6.2 Challenges

Impact of current political situation: For all Colleges the impact of the current political situation in Northern Ireland and lack of a functioning Executive, particularly in the context of 2022/23 budget allocations, means that the College is unable to operate without risk. In order to mitigate this risk, the College will be conservative in

the planning for 2022/23 and will plan to open further courses during the academic year as the potential for additional in year funding to be released is realised. The College has outlined in [Planning Principles and Constraints](#) the basis for this year's curriculum planning to achieve financial sustainability.

Increased cost of delivery: The College, like every organisation and household in Northern Ireland, is feeling the impact of significant and continual rising costs of fuel and materials. To reduce these costs the College will be consolidating services where possible to drive cash savings and exploring sustainability efficiencies with the view to maintaining a high-quality service.

Aging infrastructure in Magherafelt and Newtownabbey: The campus facilities in Newtownabbey and Magherafelt are aging and in some areas are no longer fit for purpose. The infrastructure on these sites is limiting the College's ambition to grow provision and to compete with post primary schools and other FE Colleges. It is the College's intention to submit as part of its Ten-Year Estates Strategy bids to both redevelop and improve these buildings.

Lost learning: In 2021/22 the impact of the previous two years on students' learning levels was clearly seen. The availability of lost learning funding allowed the College to implement programmes to support students who faced challenges as a result of the pandemic. This funding has not been carried forward into 2022/23 and the College now faces a situation of students who were enrolled in 2021/22 on Level 3 programmes based on over inflated grades at GCSE and who were not successful at Level 3 now having to either enrol in new courses or try to achieve in their second year without additional support. An example of this is students who completed year 13 and 14 at a post primary school and did not achieve three A level equivalents and are now enrolled in the College on Level 3 Childcare. With the move to RQF from QCF, many Level 3 Extended Diplomas now use a 1+1 model i.e., both first and second year have an outcome attached. Of our current second years we have 101 of 413, who have failed their first-year outcome, either a National Foundation Diploma or an Extended Certificate. These students had teacher assessed grades for GCSE, which likely had overinflation and the students may not have had the required entry profile for Level 3. However, these students will need extra support in second year in order to achieve their Extended Diploma although they may leave with a lower qualification i.e. partial achievement. The College successfully piloted the Northern Plus framework in

2021/22 to support students, led by newly appointed Achievement Coaches. The coaches were best placed to provide individual support to students who are struggling with their vocational qualification and require additional assistance to fulfil their potential. The posts were fixed terms contracts, and following the pilot, the College has extended these appointments into the 2022/23 academic year.

Falling enrolments across the FE sector: The trend of falling enrolments across the sector continues but the College stabilised and grew enrolments in 2021/22 with growth of almost 25% from 9,659 enrolments (excluding essential skills) at the end of 2020/21 compared to 12,042 enrolments (excluding essential skills) at the end of 2021/22 (data source 2020/21 and 2021/22 CDP Progress Reports 3). From 2016/17 to 2020/21 the enrolments in FE Colleges have decreased by 36% (153,088 to 97,532). In the recent Stranmillis report into the perceptions of Level 4 and 5 qualifications in Northern Ireland, commissioned by the DfE, it is clear there is societal stigma to attending a FE College and pursuing vocational qualifications is often seen as the lesser option, [Perceptions of Level 4 and 5 Qualifications in Northern Ireland \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](#). This report clearly states the challenges all Colleges face to sustain their provision.

Viability of second year classes due to low numbers: It is anticipated that the College will have strong first year cohorts based on the application numbers to date. However, small first year classes in 2021/22 and retention during the year will lead to small second year cohorts in 2022/23. It may be necessary, where possible, to merge classes to generate efficiency savings. The College already has a policy of merging classes, for example HLA Engineering is merged with both FT and PT Foundation Degree Engineering as the three streams tend to have only 3 or 4 enrolments each. The performance level of courses like this has been rated as outstanding in the recent SER process. Merging classes ensures viability but also improves the student experience and increases engagement which benefits students. It also ensures the College can continue to offer a wide range of subjects over the six campuses to meet local needs.

Post primary schools and competition from other FE Colleges: Direct competition with post primary schools continues to present challenges for the College. Within the College's catchment area post primary schools are increasing their vocational provision with the delivery of BTEC qualifications. Recent announcements by the

Department of Education for major capital works for post primary schools will have a direct impact on enrolment levels at the Magherafelt and Newtownabbey campuses, as they are not scheduled for new builds [Oral Statement - Major Capital Works | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\); £794m Major Capital Works Projects announced | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](#). In addition, some schools in our catchment area are developing new sixth form provision (e.g., Ballymoney High School).

With the increased use of online and blended delivery models the College is facing increased competition from other NI FE Colleges engaging with local businesses in the heart of the College's catchment not just at the periphery as seen previously. The College is considering how to maximise its engagement across Northern Ireland regardless of geographical boundaries.

HE in FE: This funding stream is facing increasing challenges with difficulty recruiting and sustaining start of year enrolments. Increased MaSN allocation to universities means, even if applications convert to enrolments, the student may be offered a place at a local HEI up to mid-October, as the final deadline for university submission through clearing choices in UCAS for 2022 entry is 28 Sept. For courses sitting on the viability threshold this may result in course closure and subsequently this can lead to a further loss of HE enrolments. The narrative on opportunities references an increase in HLA numbers this year, which will offset the decrease in HE FT. The College continues to focus through the curriculum planning process on developing and offering attractive HE FT, HE PT and HLA courses and we engage with the DfE Tertiary Education Senior Leaders Forum to raise the issue and work collaboratively with HEIs. However, we will continue to be impacted by external competition from the HEIs.

Traineeships and Apprenticeships: The College is committed to participating in providing opportunities through Traineeship programmes. However, Traineeships and Apprenticeships in many vocational areas compete for the same workspace and facilities. If employers are keen to employ apprentices to support their workforce, then the College may have to prioritise this provision over Traineeships where capacity and teaching resource is an issue. This is more acutely felt in the Ballymena campuses where capacity is already reduced due to the decant for the new build. The College is aiming to maintain apprenticeship numbers whilst growing Traineeships during the

next 2/3 years. It is also anticipated that there may be a reduction in the number of apprentices this year as the Apprenticeship Incentive Scheme is no longer open.

Staff recruitment: The continued difficulty in recruiting specialised vocational lecturing staff impacts the College's ability to sustain and grow areas such as advanced manufacturing and engineering.

Cost of living crisis: When the College opened applications for 2022/23 there was no widespread cost-of-living crisis. However, by summer 2022 the impact of the crisis was beginning to escalate and by September the College could see this in cancellations. The feedback from many applicants on part time self-funded FE courses such as Beauty, was they simply could not afford the fees which include tuition and materials as well as travel costs. For these vocational areas this has resulted in courses becoming unviable.

4.7 Planning Principles and Constraints

The College is committed to prioritising opportunities for learners and stakeholders despite difficult financial constraints. The College will continue to maximise enrolments through innovative and effective curriculum delivery. Based on the 3% budget shortfall, we are anticipating maintaining the enrolment levels from 2021/22 and will aim to increase enrolments during the year should additional resources be made available. We will:

- Prioritise courses aligned to the 10x strategy, local employer needs and the NI Skills Barometer.
- Prioritise our commitment to returning students.
- Maintain and protect progression pathways.
- Provide wrap around services for students impacted by Covid-19. The College will continue to employ Achievement Coaches as the service is crucial to support students.
- Adopt blended delivery models, where appropriate, for Level 3 and above programmes.
- Fully utilise campus facilities across the entire week.
- Rationalise and consolidate evening provision across the week and across campuses to reduce costs especially in times of increasing utilities while at the same time ensuring demand is met for those who very much value this community provision.
- Reduce discretionary consumables.
- Increase our class sizes to improve efficient delivery whilst recognising the ongoing impact of second year class sizes due to covid 19.
- Consolidate leisure and community provision to reduce costs by delivering programmes in campus facilities and ensuring cohorts run with optimum numbers.
- Plan initially for one enrichment/additionality qualification per FT programme. Qualifications offered will address employability and entrepreneurship as well as digital, communication and leadership skills. In some areas in 2021/22 3 or 4 additional qualifications were offered. However, this year the College plans to offer every Level 2 and Level 3 student at least one additionality in the first term and if there is no detrimental impact on their main qualification offer a second post-Christmas.

- Standardise delivery of qualifications across campuses. The College currently works on a six-campus model and therefore some courses may be offered on four or more campuses due to the geographical distances between campuses. Standardising across campuses will include having an agreed Awarding Organisation for each course, standard delivery hours, course materials and student experience.
- Improve staff optimisation and utilisation thereby reducing additional payments and increasing capacity to deliver income generating provision.
- Use horizon scanning to identify opportunities to increase alternative revenue streams.
- Ensure effective enrolment management with Awarding Organisations.

5 Planned Activity

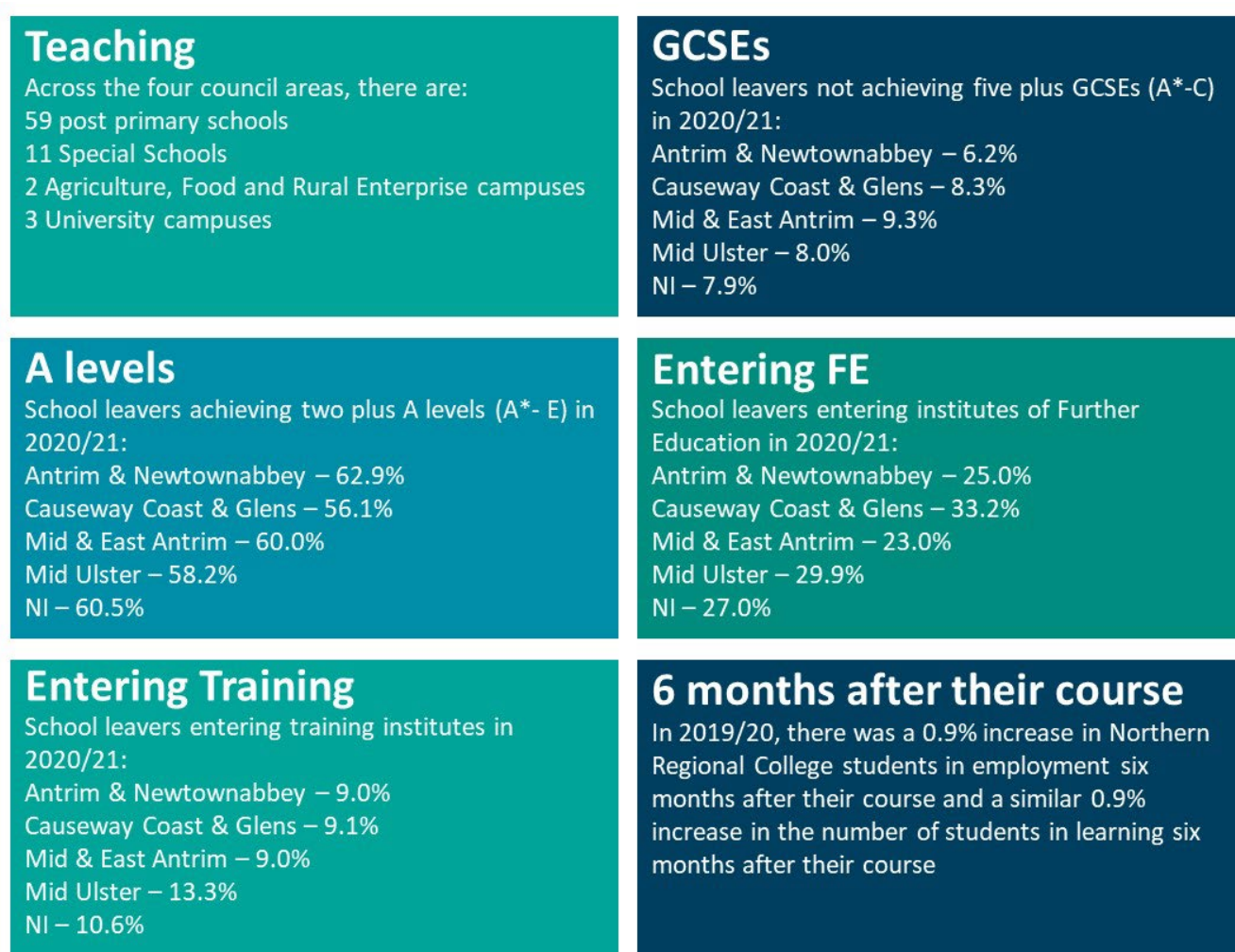
5.1 Qualifications – Report Card

The College is one of only two FE Colleges in Northern Ireland to have more than one University campus within its catchment area as well as two CAFRE campuses. The availability of choice of higher education institutes within the local area, along with 59 post primaries, has a direct impact on the planned enrolment activity of the College each year.

In terms of academic achievement prior to College entry, Figure 7 shows that in the College's catchment area one of the local council districts in 2020/21 saw the number of school leavers not achieving 5 or more GCSEs (A* - C) sit below the NI average of 7.9%, whilst three local council districts were above the NI average. For school leavers achieving two plus A levels (A*-E) three of the local council districts fell below the NI average of 60.5%.

Figure 7 also highlights in two areas within the College catchment area the number of school leavers entering an institute of further education was below the NI average of 27% and three areas had below the NI average of 10.6% of school leavers entering a training institute.

Figure 7: Northern Ireland statistics relating to qualifications

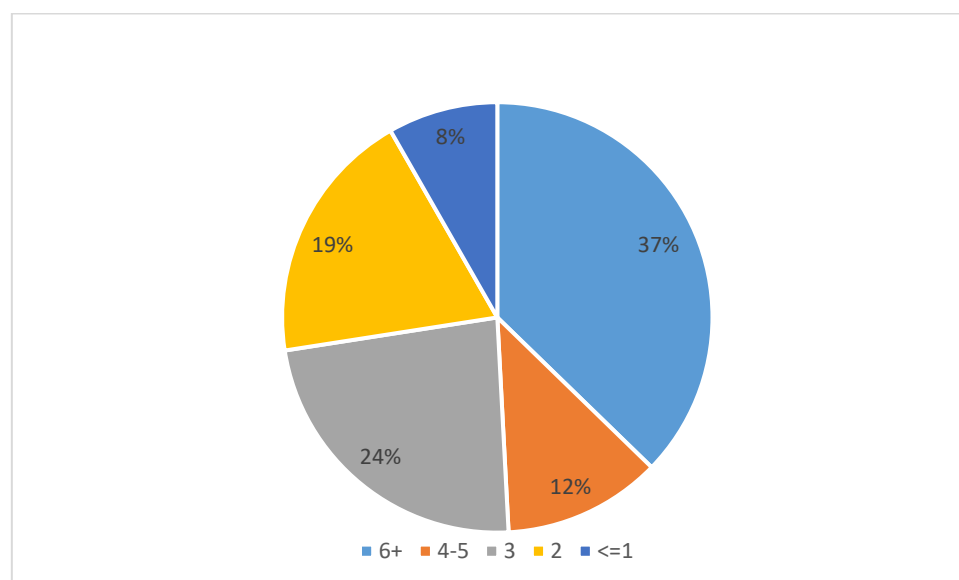


Data Sources: Teaching - Department of Education, School Enrolment - School Level PPS data, 2020/21, updated on 14th Mar 2022; GCSEs/A levels/Entering FE or training - Department of Education, School Leavers Statistical Bulletin, 2019/20, published on 25th May 2022; and 6 months after their course - DfE FE Leavers survey, 2019/20, published on 26th October 2021

The NI Skills Barometer Summary Report (2021) shows the average weekly wage of employees is directly related to educational attainment. Those at Level 3 and below earn more than £100 less than the NI average of £500 while those on Level 4 and above can earn between £500-£750 per week. There is little difference in earning potential between Levels 0 and 3. The higher the level of education from L4+, 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 the potential of our learners. Life-long learning opportunities are essential to allow individuals to upskill and progress to higher level opportunities. A worker with a degree is three times as likely to be engaged in lifelong learning activities compared to a worker with prior attainment below NQF Level 2. The Skills Barometer stated young people making career

decisions have a lack of knowledge of the economic benefit of each pathway. According to the NI Skills Barometer, the workforce demand in Northern Ireland is expected to grow by around 84,700 per year from 2020-2030. Of this demand, it is expected that 28,660 jobs will be filled from the education sector and/or from migration at the following levels: L6+ = 10,680; L4-5 = 3,410; L3 = 6,700; L2 = 5,500; ≤L1 = 2,370. It is expected, almost two-fifths (37%) of labour demand over the coming decade will require NQF Level 6+ qualification (i.e., Undergraduate degree, Masters, PhD). At the bottom end of the qualification spectrum only 8% of the net requirement is demanded at NQF Level 2 and below.

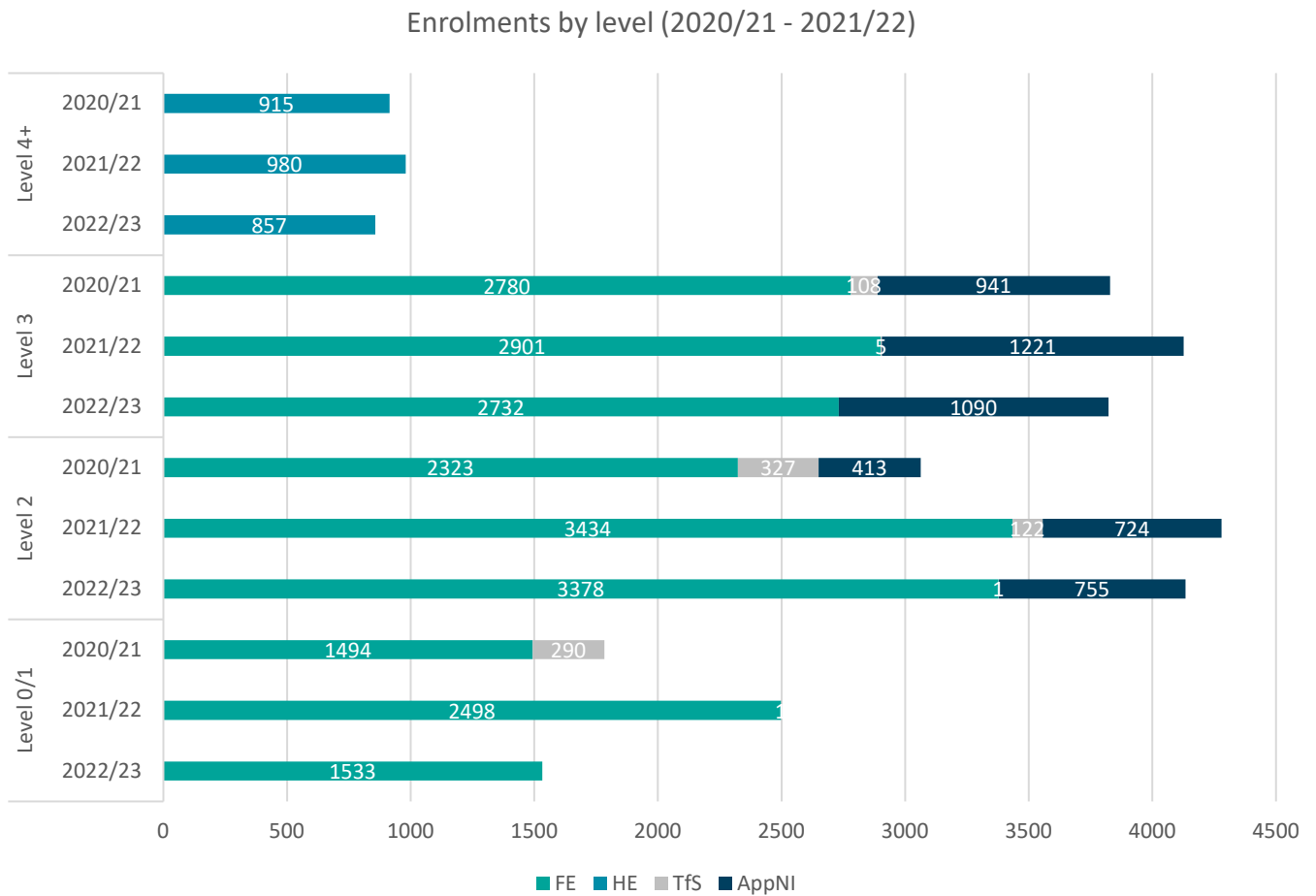
Figure 8 Annual Average Net Labour Requirement by Qualification Level (NQF) 2020-2030



Data Source: NI Skills Barometer 2021 Summary Report, published 16 Mar 2022

Northern Ireland Skills Barometer 2021 update | Department for the Economy (economy-ni.gov.uk)

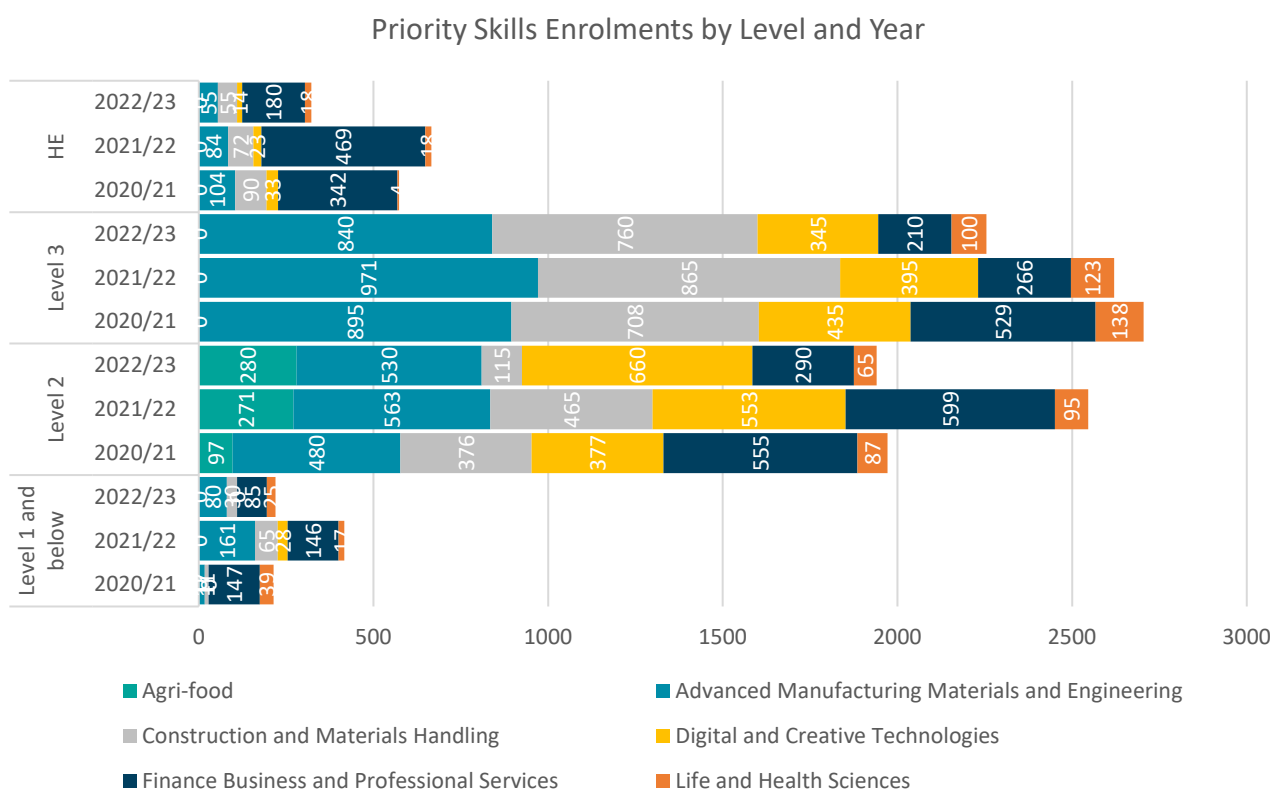
Figure 9: Enrolments at the College (2020/21 and 2021/22 actuals and 2022/23 targets)



Data sources: 22/23 – Targets, 21/22 – CDP Progress Report 3, 29th July 2022 and 20/21 – CDP Progress Report 3, 30th June 2021.

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

Figure 10 - Priority Skills and STEM Enrolments by Level and Year



Data sources: 22/23 – Targets, 21/22 – CDP Progress Report 3, 29th July 2022 and 20/21 – CDP Progress Report 3, 30th June 2021.

While the impact of COVID-19 on the labour market is not yet fully understood, evidence of positive trends in terms of recovery is provided below:

- The NISRA Index of Services Q1 2022 bulletin reported services output in NI saw a quarterly increase of 0.7% in Quarter 1 2022, and an increase of 12.4% over the year, while the UK IOS output increased over both the quarter (0.4%) and the year (9.9%).
- The InterTrade Ireland Business Monitor Survey (Q4 2021) reported that 43% of businesses in Northern Ireland have seen growth in business in quarter four of 2021, compared with 50% in quarter three of 2021.
- On the flip side, the University of Ulster Impact of Covid-19 on Northern Ireland Business Activity Final Report (November 2020), indicates that during the initial stages of lockdown the two largest sectors in terms of number of businesses (Wholesale and Retail, and Construction), both had around a quarter of businesses temporarily closed. This equates to around 5,600 business in Northern Ireland.

The report also says that the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, and the Accommodation and Food Service sectors were most impacted in terms of their inability to operate. Four fifths of businesses in each of these sectors were temporarily closed, with just over 7,100 firms affected.

5.2 Employers

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

Figure 11: Northern Ireland Statistics Relating to Employers

Economic activity

Economic activity rates were higher than the NI average in three out of four council areas in 2020:

- Antrim & Newtownabbey – 76.3%
- Causeway Coast & Glens – 69.4%
- Mid & East Antrim – 74.4%
- Mid Ulster – 76.6%
- NI – 73.0%

Employee jobs

Employment from businesses by sector in 2021:

Council	Construction	Manufacture	Oth	Service
A&N	5.0%	12.5%	2.4%	80.1%
CC&G	5.8%	10.5%	1.6%	82.1%
M&EA	5.0%	15.0%	1.9%	78.2%
MU	10.0%	28.9%	2.1%	59.0%
NI	4.8%	11.1%	1.6%	82.5%

Registered businesses

With over 25,080 registered businesses in 2022, 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

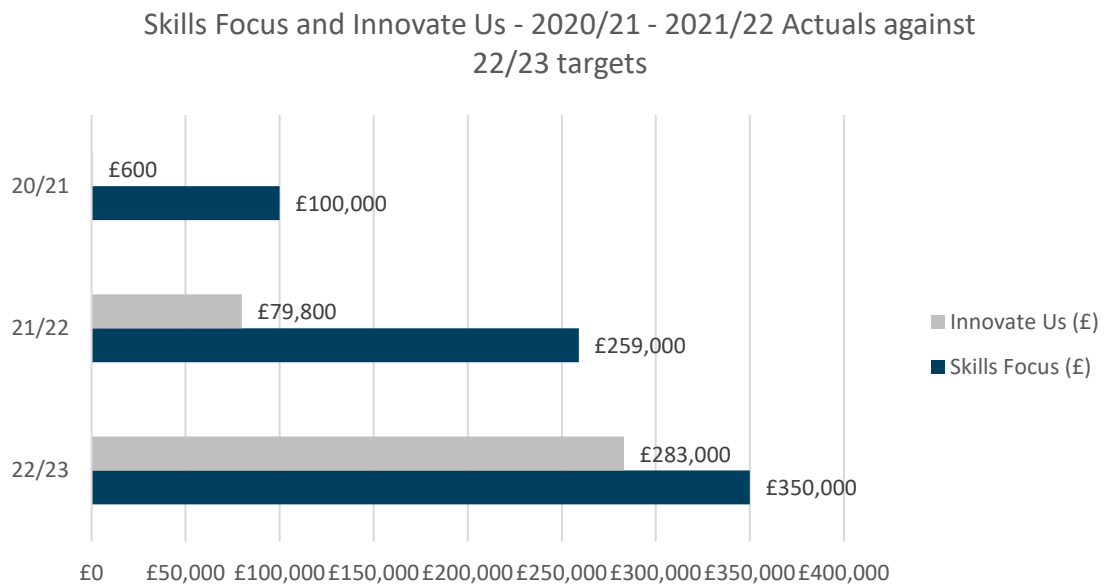
Business size (employees) by council area in 2022:

Council	Micro (0-9)	Small (10-49)	Medium (50-249)	Large (250+)	Total
A&N	3,725	450	115	25	4,315
CC&G	5,740	445	75	15	6,280
M&EA	4,600	390	50	15	5,055
MU	8,670	615	130	20	9,430
NI	70,510	6,730	1,320	320	78,885

Data Sources: 1 NISRA, Quarterly Labour Force Survey Tables – April-June 2022, published on 16th August 2022, Business Register and Employment Survey, 2021, published on 30th June 2022, and Inter Departmental Business Register, 2021, published on 16th June 2022

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. Foreign Direct Investment (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, 2021) and that the existing workforce is developed to ensure local business can compete in a global market.

Figure 12: Skills Focus and Innovate Us – 2020/21 – 2021/22 Actuals against 2022/23 targets



Data sources: 22/23 – Targets, 21/22 – CDP Progress Report 3, 29th July 2022 and 20/21 – CDP Progress Report 12th Aug 2021.

5.3 Social Inclusion

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

Figure 13: Northern Ireland Statistics Relating to Social Inclusion

No qualifications

No qualification rates (aged 16-64) are higher than the NI average in two out of four council areas in 2020:

Antrim & Newtownabbey – 9.6%
Causeway Coast & Glens – 19.5%
Mid & East Antrim – 6.1%
Mid Ulster – 13.1%
NI – 12.7%

Unemployment

In 2020, unemployment rates (aged 16-64) were higher than the NI average in two out of the four council areas:

Antrim & Newtownabbey – 2.9%
Causeway Coast & Glens – 2.1%
Mid & East Antrim – 2.3%
Mid Ulster – 3.0%
NI – 2.8%

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 – 2.8%

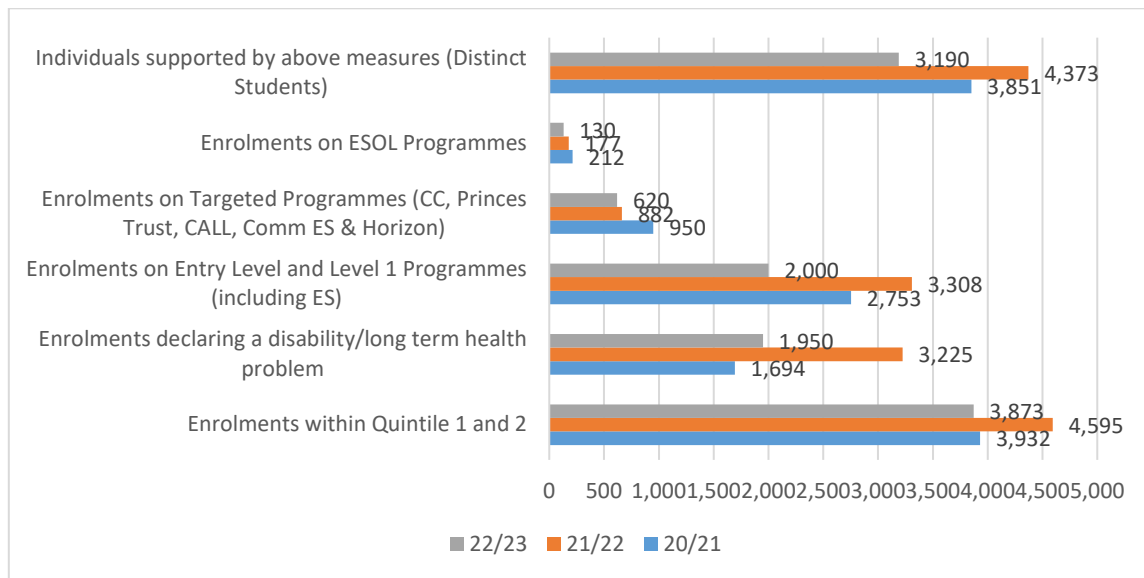
Data Sources: 1 NISRA, Labour Force Survey 2020, published on 23rd Nov 2021; NISRA, CENSUS, 2011; and NI Multiple Deprivation Measures, 2017 published 17 April 2018

It is important to ensure that opportunity is open to everyone, wherever they live, to achieve their potential. 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. There is potential to also provide these services to Ukrainian refugees. Enrolment clinics are being held during w/c 12th September and the final version of the CDP will reflect anticipated demand for these services; and
- The Inclusive Learning programmes establish qualification pathways for individuals with disabilities or long-term health problems.

Figure 14: Social Inclusion targets (22/23) and actuals (20/21 & 21/22)



Data sources: 22/23 – Targets, 21/22 – CDP Progress Report 3, 29th July 2022 and 20/21 – CDP Progress Report 3, 30th June 2021.

6 Budget

DRAFT CDP BUDGET FOR 2022/23 - Northern Regional College							
	Description	A Final Outturn Expenditure 2021/22		Note	B 2022/23 Draft NRC Resource Requirement inc. additional Pay / Contractual related	C 2022/23 DfE Contingency Planning Allocation + to be funded - letter dated 6 Jan 2023	Diff C - B
	Income	- 5,030			- 5,072	- 5,072	-
	Grant Income (Non EU)	- 206			- 207	- 207	-
							-
	NILGOS	1,151			1,116	1,116	-
	Other Operating Expenses	7,848		Note 1	7,777	7,777	-
	Staff Costs	23,118		Note 2 / 3	23,722	23,722	-
	ERAP / C-19 related	2,706				-	-
	Pay / Contractual Related 22/23			Note 3	2,537	2,984	447
Total	DEL Resource Budget	29,587			29,873	30,320	447
	Remove ERAP / C-19 related for comparison	- 2,706					
	Remove Traineeships for comparison	- 433			- 774	- 774	
Total	DEL Resource (Comparative) Budget	26,448			29,099	29,546	447
							2%

Note 1	This figures includes the agreed "Secured for 2022/23 only" amounts for Traineeships funding.						
Note 2/3	This figures includes the agreed "Secured for 2022/23" amounts for Contractual Salaries and AT costs and includes current draft proposals on academic and support pay increases. If these pay increases are agreed then DfE will need to fund all Colleges for their share of the increases.						
Note 3	The College submitted "in-year" bids to cover pay/contractual costs and an updated budget allocation was received on 6th Jan 2023 (£30,320k as per column "C" above).						
	Footnote: In order for the College to operate within budget and achieve efficiency savings it will be necessary for the College to increase the level of HE fee by £200 from the 2023/24 academic year. This may impact on the level of HE students and will need sector wide approach and DfE approval on the level of WAPP.						
	The College also requests to keep all MaSN funding for the year based on estimated numbers and forecast budgets.						

7 Planned Activity – Report Cards

The tables below set out the College's planned activity for the 2022/23 year (in-light of a DfE budget allocation of £28,949k) in support of the draft PfG Outcomes.

2022/23 Qualifications		
Area of Planned Activity (Data source: CDR)	Planned Activity For 22/23	21/22 In-Year Activity
FE Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L0-3 FT & PT Excluding Essential Skills 	7,695¹ enrolments equating to 4,547 Individuals	8,809 enrolments equating to 5,364 Individuals
HE in FE – Full time²: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L4-6 	220 enrolments equating to 220 Individuals	178 enrolments equating to 178 Individuals
HE in FE – Part time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L4-6 	637 enrolments equating to 480 Individuals	802 enrolments equating to 595 Individuals
TfS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L0-3 	1 enrolment equating to 1 Individuals	128 enrolments equating to 80 Individuals
Skills for Life and Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L0-2 	N/A	N/A
Traineeships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L2 	290 enrolments equating to 120 Individuals	97 enrolments equating to 81 Individuals
AppsNI: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L2-3 	1,845 enrolments equating to 1,080 apprentices registered for training 94% of AppsNI apprentices who remain on the	1,945 enrolments equating to 968 apprentices registered for training 94% of AppsNI apprentices who remain on the

¹ The reduction is based on one additionality per FT L2 & L3 enrolment in line with section 4.7. If in year funding is available this will increase.

2022/23 Qualifications		
Area of Planned Activity (Data source: CDR)	Planned Activity For 22/23	21/22 In-Year Activity
	programme for at least 4 weeks after initial registration and go on to remain on the programme for more than 52 weeks.	programme for at least 4 weeks after initial registration and go on to remain on the programme for more than 52 weeks.
HLAs • L4-5	100 enrolments equating to 100 HLA	83 enrolments equating to 83 individuals
Essential Skills	1,900 enrolments equating to 1,290 Individuals.	2,096 enrolments equating to 1,420 Individuals.
Priority Sector Areas and / or STEM (PSSA)³:	8,012 PSSA enrolments equating to 4,275 individuals enrolled in one or more PSSA subjects 2,936 of final year students enrolled in one or more PSSA subjects	7,494 PSSA enrolments equating to 3,426 individuals enrolled in in one or more PSSA subjects. 2,863 of final year students enrolled in one or more PSSA subjects

Data Source: CDP Progress Report 3 2021/22, 29th July 2022

³ The Priority Sector Area and / or STEM performance measure incorporates not only the Priority Sector Areas as previously measured, but also STEM subjects

Employers		
Area of Planned Activity	Planned Activity for 2022/23	2021/22 Activity
InnovateUs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023 	50 No. of projects delivered through the InnovateUs programme £283,000 of projects completed (budget spend)	17 No. of projects delivered through the InnovateUs programme £79,800 of projects completed (budget spend)
Skills Focus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L2+ 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023 	200 No. of enrolments undertaking a Level 2 (and above) qualification through the Skills Focus Programme (60 businesses supported and 80 projects completed) £350,000 of projects completed (budget spend) ⁴	345 No. of enrolments undertaking a Level 2 (and above) qualification through the Skills Focus Programme (102 businesses supported and 188 projects completed) £259,329 of projects completed (budget spend)
Assured Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L0-8 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023 	To deliver 3 No. of Assured Skills Academies	1 No. of Assured Skills Academies delivered £37,654 of projects completed (budget spend)
Other Programmes		
Innovation Boost	£30,000 budget spend	£11,500 budget spend
Innovation Voucher Scheme	£60,000 budget spend on 12 projects	£20,000 budget spend on four projects

⁴ We have aligned the target to the July 2022 budget allocation. However, the College is currently in discussions with DfE's Skills Division about potentially increasing this budget by £100k which would equate to approximately 130 additional enrolments.

Social Inclusion		
Area of Planned Activity (Data source: CDR)	Planned Activity for 22/23	21/22 In-Year Activity
Enrolments within Quintile 1 and 2	3,873	4,595
Enrolments declaring a disability / long term health problem	1,950	3,225
Enrolments on Entry Level and Level 1 Programmes (including Essential Skills)	2,000	3,308
Enrolments on Targeted Programmes (College Connect, Prince's Trust, Community ES, Horizons, CALL project)	620	882
Enrolments on ESOL Programmes	130 ⁵	177
Overall number of individuals supported by above measures	3,190	4,373

Data Source: CDP Progress Report 3 2021/22, 29th July 2022

⁵ This planning figure includes anticipated activity from the Ukrainian Resettlement Scheme and reflects the end of activity from the Syrian Resettlement Scheme.

Overall College Performance ⁶		
Performance Indicator	Planned Performance Rate for 2022/23	2020/21 Performance Rate
Retention Rate: The proportion of the number of enrolments who complete their final year of study to the number of final year enrolments.	88%	88.8%
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.	85%	87.4%
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.	75%	77.6% ⁷

⁶ The performance measures are cognisant of the pre pandemic position and take into account the bump effect of remote engagement and Teacher Assessed Grades.

⁷ Performance rates from Further Education Sector Activity, Table A30, [Further education sector activity in Northern Ireland: 2016/17 to 2020/21 | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/further-education-sector-activity-in-northern-ireland-2016-17-to-2020-21)