Name of Provider: Myerscough College
UKPRN: 10004478

TEF Year Two provider submission

Provider Context

University Centre Myerscough is an incorporated College of specialist provision in land-based and sports subjects. We have been delivering higher education for nearly 30 years and we received formal approval from DfE and Companies House to use the title 'University Centre Myerscough' for our higher education provision in 2017. The College mission is '*to become the leading provider of education in the land-based & sports sectors and the natural choice for research, industrial partners and students who aspire to success*'. Our Strategic Plan identifies four key strategic aims that underpin the College mission. These aims align closely to the TEF assessment framework:

- We will continue to build and enhance our brand and reputation for excellence within the land-based & sports sectors
- We will provide an outstanding teaching & learning experience
- We will create opportunities for all to succeed
- We will deliver great value for money

University Centre Myerscough is one of the largest UK providers of higher education courses in land-based and sports subjects. Our provision includes foundation degrees and honours degrees in most land-based subjects with master's degrees also offered in a number of subjects. We offer part time distance learning delivery for a number of programmes, which are unique to the UK. Professional accreditation is not always available for some of our specialist land-based provision, however we do have professional accreditation for some programmes where it is available, including Veterinary Nursing, Sportsturf and Arboriculture.

The University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) is our sole awarding body. Myerscough is the largest partner provider for UCLan. The majority of higher education courses are validated provision (delivered only at Myerscough) with some networked provision (also delivered at other colleges). References to 'the University' in this document are to UCLan.

We have developed a trusted and mature working relationship with the University over the 30 years of our partnership. In 2013 we renewed and strengthened the relationship and signed a new institutional agreement to become an Associate School of the University. The agreement recognises the quality of our provision and deepens the collaboration. The Associate School is managed by a Strategic Development Group and Senior Executive Team providing leadership and direction with membership from both institutions. Together, these groups drive forward the strategic aims of the Associate School to expand and grow provision, build on existing strengths and focus on employability to establish an enhanced student experience and world leading education.

We have our own Students' Union, led by a Student President and Student Liaison Officer. The Students' Union have been consulted on this submission and their comments are incorporated into the submission.

The College was subject to Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Higher Education Review (HER) in May 2014. The review report was exceptional with 2 commendations for the quality and enhancement of the student learning experience, 10 areas of good practice and no recommendations. Analysis of QAA HE Review outcomes indicates that this is the highest number of commendations and good practice identified for any institution under the HER review method.

Commentary on Core and Split Metrics

Although Myerscough is one of the largest UK providers of higher education courses in land-based and sports subjects, we are still a relatively small and specialist institution compared with the University sector. With relatively small overall numbers and specialist provision, Myerscough's data

can be distorted by peaks and troughs in individual subjects that have high numbers of students as a proportion of the overall cohort. However, the smaller provision also means that we are more aware of the specific circumstances affecting individual courses and can clarify the context and qualitative information behind the metrics.

Our part time provision is largely online or blended learning. Whilst offering the flexible approach to learning often cited by the sector and by employers as being the key to successful part time provision, online and blended learning is not factored into the benchmarking and these modes of delivery can provide additional challenges that may not be immediately apparent in the metrics. Additionally, our part time provision was in transition of being transferred from indirect reporting contract (via the University) to direct reporting contract (with HEFCE) for the years covered by the metrics and this may explain some of the non-reportable data for part time provision, particularly for the continuation metric which we understand only reports on those registered directly by the institution.

Performance against the metrics: The teaching on my Course
Our performance in teaching on my course is within 1% of the overall benchmarks for full time and part time students. However, the outcomes are more than 2% above benchmark for the most recent year of full time provision and nearly 2% above benchmark for the most recent reportable year for part time provision. In addition to the NSS outcomes, we use internal data from teaching and learning observations as a strategic target and evidence of the quality of our teaching and learning. For the last three years, more than 95% of higher education observations were graded ‘outstanding’ or ‘good’ (100% in 2016-17) and more than 47% were graded ‘outstanding’, evidencing a continued track record of high quality teaching and learning.

Performance against the metrics: Assessment and feedback
Our performance in assessment and feedback for full time students has been consistently above benchmark in each of the three years of the TEF metrics. Our part time outcomes for assessment and feedback are nearly 7% above benchmark and contain an overall positive flag in the core metrics. Additionally, the quality of assessment and feedback was identified as good practice in 79% of our 2016-17 External Examiner reports and no essential actions were identified across all reports.

Performance against the metrics: Academic support
Our performance in academic support for full time students is more than 2% above benchmark and contains a positive flag in the most recent year of the TEF metrics. Our part time provision is also above benchmark in years 1 and 2 of the TEF metrics with no reportable data in year 3. In absolute terms, our overall NSS outcomes for Academic Support have remained consistently high and been at or above the national upper quartile for all institutions in the last three years.

Performance against the metrics: Continuation
Our performance in continuation for full time students has consistently out-performed benchmark in each of the three years of the TEF metrics and contains an overall positive flag in the core metrics. Our internal reporting data further reinforces this high performance with full time in-year retention of more than 96% for each of the last three academic years.

Our part time provision has been in transition in being moved from indirect reporting contract to direct reporting contract. The majority of part time courses have only just completed the transition to direct reporting contract for all years and this has impacted on the non-reportable data for the part time continuation metric. However, our internal reporting data evidences continued high levels of continuation for part time students with part time in-year retention above 95% in both 2015-16 and 2016-17 and part time continuation at 87% for both of those years (above the full time benchmark).

Performance against the metrics: Employment or further study
Our performance in employment or further study for both full time and part time students is consistently high. The full time outcome has a very high absolute value at nearly 97% and contains a positive flag in the core metrics. The part time outcome has a very high absolute value at nearly

99%, with a remarkable 100% in year 3 and the TEF guidance recognises the difficulties of obtaining a positive flag when the outcomes and benchmarks for these metrics are so high.

Performance against the metrics: Highly skilled employment or further study
Our performance in highly skilled employment or further study for full time students are not flagged in the core metrics but contain negative flags in the split metrics for year 2, first degree, young, white, female and students not from disadvantaged areas. The part time outcomes contain a negative flag for year 1 and first degree of the split metrics and a negative indicator for being in the bottom 10% of absolute performance.

We have analysed our DLHE data in detail and it is clear that the outcomes for our Veterinary Nursing provision are the most significant factor influencing the highly skilled employment or further study metric. Veterinary Nursing is the largest area of our provision and accounted for 22% of the overall DLHE cohort for the most recent year covered by the TEF metrics. The Veterinary Nursing courses covered by the DLHE include full time and part time programmes, which recruit largely young white female students and these are also the groups with negative flags in the full time split metrics.

As with other professional programmes such as human nursing, Veterinary Nursing is specialist vocational provision leading to a specific role (students who study Veterinary Nursing do so to become Veterinary Nurses). Our DLHE outcomes for the most recent year covered by the TEF metrics for those Veterinary Nursing graduates were 97% progression to employment or further study. The detail behind the DLHE data shows that all those that progressed to employment had been employed as Veterinary Nurses. However, our DLHE data for the same year indicates just 34% of those were recorded as progression to highly skilled employment or further study.

This issue was not evident in our DLHE outcomes for our other subjects. For example, for the most recent year covered by the TEF metrics, progression to highly skilled employment or further study for Agriculture & Countryside were 93%, Greenspace subjects were 65%, Motorsports & Agriculture Engineering were 68% and Sport were 79%. This suggests that the outcomes for Veterinary Nursing are anomalous in the overall DLHE outcomes for the College.

This clearly highlights that the issue is not with the outcomes for Veterinary Nurses but with how the role that they had trained for, and secured employment in, is recorded in the DLHE survey.

The key issue is that the SOC codes used by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in the DLHE survey do not recognise the role of Registered Veterinary Nurse as that of a highly skilled (graduate-level) position. The professional body, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) are pursuing the issue with the SOC review team. It is also noteworthy that this issue has been acknowledged in a number of key publications with specific reference to Veterinary Nursing including the GuildHE response to the TEF Technical Consultation (2016), the HESA synthesis of responses from the consultation on their Fundamental Review of Destinations and Outcomes Data for Graduates from Higher Education (Oct 2016) and the DfE technical consultation response titled 'Teaching Excellence Framework: Year Two and Beyond' (Sept 16) which states '*Some providers will wish to provide additional evidence where SOC does not reflect the positive employment outcomes for their students'*.

It is clear that the numbers involved in the Veterinary Nursing provision have a significant impact on our overall outcomes for highly skilled employment. Our DLHE outcomes show that 97% of our Veterinary Nursing students go into employment or further study in their chosen profession. If our Veterinary Nurses were either counted as highly skilled, or excluded from the metric, our overall outcomes for highly skilled employment would increase to over 70% in either case, and this would put our overall outcomes for highly skilled employment significantly above benchmark.

Additionally, we contacted all our Veterinary Nursing graduates in 2016-17 to re-survey them and obtain more detailed and consistent information about their role. Of the Veterinary Nursing graduates who responded, 97% confirmed that their role involved both managerial duties and supervision or

support of other staff and/or students. More than half (53%) of respondents identified that their role was also that of a Clinical Coach (a higher level Veterinary Nurse role).

Performance against the metrics: Sustained employment or further study (LEO data)
Our performance for full time students is just over 1% below the benchmark and our performance for part time students is 6% above benchmark, contains a positive flag in the core metric and a positive indicator for being in the top 10% of absolute performance. We recognise that many part time students may already be in sustained employment while undertaking their studies but this is effectively taken into account through the benchmarking and the outcomes still reflect high absolute performance for part time students in this area.

Performance against the metrics: Above median earnings threshold or further study (LEO data)
Our performance for full time students contains a negative flag and a negative indicator for being in the bottom 10% of absolute performance. Our performance for part time students is better but still below benchmark. Whilst we recognise that the subject area is taken into account by the benchmarking, we note that the LEO report identified that agriculture and related subjects overall are one of the lowest subject area groups for median annualised earnings five years after graduation.

Additionally, we acknowledge that the LEO data is still experimental, but we note that Veterinary Nursing is in the benchmarking group of Veterinary Sciences and so the benchmarking is likely to be comparing the earnings of our Veterinary Nurses with the earnings of Veterinary Surgeons from some other institutions. It is difficult to unpick the LEO data at course level but our Veterinary Nursing provision is mainly full time and accounts for 22% of our graduating cohort in our DLHE data. As such, their benchmarked earnings are likely to have had a significant impact on our overall outcomes.

Teaching Quality

We set a clear vision of an institutional culture that facilitates, recognises and rewards excellence in teaching and learning through the College Strategic Plan (2012-22), which includes targets for observation of teaching and learning and student satisfaction with teaching and learning based on NSS outcomes. We promote reflection on key teaching and learning activities including observations of teaching and learning, analysis of student outcomes, student feedback, NSS outcomes, External Examiner reports and scholarly activity and these activities are reported and action planned through annual monitoring processes to support continuous improvement. Enhancement of teaching and learning is driven forward by the College Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy Group and monitored by the Quality Monitoring Group and the College Corporation.

Student Engagement (TQ1)

Each year we set strategic themes for the development of teaching and learning based on outcomes from previous years and staff and student feedback. The themes in recent years have included academic challenge, independent learning, research informed teaching and employability. These themes have been driven forward through staff seminars, CPD activities and work with Advanced Teaching Practitioners to encourage dialogue and professional discussion around the themes. This has had a clear impact on outcomes for student engagement in learning. For example, the outcome for the new 2017 NSS question ‘My course has provided me with opportunities to apply what I have learnt’ were above the national upper quartile, the outcome for the 2017 NSS question ‘Staff are good at explaining things’ was 93%, in line with the upper quartile. Additionally, the development of student employability/academic skills was identified as a key strength in 80% of higher education teaching observations in 2016-17.

We also integrate the VLE into teaching and learning to develop ‘content away from the class’. This includes provision of pre-lecture learning materials to promote a more proactive approach to student engagement and discussion of the learning materials in lectures and seminars, and post lecture learning materials to promote further independent learning. The outcomes for the 2017 NSS optional

question 'learning materials made available on my course have enhanced my learning' were in line with the upper quartile at 88%. Additionally, the College 2014 QAA HE Review report identified good practice in '*the strategy for developing and embedding the virtual learning environment as an effective and consistent learning and teaching tool'*.

We apply standard module timetabled teaching hours and assessment workload equivalencies to ensure optimum contact time along with consistency of student workload across modules in line with University and sector expectations. Timetabled contact hours are based on a model of approximately 60 hours contact time for a standard 20 credit module but this may vary by level and type of module as students become more independent learners. We also provide structured weekly timetabled sessions for course tutorials and personal tutorials for students. Typically, the timetabled contact time for students equates in total to around 16 hours per week leaving appropriate time for independent study.

Student attendance provides an early indicator of disengagement and we monitor student attendance closely through a live report and as a standard agenda item at the first meeting of each month of the College Curriculum Quality Group. At these meetings, subject area variances are discussed with the relevant Heads of Areas to take forward through their own Curriculum Area meetings. Overall higher education student attendance has remained continually high at 89% for the last two years, evidencing strong engagement of our students with their studies.

Valuing Teaching (TQ2)

Nearly all of our higher education teaching staff are permanent full time positions and this promotes consistent high quality teaching and learning for our students. We include a mini-teach to students as part of the interview process for new tutors. The students' feedback from the mini-teaches form an important part of the decision-making process and provides opportunity for students to be engaged in the quality of their future teaching and learning experience. In 2013, we undertook a review of teaching roles and, following this review, we implemented a revised induction package for new academic staff which takes them through a structured 6-week induction programme to ensure they are appropriately supported during this initial period. Our review also identified a lack of progression opportunities for tutors who did not aspire to a management role and we addressed this by the introduction of a new Senior Lecturer position to provide opportunity for reward, recognition and progression for tutors with a track record of excellence. The outcomes from the review are now fully embedded in the College processes and 27 senior lecturers have been appointed across all Curriculum Areas since the introduction of this role in 2013.

To support high quality teaching and learning, we maintain a mandatory requirement for all academic tutors to hold a full teacher training qualification to ensure they are appropriately qualified and professionally competent in their role. For those that do not hold a teacher training qualification on appointment, we deliver in-house teacher training in collaboration with the University. This policy ensures that 100% of HE tutors hold, or are working towards teaching qualifications and assures the professional competency of our teaching staff. This is significantly above the national figure for the sector for 2014-15 of 44% as published in 'Teaching Qualifications Data for Academic Staff in Higher Education Institutions 2014-15 (HEFCE 2016).

Our observation of teaching and learning processes incorporate a range of observation methods to promote an ethos of continual enhancement of teaching and learning. These include walk-through, developmental, assessed and peer observations of teaching and learning. The assessed observations are also externally validated through a peer review process to ensure their validity. We also deliver an 'Improving Teacher' programme and a 'Good to Outstanding' programme which provide tutors with opportunities to further enhance their teaching and learning strategies. Our higher education observation criteria is aligned to the HE Academy UK Professional Standards Framework and QAA Quality Code to ensure that our higher education teaching and learning meets the requirements of the sector and promotes the HE culture at the College. It is worth noting that this

was implemented following a staff MEd on the subject in 2010, further evidencing the impact of staff scholarship on teaching and learning.

For the last three years, more than 95% of higher education observations were graded ‘outstanding’ or ‘good’ (100% in 2016-17) and more than 47% were graded ‘outstanding’, evidencing a continued track record of high quality teaching and learning.

We ensure that strong industry links with employers and professional organisations are in place to support the vocational nature our provision and promote professional practice. Our tutors are true dual professionals as many are also practitioners in their subject area and this adds value to the teaching and learning experience they provide for students through opportunities to link theory to practice. The outcomes for the 2017 optional question ‘Practical activities on my course have helped me to learn’ were over 90% and above the national upper quartile. Examples that typify the vocational expertise of tutors include our Senior Lecturer in Sportsturf Science, who is the current President of the European Turfgrass Society; all our Motorsports tutors have worked in the Motorsport racing industry; and three members of our Veterinary Nursing team are also practicing Veterinary Surgeons.

Our annual academic staff performance enhancement review includes self-assessment against the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) Professional Standards to provide opportunity for reflection on professional teaching and learning skills and the outcomes contribute to planning for further staff development. In 2016-17, 98% of our academic staff who self-assessed were above the ‘aspirational’ and ‘influential’ threshold for all three categories (professional values & attributes, professional knowledge & understanding and professional skills), an increase from 90% in 2015-16.

We provide a range of opportunities to promote scholarly activity. Individual CPD opportunities are discussed at the annual staff performance enhancement review and a monthly HE Teaching and Learning Forum provides time for higher education tutors to discuss teaching and learning and develop their scholarly practice. Tutors are encouraged and supported (both financially and through remitted time) in studying for higher qualifications and to attend technical updating events in their subject area. Twenty-one of our tutors have been supported in studying for higher qualifications in the last three years. Tutors are also supported in applying for positions as External Examiners at other institutions and approximately 20% of our higher education tutors currently hold External Examiner positions at other institutions. In addition to supporting external assurance on quality and standards, this also provides valuable opportunity for scholarship through discussion of different approaches to teaching, learning and assessment at other institutions.

One of the cornerstones of our CPD calendar is our annual Teaching, Learning and Assessment Fair, where a range of scholarly activities are provided for tutors to support enhancement of teaching and learning. A day is set aside where tutors can choose from a menu of seminars on teaching and learning methods, ILT technologies and round table discussions to suit their needs. The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Fair provides opportunity for our tutors to develop their scholarly activity, share good practice and try new techniques that they can use to enhance their own practice.

In 2013, we took the decision to appoint a new role of an Advanced Teaching Practitioner (ATP) for each subject area to work with tutors, share good practice and further enhance teaching, learning and assessment. Our ATPs offer coaching to tutors in their area and work with them on a 1:1 basis to develop their teaching and learning skills. They deliver a range of CPD sessions within subject area and across College. The ATP roles and are now firmly embedded across the College as a pivotal role in the continual development of teaching and learning. Our outcomes for teaching and learning have increased by 15% since the introduction of the ATP roles in 2013, evidencing the effectiveness of this initiative.

We strongly promote engagement with the HE Academy and are a subscribing institution. We implement the University Professional Dialogue accredited route to HE Academy Fellowship (UKPSF D2) for our tutors and a number of our own tutors are trained as mentors for the accredited programme. This initiative provides professional recognition for HE tutors and opportunity to enhance

their scholarly activity in relation to teaching and learning. Approximately 28% of HE tutors at the College have achieved Fellowship of the HE Academy. This is in line with the national average recently published in 'Teaching Qualifications Data for Academic Staff in Higher Education Institutions 2014-15 (HEFCE 2016).

An institutional culture of recognition and reward for teaching and support staff is fully embedded through our range of staff awards initiatives. The 'MyStar' awards include categories for academic and support staff and for each of these there is an award voted for by students and one voted for by staff. We also deliver our own student-led 'Golden Roses' teaching award scheme which is specific to higher education and sponsored by the University. This provides further opportunity for students to nominate both teaching and non-teaching staff for recognition by both the College and by the University. Those shortlisted for the College Golden Roses awards are also automatically included in the overall University Golden Roses awards. Our own academic and support staff have also received University Golden Roses awards on a number of occasions and Myerscough tutors have won the overall 'Inspirational Teacher' on two occasions. In addition, we offer opportunity for students to nominate staff for 'WeHeartYou' awards. These are individual awards and can be submitted at any time of the year and can be made for any reason. The Students' Unions of both the College and the University go into the class unannounced to deliver the award in front of the students.

The 'MyStar', 'Golden Roses' and 'WeHeartYou' awards were all introduced in 2013 and are firmly embedded in the College cycle of activities to provide recognition and reward for peer appreciation and impact on the student experience.

Rigour and stretch (TQ3)

The University course approval, Periodic Course Review and External Examining processes check that programme design and delivery takes into account the external standards set by the QAA Quality Code, FHEQ expectations for academic level and volume of study, requirements of QAA subject benchmark statements and qualification characteristic statements and other factors such as professional body requirements. We embed the use of BLOOM's taxonomy to inform the development of learning outcomes and ensure that assessment is differentiated between foundation and honours degrees and effective in incrementally stretching students to develop knowledge, understanding and skills that reflect their full potential.

We recognise the importance of ensuring that programme design reflects the specialist vocational nature of industries served by our curriculum and provides exemplars of employer engagement. Examples of design features that promote student engagement with employers are the cross-curricular Work Skills Development and Work Project modules on our Foundation Degrees. These modules are assessed by portfolio and industry report. They develop independence and stretch students to develop their personal and vocational skills in real work situations. A further example is the assessment for our final year Dissertation module on cross-College degree programmes, which includes a dissertation report that is written in the style of a scientific journal paper and an additional industry dissemination report. Together, these stretch and challenge students to write to both scientific journal and industry requirements.

We arrange annual industry liaison meetings for each subject area to discuss new programmes and further developments to current programmes to ensure that the programmes remain current and produce graduates with the skills most valued by employers.

The College 2014 QAA HE Review report also identified good practice in *'the holistic preparation for and high-level engagement with the Periodic Course Review by higher education staff, students and employers'* and *'the practice of engaging employers as partners in the design, delivery and assessment opportunities within programmes'.*

The success of our programmes in providing scope for outstanding levels of stretch and achievement for all our students are further evidenced by our consistently high in-year achievement rates of over

85% for the last three years and the consistently high proportion of those that achieved high grades. These are discussed in more detail in the section on positive outcomes for all. Additionally, the outcomes for the 2017 NSS optional question 'Good advice is available on further study opportunities' was above upper quartile for all UK institutions.

Feedback (TQ4)

Assessment and feedback are clear strengths for Myerscough as evidenced by our full time core metric, which is above benchmark and the positive flag in the core metric for part time provision. As detailed previously, we implement standard workload requirements for module-level assessment strategies to ensure consistency of assessment workloads for students in line with the University and sector expectations. We also ensure that assessment strategies include a range of innovative assessments on programmes and promote assessment 'for' learning instead of assessment 'of' learning (for example through use of 'live' projects). A good example of this is the conference poster assessment for our cross-curricular Work Project module where students from the different curriculum areas across the College present their industry-based Work Project proposals via a poster as part of the Annual Research Conference, which provides students with experience of presenting in a conference environment.

Our Module Information Packs (MIPs) are based on a standard template to ensure consistency for students. Our MIPs include details of expectations for assessment tasks and relevant assessment criteria for students. Our tutors also include assessment tutorials in their module schemes of work to provide opportunity to discuss the assessments and assessment criteria. Additionally, we timetable weekly Course Tutorials for each cohort and a standard Course Tutorial Scheme of Work provides tutors with resources to deliver group tutorials on topics such as academic writing and referencing techniques. Academic tutors are encouraged to include developmental feedback on these skills as part of the assessment feedback to students as they progress to become independent learners.

We provide tutors with clear guidance on the provision of timely and developmental feedback to students as outlined in our 'Tutor Guide to Assessment'. Where appropriate, our tutors use electronic feedback via Turnitin and GradeMark and many tutors use other digital mechanisms including audio and video for providing feedback to students which has been highlighted as good practice by External Examiners. We check the quality of feedback during the internal verification/moderation process and this is also externally assured by External Examiners.

The quality of assessment and feedback practices was identified as good practice in 79% of our 2016-17 External Examiner reports and no essential actions were identified across all reports. Common themes of good practice identified by External Examiners included the vocational relevance of assessments, continued high quality of Module Information Packs, verification & moderation processes and feedback to students.

Learning Environment

Resources (LE1)

We have invested significantly in strategically providing outstanding physical and digital resources to enhance student learning and our student experience. In 2017, we completed a 5 year £30 million capital investment programme in new resources to support teaching and learning. Capital developments completed through the programme included a Sportsturf Technology unit, a high-technology glasshouse, an equine arena surface and a Motorcycle Race Technology workshop. New centres have been built for Veterinary Nursing, Animal Studies, Foundation Learning and High Performance Sports to support growth and enhance delivery in these areas. A new Food and Farming Innovation and Technology Centre and a Livestock Innovation Centre have been built to provide state-of-the-art facilities for research and innovation in agriculture and associated technologies. We also provide opportunities for capital bids to enhance specialist subject resources

on an annual basis. Examples of specialist resources that have been enhanced in response to industry expectations, student feedback or External Examiner comments include new project race cars to support the Motorsports provision, performance measurement equipment to measure the quality of fine turf surfaces, DNA sequence analysis software to support teaching of plant molecular technology and pressure mats to undertake rider analysis on Equine programmes.

We have a dedicated Higher Education Centre. Built in 2005, our HE Centre includes a number of teaching rooms, postgraduate study room, research offices, IT and self-study areas with café and pods for collaborative group working. These resources are for higher education students only, giving them ownership and a resource which enhances their higher education experience. The student computer suite in the HE Centre has one the highest usage rates of all IT facilities at the College evidencing the value that our students place on this resource and the active and consistent use of the HE Centre by students. Student representatives have also commented that the HE Centre made a significant contribution to their HE experience. Our HE Café has won both College 'MyStar' and University 'Golden Roses' awards for best support service.

We have also invested strongly in digital resources and this is driven forwards by the College Information and Learning Technology Strategy Group. We provide free pervasive Wifi across the College including the College farms and estate. This provides unlimited access to on-line resources to enhance the student experience and students commented that this has been widely appreciated. Our teaching rooms are designed to provide a student-centred learning experience and many are equipped with Apple TVs to enhance the use of ILT in teaching and learning. We have also made further investment to continual improvement of the IT infrastructure, for example to further improve the speed of Wifi and enhance the functionality of the student portal ('MyPage') for students. A key focus of our Information and Learning Technology Strategy is the use of iPads and own devices to promote interactive learning and a number of banks of bookable teaching and learning iPads are available for use by students in lectures and seminars.

We invested in a new VLE ('Canvas') in 2015-16 to enhance teaching and learning for students. Additionally, we also completed a HE Academy funded project in 2015 to develop the quality assurance of the College 'Bronze, Silver, Gold' VLE Standards. The project reviewed how the VLE is used to support HE teaching and learning at the College and the outcomes have been used to inform CPD requirements and further enhance the quality assurance of the VLE content. The 2017 NSS outcomes for the optional question 'Learning materials made available on my course have enhanced my learning' were 88%, in line with the upper quartile.

Our higher education student induction programme includes an 'E-fest' to help raise awareness of ILT technologies and software available to students to support their studies. All new higher education students are scheduled to attend the 'E-fest' during orientation week. At the event, a series of round table events are presented to students covering ILT resources and software such as Socrative, 'MyApps (College study skills software), presentations from JISC and a range of other resources.

We have also delivered an HE Academy funded 'Xerte' project to enhance tutor digital literacies and provide in-house CPD for tutors. Two Myerscough tutors have received JISC awards for their development and use of digital technologies. This work with JISC and the HE Academy demonstrates external recognition for our strategic commitment to the development of ILT to enhance teaching and learning for higher education students.

Scholarship, Research and Professional Practice (LE2)

Our Scholarship and Research Strategy, in place since 2005, sets out how the College develops a strong ethos of research and scholarly activity among staff and students and underpins the curriculum. We set funding aside to support the development of research and scholarly activity for higher education and we appoint a Director of Research and two Lead Researchers to drive forward research. Our research is structured under four centres for research. These are the Centre for Research in Sustainable Plant and Crop Science, the Centre for Research in Animal Welfare, the

Centre for Research in Sports Health and Performance and the Centre for Research in Teaching and Learning. We host an external Research Advisory Group, comprising eminent external researchers from the above areas, to provide advice, guidance and direction for our research activity and an annual research bidding process provides structure for tutors to bid for time and resources to undertake research. The research bidding process focuses on collaborative research with other institutions, potential for postgraduate study, external funding and how the research will be disseminated to students and the wider academic and industry communities.

Our research is disseminated to students and other stakeholders through a range of mechanisms including the research webpages, the annual Research Report, a factsheet for each research project and our annual Research Conference for staff and students (now in its 12th year). Research and scholarly activity by tutors also acts as a stimulus of ideas for undergraduate research projects that take elements from tutor research. Additionally, research informed teaching is promoted by the use of tutor's own research in lectures and through our annual Research Conference.

The College funded 24 research projects from tutors in the 2016-17 bidding round with the focus on high level research outputs. Myerscough has collaborative research projects with renowned Universities that include UCLAN, Lancaster, Coimbre (Portugal), Liverpool, Liverpool John Moores, Liverpool Hope, Chester, the Swedish University of Agricultural Science and Cornell University.

This level strategic support for research and scholarly activity is almost unrivalled in the college-based higher education sector. The 2016-17 research achievements for the College are among the best in the UK for the land-based college sector including 21 conference presentations and 37 research publications, 17 of which were in high-level scientific journals. Myerscough now has 86 research publications registering on Scopus. Our 2016 Research Conference attracted over 300 attendees. We had 17 research active staff in 2016-17, 40% of HE teaching staff have published on Scopus, and 67% of published staff have been cited by other researchers, evidencing the quality of research undertaken by our tutors. The College also had four case studies accepted for publication in a national LANDEX research publication showcasing the opportunities and capability for research in land-based subjects for organisations such as the Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs). The effectiveness of this research activity in underpinning the curriculum is further evidenced by the outcome of 88% student satisfaction for the 2017 NSS optional question 'My learning has benefitted by modules that are informed by current research'. We also recognise the value of providing opportunities for the dissemination of student research and scholarly activity. For example, 8 Equine Science students presented their own research at national or international conferences in 2016, including the International Society for Equitation Science Conference in France.

We are also one of 15 lead UK colleges in the HEFCE funded AOC 'College HE Scholarship' Project. The project aims to develop a framework for scholarly activity that can be rolled out to all colleges who offer higher education. We have introduced a number of new initiatives to further enhance staff and student scholarly activity through the project:

- Scholarship Steering Group: A Scholarship Steering Group has been set up with tutor representation from each Curriculum Area to drive forward the development of staff and student scholarly activity.
- Peer review: The College has introduced cross-curriculum Teaching and Learning Communities to collaboratively develop teaching practices and further develop the practice of peer review.
- Scholarship induction project: Higher Education tutors have introduced a mini-research project and formative assessment with the new student intake as part of their induction. This involved students collecting and analysing primary data right from the start of their course to promote student scholarship, independent learning and academic skills for new students.
- Work Project poster conference: Students presented their industry-based Work Project proposals via a poster as part of the Annual Research Conference to promote dissemination of student scholarly activity and provide students with experience of presenting in a conference environment.

Our scholarship and research activities and outomes outlined above demonstrate that our students are consistently and frequently engaged and involved in developments at the forefront of research, scholarship and practice. This was further reinforced by the College 2014 QAA HE Review report, which identified good practice in *'the broad range of staff development opportunities available to support a distinctive College higher educational experience'* and in '*the Research Strategy that underpins higher education learning and teaching'*.

Personalised learning (LE3)

We provide optimum levels of personalised learning through embedded curriculum and assessment design, appropriate class sizes and individual support.

Our average class size is approximately 16 students and this provides an appropriate cohort size that supports healthy seminars, in-class discussion and group work while allowing for high levels of direct tutor support and differentiation that meets the needs of diverse and individual students. Additionally, we maintain an 'open door' access policy where students can contact tutors for individual support and guidance outside of timetabled sessions. Our Inclusive Learning team also provide individual support for students with identified additional learning needs. The outcome for the 2017 NSS question 'I have received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my course' was 85%, above with the sector average.

To further support their personal and academic development, all our students are allocated a personal tutor who they meet with at regular intervals. As detailed previously, we timetable weekly course tutorials to provide opportunity for tutors to discuss course arrangements and deliver group tutorials on academic and personal development. A standard course tutorial scheme of work and a bank of online learning materials are in place to provide support for tutors in delivering course tutorials. The course tutorial scheme of work is also linked to the Graduate Employability programme, a College initiative to provide a central focus for the development of student employability skills. The success of these measures to support students is reflected in the full time core metric for academic support, which is above benchmark with a positive flag for the most recent year.

We also recognise the need to provide academic support for our distance learning students who can feel very isolated and our tutors promote interaction and communities of study between distance learning students through a range of mechanisms including discussion boards and interaction with live lectures and webinars. Distance learning students are also allocated a personal tutor, a course tutor and a module tutor for each module to provide direct support and guidance throughout their programme. Additionally, distance learning students also have direct access to our E-Learning Team to provide direct support for IT and software-related issues.

We embed personalised learning into curriculum design through optionality. For example, students on foundation degree programmes have the option of following either business or research based module options in year 2 depending on whether they wish to progress directly into employment or to further study on a top-up degree programme. Elective modules are incorporated on degree programmes to stretch students in an area of particular interest and tailor their studies to meet their personal interests. Electives may be subject based to support their specialism, or broader modules such as the inclusion of an elective module on introduction to teacher training for students who may be considering a future career in education.

We also embed personalised learning into assessment design. Where possible, assessments are designed so that students can choose their own case studies or industry-based issues to form the basis of investigative assignments. For example, our foundation degrees include a cross-curricular level 5 'Work Project' module where students use their experiences from the level 4 'Work Skills Development' module to investigate a particular project in relation to their specific industry sector and then work with an employer to develop the project and report on the outcomes. This provides personalised learning while encapsulating the ethos of foundation degrees in providing engagement in a work environment.

Our approaches to personalised learning promote the highest levels of engagement and active commitment to learning of our students as evidenced by our attendance rates which have averaged above 89% for the last two years.

Student Outcomes and Learning Gain

Employment and Further Study (SO1)

We value highly the importance of student employability and strategic management in this area is driven from the highest level. The College Strategic Plan states '*We will help today's raw talent to become tomorrow's skilled workers, in a world of constant change and diminishing resources*'. This Strategic Plan objective is underpinned by strategic targets for student destinations through DLHE outcomes and student satisfaction through NSS outcomes.

Our DLHE data demonstrates success in producing graduates who progress into their chosen career or further study. The success in longer term employment for our graduates is also demonstrated by our LEO data.

The development of employability skills is firmly embedded in our curriculum as detailed in the next section. Additionally, each of our Curriculum Areas run subject-specific employer's events for their students to help raise their awareness of graduate opportunities within their industry. These events invite key employers and industry organisations to an event where they can talk to students about graduate career prospects and students can talk to employers about potential job opportunities. These events may also incorporate an industry liaison meeting between the course team and employers to discuss suggestions for further enhancements to the curriculum and opportunities for working with employers to enhance the employability of students.

We have a dedicated careers service based in the student services centre, the 'Core' who provide information, advice and guidance to students on graduate careers opportunities and preparing for work. These can be provided on a 1:1 basis or through group tutorials sessions for subject areas. Through this service, we have also developed a 'Graduate Employability' programme to provide a framework of learning materials, support and recognition for the development and enhancement of student employability skills. Our Graduate Employability programme is linked and mapped to the course tutorial scheme of work to allow work undertaken in course tutorials to be accredited directly to the programme. Evidence for the programme is provided through a portfolio developed by students to help prepare them for employment.

Our graduate start-up businesses are strong in a number of subjects. For example, on average around 15% of our Floral Design students go on to start up their own businesses. We also have on-campus facilities for business start-up that students can access via the business incubation unit in the College Rural Business Centre.

A common theme of good practice from our 2016-17 External Examiner reports was the industry links and enhancement activities available for students which support the development of student employability skills. For example, through direct industry links provided by tutors, our Motorsports students have opportunity to work with DMack on the World Rallye Series and our Golf students have opportunity to work on the PGA European Golf Tour.

Employability and Transferable Skills (SO2)

The development of knowledge, skills and attributes that are most highly-valued by employers and enhance student personal and/or professional lives is firmly embedded in programmes at the College and this was a strategic focus of our portfolio review undertaken at the Periodic Course Review in 2013 and again at the more recent Periodic Course Review in 2017.

The 'MyEnterprise Education' project was implemented through the 2013 Periodic Course Review to ensure that programme design and development embedded the core themes of personal development and employability skills in all provision and enhanced pathways to student employment after graduation. Through the project, a suite of Career Development, Business and Entrepreneurism and Professional Practice modules were incorporated into cross-College programme delivery to promote the development of personal and employability skills. Employers are involved in co-assessing students on interview techniques as part of the Career Development module. Work-based learning was also incorporated in Foundation Degrees through cross-curricular Work Skills Development and Work Project modules. These modules have been running successfully since 2013, contributing to the employability outcomes for students.

The weekly timetabled course tutorials outlined previously provide opportunity for tutors to deliver bespoke sessions to support the development of employability and personal skills for students. Sessions included in the standard Course Tutorial Scheme of Work include job searching, CV writing and interview skills along with sessions on wider employability skills such as communication skills, time management and presentation techniques.

The success of these measures to promote the development of student personal and employability skills is reflected in the continued high absolute scores across all years of both the full time and part time core metrics for progression to employment or further study and the positive flag in the full time core metric for progression to employment or further study.

Positive Outcomes for All (SO3)

The achievement of positive outcomes for our students from all backgrounds is a key strategic priority of the College, in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds or those who are at greater risk. Our strap-line is 'Providing opportunities for all to succeed' and we achieved the kite mark of Leaders in Diversity in 2017 from the National Centre for Diversity.

We deliver an extended induction period for new higher education students to support their initial transition to higher education. This induction package includes a combination of centrally organised cross-College activities and subject-specific activities to support students in the early stages of their programme. To avoid information overload at the initial stages, the induction package includes an initial orientation in week one, followed by a 6 week extended induction period, which includes tutorials and seminars to discuss expectations, study skills, learning styles and personal development and introduces the services and support they can access as higher education students. The induction package includes a formative assessment to prepare students for the requirements of summative assessment and a personal tutorial to provide tutors and students with an early indication of expectations, academic level and areas where individual support may be required. These extended induction initiatives have been highly successful, particularly to support priority groups such as young students, those from low-participation areas and those in receipt of DSA.

We also deliver a 'MySafety and Welfare' programme as part of the extended induction period to enhance awareness of safeguarding, Prevent and student support issues for all our students. The programme is delivered via our VLE using a series of on-line learning resources. Safeguarding and Prevent are extremely important in a college environment and the safeguarding qualification enhances student awareness of these issues. Additionally, the online package includes the 'SelfSmart' initiative, a self-assessment programme that can be used as a measure learning gain for personal development and employability skills as it involves students taking a standardised self-assessment test at the start and end of the academic year. Completion of the 'MySafety and Welfare' programme also adds to student CVs and enhances student employability.

In our 2016-17 internal induction survey, 98% of higher education students stated they knew where to get help if they needed it and 96% stated that following induction they felt more confident about their course.

We provide a central student support services centre, 'The Core' to provide extensive additional academic and pastoral support for our higher education students. The Core services include the provision of a student finance advisor, student support officers, counsellors, the College nurse and the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Co-ordinator. We also work collaboratively with the University to enhance awareness of their student support mechanisms and improve access to study skills support initiatives at the University. These services provide valuable additional support throughout their studies, particularly for students in priority groups such as second career and mature students, minority ethnic groups and those in receipt of DSA.

Our electronic Student Support Register is used to assist early identification of student concerns in order to offer an appropriate level of support to improve retention, achievement and the student experience. The system involves identifying students concerns and closely monitoring these through a central electronic system. Student concerns are discussed within course teams and support officers on a weekly basis. Concerns are input on a central system and categorised according to the type of concern and assigned a level of risk. Actions are initiated appropriate to the level of risk and monitored on a regular basis. Our Student Support Register provides joined-up support for tutors in monitoring 'at risk' students and provides enhanced monitoring and support for students in priority groups such as those receiving DSA and those from low participation areas or other ethnicity groups.

The 2016-17 Student Support Register report confirms that the initiative has been very successful in supporting priority groups at the College. The percentage of higher education students who were on the Student Support Register and were retained through successful monitoring and support was 88% in 2016-17 (the same as 2015-16 and an increase from 84% in 2014-15). Additionally, achievement rates for students with a learning difficulty or disability improved by 7% and achievement for students in Polar 3 group 1 (students from the most disadvantaged areas) outperformed the other groups by 5%.

Our overall retention and achievement rates are consistently high, as evidenced by the positive flag for continuation in our full time TEF metrics. Our internal reporting data further reinforces the consistently high outcomes for our students with full time in-year retention of more than 96% and part time in-year retention of over 90% for each of the last three academic years. Our overall (full time and part time) in-year pass rates are above 90% and our internal reporting data on student achievement (a combination of retention and pass rates) is consistently above 85% for the last three years (increasing to 87% in the most recent year).

A key factor in this success was our increased focus on measures to improve progression to year two and the re-assessment period as the critical attrition point. Measures implemented in recent years to reduce the amount of summer reassessments included amending the timings of reassessments, maximising use of in-module reassessment and implementation of new aggregation and compensation regulations. The number of HE students with summer reassessments reduced from 14% in 2014-15 to 10% in 2015-16 and just 4% in 2016-17. Furthermore, no concerns or actions regarding the grading of student work or reassessment arrangements were raised by our External Examiners in 2016-17 assuring the continued robustness of assessment processes.

We analyse achievement by priority groups to ensure that support measures are targeted appropriately. Analysis of the internal 2016-17 achievement by priority groups indicated that the gap in achievement between young and older students was low (6%). This was largely linked to mode of delivery where there was a higher proportion of older students on distance learning programmes. Female students outperformed male students (within a 5% gap). This is in line with the national trend but also influenced by high achievement in Veterinary Nursing, and increased achievement in Animal Studies, both of whom have large cohorts of predominantly female students. The gap in outcomes for students from different ethnicities was insignificant (1%). As detailed previously, achievement for students with a learning difficulty or disability improved by 7% and achievement for students in Polar 3 group 1 (students from the most disadvantaged areas) outperformed the other groups by 5%.

We also monitor student outcomes by multiple dimension groups. Our achievement outcomes for white males from disadvantaged areas (the group identified as a priority by HEFCE and OFFA) were 86%, suggesting the performance for this group was in line with the overall College outcomes (within 1%). However, it was noted that the numbers can become quite small when reporting multiple dimension groups (43 students for this group).

We acknowledge that measures of Learning Gain for the higher education sector are still under development through various HEFCE projects and we are contributing to the HEFCE Learning Gain project through involvement in the AOC HE Scholarship project and implementation of the student engagement survey. Our SelfSmart initiative outlined previously also provides a measure of learning gain of the personal and professional skills of students.

Grade Point Average has not yet been introduced by our partner HEI. However, our Strategic Plan includes targets for high grades to ensure all students are stretched and challenged to achieve their full academic potential. In 2016-17, high grades for our finalist students (2.1 Degree or Merit+ other undergraduate) remained consistent at 54% (compared with 57% in 2015-16 and 48% in 2014-15. This consistency in outcomes reflects continued rigor of assessment but also demonstrate high levels of academic learning gain as the majority of our higher education students enter from vocational BTEC/C&G L3 qualifications rather than traditional 'A' levels. Furthermore, no concerns or actions regarding the grading of student work or the proportion of high grades were raised by our External Examiners in 2016-17. This assured the robustness of assessment processes and confirmed that the high grades outcomes were not due to grade inflation.

The above activities and outcomes evidence that our students from all backgrounds achieve consistently outstanding outcomes and this is further reinforced by our metrics for continuation and progression to employment or further study. The success of our initiatives to support retention and success were further endorsed in the 2014 QAA HE Review for the College which identified good practice in *'the comprehensive support for learners in their transition to higher education'* and in *'the wide-ranging support mechanisms targeted to meet individual needs that enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential'*.

Summary

The majority provision for the College is the full time delivery. Our metrics have 2 positive flags in the full time metrics for continuation and employment or further study (1 point each). Our full time metrics for Academic Support also contain a positive flag for the most recent year which gives a further half point for the most recent year, evidencing clear upward trajectory and positive outcomes for the most recent cohort. There is compelling evidence that the outcomes for highly skilled employment or further study for both full time and part time provision are affected significantly by the lack of recognition for our Veterinary Nursing students as a highly skilled outcome by the DLHE survey, but the evidence also shows that those students do go into employment or further study in their chosen profession. The 2014 QAA HE Review outcome for the College commended the quality and enhancement of the student learning experience and identified 10 areas of good practice with no recommendations. These factors together confirm that our higher education provision is consistently outstanding and of the highest quality found in the UK Higher Education sector.