UKPRN 10005072

Peter Symonds College

TEF Year Three Provider Submission

1. Introduction

Peter Symonds College (PSC) is a highly successful sixth form college. It is one of the top six performing sixth form colleges nationally. We are an OFSTED outstanding college with a reputation for providing high quality teaching and learning, an exceptional learning environment, and an unswerving commitment to continuously seeking to enhance everything we do.

Peter Symonds started Higher Education (HE) relatively recently when a level 4 diploma in Counselling was turned into a Foundation Degree with British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) accreditation. The College commenced the delivery of higher education programmes on a separate site to the sixth form college in 2010. Unusually, the College took a strategic decision to write their own degree programmes and obtain validation through University partnerships. The College currently has two such partnerships one with Middlesex University and the other with the University of Chichester and offers foundation and full honours degree programmes in Early Years, Teaching & Learning Support, Special Educational Needs, Sport Injury and Treatment, Business and Management, Insurance and Counselling. The College has approximately 250 higher education degree students per year.

The initial starting point for the PSC TEF award is Silver (based on the Core Metric flags). This submission provides further evidence and support for a Silver Award.

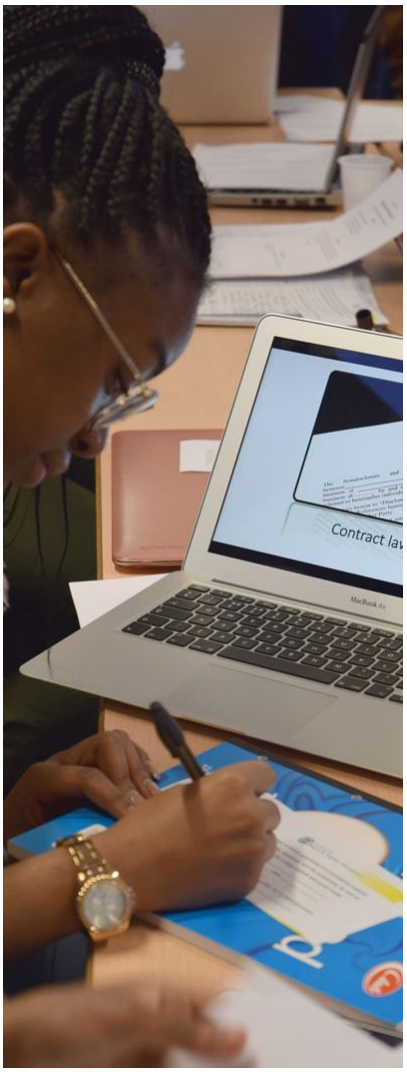
2. Mission and Values for Higher Education

We celebrate diversity and aim to offer a more inclusive approach to gaining a higher education qualification by encouraging those individuals who are unable to give up a job, or view the cost of obtaining a higher education qualification via the traditional university route as prohibitive. Students benefit from increased confidence, knowledge and the ability to think, reason and debate at a higher level. We believe this is essential in terms of ensuring a stable and productive society for the future.

Our College has a well-established reputation for excellence and is committed to raising achievement so that all learners do their very best in relation to their learning goals, prior attainment and potential. Central to this strategy is the belief that each learner is an exception, an individual with his or her own needs and aspirations. Within the context of our higher education programmes, our aim is to develop:

- Critical Thinkers;
- Academic Achievers;
- Involved Citizens;
- Effective Communicators; and

- Self-Directed Responsible Learners.



The College aims to do this through the provision of learning experiences, which emphasise autonomy, independence, a commitment to lifelong learning and instil in each student confidence, skills and knowledge for life and work.

Our higher education provision reflects underlying widening participation objectives for attracting those learners who otherwise may not have access to learning opportunities and recognises the objectives and priorities of the Solent and Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP). Improved progression rates for Level 3 learners, and generally improved attainment rates for Level 4 and above, are declared priorities for the region. The LEP needs analysis states that demographic changes, coupled with jobs becoming more knowledge and skills intensive, will result in demand for higher level skills (4-7) increasing across all occupations and within all sectors.This will accentuate the need for existing members of the workforce to obtain level 4 and above qualifications.

These needs analysis informed our curriculum planning, development and design. The College is particularly focussed on providing higher education and skills in such a way that students already working can continue in their existing job roles and any traditional undergraduate student who does opt to study at the College can study whilst starting to develop their career. Unlike the local higher education institutions, the College's focus is not typically directed towards the 18-21 year old undergraduate wanting the traditional university experience.

Our College has adopted a pioneering, innovative approach to the delivery of higher education. Students attend traditional taught sessions in college for six hours a week for 36 weeks of the year; as such, they complete 120 credits in a year and are classified as full time students. However, students are also expected to either be in paid employment in a vocationally relevant setting or have the opportunity to work voluntarily in a setting, which is vocationally relevant to their degree programme. The work place is used as a focus on which to base assignment work and becomes essentially an extension of the classroom. Our model is designed to unlock the unconscious competence and knowledge held tacitly by learners in employment but unarticulated. The first module in our framework, which is common to the majority of our degrees, provides the foundations for this process through development of academic skills. In many ways, we have been a head of the curve in our development of HE as our programmes mirror the approach of degree apprenticeships. We have already embedded our Management & Business Degree into a Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship and as more relevant apprenticeship standards become available, we will be able to do the same with other degree programmes.

Our fees are significantly lower than university fees at just under £5k per year. We have developed a suite of degrees within a framework, which enables us to maintain low fees without sacrificing quality. The framework consists of some common modules, which are contextualised to the specific subject. This allows development of teaching materials and the sharing of good practice across disciplines. It also facilitates the creation of standard processes and formats to be adopted so that programmes operate as a whole and not as standalone subjects from an institutional perspective.

3. Our HE philosophy behind our framework degrees

Our philosophy is based around the following premises:

A desire to enable those already in the workplace an opportunity to access higher education whilst continuing to work. We believe this is essential in terms of ensuring a stable and productive society for the future. Our Higher Education Strategy & Needs Analysis 2014-2020 considers the skills needs analysis in the geographical area around the College, the conclusion to be drawn from this analysis is that technological and demographic changes mean that there will not be sufficient traditional graduates aged 21 leaving university in the 2015-2020 timeframe to meet demand for graduate jobs. This accentuates the need for existing members of the workforce to obtain higher level qualifications. Failure to do so could act as a brake on economic growth.

Acknowledgement that the world is continually changing and that the pace of change is increasing. There is a recognition by educational developers and others that what worked in a pre-digital age just is not enough at a time when accessing content is easier than ever before, but selecting relevant, appropriate and trustworthy content is a much tougher proposition altogether. We cannot anticipate all the knowledge future workers will need and the future might be more about knowing how to retrieve information and then apply it than what we teach undergraduates. So, a key aspect of our programmes is centred on utilising current subject matter and knowledge to teach higher-level thinking, research and reflective skills coupled with independent learning skills that are so enabling and essential as the world changes.

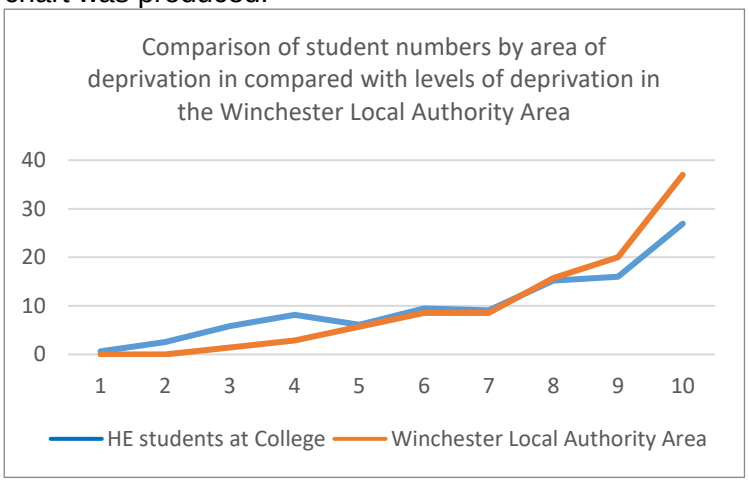
Recognition that online distance learning, which is arguably the most accessible form of learning to students in the workplace, does not meet all student's needs. We believe students who may have been out of formal education for a period of time need scaffolding, this is the support given during the learning process which is tailored to the needs of the student with the intention of helping the student achieve his/her learning goals. It is our view that students need some teaching of subject input to provide the scaffolding or reference points on which they can "hang" and develop their knowledge and also benefit through participation in small group learning. We believe this is best done through attendance at college in a formal taught class or seminar situation. The benefits of regular face-to-face contact with fellow students and lecturers are considerable both emotionally and academically, providing amongst other things; motivation, discourse and exchange of ideas about their studies with others from different backgrounds and experiences. It also enables tutors to provide support, practical and emotional, which in turn enables learners to develop in confidence and empowers them to become self-directed and responsible learners.

We also believe that students on our degree programmes bring with them valuable work experience which should be utilised to enhance learning. We therefore adopt a work-focussed approach to learning which aims to facilitate interaction with academic and workplace knowledge in a mutually constructive way. Application of academic theory to real work and vice versa creates deep learning and new knowledge, which benefits not only the student, the tutor but also the organisation and the wider economy. This philosophy links to our Higher Education Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy "Inspiring Excellence and Achievement".

4. Exploration of the contextual data for the College

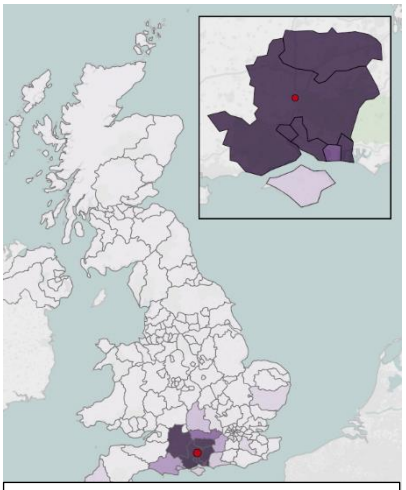
4.1 Local context

Winchester and its surrounding area, although it has pockets of deprivation, is not a highly deprived area and it does not have any neighbourhoods in the 10-20% most deprived areas in England (The 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation). Given this fact, we carried out further analysis to identify the extent to which our cohort was representative of the levels of deprivation in our area. The following chart was produced.



It shows the percentage of students enrolling onto HE programmes at the College from postcodes with different levels of deprivation, 1 being the most deprived and 10 being the least deprived over the period 2010 – 2016. This has been compared to the percentage of wards in the Winchester Local Authority (WLA) area, which fall into each category of deprivation, this line, has been taken as the norm (orange line). The blue line shows that we have a higher number of students on our HE programmes from more deprived areas than the "norm" would suggest and similarly we have a lower number of HE students from areas of less deprivation than the "norm" would suggest. This supports the argument that within the context of our local area we are widening participation for those in less affluent areas.

The overwhelming majority of our students are local students with 51% of our students coming from domiciles within the "travel to work" area and the remaining majority, approximately 40% (based on our postcode analysis), from areas just beyond this. In reality, 92% of our students are in a geographical location where they can travel to college once a week.



Student domicile prior to entry

In terms of ethnicity, College cohorts are representative of the wider community with fewer than 5% of HE students drawn from ethnic groups other than white.

Overall, HE student cohorts at PSC are predominately mature (86% aged 21 or over) often with non-traditional entry requirements. In fact, the contextual data provided in the TEF regarding entry qualifications over estimates the percentage of students entering the College with HE level qualifications. This is because a significant number of students (we calculate 20%) of students in these cohorts were moving from having successfully completed a foundation degree at the College to full honours.

Of the 20% of students who were continuing to a one year top up, 64% did not have an HE level qualification on entry at foundation degree level at the College and of those 64%, 85% of the students entered with a no tariff qualification. This means the majority of our students are entering with level 3 qualifications, which do not carry UCAS points. Typically, these are NVQ type qualifications, which are very different to traditional university entry requirements and require a completely different skill set to degree level academic skills.

Given the we have a large proportion of students (60%) who either have non-traditional level 3 qualifications or low tariff qualifications on entry, it is an testament to our processes, as well as,

teaching and learning that student's high grade results are in line with full time HE high grade benchmarks.

Qualification Level on Entry	Full-time PSC TEF Data	Full-Time PSC Adjusted Data
HE level	38%	24%
High Tariff	3%	4%
Medium Tariff	7%	7%
Low Tariff	14%	16%
No Tariff	33%	44%
Non UK	5%	5%

% High Grades	Full Time High Grade Benchmark	PSC High Grades
2013/14	71%	74%
2014/15	70%	75%
2015/16	73%	72%

Percentage of Peter Symonds College students obtaining high grades against all full time degree students. Benchmark Source: HESA

4.2 NSS results

Although there is nothing materially or statistically relevant in the core metrics for NSS results to distinguish us from achieving anything beyond the benchmarks. We do have excellent results for this year's 2016-17 NSS results and this represents an upward trend from 2014-15 results.

Our student numbers are relatively small (2014-15) 41 students, (2015-16) 24 students and in 2016-17, 67 students were eligible to complete the NSS. With small numbers, data such as the NSS can be compromised by a few dominant students who may unduly influence a group, which in turn can significantly affect the difference between the indicator and the benchmark. We believe our success in increasing the participation rate in the NSS survey from 65-69% in 2014-16 to 91% in 2017 helps to mitigate this effect.

The NSS results in the previous two years (2014-15, 2015-16) have caused us some disconcertion and puzzlement, as they did not reflect feedback we had obtained internally. We have worked with our student representative committee and study body to establish the reasons for this. Research carried out by the student representatives in conjunction with the Director of Adult & Higher Education resulted in an action plan, which remedied some issues and clarified marking and feedback turnaround timescales. It also identified that the timing of the survey would be better placed in January rather than March/April. Furthermore, the student representatives discovered that students did not fully understand what some of the questions meant in the context of higher education in our College and materials were put together to clarify. We think this added emphasis from the student representatives gave ownership to the students of the survey raising its profile resulting in a significantly increased response rate for 2017 NSS results (91% versus under 70% in previous years). Collectively, these actions resulted in a significant improvement in results in all areas and a 93% overall satisfaction rate in the 2017 NSS data. This is one example of how working in partnership with our students has improved outcomes.
As the chart below confirms our 2017 NSS results are outstanding and in all categories, bar one, our results are above the top quartile benchmark for the sector.

	2017 Top Quartile Sector wide % agree	PSC 2017 Figure	PSC comparison to bench mark
Teaching on my course	89.97	92.54	+2
Learning Opportunities	88.33	96.52	+8
Assessment & Feedback	79.17	88.06	+9
Academic Support	85.73	87.06	+1
Organisation & Management	83.22	89.05	+6
Learning Resources	87.78	84.83	-3
Learning Community	83.87	88.06	+4
Student Voice	75.76	78.98	+3
Overall Satisfaction	91.13	92.54	+1

Source: PSC NSS overall results

However, we are not complacent and with our student body consistently seek opportunities to develop and improve the student experience. For example, although our NSS result regarding feedback on marked work is above benchmark, we believe we can do more particularly in terms of feedforward. This is being provided, via our VLE Moodle but we do not think students are using it effectively. Consequently, we are in the process of reviewing how we conduct progress reviews. Student involvement in this process is a key element.

5. Teaching Quality

Peter Symonds College is committed to enhancing learning, which inspires, challenges and raises achievement. *Our 2015 QAA Review Report acknowledged that we enable "the development of independent learners through well received learning and teaching strategies alongside resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential".*

86% our students are mature, frequently combine full time work with study and family life and may have had a significant gap in undertaking study before they start their degree programme with us. Furthermore, the majority of our students (60%) arrive with non-traditional or low tariff qualifications, are likely to have had a difficult school experience and often lack confidence. Therefore, effective orientation of our students is important. Our student interview and induction process helps to identify students who need support and direct them to it at entry and our first module on developing and enhancing academic skills aids student understanding of what is expected of them at HE level and provides essential tools to ensure success. Personal and academic support, which underpins the curriculum, is key and all students are assigned a personal tutor who monitors their progress both academically and pastorally and carries out formal progress reviews with them during the year. We teach students in small groups, our class sizes are rarely above 20 and frequently between 10 and 16 students. Consequently, tutors know students and their capabilities well and can make effective use of formative assessment to provide support and challenge tailored to the individual.

Typically, taught sessions last three hours and will consist of tutor input, discussion, seminar work, and project supervision. Wherever possible tutors draw upon their own professional experiences or those of the group to enhance and develop discussion. Since the majority of students are employed in a vocationally relevant setting this frequently results in rich and complex discussion. In addition, we have a wide range of expert guest speakers who supplement our tutors.

Our programme design not only enables sharing of expertise and resources across subjects through the inclusion of common modules it also helps to ensure overall consistency and quality. Furthermore, the two module a term format helps employed students to manage their workload, quickly flags up students who are not achieving and helps to build student confidence which many of our students who are returning to study after a long time lack. Our programmes are designed to support the incremental development of students' independence and ability to take responsibility for their own learning.

We review our programmes annually based on staff and student evaluations of modules and the most recent research and professional practice. In addition, our Insurance degree is supported by an advisory board of insurance industry experts, which meets in London to review content; this is invaluable in such a fast moving industry and ensures the programme continues to meet employer needs.

In 2014, we introduced a new role to ensure that we had the right emphasis on our teaching and learning in terms of stimulation, challenge, encouragement of student engagement and effort. The introduction of the HEQM (Higher Education Quality Manager) role is pivotal in terms of enabling the college to develop its HE staff and continually enhance HE teaching and learning. This new role enabled the holistic observation of teaching and learning process (HOT) to be carried out by one individual across all programmes. HOT which is linked to the HEA UK Professional Standards Framework involves a lesson observation, feedback from students on that specific lesson, a professional discussion and an audit of online materials for the module being taught. This ensures consistency and identification of staff development needs. It also ensures, in a situation where most staff are part-time, that a professional discussion takes place following the lesson observation between the tutor and the HEQA.

Staff find the opportunity to have a professional discussion about their teaching very rewarding developmentally and we find this approach helps us to quality assure what is a diverse group of part-time tutors. Each year the HEQM sets themes for staff to development and demonstrate in an observation. Recent themes have been higher level questioning techniques, interactive exercises on our VLE, encouraging student responsibility for their own learning. The HEQM presents an annual summary of the professional discussions and outcomes from lesson observations, the themes that have arisen and these are compiled into an action plan and staff development plan for the next academic year. As part of our HOT process, staff also carry out a peer observation or can choose to review the teaching and learning of a particular part of a module. The HEQM role also includes quality assuring standards of marking, providing training on teaching in the HE context and induction of new members of staff. *In our 2015 QAA review, the team recognised the effective contribution made by the Holistic and Peer Observation of Teaching schemes to the enhancement of student learning opportunities as* ***good practice.***

The HOT process encourages reflection on both the teaching approach and how scholarship, research and professional activity have been drawn upon to facilitate student learning. Reflection on teaching and learning occurs at a variety of levels throughout the organisation, HOT, staff module evaluation forms provide individual reflection, student representative feedback at Boards of Study meetings, SPOC (student perception on course), student module evaluations along with end of year internal evaluations, the NSS data, teaching team meetings and HE staff development & planning events.

External Examiners comment on numerous examples of good practice relating to curriculum design as well as teaching and learning some examples from 2017 external examiner reports are included below:

> *"The local delivery of high quality higher education remains an excellent example of the relationship between the two institutions. The course specific academic quality is noticeable with academics employed with industry experience enhancing student experience"***.**
> EE Sport Injury & Treatment 2017

> *"The integration of theory into practice through the emphasis of learning through placements supports the depth of the students learning. This is facilitated by clear structures supporting the relationship between the college and placements and the robust supervision of and feedback to the students by both the college and the placement supervisors".*
> 2017 EE Counselling

Areas of good practice identified by the external examiner for Early Years & Teaching & Learning in 2017

"Assignment design has great strength and remains vocationally relevant.
The engagement of students in the feed forward process remains an example of good practice.
The engagement of students in Student Voice activities / representation.
The range of student selected topics within research and work based projects.
High quality work seen within dissertations".

We encourage and reward excellent teaching by asking staff to share good practice observed through the HOT programme at formal points in the year, by supporting and paying for them to become members of the Higher Education Academy, which three members of staff have achieved in the past year and a further three are about to submit. We are committed to the continuous development of our staff through use of the staff development fund to support achievement of postgraduate qualifications and through offering research bursaries for projects to improve teaching and learning.

We value our students as partners, support them to reach their potential and listen to what they say. We systematically involve them in the continuous improvement of teaching and learning; all students complete module evaluations and provide feedback via our student representative system. We involve students in periodic review as well as the development of new initiatives both with in their subject area and across HE as a whole. Despite the one day a week or weekend attendance mode 81% of students in the 2017 NSS survey said that they felt part of a community of staff and students, 90% said that staff value student's views and opinions about the course and 91% said that they had been provided with the right opportunities to give feedback on their course.

We continuously seek improvement in closing the feedback loop and although the response to "It is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on" is above benchmark we are working to further improve this statistic through collecting end of module evaluations via our VLE. This will enable us to display the results of module evaluations immediately and ensure there is a written response to the feedback displayed to students by the module tutor. We have also acted upon a recent student suggestion to supplement existing methods with a prominent notice board.

Our 2015 QAA review noted that "The College's Student Engagement Impact Analysis, is an effective tool for evaluating and disseminating changes made as a result of student feedback", is considered by the Student Representative Committee and leads to programme specific alterations where appropriate. Student Feedback has also resulted in the introduction of an Academic Support Tutor, the reorganisation of the VLE study section, increased visits from learning resources centre staff, improvements to the allocation of student login details, revisions to the questions asked at programme reviews to better detect resourcing weaknesses, enhanced assignment uploading and electronic marking, and revised interview guidance. Many of these changes formed part of the action plan drawn up in response to specific lower than expected NSS results, with actions tracked through committee discussions and AMRs.

The QAA Review Team also confirmed, in 2015, that we respond quickly and thoroughly to comments and suggestions from students. The QAA Review Team quoted examples of changes to learning strategies and resources based on systematic student engagement in the review of programmes and materials and also confirmed that we take deliberate steps to involve students as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. The Review Team found that, in general, students feel that the College has an ethos of constant improvement and listens to them so as to enhance its provision. *The 2015 QAA Review team considered "the effective and sustained responsiveness to feedback to improve students' learning opportunities as* ***good practice"****.*

"I have found all of my tutors to be very knowledgeable. I feel I could go to any of them with a problem and have felt very supported throughout the course"

Julie Terry-Jenner Humanistic Counselling

"The tutors are great, they are always willing to go the extra mile and support the students- this is my first experience in higher education and I am very impressed."

Grant Simleit Management & Business Student

5.1 TEF Metrics

We have one negative flag in year 2 regarding assessment and feedback. There was a very small cohort of students of only 24 students out of 37 response to the NSS in 2016. It is likely that the unexpected and immediate resignation of a programme leader for reasons unconnected to the programme had an impact on the promptness of return of marked work and the depth of feedback and it is in these two areas the % agree responses are lowest. Although we were able to put in place a replacement within two weeks, it did take an additional two or three weeks for them to be fully operational in the role.

5.2 NSS results for 2017

The NSS individual results questions about "Teaching on my Course" and "Assessment and Feedback" in 2017, with the exception of one result, which is at benchmark, are considerably above benchmark.

National Student Survey Results 2017	Sector Bench Mark	Peter Symonds Results	Visual comparison to bench mark
Teaching on my Course			
1. Staff are good at explaining things	89%	88%	-1%
2. Staff have made the subject interesting	83%	93%	+10%
3. The course is intellectually stimulating	85%	96%	+11%
4. My course has challenged me to achieve my best work	82%	94%	+12%
Assessment & Feedback			
8. The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance	72%	85%	+13%
9. Marking and assessment has been fair	73%	88%	+15%
10. Feedback on my work has been timely	74%	90%	+16%
11. I have received helpful comments on my work	74%	90%	+16%

Source 2017 PSC NSS results and 2017 NSS Benchmark for FT All England

6. Learning Environment

In order to facilitate sharing of work related practice group sizes are kept at or below twenty students in any one class. There are no large lecturers where students can be physically present and mentally elsewhere, in our programmes all students are active participants. In the case where students are reticent in being active participants the subject teacher and or personal tutor will intervene to provide support and encouragement.

As the majority of our students are only present in college for their taught sessions it has been essential to provide students with academic journals and data bases to research academic material and other information online. *The QAA review in 2015 found that both staff and students value a comprehensive VLE that makes much of this information available and hosts presentation slides and notes so that students can catch up.*

There is a standard format for a module on Moodle, which ensures that students can easily identify the resources linked to each seminar. It is audited by the HEQM and this can trigger staff development where gaps or good practice are identified. The VLE facilitates deeper student engagement with development of independent study and research skills through specific sections for these on the VLE which include videos and materials on essay writing, critical thinking, taking responsibility for own learning and how to research our online data bases.

Total use of Higher Education online resources by Year		
2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
3,668	11,734	23,211

Usage of our online databases has increased significantly and reflects improvements in our induction process and on-going support to improve student ability to access and search our online resources.

*The 2015 QAA Review Team considered the wide-ranging and fit-for-purpose information available to students and staff through the VLE, which is underpinned by staff development, to be **good practice**.*

In addition, we have academic support tutors who help with academic skills development. Students can be referred by their personal or subject tutor or can self-refer and book to meet with an academic support tutor, either in person or on skype. Academic support tutors are involved in the delivery of the academic skill development module and/or at the induction session at the start of a degree programme and at induction sessions for year 2 and 3 where they work with subject tutors to ensure students know what is expected of them as they move from one level to another. Collectively, these approaches enable academic support tutors to establish a rapport with students and improve their visibility and accessibility to the student body. In 2016-17, 373 hours (approximately 1.5 hours per student per year) were provided to HE students by academic support. This is in addition to personal tutorials and progress reviews.

The Head of Adult Study Support holds regular training sessions for academic support tutors and has also developed a comprehensive study support area for HE students on our VLE.

The QAA Review Team noted in 2015 that students praised their learning environment and that students recognise the high level of support that they get as consequence of:

- *the relatively small class sizes*
- *ready access to a range of teaching and support staff.*
- *Provision of academic support tutors who work with students on a one-to-one basis, reinforced by workshops and skills sessions for specific additional help with, for example, literacy, numeracy and referencing.*
- *comprehensive information about academic support and how to improve assessment and grades provided in student hand books*
- *the systematic use of progress reviews provide students with opportunities to consider employability and career development*

Our higher educational philosophy and design of work-focussed assessments means that linkages between teaching and learning, research and professional practice are embedded in all that we do. It also means that student project work often results in immediate change and benefit in their specific workplace setting. Furthermore, because students are working in a relevant vocational setting, peer-to-peer interaction and discussion provides students with a broader perspective than just their own organisation. Where students may not be in a vocational setting such as Sport Injury and Treatment we run our own clinic, which is open to the general public to provide real life work experience within a controlled setting and where specialist laboratories are needed we utilise our local university or validating university facilities.

It has been a conscious strategic decision of the College to recruit teaching staff who have vocationally relevant experience. Many of our staff are still currently working in their field and this means they too can contribute their own experience and practice in the classroom. To an extent, both students and teachers are learners together in this process. Consequently, in the delivery of our programmes our philosophy is based on a strong belief that practitioner knowledge can inform academic knowledge and vice versa. However, we also believe that undergraduates should have academic subject specific input, which provides a scaffold on which to pin and develop their knowledge.

Learners are expected to look critically at their work setting as a source of information, research, reflection and in some instances a lab for controlled experimentation. They develop strategies for improvement, which will be tested in the real world of work, creating benefit for the employer as well as enhancing personal knowledge, understanding and skills. In our framework degrees, the workplace becomes an extension of the classroom and facilitates the development of student led inquiry and research where autonomous, self-directed, critical and reflective learners are created.
This approach means that student learning is not compartmentalised into the six taught hours per week, the learning experience is much broader than this. Using the workplace as an extension of the classroom creates a dynamic learning environment where students utilise concepts and theories introduced in the classroom to inform analysis of issues in their field of work and partake in the reasoned argument drawing upon knowledge from experience, work and course contexts to create “new knowledge”. As well as encouraging deep learning through application to a relevant real world environment, this approach has brings benefits to the contemporary economic environment as well.

6.1 <u>Scholarship & Research</u>

We recognise that scholarship and research lie at the heart of higher education and our Scholarly Activity and Research Protocol outlines their nature in our organisation. We consider that it is one of our USPs that a significant number of staff continue to work in their chosen profession alongside

their teaching. This means they have a sound understanding and an up to date knowledge of their subject and /or professional practice as well as the latest research. We provide research bursaries and financial support for higher-level qualifications and HEA membership. A number of staff are studying for postgraduate qualifications and/or carrying out research/writing articles. In addition, the College is a partner in the AOC Scholarship Project and has contributed to the development of the Scholarship Framework, which is evolving out of the project.

6.2 Alignment with Industry and Employer Needs

In the field of counselling our students directly benefit from BACP professional accreditation, which provides them with the licence to practice as a counsellor. Employers are invited in to provide guest speaking and are involved in our interim review of subjects and re-validation panels. Our Insurance degree, which is the first in the country and was written in collaboration with a local insurance broker. It is supported by an advisory board of insurance industry experts which ensures the programme continues to meet employer needs.

6.3 Matrix Accreditation

The Adult & Higher Education Division has held Matrix Accreditation for over 10 years. This is the quality standard for organisations to assess and measure the standard of information advice and guidance and provides recognition for outstanding commitment and service to students. *The report identifies the level of support provided and student awareness of it as a* ***strength*** *"The support available is clearly promoted throughout the Centre on posters and leaflets as well as directly through tutors. The information is also available online and in the electronic student handbook. Students were fully aware of the support that was available and commented about how helpful staff were with all issues even if they were unable to sort out the problems themselves. Staff clearly knew their students, understanding any issues that could impact on their education or enabling them to identify relevant opportunities or progression for particular students"* 2017 Matrix Re-accreditation Report.
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6.4 TEF Metrics.

We have no flags for academic support in either the core metrics or splits.

6.5 NSS results for 2017

The NSS individual results questions about "Academic Support" in 2017 are all above benchmark

	Academic Support Questions	Sector Bench Mark	Peter Symonds Results	Comparison to bench mark
12	I have been able to contact staff when I needed to	86%	92%	+6%
13	I have received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my course	79%	82%	+3%
14	Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices on my course	77%	86%	+9%

Source 2017 PSC NSS results and 2017 NSS Benchmark for FT All England

7. Student Outcomes and Learning Gain

7.1 Career Guidance and Employability

The majority of our students are already working in the sector they have chosen for their career. We have extensive information about career development, CV building and interview technique on our VLE. Students are also able to book a careers interview should they desire. As many of our tutors are current industry professionals they are able to provide students with insight and a better understanding of the careers they are pursuing.

Name of Provider: Peter Symonds College
UKPRN: 10005072

As the majority of our students are studying for a vocationally relevant degree, whilst in relevant employment, our programmes are intrinsically linked to development of lifelong learning and employability skills. There are opportunities to explore current practice in the work place embedded in our programmes. Group discussion enables all to bring personal experience and perspectives to consider professional approaches to problems and issues and in this way, we help our students to set standards, share good practice and develop professional approaches in the workplace.

For many of our students the outcome of their study with us is very positive for example, a large number of students progress from being teaching assistants to primary school teachers and other students obtain promotion with their current employer whilst studying for their degree and as a result of the work-focussed project work they do. Although we do not have any specific data to demonstrate how we have developed graduates to acquire lifelong learning skills and make a contribution to society, economy and the environment we do have anecdotal evidence. The quotes below extracted from testimonials in our most recent prospectus provide a flavour of student outcomes:

"This course helped me progress in my career to being able to secure my first Practice Manager's Post and has greatly increased my confidence" Nicola Maule Business	
	"As a teaching assistant with ambition to become a teacher, the format of this course is perfect for me as it allows me to gain theoretical knowledge as well as having first hand practical experiences in my setting. The course has not only been beneficial to myself but my setting has also gained due to the work focussed learning projects. Certain methods and lessons have been implemented within my setting as a result of my research and findings" Kieran Balcombe Teaching and Learning
The academic programme this course offers has been excellent. The tutors are all experienced working counsellors, which means they can offer first-hand experience of working with clients. Gaining my agency placements and going out to work with clients, real people was at first daunting but with the excellent support of the college and in particular, the supervisors, it has proved to be an exciting and rewarding experience. Claire Crawte Humanistic Counselling	
	This course covers all aspects of working in a management role within a business environment. I have been able to apply each

module to my working environment. This aided my progression within my organisation.
Will Harrigan Business

7.2 TEF Metrics

We have a double negative flag in our core metrics relating to continuation rates in year 1 and 2 of the data for other undergraduate study, which is foundation degrees. A number of our students who do not continue to year 2 do so having successfully completed their first academic year. HESA's definition of continuation states:

"A student who begins an engagement with a HEP in a particular year may achieve one of a number of possible outcomes after a given period of time. These can be summarised as:

- *Qualify, whether or not that qualification exactly matched their original study intention*
- *Continue at the same HEP, either on the same course or elsewhere in the HE provider*
- *Transfer to another HEP, either to a similar course or to an entirely different study experience*
- *Absent from HE registered at a HEP.*

In our analysis of continuation, students who qualify either with a first degree (for example if they have transferred from a diploma course) or with another undergraduate qualification are included with those who continue". HESA https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/performance-indicators/non-continuation/technical

Analysis of our data shows that between 2012 and 2015 starts there were 14 students who successfully completed the the first year, and were awarded Cert HE. These achievements are not currently recorded on our MIS systems, a situation which we are seeking to remedy now it has come to light.

	Number of Students			Number of Students		
Starts	Cohort	Continuation to year 2	% Continuation to year 2	Adjusted to reflect CERT HE achievements	% Counted as continuers according to HESA definition	2017 TEF Benchmark
2012-13	37	28	75.7	33	86.5	
2013-14	98	81	82.7	85	86.7	
2015-16	114	96	84.2	102	89.5	
Overall	249	205	82.3	219	88.0	89.5

PSC TEF data. Adjusted data to reflect students obtaining Cert HE

This adjusted data puts our overall continuation rate closer to our benchmark and there is no longer any material difference and probably no significant difference although we have not confirmed this. This suggests we would not have a negative flag in our Core Metrics for continuation.

In addition, in the case of our counselling students, we take the fact that we providing a gateway to the profession very seriously and consequently we do advise some students to take a year out of their studies sometimes to attend to their own personal issues which may have come to light during the counselling programme and also to gain additional hours in voluntary practice so as to consolidate and enhance their skills. There are three students between 2012-15 for which this has been the case.

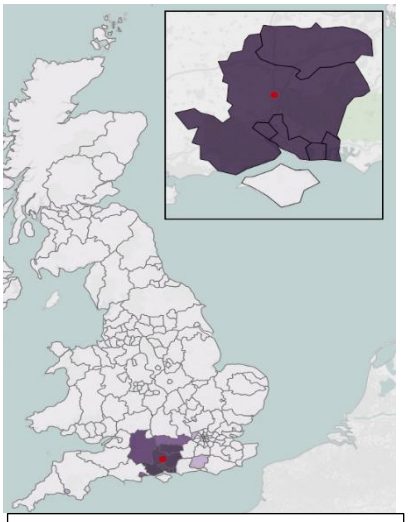
The results in this area are compounded by the fact that we have relatively small numbers of students. (37 in year 1, 98 in year 2 and 114 in year 3). Statistically each student who leaves represents a much larger percentage than a student who leaves a provider with hundreds or thousands of students.

We are not, however, complacent about analysing how our processes might be possible contributors to our continuation rate. We have considered whether our interview process should be refined in light of this statistic consequently we have a working group of staff and students reviewing our materials and questions asked at interview.

We have a positive flag with regard to progression from first degrees. This reflects the fact that many of our students are progressing to doing a one-year full honours top up having successfully achieved at foundation degree level. We know we have very effective processes to enable students to progress to their final year. In particular, with regard to understanding what is required at level 6 and the planning and preparation of their dissertation. This starts with a briefing followed by an in-depth one to one consultation with a subject expert before the end of the summer term of their final foundation degree year.

With regard to employment or further study we have a * which indicates a value in the top 10% of absolute performance and a positive flag for progression to highly skilled employment or further study for young students in the split metric. This demonstrates that the College is successfully helping young people who did not opt to go to university in the traditional manner to obtain graduate qualifications and highly skilled jobs. These students might have been trapped in lower level jobs, unable to fulfil their potential and help alleviate the local higher-level skills shortage if the College had not pioneered an alternative approach to graduate study enabling students to continue to work whilst studying for degree qualifications. This approach also helps students to develop their career through work-focussed projects, which from student feedback we know has resulted in students obtaining recognition from their employer and in some cases promoted posts.

Once qualified, the overwhelming majority of our students are employed in the Winchester area. This demonstrates that the College is achieving its objective to help reduce the local higher level skill shortage identified by the LEPs.



PSC Graduate Employment locations

8. Conclusion

Our commitment to enabling those who would not normally consider university as a option to achieve degree level qualifications is unswerving. With this comes a strong ethos of teaching excellence, continuous improvement and working in partnership with our students to ensure each individual fulfils their potential. Our learning environment is engaging and supportive, embeds professionalism in our students, provides challenge, stretch and inspiration and prepares them to develop and enhance their career in the local area.

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