Name of Provider: Yeovil College University Centre
UKPRN: 10007696

TEF Year Three provider submission

Yeovil College is a successful Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) provider that has had an established HE provision for twenty five years. Yeovil College serves the communities of South and West Somerset, as well as North and West Dorset and spans two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs); Dorset and the Heart of the South West (HotSW). The college represents the only HE provider in a 30 mile radius within a rural environment where some transport links are difficult.

The Ofsted Inspection report published in October 2016 graded Yeovil College as 'Good' across all aspects of the inspection framework. In May 2016 the college underwent a QAA Higher Education Review and was judged as meeting all UK expectations. The report commented on a range of good practices including 'the relevance and currency of curriculum delivery achieved through the extensive support for professional development and updating of teaching staff', and the extensive opportunities for students' professional development provided by employers' widespread engagement in curriculum delivery and employability support.

The recent Pearson Quality Management Review recognised the existence of rigorous quality processes and noted that there is good evidence that these are regularly updated and scrutinised. Excellent communication is recognised with all stakeholders including employers. Data and information is well integrated and is both accurate and timely in its presentation. The resources are good and Aeronautical Engineering learners have excellent resources including a newly acquired Lynx helicopter.

At the time of writing, Yeovil College has over 5,000 students enrolled on programmes that range from level 1 to level 7 of whom ~300 are studying higher education programmes at Yeovil College University Centre (YCUC). The College's strategic aims clearly recognise and support the growth of Higher Education within the College, and to the benefit of the local/regional community. This is with particular reference to the fact that Somerset, as a County, is one of few without an established University or HEI within the borders of the County Council. The College's Higher Education Growth Strategy evaluates each of the Curriculum Areas of the College in relation to generating new or enhanced higher education provision. This is with the aim of promoting internal progression, expanding local and regional opportunity, and extending the connection between the College's provision and its local and regional industries. The college's core provision across Higher and Further Education is largely of a vocational nature, reflecting the strong relationships with local and regional industry, and the community that the College serves. The vocational direction of the College is furthermore supported through its Apprenticeship and Work-based learning programmes, and the focus on work/career readiness and progression.

Higher Education provision is, primarily, through direct funding arrangements with HEFCE, and through validated or franchised programme arrangements with three University Partners and Pearson Edexcel:

- Bournemouth University
- University of Gloucestershire
- University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE)

At the time of writing the College's provision is predominantly validated through the University of Gloucestershire, being the youngest of the partnerships (established 2010).

The current range of HE programmes is shown below:

Partner	Programme
Bournemouth University	FdA Business and Management
Bournemouth University	FdSc Computing
University of Gloucestershire	BA (Hons) English with History
University of Gloucestershire	BA (Hons) History with English
University of Gloucestershire	BA (Hons) Business Management Strategy
University of Gloucestershire	BA (Hons) Childhood Studies Care and Education
University of Gloucestershire	FdA Childhood Studies Care and Education
University of Gloucestershire	FdA Graphic Design
University of Gloucestershire	FdA Media
University of Gloucestershire	FdA Photography
University of Gloucestershire	FdA Sports Fitness and Coaching
Pearson Education	HND Business
Pearson Education	HND Marketing
Pearson Education	HNC/D Aeronautical Engineering
Pearson Education	HNC/D Mechanical Engineering
Pearson Education	HNC/D Electronic Engineering
Pearson Education	HND Health and Social Care

Quality is assured through internal quality processes (Academic Regulatory Framework), and the academic regulations of our university partners and Pearson Edexcel. Depending on whether a programme is franchised or validated, students may have access to the university's resources (for example, library, ebooks), to supplement Yeovil College resources.

Discussions are taking place with a number of universities in relation to the development of new programmes within the College. Internal progression opportunities remains a key objective for the College moving forwards with its HE offer, and thus the HE Growth Strategy emphasises connections with current FE provision, matched with regional industry skill needs.

It is clearly reported that throughout Somerset and Dorset the population comprises low skills economics, with approximately 20% of the working population holding either no qualifications or a qualification up to NVQ Level 1. Additional economic indicators for the South-West, including Somerset and Dorset, identifies significant skills shortages within the Associate Professional and Technical areas, with the HotSW LEP reporting a decline/need of 3.4%. The Higher Skills agenda remains firmly central to the strategic objectives of both regional LEPs, and indeed is a central driver surrounding the College's curriculum provision at all levels, including Higher Education.

The Yeovil College Access Agreement 2018/19 is published https://www.offa.org.uk/agreements/Final%20AA%20-%20Yeovil%20College.pdf which highlights our commitment to meeting the diverse needs of our student population and widening participation obligations.

Teaching Quality

As a Further and Higher Education college, the emphasis on high quality teaching, learning opportunities, and assessment, is central to all aspects of the college provision. Policies are in place to support any staff member who does not hold a formal HE teaching qualification. This ensures all academic staff members gain relevant HE teaching qualifications whilst being encouraged and supported by the organisation.

Teaching and Learning Coaches with HE knowledge are assigned to new teachers and act as a mentor and critical friend to develop pedagogic practice. A highly robust observation policy is in place, headed by the VP Curriculum and Quality in which all staff are observed and have regular walkthroughs. The observations are conducted by trained management observers. In addition staff engage in peer observations to enhance their teaching practice. In all observations the views of students are collated to reflect 'how well the sessions meet their needs'; this is in addition to the formal and informal methods by which learners are able to voice their opinions.

Within HE in 2016/17 89% of teachers were graded 'good' or 'better' following lesson observations.

Supported by the Head of Quality and HE Manager, HE teaching staff engage with CPD through attendance at internal training, participation in external conferences, postgraduate study, and their own scholarly activities to maintain professional competence and currency.

In 2017, a new HE Teaching and Learning Network was constituted to provide space and time for staff to engage in scholarly discussions and activities relating to teaching, learning, and assessment. This builds on the college staff CPD programme already in place. The Professional Development and Scholarly Activity Policy outlines structured support for lecturing staff, including remission from teaching contact hours when engaging in approved scholarly activity, such as postgraduate studies.

Whilst providing validated and franchised higher education programmes, current university partnerships also offer opportunities for lecturing staff to engage in professional development through attendance at educational development events and Teaching and Learning Conferences. Such events provide staff with the opportunity to spend time with academic staff within the university sector, share practices and innovations, meet academic link tutors, and consider collaborative scholarly ventures.

All new lecturing staff participate in a full induction programme which includes immersion into HE quality processes. With the exception of one HE programme, all current HE lecturing staff also teach on FE programmes and therefore are experienced in quality reviews and observations. The college is actively seeking opportunities for those teaching on HE programmes to engage with HE approaches to teaching, learning, and assessment, and the HEFCE-funded Scholarship Project is a useful vehicle to encourage Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) within the HE lecturing team. Several staff are currently undertaking a Level 4 Certificate in Technology in Learning Delivery which aims to develop a fundamental understanding of using collaborative technologies in teaching, learning and assessment. Staff will be able to apply the use of technology to learning delivery and assessment and to share practice of the use of technology in learning and use appropriate resources to support learning and assessment.

Each year students are invited to nominate a member of teaching staff for an award. It has been suggested that there are three main factors influencing a student's perception of teaching: subject knowledge; lessons delivered; and willingness to help students (Feng and Wood, 2012). Others suggest that levels of flexibility, institution's systems, open-door policy, access to disciplinary experts, and pedagogical approach are key to students' perception of teaching excellence. The 2017 winner, as voted by the students, was based on the lecturer's responsiveness and expertise. All staff who received nominations also had the comments made by the students shared with them.

The college adopts a student-centred ethos and encourages student-staff interactions in a formal and informal manner to enhance academic partnership. Effective communication and small class

sizes ensure that any issues are dealt with promptly and effectively avoiding any negative impact on the student's education.

Where possible, lecturers adapt their teaching approach and style to suit learner needs and where appropriate, embrace learning technologies and active learning. Throughout each programme, students are encouraged to participate fully in a range of academic and social activities to grow academic and employability skills. In 2017, students on the Media programme embraced the HE team's brief to develop two videos for and of the annual Graduation Ceremony as one of their many 'live' briefs. This initiative, supported by departmental staff, provided an opportunity for first and second year students to engage with a real 'client'; maintain communications; listen actively; and undertake an important assignment for the college. Such a real-life project, in a fairly pressurised situation, provided a significant opportunity for students to immerse themselves in an important project which was highly valued by the college. In 2018, students on Business and Media courses have been invited to attend an annual Collaborative Partnerships conference at a university partner to co-present their market research and video production experience with the HE Manager and we look forward to reporting on the students' experiences in our next submission.

In addition to formal and informal internal feedback mechanisms such as Board of Studies, Programme Team Meetings, Module Evaluations, Partnership reports, the National Student Survey provides important information about our students' experiences which is considered and actioned by HEMSG. We acknowledge that the college discussed data issues with HEFCE related to one particular programme and have undertaken a comprehensive internal training exercise (with support from HEFCE), reconfiguration of our student records system, update of internal processes, and appointment of new HE team. We welcome the opportunity to receive guidance on continuous improvement of our data collection systems and are confident that the current state is sustainable.

NSS 2017 scores worthy of note relate to the teaching and support of students on our current Computing programme. It is of concern that students on one-year (top-up) programmes are excluded from the NSS as our HE portfolio, designed to meet the flexible needs of learners and employers within our remit and yet a significant proportion of our learners, who report, anecdotally, of an excellent learning experience and small cohorts, are excluded from the NSS. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how these views can be captured and reported for future submissions.

We recognise that a significant proportion of our students come from non-traditional backgrounds and require specific or personalised academic support in order to realise their potential and we have a range of Learning Support professionals available to facilitate workshops, sessions, and one-to-one support. We pride ourselves on teaching in a flexible way that is responsive to student learning needs yet strong enough to inspire interest in the subject and ambition.

Teaching and learning is supported through Moodle, our virtual learning environment. All assignments, with the exception of 3D models/design portfolios, are submitted through Moodle and run through academic integrity software, Urkund. The college considers academic integrity to be the lynchpin of an academic qualification and continues to focus on academic writing and referencing from Induction and throughout academic programmes.

Several members of college lecturing staff are Pearson Edexcel assessors, examiners, and authors, and their experience is crucial to ensure we maintain academic standards. We welcome staff feedback in maintaining our high quality standards. Three college staff are Ofsted inspectors and one has been a QAA for Bournemouth University, bringing a wealth of FE experience into college life. Whilst there are significant differences between FE and the HE QA/regulatory framework, the adherence to robust quality procedures, content informed and rigorous monitoring combined with detailed course reviews and learner feedback still apply.

Yeovil College undertakes a range of targeted HE marketing activities to increase student numbers. We report on the effectiveness of various approaches through internal mechanisms and

externally to our University partners during Partnership meetings. The HE marketing strategy incorporates ongoing market research; community events; employer feedback; social media communications; public lectures; posters, print and radio; mini Pocket-guide prospectus; school visits; website redesign; and local activities to increase student numbers.

In 2017 we were contacted by a major locally based employer who is developing a Graduate Programme eager to talk to current students with a view to recruiting students directly. We hope to expand this activity to include a wide range of employers to showcase our HE student work and contribution. We value and enjoy excellent relationships with community groups and agents.

We enjoy strategic partnerships with a number of schools, (Westfield, Preston, Buckler's Mead, Stanchester, King Arthurs, Huish Episcopi), through which potential students enjoy taster sessions, and each year provide a range of activities during 'HE Week'.

We consider our strength to be our staff and their adaptability to meet learner and employer needs swiftly and effectively. We consider the rapport our staff have with our students, evidenced by the interactions; knowing student names, friendliness and care, to be one of our key attributes as an HE provider and vital for student learning gain. We seek to ensure that our students are motivated to attend tutorials and lectures, enjoy their subject, and develop confidence and self-esteem.

Two of our niche subject areas are aeronautical engineering and software engineering and we are very proud of the relationships we have with employers and the reputation we have amongst their staff and contractors.

The culture of the organisation is reflective and based on trust with individual accountability. Teams work well when focussed on issue resolution, for example, legacy data issues, and the college is now confident that it will be able to now operate from a position of strength as it embraces the new HE landscape of opportunity.

Learning Environment

HE students enjoy a range of facilities and supports on the Yeovil College site. With a dedicated HE lounge and fully staffed Quiet Study Area, there is space specifically for HE learners however they can also avail of space and services provided for FE learners. The Learning Resource Centre is located centrally with a satellite desk within the Quiet Study Area (QSA) which is staffed Monday-Friday. Students can utilise small study spaces for group work, and there is a range of PCs available for loan in the QSA. The college provides a range of affective and cognitive supports to HE students through the HE team and Head of Student Experience, and Learning Resource Centre.

With class sizes being relatively small by university standards, HE students can enjoy the immersive experience and academic discussions with peers and staff as a known individual and therefore the environment is comfortable and supportive.

Each teaching room is networked with Promethean facilities. The college VLE (Moodle) is widely used by staff and students alike and in 2017 the college configured Urkund (academic integrity software) as a replacement for Turnitin. Following Induction, students are invited to attend workshops on referencing by the Learning Resource Centre team, and shown how to upload assignments to Moodle, via Urkund. Our responsive approach to curriculum design and delivery combined with our open and inclusive approach ensures learners feel part of the YCUC and are able to realise their potential.

HE lecturers adopt a range of teaching approaches, depending on the disciplinary area. Academic practice ideas are drawn from scholarly literature and professional groups, together with individual experiences and training. For example, in Engineering subjects, students enjoy excellent workshop facilities under the guidance of Technical and Lecturing staff. This 'hands-on', authentic

approach provides real immersion in the discipline, which is then supported by group-based tutorials, lectures, Moodle-based resources (including quizzes, case studies, journal articles), and a recommended book list. Lecturing staff continue to innovate in the range of resources and learning opportunities they provide, most recently regarding lecture capture and the production of short digital stories. Such enriching innovations are designed to provide support to meet a range of student needs in a timely way.

The HEIs who partner the college have individual feedback/turnaround rules and the YCUC Quality Handbook and practice is flexible and adaptive to encompass these. The college HE provision is monitored by the HE team and reported through various groups, including the Higher Education Management and Strategy Group (HEMSG) and Governing Body.

Students are actively encouraged to participate in college groups and give feedback on their experience.

Collaborative partnerships allocate an Academic Link Tutor who liaises with the Programme Leader throughout the programme with formal meetings at scheduled stages. In addition, external examiners are an additional quality measure to ensure parity between the delivery both within the YCUC and partner institution as well as meeting the QAA framework.

The central HE delivery occurs within the Kingston building which is well resourced and provides a suitable learning environment. Specialist areas have high quality facilities of industry standard.

Where appropriate, external subject matter or industry experts are invited to talk to students to emphasise or highlight specific topics. The aim is to provide students with a holistic learning experience.

The college has offered apprenticeships for many years, and, following the introduction of the employer levy, expanded the Higher and Degree Apprenticeships (HDA) offering. The driver for HDA is to meet employer needs and to provide an alternative to the traditional HE experience without the cost of tuition fees/student debt. Students on HDA programmes are registered on HE programmes as their primary course, and then subsequent skills-based modules (levels 2 or 3). Higher apprenticeships have been successfully delivered in HE (Engineering/IT) over the last 10 years.

Student Outcomes and Learning Gain

Whilst the metric relating to student outcomes from the Destination of Leavers from HE (DLHE) is not reportable due to small class sizes and response rates, DLHE responses do not provide valid and reliable data that can be readily used by the college.

YCUC is situated in a HEFCE ‘cold spot’ and therefore our widening participation and outreach activities are of great significance. Anecdotal evidence obtained in 2016 suggested that little was known, within Yeovil town centre, about Higher Education provision within Yeovil College. This was substantiated by feedback from subsequent school visits and promotional events (Bath and West Show 2017; town centre gazebo; Dorset/Somerset town visits). As a result, the HE prospectus was re-designed into a Pocket Guide; the website was updated; students engaged in primary research; students worked with HE and lecturing staff to make information and graduation videos; Information Events redesigned; and social media marketing was re-addressed. The college is actively monitoring the effectiveness of marketing campaigns and will continue to listen and respond to feedback. In 2017, 700 learners participated in and enjoyed a “My Futures’ event which included career guidance.

In 2018, the college has organised a Public Talk by a female scientist/television personality to encourage the public and school children to visit the college. In 2017 the college held a successful Victorian Fayre, to encourage the public to visit the college site. We will continue to organise

activities to attract people onto the site and then endeavour to provide an environment where visitors can learn about what the college can offer students and employers alike.

Plans for 2018 include a wider programme of taster sessions, study skills for HE workshops, and other short programmes to overcome anxieties experienced by those non-standard applicants who are considering HE study but who may not have had the opportunity to consider their skillset and how to learn at HE level. We acknowledge that we have a cohort of level 3 learners on-site already and anticipate a full range of information activities for these learners to advise them about progressing to HE level learning.

The college has a current Access Agreement in place and has committed to undertaking a wide range of activities and providing supports to those underrepresented at HE. We acknowledge, however, that the number of students identifying with a disability currently studying at the college is low and this may reflect the portfolio of programmes which are practically based.

The college Employer Engagement team, consists of 23 members of staff. Feedback from the employer survey 'FE Choices' indicates that 95% of employer respondents were satisfied with their interactions with the college.

Employability Skills are embedded in all HE programmes and evidenced by the range of module assessments and work placements offered. Many assessments and projects are designed in consultation with employers, e.g. Graphic Design, Computing, Aeronautical Engineering, to ensure that they are relevant to the workplace, and authentic measures of learning gain. For students not in employment, assignments are designed to provide an opportunity for learners to grapple with and explore threshold concepts, moving from a liminal space into a transformative place with new knowledge. We anticipate that the ability to learn and communicate, the expansion of knowledge, and ability to critically evaluate information will be evidenced at interview and be highly valued by employers.

Whilst the college does not currently have a wide range of postgraduate programmes, university partnerships do provide a mechanism for supporting the progression of our graduates onto postgraduate programmes. The college encourages students and their Programme Leader to visit the validating university in order to experience the university culture, environment and facilities, and to hear about postgraduate opportunities.

Students are fully supported throughout their time at YCUC. From an in initial induction programme and VLE-based induction exercise, HE students receive a bespoke Newsletter containing a range of information and supports. The college provides additional learning and disability support which HE students can avail of. There is a dedicated HE Liaison person and college Chaplain who provide pastoral support and a range of student counsellors with whom appointments can be booked. These staff are 'on the ground' and work amongst the students thereby being available to listen and advise as and when required. The increase in student counselling support needs is of concern and the college is reviewing its overall provision through the Head of Student Experience.

Originally an FE provider, the college has provided higher education since 1993 followed by a partnership arrangement with the University of Bournemouth. As previously noted, the majority of our current HE students study on a part-time basis and are in employment. Employers work with the college to support the professional development of staff to meet their ongoing work-based training needs and many students study at YCUC because the programmes meet their employer requirements, are based in Yeovil, and collaborations between college and employer staff provide an open and honest route to developing the workforce.

The college has a range of full- and part-time programmes, including professional programmes and a flexible option in Engineering. The flexible Engineering programme was originally designed to meet the needs of military personnel who were working across the globe and unable to attend

formal class-based activities. To meet the myriad of assignment submission requests and QA requirements, in 2016/17 the programme was redesigned and restructured.

Student recruitment continues to be a challenge; the college continues to undertake significant marketing activity and maintains an employer engagement team. We acknowledge that our university partners and reliability of survey data (DLHE, NSS) requires students groups of > 10 and we continue to undertake significant marketing activities.

We have discussed data issues with HEFCE and look forward to positive outcomes as a result of the enhancements and changes made to our student records system and staff training.

The AoC HEFCE Catalyst funded project: Enhancing College Higher Education Scholarship and Student Learning aims to support the development and embedding of a distinct college-based higher education scholarly ethos across the sector associated with technical education at levels four and higher, by creating a 'scholarship framework' that can be adopted by all colleges, and one which is firmly centred on enhancing the learning experience for students. The college has enhanced the Professional Development and Scholarly Activity policy to support HE teaching staff in developing and undertaking research, development, and SoTL in particular through structured remission and reconfiguration of teaching schedules.