TEF Year Three Provider Submission

Provider Context

Our mission and values

Pearson College London is a young alternative provider of Higher Education with a unique character. We are an autonomous, not-for-profit, legal entity within the Pearson PLC group and the first HEI to be established within a global FTSE 100 company. Our mission is: *"…to become one of the UK's leading universities for in-depth industry engagement which helps our students develop the knowledge, intellectual capacity and professional experience they need for their long term careers. Our courses are designed to be academically demanding, industry informed, and to inspire students with a real interest in how their chosen discipline plays a role in the modern professional world*."

Collaboration with employers is at the heart of our identity and embedded in our programmes, curriculum and student experience. Our ambition is to use our unique position within a global corporation to create specialist knowledge on industry collaboration across disciplines and to forge innovative and effective links between the world of work and teaching and learning in higher education. This knowledge then provides students with an engaging learning experience which is challenging, authentic and relevant to industry.

Equally important to our identity and values is the centrality of the student. This is the first element in our statement of values: *"Student centred – We put our students first and keep their interests at the centre of our thinking."*

Students, together with industry and academics, have a key role to play in the design, delivery, evaluation and enhancement of programmes and their experience. This core value is reflected in the way in which we proactively engage with the students: not just seeking their feedback, but welcoming them as partners in decision making.

Our history

We opened our doors to a group of twenty students in September 2012 and, at the time of writing, have 696 undergraduate students and a further 27 on postgraduate programmes and expect a further 90 to enrol on our January start programmes shortly. We have two schools:

- **Pearson Business School** has a suite of undergraduate programmes in Business and Management, Accounting and Law, including two integrated Masters programmes
- **Escape Studios** which delivers programmes in Visual Effects ("VFX"), Game Art and Animation. Escape runs professional short courses, Masters degrees, and a suite of undergraduate degrees (including integrated Masters) which commenced in September 2016.

Our first programme was a Higher National Diploma combined with a BSc Business and Enterprise top up degree validated by Royal Holloway and Bedford New College. In 2014 we designed a suite of BA (Hons) degrees in Business Management with specialist pathways in Marketing, Finance, Law and Global Industries, validated by Ashridge Business School. Royal Holloway's involvement was limited to validation of top up degrees and Ashridge subsequently changed its strategy regarding validation, following its merger with Hult. We therefore sought a new validating partner and are very pleased to have a validation agreement with the University of Kent which covers the subject areas of both the Business School and Escape, as well as the opportunity to extend into other areas of strategic collaboration. All new students therefore now join a University of Kent-validated programme.

The advent of degree apprenticeships (and their forerunner, higher apprenticeships) presented us with an opportunity which we were keen to embrace. Apprenticeships perfectly embody the combination of academic rigour and industry engagement which is at the heart of our mission. We

were one of the first institutions to develop apprenticeships which incorporate a degree, through our Leadership and Management scheme with the BBC which commenced in 2014. Our pedagogic approach, based on authentic learning, has proved particularly relevant to apprenticeships. From January 2018, we will have around 85 apprentice learners on the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship ("CMDA").

Our students

Our students predominantly study full time and face to face, supported by extensive use of our Online Learning Environment ("OLE") to create a blended learning pedagogy.

We have chosen not to apply for a Tier 4 licence at present, so our students are mainly drawn from the UK, with a small minority of EU students. Of our 723 active students, 500 (69%) are in the Business School and 223 (31%) in Escape. The majority of our UG students are young school leavers (under 21). Our contextual data shows that our student body is more ethnically diverse than the sector as a whole[1], with a reasonably even balance between male and female (marginally more male than female), diverging slightly from the sector average. The proportion of our students who have a disability is the same as the sector average.

Our teaching space

Our principal site is at 190 High Holborn, in the centre of London, where two floors were refurbished for our exclusive use, opening in September 2016. Owing to our expansion, a third floor is being developed and will be available for the start of the 201819 academic year.

Reviews

We have an excellent record of success in relation to regulatory and review requirements. In our second full year of operation we were one of the first institutions to be reviewed by the QAA under the HER (Plus) method and we have subsequently undergone regular annual monitoring. On each occasion we have been found to be meeting the expectations of UK higher education. We have been successful in both initial and annual scrutiny by the Department for Education (previously BIS) and HEFCE for specific course designation. In order to be able to offer degree apprenticeships, we applied for inclusion on the Register of Training Organisations and its replacement, the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers. On both occasions we were successful on our first attempt.

We elected to enter the Teaching Excellence Framework in 2017 and were awarded a provisional rating. We now have one year of suitable metrics and are pleased to be able to make our first formal submission. It is worth noting that, because we are a young institution and have developed significantly since we opened five years ago, our metrics present a limited picture. In particular, the experience of students from Escape Studios does not feature at all and, because of our expansion and the fact that the metrics focus heavily on data from recent graduates and final year students, the proportion of our students in the TEF populations is relatively low. We have endeavoured in this document to present a more holistic picture than that presented by metrics alone.

Teaching Quality

TQ1: Student Engagement: Teaching provides effective stimulation, challenge and contact time that encourages students to engage and actively commit to their studies

We embed the principle of student engagement into all aspects of our provision:

- Students are included in our programme design process (see TQ3 below).
- Our admissions process engages prospective students from the start with applicants taking part in a workshop which reflects the ethos of our learning and teaching strategy including group tasks, interview, and, for Escape Studios reflecting on their portfolios and giving feedback to each other.

[1] Sector averages taken from HESA 201617 Statistical First Release

- Students are consulted on all major initiatives, for example the recent re-design of our teaching space, ensuring that it fulfilled student needs while allowing them to study within a professional setting which fosters a collegiate and collaborative atmosphere. The initiative for the re-design arose from student feedback and students were then consulted on all aspects of the process from layout to choice of furniture.
- Our culture of entrepreneurship and student engagement means that we will consider and adopt student ideas for new initiatives. An example is the "incubator project", the idea for which was developed by a student as part of his dissertation to enable students to be exposed in a direct way to entrepreneurship in action. As a result we agreed to host a start-up business within the College – 15 applied and the shortlisted businesses were evaluated by students. The successful business ("The Access Platform") has contributed directly to the learning experience of students across the School in a number of ways which integrate student projects with the real work of the company.

Our students are considered part of our academic community through their role as scholars and their engagement with the governance of the College, and also in other ways. Many of the internal and external activities available to staff for their development are also available to students, eg festivals, industry days and events. In the area of research a Business School undergraduate student and one of our academics jointly authored and published an article in a peer-reviewed journal – we then supported both to present this at an international conference in Warsaw.

Students are involved in our decision-making and governance via their representation on our committees. They are able to give feedback on all aspects of learning and teaching via feedback questionnaires on the programme at the end of each year and on individual modules at the end of each module. Student-staff liaison committees ("SSLC") also meet twice a term to enable student representatives to give feedback on an ongoing basis. The results of the questionnaires and SSLC meetings feed directly into the monitoring, review and enhancement of programmes (on an ongoing basis and as part of annual monitoring) and resulting actions reported back to students for comment and approval. We are also starting to use learner analytics more systematically to gauge and track learner engagement and to include this in the reflection which is part of module review and have developed a series of training videos for academic staff on using these analytics.

We are concerned that the metrics for "the teaching on my course" are disappointing (these metrics apply to the Business School only as the first Escape undergraduates are only now in their second year of their degree). Following analysis of not only the 2017 NSS results, but also of student feedback from end of first and second year surveys, module surveys and at SSLCs, the Business School undertook two major initiatives during the last year to ensure that the degrees are relevant, interesting, challenging and intellectually demanding for students. The first was a major redesign of the Principles of Business module which is a core 60 credit module on all our Business degrees and comprises half of the first year of these programmes. This redesign drew on the doctoral research of the module leader and the authentic learning approach of the Escape Studio Projects (see TQ3 below) to incorporate into the module (a) a major project in which students set up their own business and (b) specific student reflection aiming at ensuring that the students are reinforcing their learning and reflecting on how they are applying what they have learnt in the classroom to their project, and how their project has itself taken their learning forward.

The second major initiative was a review of the learning, teaching, assessment and feedback strategy in the Business School (explained in greater detail under TQ4 below). This drew on:

- student feedback (from questionnaires and SSLC meetings)
- staff reflection on their teaching (informed by the analysis of feedback)
- the findings from peer observations (see below)
- a specific session for all business school academic staff at which a panel of students who had just completed their degree were asked questions about our approach to learning and teaching, what worked and what didn't, areas for improvement and ideas for new initiatives

(this was recorded to ensure the student views were captured). It particularly addressed areas where NSS metrics were low.

As a result changes were made to the teaching pattern and approach to allow more time for interactive work in seminars, to ensure greater correlation between lectures and seminars and clearer guidance on advance preparation, and to provide more effective opportunities for feedback to students (see TQ4 below). The results of this will be evaluated at the end of this academic year.

TQ2: Valuing Teaching: Institutional culture facilitates, recognises and rewards excellent teaching

As a small institution with an ethos of industry engagement we employ both Associate Tutors and permanent staff to ensure that we have the breadth and depth of subject expertise to enable us to challenge and stretch students across a wide range of modules and to ensure that our curriculum remains industry relevant. Almost all staff have significant industry experience in addition to their academic qualifications.

All staff are supported through a review and appraisal process and we take steps to encourage our academics to develop as reflective practitioners through for example, peer observations which enable staff to both observe and be observed. An action plan is drawn up by each School as a result of these observations and this is monitored by the Review and Enhancement ("RE") Committee. We evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme annually. The evaluations for both 15-16 and 16-17 demonstrated that the scheme had had a significant impact on teaching and learning with almost all tutors reporting specific examples of changes to their teaching practice as a result of observing or being observed. This academic year (17-18) the Business School had completed their observations by the end of the autumn term to enable them to act on any findings earlier in the year and to enable the findings to contribute at an early stage to the evaluation of the Schools pedagogical review (see TQ3 below).

The importance we place on teaching is demonstrated by our appointment process which includes a short teaching demonstration by each shortlisted applicant. This demonstration is reviewed by both a panel of Academic Staff and where possible also by a panel of students before any appointment is made. We emphasise the importance of staff development activities and actively encourage and facilitate staff in undertaking internal and external opportunities (see LE2 below). We have supported and sponsored a number of staff though both PgCert HEs and MEds. We have also set a target for 80% of academic staff to become fellows of the HEA by 2020. We recognised the excellence of the work on the design of the Escape Studios degrees by entering the team for an HEA Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence ("CATE award") for which they won a finalists award, the only team from an "alternative provider" to do so.

We are currently working on an academic titles policy with teaching excellence being allied to promotion. A working party is due to report to Academic Board on this with proposals for a scheme to be operative for the next academic year.

TQ3: Rigour and Stretch: Course design, development, standards and assessment are effective in stretching students to develop independence, knowledge, understanding and skills that reflect their full potential

The design process for PCL programmes is consistent with our mission and ethos of providing courses that are academically demanding, industry-informed and inspire students with a real interested in how their chosen discipline plays a role in the modern professional world. To this end a design team, known as the Degree Concept Team ("DCT"), is formed for each programme comprising members from industry/practice, academics (both internal to PCL and external) and the student body. The inclusion of external members is intended to bring independence and objectivity as well as a breadth of expertise and an understanding of the skills and attributes that the relevant industry needs both now and in the future.

In the HER (Plus) Review of 2014 the QAA identified the role of the DCTs at PCL as a feature of good practice and we have worked to ensure that this has not only been maintained, but further enhanced. When we designed of our suite of degrees in VFX, Computer Animation and Game Art we reworked these DCT events to increase the scope for innovation and creativity in the design and to afford opportunities to evaluate the proposed learning, teaching and assessment strategies. This involved visits to overseas institutions, more interactive DCT events and a series of Studio Projects to prototype the learning, teaching and assessment strategies, first with Escape alumni and then with college students - each project was evaluated before the design was finalised. In this way staff, students and industry worked together to develop a studio-based learning methodology and resulted in a Finalists CATE award from the HEA. The process also resulted in a paper presented at the Education track of Eurographics in Lisbon.

The programmes which emerged have two significant features: a pedagogy centred on professional practice; and the allocation of a large proportion of the assessment and feedback from the tutor to industry, peers and the students themselves. Two of the fundamental aspects of the programme: working in teams as part of a professional community (including the ability to assess their own work, as well as that of others) and being aware of the business and commercial context, necessitated a particular type of pedagogy and assessment with effective, challenging projects and in-depth “crit” sessions incorporating peer and self-assessment.

These programmes commenced in September 2016 and we are very pleased that the feedback at the end of the first year (which mirrors the questions that will be asked in the NSS when students reach the final year) showed scores of over 90% in all questions in the “teaching on my course” section. The process was shared with the Business School through staff development and the Business School has incorporated some of the learnings by including an “apprenticeship challenge” in induction week which explicitly builds on the learnings from Escape Studios.

The Business School also espouses our mission of industry engagement and relevance with a pedagogy based on authentic learning. An example is the Principles of Business module which comprises half the first year of business programmes (see TQ1 above). Another example is the “self-managed learning modules” (SMLs). These are optional modules, available at each level of all our Business degrees which allow students to incorporate work-based or entrepreneurial activities as credit-bearing modules within the degree. This allows them to demonstrate their ability to transfer and apply learning in a range of settings, in ways appropriate to unique situations which can be bespoke to a particular workplace. They also encourage independent learning, along with the research modules which are also incorporated into each level of the degree.

The degree apprenticeships are a prime example of the College’s ethos of authentic, real-world learning, with a learning and teaching methodology that integrates academic study and workplace learning and incorporates an independent learning plan (“ILP”) as a tool for self-reflection and integration of workplace projects into the learning. The companies who send their apprentices to us for the CMDA degree include the BBC, TfL, Moorfields NHS Trust, IBM, L’Oreal, the RSPB, WPP (Kantar Added Value), Unilver, Ogilvy, Tesco, DirectLine, and Pearson itself.

Another mechanism we use to ensure industry relevance is to seek professional accreditation for our programmes wherever possible, for example the ACCA and the CMI accredit some of our programmes or modules and the Solicitors Regulation Authority (“SRA”) and Bar Standards Board accredit our LLB programmes. In addition the SRA has approved our MLaw programme as an exempting law degree, exempting students from the professional stage of training as a solicitor, one of only 6 programmes in England and Wales to afford this exemption.

TQ4: Feedback: Assessment and feedback are used effectively in supporting students’ development, progression and attainment

Escape Studios degree assessments normally have a practical element and a written element (usually a retrospective in which the student reflects on what they’ve made). Both these elements

are essential to the students' development: one demonstrating that they 'can' deliver to a required level and the other showing that they understand 'why' then can and how they could improve. This assessment methodology continues the ethos of academic rigour combined with industry relevance. Marking of assessments is split between tutors, peers and the students themselves and for some modules between tutors, peers, students and industry. This ensures that the outcomes relating to reflection, and the giving and receiving of feedback are properly assessed and that the programme retains industry currency.

Formative feedback to students is central to and pervades the programmes, with feedback from their tutor, studio assistants and from peers both on a one-to-one basis in the studio and in group feedback sessions. This is formalised in the "dailies" which, as the name implies, are daily feedback sessions on the students' progress on their current project. In addition, after formal presentations, students receive feedback from tutors, peers and professionals in a specially arranged session. At the end of the module, students receive feedback with their marks, which is written, audio or video recorded and specifically relates to the mark awarded. Students are explicitly advised to use all these different types of feedback to help them build on their strengths and develop their skills as they progress through their programme.

Assessment in the Business School has also been designed not only to ensure that students have an opportunity to demonstrate the learning outcomes, but also, where possible, to ensure that the assessment is aligned with the real-world ethos of the programmes. It therefore includes a combination of examinations and coursework, the latter being designed to reflect the kind of activities that might be required in the workplace, either individually or as part of a team, eg report writing, data analysis, preparing strategies and presentations. In addition, assessments for the self-managed learning modules, are tailored to the project undertaken (see TQ3 above).

Feedback to students in the Business School is guided by the overall Feedback Policy. The policy is implemented through a number of mechanisms. In the academic year 16-17 weekly clinics were specifically introduced to allow students to receive one-to-one formative feedback on assignments as well as more general feedback on their progress. For modules assessed by examinations, students sit formative "mocks" which are marked and discussed in seminars to allow students time to improve areas of weakness and build on their strengths before the actual examination.

The Business School recognised that attendance at clinics was not as high as we would wish and that some students were not taking the opportunity to benefit from this feedback opportunity. As a result, the review of pedagogy in the Business School (see TQ1 above) included reviewing the mechanisms for feedback and the way that it is integrated into the programme, including the use of clinics and exploration of whether there could be a better medium or forum for providing feedback. This initiative was already underway when we received the NSS metrics showing poor student satisfaction in relation to feedback. Additional focus groups were held with students to gain a greater understanding of the issues and the Business School Board, led by the Dean developed an action plan in response to the feedback from students which was interrogated and approved by the RE Committee and by Academic Board. This plan incorporated work already undertaken as part of the pedagogy review with the clinic time replaced by additional, compulsory, seminars, in which feedback is integrated throughout. In addition time has been explicitly set aside for tutors to discuss the marking criteria with students, posters have been developed to help students gain a better understanding of the marking criteria, seminar time has been set aside to explain the rationale behind feedback, the different ways it is delivered and how students can use it to improve their work and tutor training sessions have been held focussing on the giving of feedback. The Business School is also trialling the use of recorded oral feedback which has been used successfully in Escape Studios. The College will evaluate the success of the increased emphasis on feedback and the revised Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy at the end of the 17-18 academic year and students' views on its effectiveness will be central to this.

External Examiners for both schools and for all our validating partners have consistently commented on the rigour and effectiveness of both our assessments and our feedback to students.

The External Examiner reports are scrutinised by the Admissions, Progression, Retention and Attainment Committee ("APRAC") and responses to the reports are approved by them. We consider that the reports, together with any other External Examiner comments are a crucially important means of identifying issues (or good practice). An example of an action taken as a result was the revision of the Research Ethics policy.

Learning Environment

LE1: Resources: Physical and digital resources are used effectively to aid students' learning and the development of independent study and research skills

We consider the appropriate resourcing and learning environment to be crucial to ensuring our students are properly supported and able to learn effectively and to network and socialise. To this end we review our overall estate annually to consider the overall capacity, balance and appropriateness of our learning space and facilities.

Physical Resources

As a result of the review in Autumn 2015, and also as a result of student feedback we undertook a major refit of 2 floors of 190 High Holborn so that they were designed specifically for students while still allowing them to study within a workplace setting (ie the wider Pearson). The £3million conversion and fit-out included classrooms, and three studios kitted out with high-spec computers for the new Escape Studios undergraduate programmes. These classrooms have been designed to ensure flexibility so that the space can be configured differently depending on whether the students are studying technical aspects of their craft or undertaking collaborative creative projects.

The overall space also includes small rooms for staff and/or student meetings, collaborative spaces, kitchens where students can congregate to make coffee, eat and hold informal meetings. The design is particularly aimed at creating a professional work-place atmosphere and to ensure that the space is flexible and enhances collaborative working which is central to our approach to learning and teaching. The work was undertaken over the summer of 2016 and was completed in time for the start of the 16-17 Academic Year. At the same time, the software for all the College's systems was reviewed and updated accordingly, including that needed for Escape Studios. The QAA noted in their 2017 report that "Students were extremely positive about the resources available to them and the opportunities these provided for group work and collaboration."

A further review in 2016 has concluded that a third floor should be converted and incorporated into Pearson College. This has been agreed and a project plan established which will see the work completed in time for the start of the 18-19 academic year, at a projected cost of £1.5 to1.8million.

Digital Resources

All students have access to our OLE which allows them to access information needed to support their studies from a variety of devices. Two new members of staff were recruited before the start of the academic year 16-17, a Head of Digital Content Delivery and an E-Learning Consultant, to enhance the OLE and to ensure that full use was being made of its capabilities including training staff to use it to its full effect. This team have redesigned Blackboard and the E-Learning Consultant was recently asked to share our methodology and experience of this with several universities at the London Blackboard User Group (BUG) and Blackboard have asked if they can share this work with a wider audience.

Students can find information for all of their modules on the OLE – including preparatory material and pre-reading and lecture and seminar materials presentations and reading lists. Business School lectures (Escape programmes do not have lectures) are also recorded and available on the OLE to enable students, for example, to go back and revise what they have learned or clarify something they were unsure of first time round.

In addition to learning materials, the OLE also contains key information such dates, events and assessment information. It is an important vehicle for making announcements and communicating to students as it ensures real-time communication. On their homepage, students also access the

Student Zone where they can find out about life at Pearson College including information on clubs, societies and groups they can join, upcoming events, and volunteering opportunities.

We ensure that students receive an online induction to using the OLE at the beginning of the year so that they feel confident in accessing the materials stored there. The Digital Education Team also collect information from new students about their previous digital experiences in education and their expectations of what we will provide – this is then used to inform our strategy and provision.

Staff also receive an online induction at the beginning of the academic year (or if a new service is introduced on the OLE) to ensure that they are using the OLE effectively for students. In addition, regular training is given on topics such as blended learning, using e-portfolios and creating high-quality pre-recorded video for students, bespoke resources are also created by the Digital Education Team and stored in our E-Learning and Teaching Community on specific aspects of the OLE. RE Committee decided that more use could be made of learner analytics to support students, to understand more about student engagement in relation to particular modules and activities, and to review the effectiveness of modules. As a result we have developed a series of training videos on the use of learner analytics. To ensure staff are aware of the training opportunities, they receive regular newsletter updates about this and about new resources that have been created to support their practice.

Online Library Service

All members of the College have access to a fully online library which can be accessed via the Student Portal. The collections include thousands of ebooks, over 1 million full text articles from academic and professional journals, conference papers, statistical data, market and industry reports, legal information and video content.

To ensure that the Library's collections closely support teaching and learning they are developed by the Library Service in conjunction with teaching staff. The Library Service is consulted as part of the validation of new programmes and key library resources are identified and costed as part of the business case. The Library Service works closely with teaching staff on a one-to-one basis to curate relevant and up to date reading lists and from the summer of 2017 the Library Service is rolling out a reading list management tool (TALIS) across all modules to enhance the student experience and facilitate the enhancement and updating of reading lists.

Help and guidance for students and staff is provided on the Library Service which is designed to help them find the information they need. In addition all students are given a library induction when they join which is then followed up by further training on specific skills during their studies. The Library Service website also contains guidance on using the library services and developing study skills. These guides include guidance on independent study and research skills and support the face-to-face learning and teaching in this area. A professional librarian is available to provide staff and students with further assistance.

Library spend is bench-marked against the SCONUL annual library statistics and in 2016-17 our library spend was £535 per FTE compared with UK HE average of £413 per FTE according to the most recent SCONUL annual library statistics report. The Library Service is conducting comparative research on library usage with a view to bench-marking the use of library resources in teaching and learning against the sector.

LE2: Scholarship, Research and Professional Practice: The learning environment is enriched by student exposure to and involvement in provision at the forefront of scholarship, research and/or professional practice

Employer engagement in both our course design and delivery is fundamental to all our programmes, as is discussed under TQ3 above and SO2 below). For example the design team for our Business School degrees included representatives from Unilever, IBM, WPP (Kantar Added Value). Lotus Formula 1 and Gowling WLG. Following the success of this process we reworked it and built on it for the design of our Escape Studios degrees, for which the design team included

Paul Franklin, double Oscar-winning VFX supervisor and founder of Double Negative, Charlie Bayliss, Technical Director Framestore, Tara Saunders, Sony Computer Entertainment and Hugo Sands, Animation Consultant and Producer. We also include engagement from external academics, in this case from Professor Joan Ashworth (then Head of Animation at the Royal College of Art). A more detailed discussion of this process and its impact can be found at TQ3 above. Escape Studios also has an Advisory Board comprising twelve senior members of the industry whose role is to advise at a strategic level of the future direction and needs of the industry.

Employer engagement pervades all we do and it is therefore embedded in the whole student journey, not just the delivery of specific programme modules (see further discussion of this at TQ3 above and SO2 below). Industry engagement of all types and at all levels is co-ordinated by our Centre For Industry Engagement which sits alongside our schools.

Maintaining a balance of expertise in our staff is key to our continuing success, and so ensuring that we have both academic rigour and professional currency is a challenge we constantly face. We aim to maintain this balance through supporting a wide range of activities depending on individual interests and development requirements:

- Staff have been supported in study for higher degrees through a combination of direct support in terms of funding and reduced workloads for study time
- Staff are encouraged and supported to attend industry conferences and events (nationally and internationally), engage actively with professional societies and network with current practitioners
- Our annual VFX Festival brings the latest industry developments together to exchange experience and challenges with our staff and our partners, and includes panels discussing education, new technology and diversity. We run a series of industry-focused events 'Escape Labs' where invited speakers and panels debate with guest and staff on the latest industry developments. These are all open to our students as well as staff and we also hold an annual careers festival for all Business School students.
- Core staff working on external professional projects and films is encouraged and supported.
- Involvement of our staff in delivering CPD training is seen as a two-way activity that brings knowledge of the current challenges facing industry to our staff, (this has also included mentoring staff teaching at other universities)

This is by no means an exhaustive list of the different ways that we strive to develop our community, and we continue to look to new ways of building excellence into our learning and teaching.

The impact of this engagement on the student experience is evidenced not only by ensuring the currency of what we teach but also by our methodology, for example:

- The studio-based approach in Escape Studios that is the fundamental learning style across all their UG programmes.
- The extensive use of presentations to peers, industry and tutors in a professional setting to obtain feedback and practice communication skills.
- The use of portfolios and retrospectives that require students to select, reflect and analyse their own work in a similar way to practising professionals whilst demonstrating sound academic judgement.
- The extensive use of peer and self-appraisal, in Escape Studios requiring that students not only engage on a personal level with the assessment process and criteria, but that they understand it and can place their work in the context of it.
- The pedagogical approach in the Business School, for example the 60 credit core Principles of Business module based on the doctoral research on experiential learning of the Programme Leader.

LE3: Personalised Learning: Students' academic experiences are tailored to the individual, maximising rates of retention, attainment and progression

All our degrees are designed to incorporate flexibility, to maximise student choice while still ensuring overall coherence. Two examples of this are the ability of Business School students to accelerate their studies if they fulfil certain requirements, and a common first year for programmes with different pathways so that students can transfer to a different pathway after their first year without affecting their studies.

The "common first year" approach applies in both the Business School and Escape Studios. The suite of Business Management degrees have the same requirements for the first year whatever pathway is followed. Central to this is the Principles of Business module which ensures that all students have a firm understanding of the fundamental aspects of a Business, including the lifecycle of a business from beginning to end, and an opportunity to contextualise this through real world application, whatever pathway they go on to follow. This not only ensures the programme has coherence but also allows students to gain more understanding of the elements involved in different pathways before going on to make a final decision as to which pathway to follow.

In Escape Studios, all the degree programmes have a common first year. This is fundamental to their design with the need for a solid foundation and understanding of the principles on which the disciplines are built having been identified as a crucial part of students' development during Escape's consultations with industry. This also has the added benefit that students experience the three different disciplines and have the ability to transfer to one of the other degrees, without affecting their studies, if they find that their true interest lies there (and our experience after the first year is that a number have done so).

The option of accelerating is achieved by having three terms each year. Students on a traditional three year route study two terms (a traditional academic year), but students who accelerate undertake an additional term of study over the summer allowing them to complete the degree in two years. The volume of study each term (60 credits) remains the same in either case. We are aware of the intensity of study on a two-year degree, and therefore ensure that only those students who are likely to succeed, embark on this route. For this reason students are not permitted to enrol on an accelerated degree from the start, but apply, if they wish to do so, after their first terms' results are known and a decision is made based on their attendance, assessment results and supporting reference from their tutor.

In the Business School we have allowed students to follow a part time route, studying 30 credits a term only but studying those modules alongside FT Business School students. However, our NSS results showed lower satisfaction rates overall among part-time students, including for "academic support". We have talked to part-time students and analysed the causes of this and realise that because the (very few) part time students were spread across different programmes they did not know each other or have sufficient cohort identity or community. We have now introduced a number of initiatives and events for these students to give them a sense of community with others studying part-time. We have also revised our part-time policy, only recruiting part-time students onto the straight Business Management degree to ensure sufficient numbers for a separate cohort.

Another example of the way that we enable students to tailor their experiences is the SML modules (see TQ3 above) which allow students to incorporate work-based or entrepreneurial activities as credit-bearing modules within their degree. These are offered in all three years of the degree and, together with the research modules, mean that students can tailor as much as 50% of their degree to areas of specific interest within the subject.

We are concerned that our continuation rates are not as high as we would like or as the target we have set ourselves. We have analysed this and the rates for "UG other" (relating to our HND students) are considerably lower than for our UG degree students as the split metrics demonstrate. For degree students alone our continuation rates are 90% which is more in line with our expectations. We have recognised that our expertise lies in degree education, whereas many

students study HNDs in FECs where the expertise lies in HNDs. We have taken the difficult decision, conscious that we are a small organisation and need to concentrate on what we do best, not to offer HND programmes to new students. We continue to nurture and work with the students who remain on the programme and are very proud of the many HND students who have studied with us and gone on to complete the "top-up" degree, with the majority achieving 1st class or 2nd class degrees from Royal Holloway.

The availability of clear, accurate and timely information for current students is crucial to their success on their programmes. It helps to establish the sense of belonging and confidence which is a major factor in retention and therefore plays an important part in our induction arrangements and the Retention Strategy. We launched a number of new programmes in academic year 16-17, including Law and Accountancy and the new undergraduate programmes in Escape Studios. The induction period in September 2016 was therefore the most complex that we had run and, shortly afterwards, a review meeting was held to consider what had gone well and what improvements could be made. As a result of this meeting, a working party was set up, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Principal (Academic Affairs). It reported to RE Committee in April 2017. The working party took a wide view of its remit by looking at the information available to applicants and offer-holders during the period from the point of offer to the end of Welcome Week.

In parallel with the induction review, the content and structure of Student Handbooks was also overhauled. The content has was divided so that there is now a College Handbook with information relevant to all undergraduate and postgraduate students, and a separate Programme Handbook for each programme. During Welcome Week, students are introduced to the Handbook in a face-to-face session.

We have always had a personal tutor system but during 2017 we developed a formal personal tutor policy, including a role description. This was instigated as part of our review of policies and strategies relating to retention and academic support and as a result of informal feedback from new tutors, asking for more clarity and guidance about their role. The review was conducted by the Deputy Vice-Principal (Academic Affairs), who consulted by meeting with tutors representing both Schools. All academic staff receive training on the policy.

Student outcomes and learning gain

SO1 Students achieve their educational and professional goals, in particular progression to further study or highly skilled employment

We are proud of our excellent results for student outcomes and learning gain, not only the achievement of a 100% score for employment or further study in our first DLHE survey, but also the double positive flag for highly skilled employment. We believe that these outcomes reflect our consistent focus on bringing authentic world learning into the classroom, as well as the specific programme of activities led by our Talent Development Team. We are not, however, complacent and continue to innovate by introducing new projects to enhance the experience of our students.

Monitoring and targets

APRAC, which reports to Academic Board, is tasked with monitoring the success of our students throughout their whole journey with us and beyond. This is achieved partly through Key Performance Indicators ("KPIs"). We monitor learning gain through an "Added Value" KPI, based on the methodology used by the Guardian. Our assessment is that our current score is 5.97.

Other KPIs include DLHE scores, completion, good degree results, continuation data and NSS scores. Our average score for good degree results (defined as first class or upper second) over the last three years is 73% which we consider to be impressive, given that we are not a high tariff institution. In this context and in the light of concerns about grade inflation, it is worth emphasising that awards and classifications are not our own responsibility, but that of our validating partner.

SO2 Students acquire knowledge, skills and attributes that are valued by employers and that enhance their personal and/or professional lives

Programmes designed for employability

We have described our approach to programme design above (*see section on Teaching Quality*). The high level of employer participation in the design and delivery of programmes ensures that employability is not an added extra, but fundamental to the curriculum, from the Degree Concept Teams to setting projects for assessment. For example, our undergraduate students in Escape Studios had the benefit of feedback from award-winning studios including Microsoft, Dreamworks, MPC and Framestore in 2017.

Talent Development focussed on skills for work

Our Talent Development ("TD") team, led by a Deputy Vice-Principal, provides students with all the usual advice and guidance to be expected from a careers service, such as CV writing, interview advice and skills workshops. However, their involvement goes much further than a typical careers service. Moreover, they do not work in isolation, but build on the industry-related practice which is embedded in all our programmes.

A good example of this integration, is the use of Business Challenges which provide students with a valuable opportunity to tackle challenges set by leading employers. During the first term of academic year 2017/18, our Business School students participated in four Business Challenges:

- **Royal Mail:** all our new Level 4 students tackled the Royal Mail Business Challenge as part of Welcome Week. This set the tone and expectation for our Business School programmes: the integration of academic learning with authentic, current business problems.
- **Money Supermarket:** 26 accounting and business students on our Level 4 Business Mathematics module participated in this challenge, which was linked to the topics in the curriculum.
- **Deloitte:** 40 Level 5 and 6 students participated in this challenge. Their work is featured in the Deloitte Global Powers of Retailing Report 2018 pp8/9[2]
- **Pearson PLC:** John Fallon, CEO of Pearson, led an exclusive day-long challenge for our Level 4 Business School students. Classes and workshops were re-arranged for the day, so that they could all attend.

The TD team organise regular events throughout the academic year including:

- An annual **careers fair**, which was first held in January 2017 and will be repeated in January 2018. As well as drop-in stalls, this includes a series of workshops run by external experts on topics such as presentation, LinkedIn and emotional intelligence; a speed networking event; careers panels and opportunities to pitch business ideas to entrepreneurs;
- A **volunteering fair** held in the autumn term
- Talks and events by **Professional Bodies**, such as the Chartered Institute of Marketing
- Talks by **recruiting employers**, such as AIG
- Talks by representatives of **careers and professions**, such as solicitors and investment bankers
- **Employability skills workshops**, led by employers, such as Danone, and other external bodies or experts.

Students on our Escape Studios programmes are encouraged to attend our annual **VFX Festival**. This three day event supports the creation and development of world-class, studio-ready talent for the VFX, games and animation industries. Talks and workshops are delivered by leading studios,

[2] https://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/consumer-business/articles/global-powers-of-retailing.html Published January 2018, accessed 17.1.2018

which, at the 2018 festival, will include Framestore, who will be describing their work on Paddington 2, and the Mill, who will be discussing the John Lewis 2017 Christmas advertising film "Moz the Monster".

As part of their Annual Action Plan, the TD team have launched three key initiatives in academic year 2017/18:

- An **online Talent Development Centre** which provides students with diagnostic tools, and advice and guidance on key aspects of skills development, career planning and job searches.
- The **Future Leaders Programme**. This programme is particularly aimed at those students who do not already have the confidence to present themselves as "future leaders" and is therefore particularly relevant to those from disadvantaged backgrounds who may be lacking in the cultural capital which others may take for granted. It has been launched as an initial pilot for 35 students and was over-subscribed. Participants attend a series of workshops and engage in volunteering and work experience. Students who complete the programme will receive a certificate and attend a graduation event in June.
- **Student Talent Development Ambassadors.** This scheme is currently being trialled in the Business School and will be extended to Escape Studios, if successful. Students were invited to apply for this scheme and seven have been appointed, representing all programmes. They will have an external focus, researching events and promoting them to students. They are also encouraged to blog about careers-related activities and events and to assist the TD team in communication with students at the grass-roots.

Internships, work experience and entrepreneurship

All our Business School students are guaranteed an internship of at least four weeks, provided they meet certain attendance and performance requirements which are clearly published. Internships are available both in the UK and internationally, and a wide range of experience is available including public sector (for example, the Cabinet Office), SMEs and large employers (for example, Direct Line).

Wider work experience schemes are also available, including:

- **8th Day Projects**, so-called because they respond to the needs of SMEs to have an "8th day in the week" by providing students to carry out specific projects;
- **Consultancy projects**
- **Social enterprise** projects, including "Once Upon a Doug", a scheme working with widowed farmers in India
- **Commercial enterprise** projects.

In addition, our students have the opportunity to work with our start-up in residence, The Access Platform ("TAP"), which has been based in our 190 High Holborn campus since March 2017. This has provided around 80 students with significant opportunities to enhance their learning and skills development, for example:

- Law students helped to develop standard contracts;
- The CEO of TAP worked with the tutor for the Agile App Design for Business module, provided a real-life project for students to develop
- Students have carried out market research through focus groups to enhance product development

Apprenticeships

As we mentioned at the outset of this document, we have been at the forefront of the development of apprenticeship programmes, which sit squarely within our mission and ethos. Our apprentices have a particularly high continuation rate (only one apprentice has withdrawn since we commenced these schemes in 2014). Our first cohort of BBC students have completed their degrees and all continued their employment with the BBC on conclusion of their studies.

By its very nature, an apprenticeship is designed to ensure that students develop the skills, knowledge and attributes valued by employers. Indeed, the Apprenticeship Standards (which are written by a group of employers) are required to set out the learning outcomes by reference to knowledge, skills and behaviours. Prior to launching our CMDA Scheme, we mapped the learning outcomes from our BA (Hons) Business and Management against the requirements of the CMDA and found that they were a very good fit.

We use an e-portfolio in conjunction with the ILP (see TQ3) to assess and monitor each apprentice's progress against the learning outcomes, in particular those relating to skills and behaviours. The e-portfolio provides a space for apprentices to collect evidence and is available for inspection and review by the academic mentor and the company mentor.

Regular meetings between academic mentor, company mentor and apprentice ensure that the apprentice has the opportunities in the workplace to develop the requisite skills and behaviours, as well as monitoring feedback and results from their degree studies. Our CMDA model is structured so that apprentices can use their work-based learning to contribute to 50% of their degree studies, by using the framework of the Self-Managed Learning, Research and Consultancy modules to design work-based projects which will often benefit the employer, as well as exemplifying authentic learning in action. All projects are signed off by the academic mentor and the module leader and subject to our quality assurance processes and those of the University of Kent, including oversight by External Examiners, so academic standards and rigour are safeguarded.

SO3 Positive outcomes are achieved by its students from all backgrounds, in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds or those who are at greater risk of not achieving positive outcomes

Admissions process based on potential to succeed

From the outset, we have had a fundamental commitment to widening participation. Our student recruitment team have built relationships with a range of London schools, including a number in areas of low income or low participation in education, where they deliver workshops on careers and employability.

Our twin-track admissions process identifies applicants who have the ability to succeed in higher education but whose potential may not be reflected in their current academic achievements.

In our Business School, offers may be made on the basis of tariff scores, together with an interview. However, we have an alternative admissions route, based on a half-day Professional Workshop where applicants participate in a series of exercises through which their cognitive abilities and ten workplace competencies are assessed.

We have monitored and reviewed the Professional Workshop in the light of experience and the current version echoes a typical assessment centre of the kind which students may encounter when applying for jobs at the conclusion of their programme. The competencies which are assessed were drawn up in consultation with some of our employer partners, including the BBC. Applicants participate in a group exercise, culminating in a short written exercise.

They also complete two online tests: the TalentLens Core Abilities Assessment of verbal, numerical and abstract reasoning and the Watson Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal. All applicants are also interviewed. Scores from each element of the Professional Workshop are amalgamated and offers are made based on the final aggregate.

We have commenced a long term project to assess the effectiveness of our admissions process, in particular the two objective tests. Analysis of our first set of graduates undertaken in 2016 found that the Core Abilities and Watson Glaser tests were better predictors of final degree classification than tariff points. While this is an early result based on a relatively small sample of students, we

are encouraged by the findings and will continue to monitor the effectiveness of our admissions process.

In anticipation of the commencement of undergraduate programmes in Escape Studios, we designed a Creative Workshop admissions process which would achieve the same goal of admission on the basis of potential for success on the programme. The programme team were also keen to ensure that the Creative Workshop gives applicants a taste of the learning and teaching methods, so that they can also assess whether they think the course is right for them.

Applicants bring a portfolio of their creative work and discuss it in small groups with a tutor. This enables tutors to assess their potential and passion for the subject as well as their understanding of the creative process and ability to reflect on their own and others' work. They then participate in a group exercise, demonstrating their potential to work collaboratively. The employers who participated in the Degree Concept Team for the Escape undergraduate programmes emphasised the importance of team-working and it is therefore at the heart of the learning and teaching methodology which was developed out of these discussions. A consistent scoring system has been designed, with borderline applicants being given the opportunity to submit an additional piece of work.

Support for disadvantaged groups

Our Student Services team includes a dedicated manager for additional learning needs and disability who advises students and coordinates support and adjustments to the learning environment and/or assessment. In 2018 we are recruiting a counsellor to support students with mental health problems. Since our inception, we have run a Hardship Fund, which students can apply to, in the event of financial difficulty.

Monitoring and evaluation of widening participation

Our metrics on student outcomes demonstrate that all our students to date, including of course those from disadvantaged backgrounds, have progressed to employment or further study. Our split metrics for highly skilled employment are variable, but with a small sample and so many "not reportable" categories, it is too early to draw any conclusions about the splits.

We are conscious that our student body is drawn disproportionately from areas of high participation, when compared to HESA benchmark and sector averages. This indicates that, despite our student recruitment team's focus on some school and colleges in low participation areas and our twin track approach to admissions, we are not adequately reaching this under-represented group. During academic year 201718 we are reviewing our overall approach to access and participation, in anticipation of entering into an Access and Participation Agreement with the new Office for Students. As part of this process, we will be examining our performance in this area and taking more steps to reach this important group of potential students.

Summary

Pearson College London was established to develop a new type of distinctive learning community which combines academic rigour with outstanding employer engagement, providing students with the knowledge, skills and attributes required for success in the modern, global world of work. We are an ambitious young institution, at an early stage of our journey, and are proud that, already, the outcomes for our students have been excellent, as shown in our outstanding DLHE metrics. We are also aware of aspects of our delivery which need to be addressed, and, as we have demonstrated, we have a clear plan for improvement. Our action plan is already being implemented and we are committed to teaching excellence and the continuous enhancement of the experience of our diverse population of students, so that each of them is able to realise their potential in higher education and their future careers.