Name of Provider: Preston College
UKPRN: 10005200

TEF Year Three provider submission

1. Provider Context

Preston's College is committed to ensuring that its HE provision meets the Quality requirements of the sector, and believes, that although the initial hypothesis is that of bronze, the college can demonstrate its provision meets the Silver rating of the TEF. This is due to the excellent enhancement strategies that have been put in place over the past 3 years through which sustainable impact can be seen in its most recent provision.

As a College, we have seen much change in terms of the dynamic nature of the market place, the cohorts of students that we serve and the curriculum changes brought about by national, regional and local policy requirements. Preston's College is a rooted in its ambition to serve its community; to make our students 'THE most employable'; to support all students irrespective of their background, future ambition or entry point.

Employability and future scoping skills for the careers of tomorrow are at the heart of our strategy, ambition and drive to becoming an outstanding College for our students, employer partners and the community we serve.

The vocational and technical nature of the College means that it has the potential to meet some of the key labour market and skills needs identified. As highlighted below, the resulting impact of available LMI and regionalised skills demand is having a direct influence on the College offer so that it better meets the needs of key customer segments and stakeholder groups. The mission for all to become THE most employable reflects the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Framework for Skills and Employment that details predicted economic growth in construction, logistics, and business and professional services. At curriculum level 33% of enrolments are linked (TEF Data, 2017) to industries that support this economic predication.

The College uses available labour market intelligence to help shape its curriculum so that it meets the need of industry in terms of both replacement and growth demand. For example, the influence of City Deal and general economic recovery is having a growth effect on the construction industry with a 12% growth in construction related jobs between 2015-2020. This can be seen by the fact that 60% of the college part time provision is made up of students undertaking courses in Engineering and Technology and Architecture, Building and Planning. From the TEF metrics it can be seen that over the 3 year period the increase in provision has been in these areas by 10% thus reflecting the developing provision in response to the labour market demand. Most recently the college has established excellent links with the local HEI in these two areas and have developed University pathway courses which takes students from its full time provision through to the final year of the degree programmes. Impacts of many of these initiatives can be seen with the current continuation data where over the next 3 year period this improves to 86.6% compared with the average across current full time and part time of 78.7%.

Preston's college has strong partnerships with local schools, the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), Pearson and a new partnership for 2015/16 with the University of Derby (UOD). The college has links with a wide range of employers, which enables the college to deliver a curriculum offer that meets local needs and has input from employers. As a result, the college has seen a shift in trends of more mature students attending the college. The full time students have a balance of both mature and under 21 students at 44% and 56% respectively. This is a gap that has been closed as the college shifts its provision due to the closer working relationship with the local University.

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A clear Higher Skills Strategy has been implemented, building upon existing strengths within the College and also generating new areas of specialisms linked to the wider economic demand and demand from employers. A strong relationship between our validating Universities and ourselves continues to provide wider curriculum developments, sharing of ideas and expertise and helps to support the innovative delivery through our Real Work Environments. The strategy encompasses 10 key objectives some of which are outlined below:

- Address skills gaps locally and regionally at levels 4, 5 and above
- Increase the number of HE students entering employment or the next level of Higher Education
- Increase the number and relevance of the HE Access programmes that support progression onto the College's own Higher Education programmes
- Maintain and improve the quality and standards of the HE provision at Preston's College including teaching and learning and outcomes for students.
- Enhance the pedagogical effectiveness of staff in delivering Higher Skills and Education provision.
- Enable students to contribute to the shaping of their learning experience
- Provide an appropriate resourced environment for a high quality student experience.
- Enhance students' learning opportunities by embracing new learning technologies, developing a series of Real Working Environments, fostering learning outside the classroom and through a project-based learning approach.
- Further develop effective external partnerships that provide tangible benefits to Higher Skills students and employers.

2. Teaching Quality

2.1 Student Feedback

Student engagement continues to be a key focus at the college to ensure the college responds to learner needs. As a result of increased student engagement at both an operational and strategic level, developments and changes to programmes of study has had a positive impact. The college has an active learner voice which is run by the Heads of Department and student reps feed issues which influences changes within the college. The NSS captures a small majority of students at the college and to ensure the college responds to students during their learning journey, the in house survey was developed to capture feedback in a timely manner. This also ensures all HE students are captured as many were undertaking HNC/D provision. The college has developed its systems and processes, in line with student feedback and utilises the NSS questions for its surveys to ensure that students are engaged with the process and will provide quality feedback. Fig. 1 demonstrates the improvements in take up of the survey through ensuring students are becoming more engaged in the college decision making processes.

Fig 1.

HIGHER EDUCATION SURVEY 2014/15

Eligible respondents	229
Total respondents	64 (27.95%)

HIGHER EDUCATION SURVEY 2015/16

Eligible respondents	314
Total respondents	185 (58.92%)

HIGHER EDUCATION SURVEY 2016/17

Eligible respondents	308
Total respondents	240 (78%)

The TEF metrics demonstrate that student satisfaction with the quality of teaching is above benchmark for part-time students but below for full time, which is the majority of the provision. Through effective implementation of student voice mechanisms to ensure robust monitoring of quality the internal HE survey that is completed by the majority of students indicates a satisfaction rare of 94.9%.

Internal module evaluation questionnaires demonstrate high levels of satisfaction on programmes with students reporting being either *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with delivery. In addition the internal student survey, which includes all HE students compared with the NSS survey, demonstrates an improving picture of the quality of teaching and learning which is being sustained as demonstrated in figure 2 below.

Fig. 2

2013/14	83.3%
2014/15	85.9%
2015/16	94.8%
2016/17	94.9%

This is in line with the college's drive to place teaching, learning and assessment at the heart of the college, reflecting the continuous pursuit of excellence that is evidenced through a number of mechanisms. These mechanisms include the face-to – face student voice, compliment and complaints facility and student council.

The metrics for academic support from the NSS survey, puts the college in the bottom 10% with only 68% of the fulltime cohort being satisfied. Over the past 3 years significant investment has been undertaken in ensuring that the Learning Zone staff are fully equipped to provide sessions on academic skills, and this is now embedded within the main curriculum areas. In addition it forms part of the induction as an introduction. The internal surveys demonstrate that the academic support is good for students as displayed in figure 3 below.

Fig. 3

2013/14	85.4%
2014/15	81.3%
2015/16	91.56%
2016/17	92%

Teaching quality has also been acknowledged through the various external examiner reports and visits in recent years. High teaching standards is evidenced through this process by confirming that the standards produced are appropriate for the qualifications and comparable with others that they are familiar. Several examiners noted the excellent links with industry and good practice in relation to assessment methods and feedback given. Examples include:-

- ‘The portfolios of evidence and presentations were produced to a professional standard.’(Construction)
- ‘High level of industry standard training and work based learning opportunities’(Dance)
- ‘the course team have employed a detailed feedback process to ensure that all students are aware of how they can improve on their work for the future’(Science)
- ‘The assessment and examination procedures are at a high standard’(Engineering)

2.2 Observation Processes

The college has had an observation process for a number of years and has consistently identified that HE tutors were deemed either good or outstanding. This has in turn been further evidenced through the peer observation undertaken by the appropriate HEIs. “The teaching practice demonstrated was excellent.” (UOD), “all students engaged well and spoke positively and enthusiastically about their varied experiences of the course.” (UCLAN). This has positively impacted on continuation rates with a positive trend to 86.6% (2016/17) from 78.8% (2015/16). Staff are supported and encouraged to share this best practice during the monthly Teaching and Learning Communities, ensuring continuation and dissemination of effective practice for HE staff.

The Learning and Teaching methods that have been observed have been identified as promoting effective learning and high student engagement. Exemplar comments from both students and observations include:-

- ‘All learners could articulate the grades they were aiming for and fully understood the progress being made, with many achieving distinctions in year 1. Those that had not achieved distinction, fully understood what they needed to develop, and articulated how they would improve this year.’
- ‘One learner said 'I went home last night feeling really quite confident'.
- ‘…while an effective discussion style of delivery allowed the consolidation of learning to happen.’
- ‘This was good evidence of stretch and challenge’
- ‘Tutor linked the discussion on assessments to photo shoots and links to industry/challenges of working on set’

The college’s observation process has been revised with a move away from graded observations towards ungraded observations supported by professional discussions. Intensive training for observers and weekly professional dialogue around observation outcomes ensures the system is robust and consistent. The key components of the observation process are implicitly linked to the HEA UK Professional Standards with areas of activity, core knowledge, and professional values emphasised in the reporting and subsequent professional discussions. The observation process has a developmental focus and is further enhanced through the monthly Teaching & Learning Communities (TLCs) where teacher autonomy, peer support, and individual and group reflection are

promoted. In the drive to empower staff to continually develop, dedicated industry INSET days have been introduced to provide opportunities for HE staff to undertake bespoke CPD in either their subject specialism or as educators, acknowledging and supporting their role as a dual professionals (Transformation Programme, 2017/18). Internal acknowledgement of consistently high teaching standards is evidence through the college's Rewards and Recognition Scheme, a relatively new initiative that is now well-established. Here staff can be nominated under several categories for teaching and learning, where module evaluation questionnaires and Learner Voice feedback is reviewed as part of the evidence, alongside peer feedback for staff. 100% of HE teachers have been recognised for their excellent teaching for the year ending 16/17.

2.3 Staff Development

In the pursuit of excellence HE staff are typically required to be qualified to a level above what they teach. Staff are supported to undertake post-graduate and professional qualifications and financial support for Level 7 programmes is available as part of the Transformation Programme, evidencing the college's commitment to professional development. The table below indicates the level of qualifications teachers on the HE programmes currently have.

Qualification Level	**% of staff**
PGCE teaching qualification	100%
First degree (or equivalent for Dance staff)	100%
Master Degrees or currently working towards	10%

The college has recently validated 2 programmes that are at level 6 alongside the PGCE programme at Level 7. There are currently 8 staff delivering on these programmes. 100% have achieved or are working towards their masters qualifications, but the college is committed to enabling staff to achieve higher level qualifications to support the drive for research in its commitment to achieving TEF gold in the future.

All new staff are inducted into delivering at HE level through undertaking online and face to face professional development activities. This is done through the Quality and teaching and learning team within the learning lab. The support programme effectively inducts new staff into the underlying pedagogical principals and the Preston's approach to teaching and learning.

Staff are also supported to continue to be industry specialists through the bespoke INSET industry day as well as being supported to maintain current practice. Recent examples of this include:

- Counselling staff continuing in or running their own practices
- Initial Teacher Education team supporting projects and dissemination events with the Education and Training Foundation
- Projects run in conjunction with Eric Wright Construction and supported learner work experience
- Links with British Aerospace
- Industry Day CPD links with University of Leeds investigating the impact of Cognitive Load Theory

In addition examples from the Dance course identified by external examiners as best practice include "many staff are subject specialists holding Licentiate or Fellowship qualifications within their specialist genre which enables the students to benefit from the individual strengths and expertise of each module leader/tutor".

Staff are also supported to undertake Level 7 qualifications in education, focusing on the latest research and approaches to pedagogy. Findings from academic research and academic study are shared as part of the college's annual Teaching & Learning Conference and Market Place event, in addition, staff engaged in Level 7 study work alongside the quality team to help inform in-house

CPD. Students also have the opportunity to share their research through presentations to industry specialists (for example, construction) as well as at partner HEI's research and development conferences, such as the Post 14 Education and Training Annual Showcase. The approach to professional development acknowledging the role of staff as dual professionals is directly linked to the college's ethos to be THE most employable and the impact can be seen in the recent survey data and continuation data.

Through the high levels of commitment the college demonstrates towards the development of its staff, either through formal qualifications or industry days, this enables staff to undertake evidence based research into industry which is then passed onto students in their classroom experience. This has been seen through the External Examiners comments which include examples from initial teacher training, "…offered an opportunity for students and ITE staff to engage in thought-provoking discussions about learning, professional identity as a teacher in FE, reflection and assessment'. (ITE, 2016)

3. Student Experience

3.1 Transition arrangements

The college has established an excellent transition programme for its HE students to support them through their programme of study. This is vital for the college students as just over half of both full time and part time students come with no tariff points but with wide industry knowledge. As the student cohort is essentially made up of return to study students the engagement in the wider learning opportunities is essential. An induction scheme has been created which has been based on student feedback from the student voice. This induction ensures that not only are students inducted to the appropriate University regulations, but that they undertake appropriate study skills sessions. Based on further student feedback this is followed through the second year of study to ensure that students are ready for the next level. Handbooks and links to the University information are housed on the college VLE system which ensures all students have up to date information throughout their programme of study. Incorporated into this is an induction task which enables starting points to be assessed by subject tutors to enable effective planning of the sessions. This is particularly important given the types of students at the college that have not studied for a period of time or are mature students. The impact of this can be seen through the support that students receive whilst on their course through the extract of the survey data in Fig 3. This demonstrates an improving picture and the sustainability of the measures that have been put into place.

The learning resource teams deliver bespoke inductions to students on the facilities available to them, but also ensure access to the partner HEI facilities are covered in relation to book loans and e books. Visits during induction to the HEi partners is undertaken and take up of students using these facilities is excellent. Learner voice comments identify that the private study rooms and pods at both HEIs and the college are valuable to them supporting group work that is being undertaken. Support for aspects such as referencing is housed on the college VLE and appointments are able to be booked should further support be required. All delivery teams ensure that study skills session are built into their delivery plans and these are carried out in the evening for those courses that are evening only.

Support for the HE provision has been strengthened through the use of student managers, who track attendance and monitor progress alongside the programme teams. This level support is important for students to ensure that not only is the transition seamless, but that at risk students are identified early on and strategies put in place to support them to achieving the qualification. Early indication from the student survey and the student voice meetings are that these are having an impact on both grades being received, but also on the retention of the students. Retention has a 3 year trend of improvement overall of 87%. Again this is referenced within the student survey regarding support received as outlined in fig. 3

3.2 Learner analytics

The college utilises its internal system which tracks learner progress across all modules and identifies grade outcome alongside target grades. Target grades are driven through conversation with students and course tutor and linked to progression outcomes. This has been positively received by students and enabled students to monitor progress both inside the college and remotely to ascertain the likely overall outcome for their programme of study if attaining at the current rate. All managers across the college have access to this system and monthly monitoring meetings are held to ensure robust tracking of student outcomes is upheld. This system is effective at ensuring that those students that are retained achieve and progress onto positive outcomes. This is demonstrated through the metrics where 94% of FT and 98% of PT students progress onto employment on further study. This is on or slightly above benchmark. The college is aware it is slightly below, for FT provision in the highly skilled employment which is due to the courses that fall under this banner. Examples include Dance and Performing Arts where highly skilled employment

is more difficult to achieve within the DLHE snapshots but the employment or further study is at benchmark. Many students on these courses go on to self-employment or part of drama/dance schools. The college support these learners well into these routes by ensuring that online materials are available and classes are held to support their enterprising ambitions. However, where the college has provision in place that can lead directly to highly skilled employment as seen within the part-time provision, this is currently 5.3% above benchmark. The college has excellent success with part time students who complete their programme of study and gain promotion as a result. Both Construction and Engineering have excellent case studies of students who have moved into managerial positions following completion of the course, or whilst on the course. This demonstrates the colleges' ability to ensure that the programme of study and the modules it provides are meeting employer needs.

3.3 Employer Engagement

As programmes are validated or franchised, the college has a historic evidence base of ensuring these meet the needs of the local economy and develops skills required by employers. Employers are invited to help design the knowledge and skills requirements and invited to the validation panels to ensure it meets the needs of the industry and that they are highly valued programmes of study.

All courses at the college provide students with employability skills and make clear reference to the Foundation Degree benchmarks. With this in mind there is a work-related module on all programmes which is designed to hone the skills that industry requires. In addition new programmes that are validated have recognition from PSRBs with examples such as Teacher Training and counselling. When gaining approval for the FDA Chyps programme, both students and employers were consulted on the course and the modules that were going to be delivered along with the pathways the college proposed to be validated. For the FDA Counselling and BSC Top up programme, specific modules created were devised from both student and employer feedback which mean that the modules created reflected both industry needs, the strategic vision of the college and students expectations. This in turn ensures the programme design meets its intended learning outcomes of development of skills for employment.

An example from the recent HER states "Operationally, the College uses external advisers, including local employers, who inform programme design and assessment and aim to ensure the enhancement of students' employability skills." In addition to the programme design, employers are also embedded within the assessment processes of the courses. This ranges from providing high quality projects for students to undertake to attending a presentation panel to provide feedback on projects from an industry perspective. This was again recognised the Higher Education Review where it was noted that "all programmes include skills development modules that enable development of employability in a formalised way. The College encourages project-based learning and external examiners have mentioned the high quality projects that reflect real-world working because of the student and employer involvement in the assessment process. Performing arts students take part in commercial projects and shows in conjunction with professional staff and crew.

Employers contribute to the curriculum by providing guest lectures, developing the curriculum and evaluating student presentations." External examiners have also commented on this within good practice sections which include, "The varied nature of the assessment methods works well for each programme providing a well balanced mix of opportunities to develop skills relevant to the industry" (Construction), "good workshop delivered by industry specialists.." (Performing Arts). Impact of these close links with industry can be seen by the high engagement of students in the sessions as reported in the observation data and through attendance statistics. Overall attendance for 1617 academic year was at 87% with 3% non-attendance attributed to employer related absences detailed by the employer on the part-time provision. In addition student feedback from the internal survey identifies that they believe they are developing the appropriate employability skills whilst undertaking their programme of study as seen in Fig 4.

Fig 4. * This question was not asked in 13/14.

2013/14	N/A*
2014/15	90.3%
2015/16	91.25%
2016/17	96%

The impact of embedding the employer links in both programme design and through projects accounts for the increase in results over the past 3 years. The move into further education and employment in the metrics also indicates that the college meets the needs of both students and employers, developing students with highly valued skills.

In Performing Arts HND, there have been meetings with employers including The Arden Theatre School, The Guild Hall, Ribby Hall, and other employers which have directly informed the restructure of the course for 15-17, especially in relation to a focus on skills classes for practical delivery. This impacted positively on progression outcomes and achievement rates over the 3 year period.

Within the Engineering department growth in numbers have come from local employers who value the modules that are taught as they link directly to their needs. Feedback has been excellent and requests have been received to deliver an additional top up course to the HND for their employees. This has been put in place for 17/18 academic year.
'We selected Preston college over three years ago….I can honestly say this was a great decision..' (Britannia Dynamics 2015)

3.4 Infrastructure

The college has invested significantly in the learning environments improving both physical and flexible learning aspects. The development of Bronze, Silver and Gold requirements for its virtual learning environment has had a positive impact upon the learner experience. All Higher Education Courses were to achieve a minimum of Bronze by January 2015 which ensured all the students had appropriate information to transition in to Higher Education such as academic regulations, assessment schedules and module descriptors. In addition it is expected that students utilise the discussion boards to develop their critical thinking skills with their peer groups. This impacted positively on achievement and completion due to students having clear access to a minimum number and type of resources. Learner voice and the student survey have identified this as helping students in their study as indicated in Fig 5.

Fig 5

2013/14	68.6%
2014/15	84.4%
2015/16	94.84%
2016/17	95.1%

This demonstrates that the digital resources are of high quality due to the ability of them helping support students in their study. This is in addition to the quality check of the courses meeting the minimum standards.

Demonstrating the commitment to enhance the learning experience further and ensure outstanding digital resources, the college has recently invested in a new VLE system. This has been part of the strategic priorities for ensuring that students have opportunities to keep up to date with new learning technologies and enhance the current learning experience further. The new developments that this will bring to the HE provision is vast and will enhance current teaching and learning methods that engage learners utilising spaces for discussion and critical analysis that can then be brought into the classroom. The course requirements on the VLE are developing from bronze, silver and gold as part of the college transformation programme. Courses must demonstrate teaching and learning methods that enable leaners to discover, enhance and transform their thinking. This in turn links to the development of higher order skills which will be intrinsically embedded within the courses and digital materials available.

HE delivery takes place in outstanding facilities which includes its industry standard, state-of-the art iSTEM facilities, professional dance studios, and customised counselling suites. As an example, external examiner reports have highlighted facilities noting 'good theatre space, with effective technical support reflected within the ambitious productions' (2016). Recent validations identify that the college has invested in its facilities for the HE students by citing "good industry standard technology…innovative spaces" (FDA Engineering 2015). Coupled with this, in response to student feedback, a 19+ room has been developed within the learning resources area and all HE students have bespoke higher skills lanyards to support the investment in the college of a HE identity. Learner Voice feedback and minutes identify that HE students feel they now have an "identity". The college continues to be committed in developing its HE area over the next 2 years to work towards providing outstanding physical resources for its students across all of its provision.

As part of developing its HE infrastructure, the college has brought together its Quality, Teaching and learning and E-Learning provision under one named member of staff. This has supported the development of its online learning materials in ensuring it is of a high quality and that it is effective in supporting the pedagogy and skills developments of the students. Within the teams support staff have specific remits which include a teaching, learning and assessment Quality Improvement Lead for Higher Education. The impact of this change can be seen through the lesson observation grades of 100% graded good or better, and within the improvement of the Quality of teaching statistics in recent years in the internal surveys. This change in structure has brought about the continuous improvement drive in quality of Teaching and learning, but also in the colleges' commitment to investment in the development of its staff.

The college believes that over the past 3 years it has greatly improved its provision to ensure the student experience is very effective with students actively engaged in sessions developing excellent employability skills. Digital resources are of a high quality and employer links are excellent which truly enhance the programmes of study.