GRIMSBY INSTITUTE GROUP

'The Institute should be commended on the deliberate steps it takes, at Institute level, to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities' (QAA, 2014)

'Senior leaders and governors have created a culture of very high and ambitious expectations of both staff and learners…Senior leaders and managers implement all quality arrangements effectively and relentlessly, and focus continually on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and the progress of learners. They use readily accessible and accurate management information to monitor and improve performance. They have high expectations for all staff to work collaboratively and contribute significantly to the culture of continuous improvement.' (Ofsted, Outstanding May 2017)

'Grimsby students are above and beyond, they come with a passion and are nothing other than professional.' (Theresa Khalaf, Foresight Ltd)

'The tutors know who we are and care about who we are.' (student, 2017)

v1 – About Us

1.1 Our College

The Grimsby Institute Group (GIFHE) is one of England's largest and most successful further and higher education providers. Based in North East Lincolnshire, the college operates from several campuses including Scarborough TEC, some 80 miles north of Grimsby and Skegness TEC, 30 miles to the east, and we are crystal clear about our place - serving at the heart of our community.

Welcoming our current HE cohort of 1,323 full and part-time students, we are supremely proud of our long history delivering higher level technical and professional programmes. Commencing in the 1960s, the college offered three year HNCs in Food Science to train people for the food sector, which continues to be vital for the local economy. The college's mission reflects our core priority which is to improve the economic and social prospects of our local area through the provision of higher education for those who may not be able to access this elsewhere. In January 2010, the Grimsby Institute merged with Yorkshire Coast College (YCC), a small general further education college based in Scarborough (now known as Scarborough TEC) offering small but unique and nationally-renowned HE provision.

Our mature and collaborative relationship with the University of Hull ensures that our curriculum developments emerge through our joint understanding of the particular needs of our region to act as the pivot for economic growth and prosperity. In response to employer demand we also offer Pearson programmes in engineering and sport with a growing number of higher and degree apprenticeships.

In August 2013, we became only the third college to be successfully awarded Foundation Degree Awarding Powers, highlighting the confidence and absolute commitment to the

custodianship of academic quality and standards. To 2016/17, this status has facilitated the validation of 15 Foundation Degree programmes with a further three currently in progress. In February 2014, QAA's overwhelmingly positive Higher Education Review of the Institute cited eight areas of good practice, and two were commended. In 2013, the Institute won the AoC Beacon Award for Widening Participation. Three years later we again won this award and the overall Leading Light Award for the tremendously important work we do to prioritise access for all.

In May 2017, Ofsted awarded the college an overall grade of Outstanding; recognising the Grimsby Institute for its unswerving commitment to students as part of our 'DNA'.

1.2 Our 'Part of the World'

We are acutely aware that the areas served by the college include wards that rank very highly for economic, social or educational deprivation and that participation in education remains sadly low, albeit with some green shoots of improvement becoming evident. Of particular note and in marked contrast to the national picture of HE recruitment, the Grimsby Institute recruits a significant proportion of its learners from three wards that rank in the top 1% for indices of multiple deprivations for England – from over 32,000 wards. Unemployment in North East Lincolnshire is higher than the regional and national figures. In terms of progression from school or college indicators, of the 16 post-16 providers, none offer exclusively A-Level pathways and instead combine academic study with vocational subjects, thus reflecting the focus of the area on employment needs and in particular within the trades.

'The overall proportion of working age adults in North East Lincolnshire (16-64 year olds) with higher level skills (NVQ4 and above) was 22.9%, significantly less than the GB average of 38.2%.' ONS 2016

1.3 Our Students

The Institute recruits students from a large geographical area due to the rurality of the county and as the provider of choice for accessible, high quality HE provision. At the beginning of academic year 2016/17, there were 1,364 students studying on HE programmes at GIFHE, with the overwhelming majority at the University Centre Grimsby (96%) and 4% at Scarborough TEC. Of students enrolled at the Institute, 90% were full time and of all students, less than one-third were 'traditional' 18-20 year-old entrants. The vast majority of students are white British and around 62% are drawn from deprived or *very* deprived areas, a stark contrast to the national average of 11.3%. Students studying on programmes related to health, well-being and society including health and social care, pre-nursing, counselling and psychology constitute 45% of the student body. In these subjects, 88% of students were over the age of 20 (67% over the age of 25) representing a large number of predominantly female students returning to learn and with caring responsibilities. Conversely, of students studying on digital, creative and computing courses and who formed 25% of the student body, almost two thirds were aged 18-20. Compared to the national average of 9.7% the Institute supports a significantly higher percentage (23%) of students with a declared disability, with rising numbers citing mental illness or mental health as a pre-existing condition. In <u>all</u> categories of our NSS scores, students with a disability show a positive gap of up to 3.8% in satisfaction compared to our sector-benchmarked score.

College Mission:

‘We strive for excellence and innovation in all that we do.’

2 – Excellence in Our Teaching

2.1 Student Engagement

‘The empowerment of students through their engagement in strategically driven enhancement activities, is good practice.’ (QAA, 2014)

The strategic commitment that the college has made to ensure that students have access to the very best in local and accessible learning has resulted in exceptional improvements in NSS scores in 2016/17 and this now resides at 89.9%, a 4.4% positive gap between the Institute and the sector benchmark. In our NSS scores, the overall responses of students to the quality of teaching and learning over three years are not flagged as significant, demonstrating our high level of commitment to the quality of our delivery.

Our male students feel particularly well-served and satisfied, scoring 4.8% above benchmarks for assessment and feedback and a positive difference of 5.6% for academic support. As stated, the college’s intake of students with a disability is 13.3% higher than seen nationally and yet when benchmarks are applied, all three key questions are reported positively above or well above expected for this group. Students from non-white backgrounds rate their teaching as 2.5% higher than national benchmarks.

The Grimsby Institute’s HER determined that our unswerving commitment to the engagement of, and partnership with, students is apparent in all that we do. The shared experience of HE at the Grimsby Institute is manifested in far more than merely the ‘presence’ of students within our deliberative committee structures. The change to the mechanisms by which students are empowered to collaborate in the academic community of the college was a deliberate move to a ‘Student Senate’ approach that has direct lines of reporting and responsibilities in the quality and standard, enrichment and enhancement of the student experience, demonstrating impact on key areas of focus. Formally introduced in 2016, the Senate contributes to decision-making at all levels of the organisation, working in tandem with a wide range of other forums and opportunities such as the Student Council which represents the entire organisation.

Students from the Senate and also from the wider college body have been actively encouraged and engaged in supporting the quality of teaching and learning that they receive. A number of students have been trained alongside academic colleagues under a ‘License to Observe’ scheme which is based upon accepted standards of the UKPSF and Professional Standards to enable joint, ungraded observations of teaching, learning and assessment. Feedback from observers and students highlights the strong pedagogical approach to inclusivity; a shared notion of feedback enhancing reflective practice within teaching and learning. This has been welcomed as a non-judgemental and supportive process within the teaching community promoted by the Institute.

The clarity of purpose and immediate impact of the Senate was noted by our university partners as 'actively encouraging representatives in reviews and feedback on quality processes'. The university commented on our students' interest in engaging with the wider matters of higher education including the TEF, NSS and the Quality Code.

*'this innovative approach to student engagement as good practice in terms of empowering students and creating opportunities for wider involvement, and noted that it was worthy of wider dissemination' (*PQER*,* University of Hull, 2017)

Student programme representatives are systematically involved in all aspects of *their* college and demonstrated the value that they place on the professionalism and quality of teaching and learning through their organisation of the 'Student-Led Teaching Awards', held at the end of the academic year. The event brought together students, staff, managers and governors from across the campus highlighting the serious value placed on teaching and learning at the Institute. Nominations for individual tutors and the prizes, in categories devised by students themselves, celebrated the diversity, professionalism and care of both teaching and support colleagues for our students.

At least once each semester, students from across the college are invited to semi-formal 'Meet SMT' events. Attended by senior managers of both academic and support services, students also have direct access to key staff responsible for the holistic experience of students including those responsible for IT, learning resources, food service and academic support. Student representatives are free to raise any issues directly through this meeting facilitated by the Vice Principal for HE. Where possible, emerging issues receive immediate feedback which is then captured in formal, shared minutes received by the student body via their VLE and student email. In cases where there are not ready answers, the relevant manager is tasked to respond in similar detail and timescale. As an example, a question raised about the availability of more quiet study areas was resolved and the resource was provided within five working days.

Student feedback on their experience is absolutely integral at module level and 100% of modules receive evaluative student comments, which are then analysed for actions to be taken and reported back to the student cohort and subsequent groups. Student representatives work in active partnership with the HE Quality and Enhancement team to validate each faculty's Self Evaluation and Enhancement Document. Student Representatives are provided with extensive support and guidance to enable them to critically evaluate the performance of the faculty, including its approach to student engagement, the quality of teaching and learning and the academic standards within which it operates. This highly valued student contribution to our enhancement is included in the formal feedback to each department where it is acted upon promptly and with rigour. As a result of this, students have become active quality enhancement partners at GIFHE.

2.2 Valuing Teaching

'There is a sound, thorough and rigorous set of procedures by which teaching and learning is secured and enhanced' (FDAP Final Report, 2012)

*'The tutors always make things interesting....the sessions are never just lectures and this helps different people to understand.' (*Criminology Student)

Students at the Grimsby Institute have rated the teaching and learning on their course as 4.1% better than the benchmark figure – a fact that reflects the professionalism and

commitment of our teams in the pursuit of teaching excellence.

Teaching and learning is at the heart of all of our activities. For most of our modules, 21% of the notional hours of learning are direct contact time with the lead academic tutor. Group size is also comparatively small ensuring that students are engaged in learning – the current mean group size is 13.5 students with a standard deviation of 9.1.

The impact of the HE staff development programme, a revitalised emphasis on scholarly activity and significantly increased levels of meaningful teaching-led research has provided exceptional support for teachers to improve their practice. The Grimsby Institute won the latest AoC Beacon Award in 2017 in recognition of our innovation and investment in staff development to ensure that students benefit from the best in teaching and learning.

Teachers speak confidently about the value of the staff development they receive and are supported to ensure that we maintain the duality of their professional practice as teachers as well as their subject specialisms. In higher education 100% of tutors have a teaching qualification or professional recognition through the Higher Education Academy and are expected to be educated at a level above that which they teach. To support staff further, the Institute implemented a robust Remission Policy which allows all HE staff to reduce their teaching benchmark to concentrate on their higher level study, related research and/or programme design and development. This approach has been shared as good practice with other providers at events such as the AoC 2017 National Conference and informally with visiting institutions such as Leicester College and Bridgend College.

Quality arrangements to improve teaching, learning and assessment are supportive and thorough and lead to timely interventions and sustained improvements. These include end of module surveys and reports, Programme Review Boards and Annual Monitoring Reports, all of which are predicated on feedback from teaching and learning with a clear line of sight to implementing developmental improvements, whether this be for individuals or whole programme teams if appropriate. Staff are encouraged to experiment and to take risks in developing innovative approaches to their practice, resulting in creative and confident teaching that has a very positive impact on the progress that students make. This trust in the personal responsibility for one's own practice is exemplified in the change to non-graded observations.

Teachers are excellent role models for students, improving their *own* performance by participating in a wide range of effective professional development. Many maintain their strong links with industry and all who required to do so remain up to date with professional, regulatory and statutory bodies, to bring cutting edge knowledge and experience into the classroom to enhance student experience. Examples of supported staff development in HE include; PhD and Master's level

qualifications, HEA fellowships, teaching qualifications, attendance at internal and external conferences including keynote seminars and best practice visits to other HEIs.

During the academic year 2016/17, a total of 81 sessions in higher education were observed and 27 informal walk-throughs to consider the quality of teaching and learning for our higher education students. In almost half, there was clear evidence that research was explicitly linked to the session and in the rest it was evident that research and scholarly activity were embedded into future planning. In 92% of observations, positive student progress was evident.

Other commendable aspects determined from observations include the embedding of transferable and employability skills including literacy and numeracy, student engagement and the effective use of technology to enhance learning. In 16/17, 100% of all new staff (and those who required support following observations) received one-to-one coaching from one of our 'Quality Managers'. Coaching support includes one to one target-setting, supportive observations and bespoke training delivery or referrals. Additionally, a revised staff induction to teaching, learning and assessment – Teaching Essentials – exists as a dynamic and responsive programme giving teaching staff access to training based on higher education-focussed approaches to teaching, learning and assessment practices including planning, observations, differentiation, assessment and embedding core and transferable skills. The effective use of a wide range of digital technologies for teaching and learning is also a core element of the programme.

The 'Innovate' space is notable as a significant development; a formidable driver in enabling early adoption and skills enhancement in the area of digital literacy for Institute staff. A discrete space has been created to ensure that colleagues can access expert support and the latest technologies for teaching. The space includes a 'smart' classroom, lecture space and informal lounge which supports trying out new technologies in a non-challenging environment. Feedback on the facility has been wholly positive with the space being well-used. Colleagues have been further supported to develop their digital skills and to share effective practice through the 'Level Up' scheme, which awarded staff with gold and silver awards for demonstrating the embedding of digital technology in teaching sessions following training. The college won a further Association of Colleges Beacon Award for this innovation in 2017.

Feedback from external examiners is excellent and is a continued and sustained strength across higher education at the Institute, highlighting our commitment to teaching, learning and assessment. Additionally, the support provided to our students through well designed and innovative assessment methods is recognised by externals. Extensive feedback to support further development and nationally-comparative grading has been well-cited by examiners throughout their reports for the college. Where issues *have* been raised, swift

intervention has prompted immediate action to safeguard against reoccurrence.

2.3 Assessment and Feedback

*'There is strong evidence within the learner's scripts and the individual feedback of the quality of teaching and learning. Each script has detailed, individual feedback which highlights not only areas of development, but the strengths and achievements of the learners. It also offers practical and useful suggestions that learners can use to develop and stretch their work. There are also obvious annotations on each script, highlighting the areas of stretch and development which can be viewed by the learners.' (*Fay Armstrong, External Examiner, FdA Children, Young People and Families, 2017)

'The level of support provided to students by the Programme Leader and teaching staff has been consistently commendable, as has the quality and quantity of feedback provided to students' (Dr. Lee Richardson, Dublin Business School, External Examiner, BSc Applied Psychology, 2017)

'Our feedback is always related to our work is always concise and is precise.' (Criminology student)

It [Feedback] is worded not as critical, but to be constructive and build confidence' (Counselling student)

According to our NSS results in 16/17, student satisfaction for their experience of assessment and feedback was extremely high at 5.8% above the national benchmark and an increase of 7.5% from the previous year. The introduction of Turnitin has supported the speed of feedback return but it is the quality of feedback that has been indicated most strongly by students and external parties alike.

3 Our Learning Environments

3.1 Our Focus

The Grimsby Institute is determined to improve the life chances of our students and over several years has invested heavily not only in the physical and virtual environments for higher education but crucially in the support networks provided by people who can, daily, make a profound difference to student continuation, progress and achievement.

Our continuation data identifies that the data set is negatively flagged - for the combined years we are below our benchmark. However, the splits between years demonstrate that the strategies that have been implemented have had a significant impact and for 16/17, continuation is 'at benchmark'.

The deprivation in our area does not quell aspiration and neither do we. Of our full time students, 67% reside in POLAR3 quintiles 1 and 1 – a total of 843 students (full and part time) who live in areas denoted as high or very high deprivation. Compared to the sector average less than 12%, this data alone demonstrates that what we do at the Grimsby Institute is atypical and almost incomparable to the majority of HEIs.

Although the college has *always* been cognisant of our student body's demography,

the availability of incisive data meant that we were able to determine a focus on robust actions to maximise the life-chances of particular groups. From 2012/13, targeted interventions including revisiting the curriculum offer to align with employment and the scaffolding of learning with the right support, sought to address the retention issues of these students. The college's absolute commitment to the widening participation agenda was not, however, up for consideration in order to falsely 'protect data'. We remain proudly committed to keeping our doors open to the non-traditional student and, by gearing our offer and delivery methods to suit our learners, we are now quickly closing the gaps for these most vulnerable of students.

In 16/17, the college's investment in ProSuite – solution software for data capture and analysis – has had a seriously positive impact on the ability of HE tutors and managers to identify and respond to the profile of students, recognising the emergent issues around progress, anticipating and introducing measures to improve the success of students who may be at risk of faltering. We are committed to the improvement of digital and data services to support staff and students, introducing Markbook, TurnitIn and Pro Monitor, that quickly and effectively have improved the accessibility to vital information. We know our students extremely well and what we need to do to keep them on track and thrive.

Acutely aware that a large cohort of our students are mature and knowing that this majority has family and many pressing external commitments, we have worked tirelessly to facilitate learning provision that prioritises their needs. The introduction of a new and dynamic virtual learning platform – Canvas – has been a significant investment in time and resources to give students access to a state-of-the-art online environment. The Institute promotes inclusivity and accessibility through ICT exceptionally well and ensures that students are well-equipped with the necessary skills in class to use these methods of study in independent learning. This has been evidenced in observations and is a strength of the organisation.

'Canvas [VLE] has been a real improvement - it is used really well on our course, they use Padlet alongside it so we are all contributing to ideas on that' (PGCE student)

'I am given the freedom to learn in a way that suits me. It allows me to work on the go, on my phone, on line and out and about.' (Arts student)

3.2 Our Resources

'The sessions put on by Ella [Academic Achievement Coach] are amazing – you just need to clone her!' (PGCE student, confirmed by many)

Based on the strategic drive to improve access and provide support for all, we have invested £321,862 from our Access Fund to facilitate the recruitment of numerous student support posts including Success Coaches, an Academic Achievement Coach and an Employability

coach. As an example of impact, the HE-specific Success Coach role has made a measurable, positive difference to the attendance and participation rate of students, helping them as individuals to overcome their barriers to their ultimate achievement. The very high satisfaction scores returned by students (+4.5%) are testament to the impact this has made.

The investment in physical resources to provide students with the most realistic, industrial and sector-based training is at the forefront of learning. The University Centre, itself an awe-inspiring £20million and award-winning building, houses for example, an exceptional platform for video and film creation and dissemination. Estuary Student TV is an internal commercial company that pairs students with commercial and corporate work. Operating in parallel to curriculum, the channel manager and crew can be responsive to news events, operating from a highly equipped editing studio for post-production. The ESTV website serves as an external portal to share staff scholarly and research activities and Estuary TV, a broadcast channel within the heart of the student TV and edit studios, provides additional student placements and regular broadcast opportunities for students studying film and television.

3.3 Our Scholarship, Research and Professional Practice

*'The institutional support for staff development relating to professional updating and scholarly activity is good practice.' (*QAA, 2014)

'Last year I was part of a research project for my tutor. We researched the impact of online learning, I helped gather the data from another group, my tutor presented this at a conference' (Psychology student)

Our unswerving commitment to supporting research and scholarly activity, regardless of the idiosyncratic 'mixed economy' of further and higher education-based staff, has led to two important initiatives. Firstly, teaching remission was granted to all teaching staff on HE programmes ensuring focus, capacity and opportunity to engage in high level research activity. Secondly, this activity was planned as part of the appraisal process to ensure that the direction of travel could be conclusively linked to the activity's measurable impact on teaching and learning. There is a strategic commitment by our organisation to ensure that research is both relevant, current and valid. In terms of dissemination, research and scholarly activity, our well-received 'GIG Creates Conference' and 'GIG Creates Journal' served as a popular portal to share practice with colleagues and more widely. Remission from teaching hours was also granted for industrial updating activity, professional accreditation and other examples of investment in own-learning. As examples, of 79 staff, 22 were studying further qualifications at levels 6-8, 46 contributed to HE panels and committees, 37 updated in their professional subjects, 9 undertook external examiner commissions and 26 contributed to external publications or conferences.

A new development in 2017 has been the introduction of 'Community and Practice'. These weekly scheduled events, made possible by timetabled commitments, are managed by the academic and quality teams as a forum for shared practice and research as well as providing an 'open space' for HE matters both internally and externally to be critically debated. Participants are encouraged to contribute their ideas for challenge and response. The 'ownership' of these sessions by colleagues, *for* colleagues and the responsibility to lead by example and engagement is key. Community and Practice is a game changer for the Institute to commit to the importance of scholarly enquiry embedded within the culture of the organisation.

A further example of our innovation in supporting the updating of HE staff is Erasmus+; a funded two-year Key Action 1 programme. To date this has facilitated 'mobilities' to three European partners, where lines of enquiry have been pursued in work experience models and cultural teaching practices. On their return, 30 pioneering academics and support staff have brought skills back purposefully to enrich their UK delivery.

'[The Institute]… has created a strong academic community at work' (FDAP Final Report, 2012)

3.4 Personalised Learning

'Students' academic experiences are tailored to the individual, maximizing rates of retention, attainment and progression' (QAA, 2014)

'Differentiation is built in to the teaching and is extended by the different forms of learning support for disability. My information and support is provided so that I am included – all my information is provided in Braille. This is a massive positive.' (Counselling Student)

Initial advice and guidance is exceptional. In response to our audits on student experience and our analysis of previous intake and loss, new approaches to the ways in which advice and guidance is managed have been implemented, with the student at the epicentre of what was previously seen as a 'process' and students have reported their increase in satisfaction. Improvements to induction processes including those for students with later start dates have been noted by partner institutions as 'best practice'.

The Grimsby Institute recognises and seeks to continually meet the needs of its mature student majority with their inevitable external commitments of family and employment, working hard to facilitate learning provision access to these students. Our online learning portal, Canvas, is rich with support material and learning activities for students. In almost all observations of teaching and learning, the confident and appropriate use of ILT has been noted. The 'Innovate' team assist academics to develop "flipped" and "flipped follow-up" sessions with back to back, staffed and non-staffed sessions. This model has increased the participation levels in flipped work, and the impact and results of its introduction have again been recorded in walk-through observations. The pace of learning is increased and learners are achieving higher grades.

Housed in the inspiring University Centre building, students are provided with many stimulating and well equipped learning zones and environments in which to study. From the flexible break-out spaces for each area to the 24-hour-a-day, 364 days-a-year, Learning Resource Centre, study can take place whenever it is required, taking account of personal and work commitments of our students.

4. Student Outcomes and Learning Gain

*'At a time when FE is being encouraged to diversify into higher education and to concentrate on providing higher level qualifications in technical areas, to work with local employers in doing so and to meet the need for adult training and retraining, it does strike me as an exemplary scheme.' (*Baroness Sharp, FEWeek, Feb 2017)

*'The level 5 & 6 students that I met in June were most articulate and provided a valuable overview of their experiences of study. I was most impressed by the students and their professional awareness and understanding of the industry.' (*Karen Bartlett, External Examiner, BA Historical and Performance Costume for Stage and Screen)

'We develop loads of transferable skills like writing styles professionalism in work environments – even the attendance we have to have here develops this' (Business student)

4.1 Employment and Further Study

The Grimsby Institute tirelessly pursues its endeavour to ensure that graduates can progress into fulfilling, relevant and continuous employment. Our drive to widen the participation of our area is reflected in the 59% of students counted in this TEF year who reside in areas of high and multiple deprivation.

In terms of starting points, 40% join us without achieving the tariff and a further 32% with low tariff entry qualifications, demonstrating our resolute determination to give access to those who demonstrate their experience and commitment to their aspirations through other means of assessment. The impact of initiatives has been to demonstrate that students from postcodes within POLAR3 quintiles 1 and 2 are more likely to remain on programme and similarly-ascribed part time students are *significantly* more likely (+4.2%) to gain higher level skills employment or further study than nationally. The definition of highly-skilled employment falls within categories 1-3 of the Standard Occupational Classification and our LMI data is clear that there are only small increases forecast in the number of employment positions for Professional Occupations, Associate Professionals and Technical Occupations and, reflecting this, our recent DLHE data indicates that the median salary for our graduates has reduced from the previous year. The median salary is 17.9% below the benchmark and there is consequently a double negative flag.

The regional and sub-regional economy inevitably has a profound effect upon employment outcomes for our graduates - the majority mature students - for whom locale is everything. Within the Humber region the median salary is already 9% lower than the rest of England, with a shift towards increased part time employment coupled with a higher proportion of people employed within skilled trades. The proportion of students that remain in the area upon completion of studies is high and DLLE data indicates that 85% of graduates have remained predominantly local to the college. Our latest available DLHE data demonstrates that the actual number of graduates in employment or further study has increased, despite the dire economic context of this period, and remains at only -1.5% against national benchmarks.

Whilst the majority of our students are clearly focused on achieving or enhancing their employment prospects, the potential for progression to higher education is also actively encouraged. Several popular visits to regional providers of Masters level study have been organised, giving students access to experience of other potential destinations post-graduation.

4.2 – Employability and Transferable Skills

The Institute has undertaken a serious commitment to ensuring that students are supported in securing employment, both in readiness for and post-graduation. The HE Employability scheme includes a broad range of events and activities to develop student skills, raise awareness and provide a point of employer contact. The evolution of the Talent Dock – a bespoke in-house recruitment and employability centre - has provided a portal for targeted career advice, opportunities and skills development delivered by Employability Co-ordinators, a HE Employability Officer, Careers Advisers and Student Recruitment Officers. A wide range of services are available including CV support, work placement opportunities, job search support and advice on internships and graduate jobs. These include work placements and internships for students on courses where this is not 'mandatory', including for computing and design students where the majority of businesses are micro to small in size.

In 2016/17 the Talent Dock's labour market update has had over 6,000 views. Workshops and seminars have been hosted throughout the year with over 20 different industry speakers and over 300 students participating. HE employability workshops have been conducted throughout the year and remain popular with students, with 752 engagements on employability-themed workshops, for example.

In terms of uptake on our visits to the Universities of Hull, Lincoln, Leeds, Sheffield and Bishop Grossteste, 400 students have benefited. 100% of attendees reported that post-graduate study was now a foreseeable option.

The value of the relationships with local employers is paramount to the success of the graduate recruitment programme. Several events including a prestigious 'Future of Food' event notably prompted the following statement from Marcus Coleman, CEO of Seafish, who said: 'We are excited to be working with the Grimsby Institute on this event. We know many businesses in the seafood industry struggle to recruit and we need to encourage people into the sector. The perception of the industry is often a barrier and we aim to overcome this on the day by show casing all the different opportunities available in the seafood industry.'

A further careers event welcomed 25 employers who gave the students information about graduate jobs and internships. Our student job website 'Get Highered' became operational in 2016 with an early uptake of 100 students registered on the site and quickly had almost 90 advertised vacancies.

Placements as part of programmes are a central feature to assist students with the

transition to employment and they make a significant contribution to the development of employability skills. The quality of these opportunities is valued highly by students and organisations, acknowledging the critical contribution to the student journey.

The commitment and contributions of our employers is celebrated yearly at a staff/student collaborative event. In the last academic year, the event was attended by 40 employers who continued to praise the quality and professionalism of Grimsby Institute students one commented, 'they are above and beyond, they come with a passion and are nothing but professional'. Equally, the students see the immense value of their experience for themselves. One Hospital and Health student said, 'I have a new sense of purpose, knowing that I am making a better life for myself. This is my final chance to change mine and my family's life and that's important to me'.

A dedicated employability officer has the remit of organising events and supporting students. This has seen a renewed focus via the thematic review in 2016 for all HE programmes and numerous activities including an employment roadshow and skills week. Whilst higher-level post-graduate employment is currently limited, significant work is carried out with employers and students to enable higher-level skills and ensure students leave us with the required qualifications, skills and knowledge and are fully prepared for employment within their chosen sector.

'The university as a whole prepares you well for employability with workshops etc., and it is made clear that there is always someone to speak to if you have any questions or need advice regarding employment. From our degree in particular, I think assignments involving presentations have given me a lot of confidence that I didn't necessarily have when we started. This came into use when I have been attending interviews for jobs!' (Level 6 Business Management student)

'I am in my final year of a Business degree and am very confident that the range of subjects covered throughout the course have been both broad in nature but also in depth. My degree has provided me with the necessary knowledge and skill set in order to maximise my career opportunities in the current job market' (Level 6 Business Management student)

'I have worked with the Grimsby Institute over the past 4 years to recruit graduates to ENGIE direct from their final year degree course. I have always found that in addition to academic ability, the degree courses at the Grimsby Institute provide real world life and work experience which ensures students leave ready for the challenges of the employment market' (Elliott Heward, Engie)

4.3 Positive Outcomes for All

From our latest Higher Education Review, the difficulty in establishing the precise impact of individual enhancement-related activities was noted but the cumulative effect of multiple initiatives is having a significant impact on performance as evidenced by improved student achievement rates.

Given the profile of the local economy, there are far fewer opportunities for students to enter occupations classed as highly-skilled; the profile of local employment closely matches the starting points of many of the students as significant numbers are drawn from areas of least participation in HE and compulsory education may not have generated positive outcomes. 31% of the students who recorded a response have indicated that they are coming from a single parent household or a household in which no household member is in employment and over 80% of this group are mature learners. The Institute has recognised that these students require significant academic support which led to the engagement of an Academic Achievement Coach, who works with Programme Leaders to support students in developing those skills necessary to be successful whether on a one to one or group basis.

Improvements have been made in the number of ‘good’ degrees through targeted support, stretch and challenge. This drive has led to improvements between 2013/14 and 2016/17 of 3%. In this period there was a decline in the number of good degrees awarded down to 45% in 2014/15. In 2015/16 we implemented a change in our support, refocusing our Study Skills Team to achieve the impressive improvements of 3% and 7% in the following two years. Differentiated academic support has been aimed at those predicted to attain a 2.2 or 2.1 and additional motivational tutorials. The evidence from our external examiners is clear that whilst grade improvements have been seen, these are wholly in line with the national standards for quality in student work.

Programmes are carefully planned to develop an increasing performance velocity and this planning is subject to scrutiny through a variety of committee structures. Our HE programmes include bridging work to ensure that students are able to accommodate the transfer between levels of study and the Academic Achievement Coach works with students to ensure academic skills are developed. There are initiatives and resources directed at supporting students in closing gaps for attainment and progression, consequently the TEF core metrics show no negative flags for students in disadvantaged groups and splits are neutral for these students.

The BME profile of the organisation is matched to the demographics of the region, however the intake has increased by 2% and stands currently at 5%. NSS data for BME students in the teaching category has a positive split of 2.5% and academic support is also rated positively. There are no distinguishable gaps in continuation rates between male and female students.

Students who are identified as having a disability currently account for 23% of the enrolments compared to a sector average of 9.7%. Although almost a quarter of our students having a disability, the college has reduced the performance gap to 0.3% when compared to national benchmarks.

The college recognises the importance of accurately assessing and providing additional support for students with a disability, whilst there is a single flag for continuation as there are for students without a disability there are no flags for employment or further study and NSS criteria are equally without negative flags. Assessments are completed by a specialist provider and our Disability Officers work closely with Programme Leaders and through direct disclosure to ensure appropriate concessions are made. There has been a notable fall in the percentage of students receiving DSA following changes in April 2016 and whilst this group now only comprises 23% of the cohort there are an increasing number of students indicating via screening that they have a disability that will affect their study. 58% of all new starters have indicated they have a disability and of these 42% will progress onto claiming DSA. Support for students with disabilities is bespoke and personalised to the needs of the individual. These include; one-to-one learning support for students with specific learning difficulties. Specific adjustments to the physical environment are made in order to ensure comfortable learning environments for all. Alongside all of this, a range of both planned and responsive activities are integrated into the student year, for those students who suffer severe mental health issues, in order for them to be fully supported and reach their potential.

'Support comes first here and funding comes afterwards – they get on with fixing the issue then afterwards worry about the rest' (Visually Impaired Counselling Student)

Conclusion

Students are at the beating heart of the Grimsby Institute. We know who they are, where they come from and where they not only *want* to go, but where they *could go* with our help. We are supremely committed to providing the best teaching, the best environments and the best holistic opportunities for our students to succeed from whatever point they arrive from and we are unstoppable in our mission to build on our outstanding reputation to deliver an inspiring experience for students, staff and stakeholders.