



THE
NORTHERN
SCHOOL
OF ART

Strategic Plan

2019-2024



We are The Northern School of Art

@THENORTHERNART



We are all
about **creative**
people in a
creative place
with a **creative**
culture leading to
a **creative** **future**.

WE ARE THE NORTHERN SCHOOL OF ART



In 2018, we became The Northern School of Art having proved to the Secretary of State for Education that we are the distinguished provider of both Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) specialist art and design education in the north of England.

Our Further Education students have excellent progression into positive outcomes with 94% of our leavers in 2019 progressing into education, apprenticeships or employment*.

Our HE students demonstrate the highest overall satisfaction of any provider in the North East as well as enjoying high levels of graduate employability**.

We proudly serve our local communities in the Tees Valley and, through our mission to enable individuals to receive exceptional education for creative careers, we not only supply the talent needed by the rapidly growing creative economy but support the wider economic and social development of our region and its people.

We will redefine what it means to be an art school, by reference to our student outcomes and our teaching and learning environment. Creativity, and its associated skills knowledge and attitudes, is viewed internationally as essential to the development of a stronger civil society, economies and with individuals who are capable of driving change and securing personal well-being and fulfilment. NESTA (formerly the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts) and others have shown that these skills, knowledge and attitudes will be vital and will not be superseded by Artificial Intelligence (AI).

We are rated Outstanding by Ofsted for Further Education and have been awarded TEF Gold for the quality of our undergraduate teaching and outcomes.

We are dedicated to providing the highest quality teaching and learning experience for all our students, enabling individuals to progress from FE to undergraduate study and into careers in a set of industries dominated by people qualified to at least degree level.

**Creativity
is ‘Imaginative
activity
fashioned so
as to produce
outcomes
that are
both original
and of value.’**

All Our Futures: Creativity,
Culture and Education, NACCCE, HMG, 1999

Glossary

FE - Further Education
HE - Higher Education
HEI - Higher Education Institution
TDAP - Taught Degree Awarding Powers
EBacc - English Baccalaureate



*Data compiled for academic year 2018/19 and submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

**'NSS 2019', Office for Students & 'DLHE: HESA', Department for Education 2018.



Regional Context

The School exists within the rapidly growing creative sector in the UK and the North, where our reputation is strong. Sector growth has been sustained over more than 20 years. More particularly, in the five years up to 2017 the sector in the north east grew faster than anywhere else in England apart from London (47% growth by value). The sector has grown faster than the UK economy since 1998 – the creative industries employ 1 in 11 people in the English workforce and are predicted to need an additional 900,000 graduates by 2022 (DCMS, 2018).

In the Tees Valley, the School is the only specialist provider of FE and HE education in the creative sector and highly performing on many measures – we are a key part of the skills development pipeline for the sector which is a strategic priority for the devolved Tees Valley Combined Authority. Notably, the School is a member of the Tees Valley Culture Group which is leading preparation for a bid to become UK City of Culture in 2025. Within our local context, the School is making a significant contribution to social and economic development through its Saturday Clubs, free professional development for teachers, the award winning Festival of Illustration and participation in many other community based projects.

‘Place’ is important to us, we will:

- continue our own efforts, and those of the Tees Valley Combined Authority, to grow the regional economy, develop an arts infrastructure and develop community arts engagement;
- promote our location as a special place – an extended studio for our students, graduates and staff;
- seek to foster a clustering of creatives around our campuses.

The FE and HE markets both face uncertainty over the period of this plan. A challenging market may become even more so - as Brexit impacts on recruitment to larger Higher Education Institutions (HEI), and as the impact of the EBacc is felt in successive cohorts of students leaving school at 16.

Demography will swing back in our favour first at FE and then at HE bringing the potential for growth.

	Aged 16		Aged 18	
	England	North East	England	North East
By 2024	+19.8	+17.3	+12.6	+13.4

ONS: Population Projections



‘My message to everyone who cares about the education of our next generation is simple: **creativity matters**...equip them most of all with the creativity to make best use of **their talents** and to react to all that the brave new world can throw at them.’

Financial pressure and uncertainty are likely, particularly as we await any Government's response to the Augar Review (of post-18 education funding), and absorb the impact of contribution rate changes to the Teachers' Pension Scheme after 2020. In FE, the long term funding position remains difficult following 5 years of cash standstill.

On a positive note, the particular context of the Tees Valley and its devolution deal mean that creativity and culture is recognised as strategically important and worthy of investment. Our response to this context must be ambitious yet realistic, taking account of our institutional scale, capability, capacity and responsiveness.



Our Vision for 2024

By 2024, we will have built on our track record and successes. In essence we want to have more students on continuously improving courses, studying in high quality, supportive, creative environments. We will develop our curriculum through increasing product differentiation from our competitors and foster innovation. Our students' experience with us and the quality of the destinations they move on to, in the North and elsewhere, guides what we do and aspire to. This Plan has been adapted by our Corporation Board which will monitor its direction and delivery.

We will have:

Degree Awarding Powers and become an HEI enabling us to become ever more responsive to the needs of students and industry, making the School more visible in direct comparison to competitor universities and opening up new funding opportunities only available to HEIs.

Grown, out-pacing demographic growth in both FE and HE student numbers as demographic growth kicks in, enabling us to secure our place in the region, re-invest in, and develop our curriculum offer and become more resilient.

A new FE Campus in the heart of Middlesbrough, a location that is more accessible to our growing catchment area - adjacent to a creative industry hub.

Established the School as a leader in thinking and practice in the creative sector in the North and beyond - allowing us to offer current and relevant teaching and industrial experience.

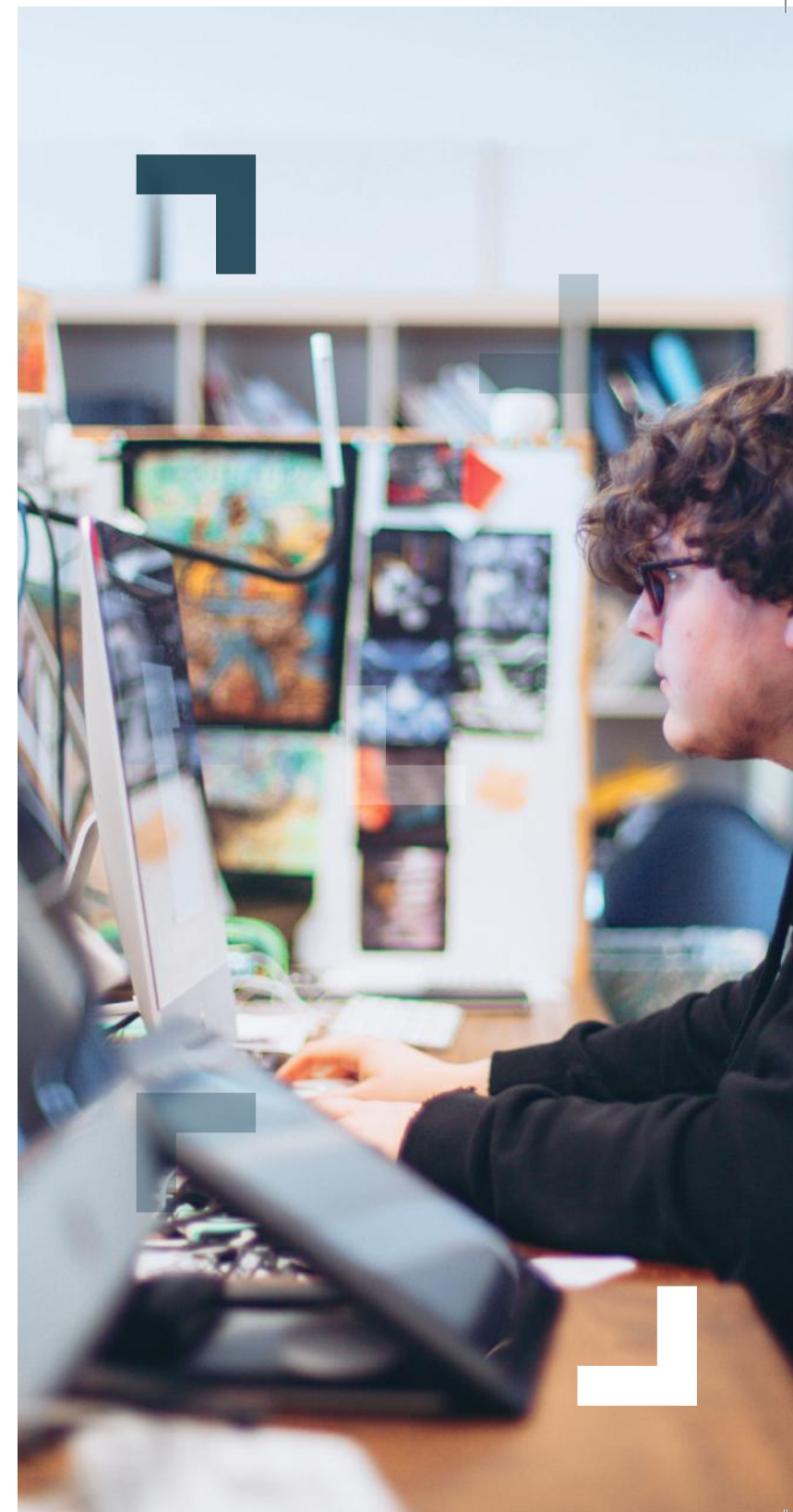
We will continue to deliver excellent standards of teaching and learning, sustaining our:

- Teaching Excellence Framework Gold for Higher Education
- Ofsted Outstanding rating for Further Education

At the same time we will ensure our future by maintaining a good financial health rating.

This is our Vision for the School and it informs the set of Key Outcomes we want to achieve over the next 5 years.

This Plan and the Key Outcomes are supported by a range of more detailed strategies, governance structures and performance indicators which allow us to monitor and constantly improve our performance and anticipate or react to the changing environment in which we operate.



Key Outcomes for 2024

By 2024, we will have...

A current, relevant curriculum offer - the School must keep developments in the creative industries and creative education under constant review, primarily via staff scholarly activity, whilst assessing potential student demand in order to ensure that its offer is relevant and contemporary.

This will result in:

- development of a differentiated curriculum offer - for example building on the unique opportunities offered by the development of The Northern Studios
- an FE and HE curriculum based on developing and ever shifting industry and market needs - responding and anticipating to these regardless of our current offer and academic reach

We will deploy newly developed planning processes for both FE and HE that allow us to respond to the market whilst preserving our character as a specialist provider offering distinctive and often niche subject areas.

Further enhanced our teaching and learning - the School already has a reputation for the quality of its provision, as we develop we will ensure that we do not alter our essential character. Our actions will lead to:

- maintaining our outstanding position in FE for creative study
- maintaining our excellent TEF Gold position (with reference to the TEF metrics)
- demonstrably enhanced impact of scholarly activity on both pedagogy and curriculum development
- the School being a sought after industrial partner, leading innovation and thinking on creative education and practice, at a national level
- a well qualified staff team with the necessary teaching, specialist and leadership skills
- a more outward facing institution as the School develops wider relationships with other HEIs and private sector organisations - supporting and enhancing scholarly activity and research and innovation in the curriculum
- the introduction, development and embedding of a post-graduate study community
- collaborative and cross disciplinary working in all subject areas, to remove barriers to learning and enhance the learning experience

Cultural learning is embodied by a set of skills, attitudes and knowledge. High quality education should combine:

- Knowledge
- Technical skills
- Analytical and critical skills
- Development of personal creativity

taken from The Virtuous Circle by Sorrell, Henley & Roberts (2014).

Improved student experience - at both FE and HE, the School already has a reputation for the quality of its student services and support, broader student experience and engagement that has been developing strongly.

Our actions will lead to:

- an enhanced student union and extra-curricular activities offer
- further opportunities for students to access a range of information, advice, guidance on the wider student life, general life skills and personal issues
- a wider recognition of and support for students with additional needs
- a better understanding of well-being through promotion and the offer of practical activities to support both staff and student well-being
- a variety of warm and welcoming social, informal and private spaces to support a range of student needs
- an extended portfolio of well-managed, furnished and high quality student accommodation to meet a range of budgets and student requirements

Key Outcomes, particularly 2 and 4, will assist us in fostering a mature HE Orientation, supporting and securing our timely transition to HEI status and attainment of Taught Degree Awarding Powers.

The School is comparable in size to a general university arts faculty - at this scale everything we do is considered through the filter of sustainability so our final outcomes must relate to this. We will have an approach that seeks to review any processes and activities, wherever possible, to secure sustainability and best use of resources.

Grown our student numbers - outpacing demographic growth and in a competitive market, our action will result in:

- more FE students studying in our new campus. We will have expanded the reach of our recruitment to new areas and developed our curriculum offer
- an enhanced position in the HE market, a successful recruitment to new postgraduate programmes. We will have developed the curriculum, grown the Level 4 intake, and ensured that undergraduate programmes operate with optimal group sizes
- the School being ready to enter new markets once TDAPs in perpetuity is achieved soon after the end of this plan period

We will expand and grow - but not beyond a point that would threaten our distinctive specialist character where students enjoy a personalised and supportive environment.

Sustained employability record - the introduction of the Graduate Outcome survey means we will lose current and fine grained intelligence about graduate outcomes.

Set against this context we will continue to take action which results in:

- closer relationships with our alumni enabling us to understand their careers and engage them with the School
- deeper and wider relationships with the creative sector and the development of formal Knowledge Transfer Exchange Partnerships
- formal relationships with a wider range of prominent cultural institutions in the North
- a thriving alumni/early career creative community at The BIS - Whitby Street Studios; and the development of a screen industry value chain cluster around The Northern Studios
- deep partnerships with the screen and immersive tech sectors through The Northern Studios development
- ongoing and developing support for students to effectively prepare them for: work as a creative, freelance practice and postgraduate study

Viable and healthy resources with fully embedded planning systems - we will maintain our record of good financial management and health. We will be lean and effective in all we do. We will invest in the support and development of all staff.

We will take action to deliver:

- effective resource allocation planning and modelling systems
- effective asset management and utilisation planning
- a staff team with robust morale which feels supported and recognised for its achievements at personal and team level
- staff with the knowledge and skills to deliver effective planning and performance management (of people and delivery)
- a governing body that is supported, ambitious, representative and appropriately challenging to the School leadership

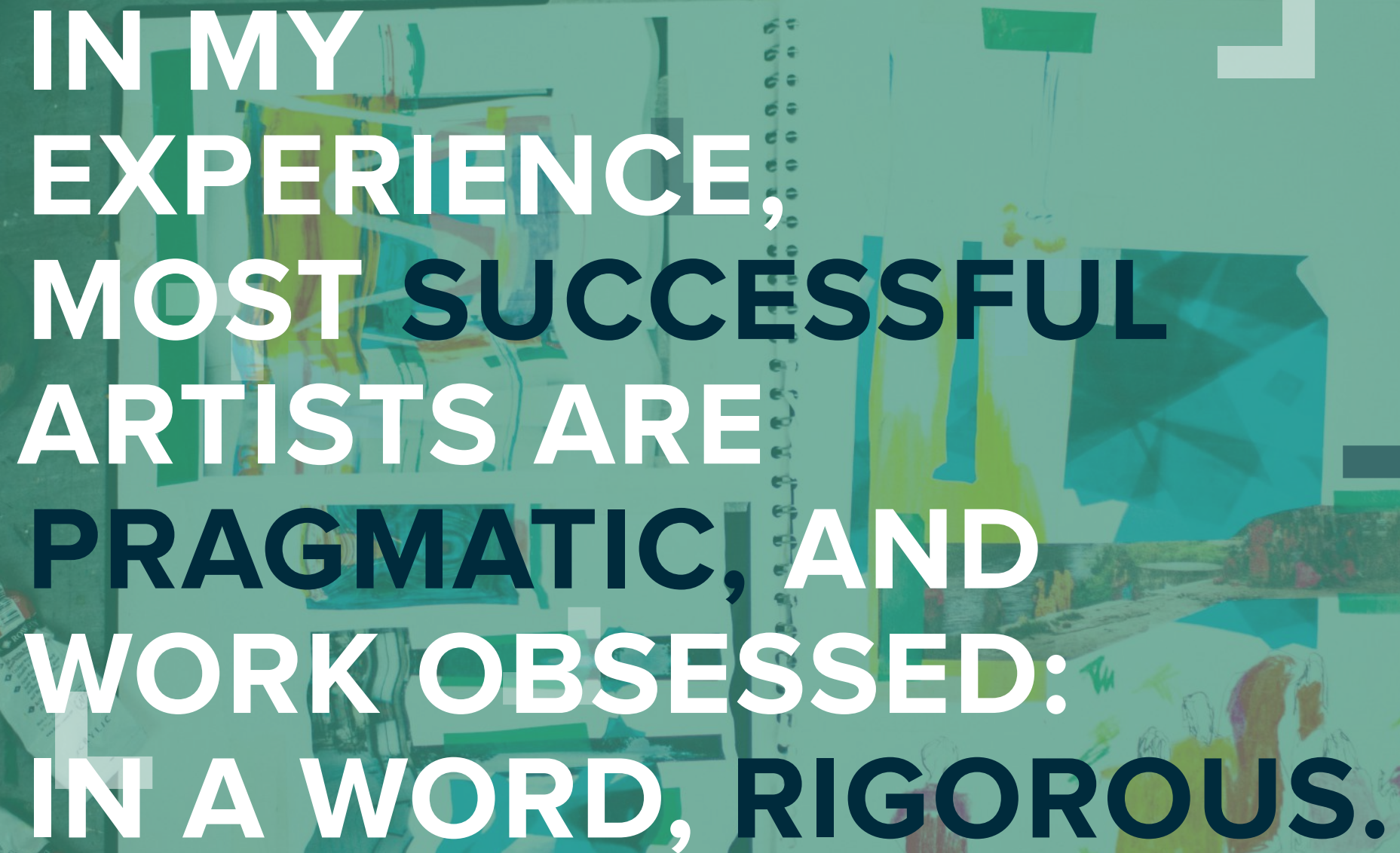
We aim to ensure that students, staff and **community** are focal points for what we do. Everything we do is guided by our **values and behaviours**.

Our Values

- creativity and excellence
- professional practice, employability and enterprise
- student engagement, support, collaboration and community

Our Behaviours

- concern for the quality of a holistic student experience
- a positive, collegiate approach
- professionalism
- always seeking improvement; appropriately self-critical
- equality and diversity



IN MY
EXPERIENCE,
MOST **SUCCESSFUL**
ARTISTS ARE
PRAGMATIC, AND
WORK OBSESSED:
IN A WORD, **RIGOROUS.**

Grayson Perry taken from The Creative Stance (2017).

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**Find out more at
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