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|  | **ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019**  Overview  The School Annual Report sets out summaries relating to key reports on institutional performance and provides assurance information in relation to the 2018-2019 School year. |

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# Introduction & Overview

## Principal’s Introduction

This Annual Report is an internal document prepared in order to provide the Corporation Board with an assurance overview in relation to the activities of the whole School. It aims to review the previous year, 2018-2019, rather than to provide a preview of the current year. Whilst it is a comprehensive document, it does not encompass all assurance areas in full detail. For instance, members wishing to be fully informed about FE or HE academic issues should refer to the School’s Self-Assessment Report (SAR) or the Academic Board’s Annual Report.

This year, there has been a focus on continuing to progress work started in 2017-2018 to enhance the School’s governance arrangements. The School has complied with the AoC’s Code of Good Governance for English Colleges since the Code’s inception. In 2017 the School assessed its compliance with the Committee of University Chairs’ (CUC) *Higher Education Code of Governance* (2014, as amended 2018) – “the CUC Code” – judging that it was close to compliance, and that it would work towards full compliance. Publication of the Office for Students’ (OfS) registration requirements in February 2018 hastened the School’s decision to seek to comply fully with the CUC Code by the end of 2018. To this end, acting through the Governance and Search Committee, the Corporation Board implemented a number of assurance measures which have continued this year, including:

* The Academic Board has provided a detailed report to the Governing Body covering academic standards and related issues in order to provide appropriate assurance;
* The Remuneration Committee has provided a detailed report to the Governing Body covering the remuneration of senior post holders in order to provide appropriate assurance;
* Assurance statements have been sought and obtained from senior managers in relation to regulatory compliance, including that during the year the School’s business has complied with the Instruments & Articles of Government and Standing Orders, that publicity materials comply with the requirements of the Competition & Markets Authority, that finance and data returns to ESFA and other bodies have been complete and accurate, and that the School’s policies have been correctly applied throughout the year;
* The Governance & Search Committee has reviewed a detailed assessment of the School’s compliance with the CUC Code; and
* The Governance & Search Committee has produced an Annual Report to the Governing Body in order to provide assurance in relation to governance issues.

This comprehensive range of measures was implemented last year in order to move the School towards full compliance with the CUC Code. However, in 2018 the Annual Governance Report concluded that there were two issues “…*which, whilst not considered to be fundamental…* *in the opinion of the Governance & Search Committee prevent the School from asserting* … *that it is fully compliant with the CUC Code*”. These related to an independent review of governance arrangements and the adoption of a financial strategy. Both of these deficiencies were rectified in 2019. The independent review of governance concluded that the School was compliant with the AoC Code and, subject to the approval of a financial strategy, was also compliant with the CUC Code. A financial strategy was approved in July 2019 and hence the Governance & Search Committee’s Annual Report to the Corporation Board was able to conclude that the School was fully compliant with both governance codes.

## Strategic Plan

*Overview*

During 2019, and following wide consultation with staff, the Corporation Board adopted a new Strategic Plan covering the period up to and including 2024. This 5-year Plan sets out the key outcomes we seek to achieve and to identify the character of the institution. It is purposefully concise – more detailed action plans and targets are given in underpinning strategies, such as the Academic Strategy, and operational plans that support its delivery.

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. Our vision is to 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, at least maintaining our market share 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 our self 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.

The Plan is structured around six outcomes which support this vision for the School in 2024. These are described in the following section.

*Key Outcomes*

**A current, relevant curriculum offer** - The institution 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.

**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.
  + Held 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.

**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 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 wellbeing through promotion and the offer of practical activities to support both staff and student wellbeing.
  + 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.

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

* + At least retaining our market share of FE students studying in our new campus. We will have expanded the reach of our recruitment to new areas and developed our curriculum offer.
  + At least held our position in the HE market, and successfully recruited 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 DAPs 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 post graduate 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).

# Assurance Issues

## Finance

*Financial Headlines*

Income

Expenditure

*Summary Accounts 2018-2019*

We recognise that College accounts are complex and that not all readers will have the time to study the level of detail that we are required to publish. Therefore, we have prepared an ‘easy-to-follow’ summary of the key numbers from our 2018-19 accounts. This should give an appreciation of the School’s financial activity in the year.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2018-2019** | **2017-2018** |
|  | **£000** | **£000** |
| **Income** |  |  |
| Education and Skills Funding Agency | 2,729 | 2,782 |
| Office for Students | 332 | 356 |
| Other government grants | 281 | 280 |
| Further Education Student Fees | 98 | 81 |
| Higher Education Student Fees | 4,995 | 4,327 |
| Other income | 677 | 724 |
|  | **9,112** | **8,550** |
| **Expenditure** |  |  |
| Teaching costs | 5,904 | 5,679 |
| Non-teaching costs | 1,831 | 1,767 |
| Premises costs | 867 | 628 |
| Depreciation | 682 | 643 |
| Finance costs | 151 | 174 |
|  | **9,435** | **8,891** |
|  |  |  |
| **Deficit for the year** | **(323)** | **(341)** |
|  |  |  |
| **Cash balances** | **498** | **463** |
| (Excluding grants not spent) |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **ESFA Financial Health Assessment** | **Good** | **Satisfactory** |
|  |  |  |
| **Banking Covenants** | **Met** | **Met** |

The financial health assessment for the School has improved since last year. This is due to the School’s financial performance improving after a period of investment made in various buildings at the Hartlepool HE campus and investing in new higher education programmes in advance of student recruitment. Financial health is forecast to remain at ‘Good’ for the foreseeable future.

## Risk & Internal Controls

*Risk Appetite and Risk Management Policy*

The School monitors key risks on a regular basis in line with the Risk Management Policy. As a matter of good practice it approves the Risk Management Policy on an annual basis. One of the main reasons behind this is to enable the Board to discuss its appetite to taking risks. Currently the Corporation Board attitude to risk is ‘Open’, defined as:

*OPEN – willing to consider all delivery options and choose the one most likely to result in successful delivery whilst also providing maximum reward, this represents a measured approach to risk making informed and considered choices*

*Corporation Risk Register*

The Audit Committee reviews the risk register on a regular basis in detail and the Board discuss risk at every Board meeting to determine if the risks the School faces have altered since previous meetings.

Key risks to the College over the course of the coming months include:

* Government policy including BREXIT and HE Fees
* Construction project(s)
* Cash flow and banking covenants
* HE recruitment
* FE recruitment

Key areas of risk become standing items on the Corporation Board agenda for discussion or are covered by the Principals Report at each meeting.

*Audit Committee Annual Report – December 2019*

Under the Joint Audit Code of Practice (JACOP), there is a requirement for the audit committee to produce an annual report, which is submitted to the corporation prior to the Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control being signed. The Audit Committee is responsible for providing insight to the Corporation on “the adequacy and effectiveness of the School Corporation’s assurance framework”.

The Audit Committee annual report:

* Summarises the committee’s activities relating to the financial year under review, not only those activities undertaken in-year;
* Includes the committee’s opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the School’s assurance framework of governance, risk and control and how the School has secured value for money; and
* Underpins the board’s own opinions in the Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control in the annual financial statements

In line with the requirements of the Accounts Direction 2018 to 2019, English FE Colleges are required to submit the audit committee annual report to the responsible funding body. In the case of The Northern School of Art this will be a submission to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Some of the key causes for concern are illustrated below, together with how, as an institution, we look to provide the Audit Committee and ultimately the Corporation Board with assurance:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Area of concern** | **Sources of assurance** |
| School Strategy | Corporation Board strategy days  Corporation Board performance reporting |
| Key Performance Indicators | Management accounts and financial statements  Data book reporting  Recruitment statistics  Academic standards committee reports  Principal’s report |
| Internal Controls | Internal audit reports and opinion  External audit reports and opinion |
| Financial controls and reporting | Internal audit reports  External audit reports and opinion |
| Value for money | Procurement processes  Annual budget process and use of curriculum resource model to identify anomalies |
| External and internal risks | Risk register in place which is regularly reviewed and reported upon  Principal’s report updating on the School’s operating environment and sector developments |
| Academic delivery | Self-Evaluation Report (SAR)  Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)  ESFA monitoring  Oversight by the Academic Board, including Annual Report |
| Training of Governors | Clerk to the Corporation plans:   * Induction of new Governors * Governor development programme |

*The Audit Committee’s Formal Opinion 2018-2019*

With increased autonomy and accountability, coupled with pressing financial viability concerns in the education sector, providing an opinion on the ‘adequacy and effectiveness’ of the School’s assurance arrangements, governance, risk and control processes is a real challenge for any Audit Committee.

In forming its opinion, the Audit Committee must have a clear understanding of the School’s overall financial position. It must also have a clear understanding of the School’s risk profile and also where improvements in internal controls may be required.

The assurance process that has been documented above has illustrated the processes that the School has employed to try and assure Members as to the financial and operational risks to the School and where it has sought external reviews and opinions.

With this in mind and considering the review and challenge that has been conducted during the year by the Audit Committee it is the opinion of the Members of the Audit Committee that the School’s assurance arrangements, governance, risk and control mechanisms are adequate and effective for the purpose of conducting the continuing delivery of provision at The Northern School of Art.

## Human Resources

*Turnover Rate*

The below data shows a very slight decrease in turnover rate from 2017-2018.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2018-2019** | **2017-2018** |
| Turnover Rate | 6.6% | 6.8% |
| National Turnover Rate | 15% | 15% |

The data below show the rate of turnover per month.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Month | No of Staff | Leavers | Rate (%) |
| Aug-18 | 210 | 3 | 1.5 |
| Sep-18 | 211 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Oct-18 | 212 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Nov-18 | 212 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Dec-18 | 213 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Jan-19 | 215 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Feb-19 | 214 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Mar-19 | 213 | 3 | 1.4 |
| Apr-19 | 213 | 2 | 0.9 |
| May-19 | 211 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Jun-19 | 210 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Jul-19 | 208 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Mean / Total | 211.8 | 14 | 6.6 |

The data below show the reasons for leaving.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Health reasons | 2 |
| Resigned – Another role | 6 |
| Resigned – Personal reasons | 1 |
| Retirement | 1 |
| Settlement | 1 |
| Redundancy | 3 |
| Total | 14 |

The turnover rate for 2018-2019 at 6.6% has decreased by 0.2% compared with the previous year. The national average for turnover is 15%, therefore, in comparison, the School has a very low turnover rate.

However, turnover rates are relative, so it is hard to say what is “too high” or “too low.” To assess the School’s turnover rate going forward the HR department will compare the Schools turnover with similar institutions. This will be carried out through communication with the AoC and Guild HE HR networks. This will enable a more meaningful analysis to be undertaken.

*Sickness*

The national average sickness percentage in the UK for the Education sector is 2.7%. According to the Office for National Statistics [sickness absence has fallen to the lowest rate on record](https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/sicknessabsencefallstothelowestratein24years/2018-07-30). The latest available figures (2017) show that the average number of sickness absence days that UK workers took was 4.1, which has almost halved since 1993 (7.2 days). The data below show the School’s sickness percentage for 2018-2019 as 3.47%. This is a decrease of 0.35% from 2017-2018. Monthly sickness rates are communicated in the Staff Newsletter with a comparison from the previous year. All sickness is monitored and appropriate trigger meetings are organised between HR and staff.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Sickness Rates** | **2018-2019** | **2017-2018** |
| Annual Rate | **3.47%** | **3.82%** |
| Long Term | 49.56% | 43% |
| Short Term | 50.44% | 57% |

It should be noted that out of the 1422.5 days’ sickness, of these 571 days were in the Cleaners, Catering and Caretakers category, which equates to 40% of the overall sickness percentage.

The graph below shows the annual sickness percentage for the last 11 years. [NB there was no available data for 2013/2014].

It should be noted that 17% of long-term sickness and 9% of the School’s overall sickness was attributed to mental health-related illnesses. This is a significant decrease from 2017-2018 in which 52% was attributed to mental health-related illness. This is also significantly lower than the national average of all mental health-related illness which is 57% (source: British Safety Council). The School holds mental health very strongly on the agenda with the introduction of mental health first aiders and have recently signed the AoC’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter which recognises the School’s responsibility to create an environment that promotes student and staff wellbeing and proactively supports student and staff mental health.

The Wellbeing Champions (Teresa Latcham: Student Services Manager and Amy Crossland: Head of HR & Organisational Development) will continue to implement and support wellbeing within the School by raising awareness and promoting healthy lifestyles and positive mental health. This, in turn, will hopefully further reduce the amount of sickness attributed to mental health.

*Staff Development*

Below illustrates the staff development approved for 2018/2019.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Qualification** | **Number of applications approved** |
| MBA | 1 |
| MFA/MSc/MA/MEd | 0 |
| PGCE/PG Cert (HE) | 4 |
| PhD | 1 |
| Misc., including conferences, et cetera | 65 |
| Online Safeguarding, Equality & Diversity, Prevent, Channel and Health and Safety | School-wide |
| **Total** | **71** |

In addition, 12 members of staff have achieved HEA Fellowship status. 24 members of staff are left to complete this with a deadline of December 2019.

Moreover, all HE Programme Leaders completed the Management Development Programme (MDP) receiving a CMI qualification in Leadership and Management.

*Wellbeing*

A Wellbeing Group has been established comprising of members of staff from across the School. Our current Wellbeing Representatives are:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * Amy Crossland * Teresa Latcham * Michelle Peart * Catherine Wilkinson * John Noble | * Anne Russell * Liam Bradley * Michelle Coleman * Louise Fitchett * Tracey Phillips | * Dan Tierney |

It is hoped that ‘Wellbeing Wednesdays’ will commence before the Christmas period to enable staff to attend a variety of wellbeing activities in working hours, thus, avoiding clashes with activities outside of work, e.g. caring commitments.

*Mental Health First Aiders*

We currently have 12 mental health first aiders whose role is to identify, understand and help a person who may be developing a mental health issue. In the same way, as physical first aid is learnt, mental health first aid teaches volunteers how to recognise crucial warning signs of mental ill-health.

*Equality and Diversity*

Included in the annual Equality and Diversity section later in this report.

*FE Safeguarding*

In 2018-2019 all FE staff were expected to partake in the below online training.

* Safeguarding – 97% completion rate. 2-year expiry renewal.
* Prevent – 100% completion rate. 2-year expiry renewal.
* Channel – 98% completion rate. 2-year expiry renewal.
* Equality & Diversity – 89% completion rate. 3-year expiry renewal.

All FE staff are asked to attend a Safeguarding and Prevent update training session, which is delivered annually.

Selected FE academic staff are also required to complete the training noted below throughout the year:

* Genital mutilation.
* E-Safety.
* Child Sexual Exploitation.

All Safeguarding Officers are required to carry out Core Level 3 Safeguarding Children training every 2 years.

*Employee Reward and Recognition Scheme*

The employee recognition scheme was introduced in January 2016. This scheme consists of any employee having the opportunity to nominate an employee who has gone above and beyond their normal duties. The reward consists of a £15 Amazon gift voucher and a personalised ‘thank you’ letter from the nominating employee. This scheme continues to be very well utilised with 70 members of staff receiving an award in 2018/2019.

*Future Developments for 2019/2020 – HR strategy*

The 5-year HR Strategy (People First) was written in 2017-2018. The HR strategy is focused around 8 themes. These include:

* Rewarding and Recognising Excellence.
* Engagement.
* Performance Management and Growth.
* Talent Attraction.
* Leadership and Management.
* Equality and Diversity.
* Safeguarding.
* Health and Wellbeing.

The HR department will continue to work through this strategy to motivate, grow and engage our employees.

Additional activities for 2019/2020 include:

* Equality & Diversity Strategy.
* Full complement of policies and procedures.
* Management Toolkit training and implementation.
* Change Management.
* Possible Sustainability (Environmental) Programme.
* DAPs preparation.

## Health & Safety

The following table provides an overview of the health & safety position in the School.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Comment** |
| 1. **Date H&S policy implemented:** 2. **Date of next review:** | May 2019  April 2020 |
| 1. **Accident Report File (e.g. trends/remedial actions etc)** | * Statistical analysis of accidents and near misses (compare to previous year(s) to show any trends); details of actions taken to reduce number and repetition of most common / most serious accidents. * There has been a total of 30 accident book entries, * No Riddor reportable events * There is a 12% reduction in accident book entries compared to last year’s figures. |
| 1. **Details/outcomes from fire drills completed and extinguisher annual service check:** | * Fire drills have been carried out at both sites. All drills satisfactory with the buildings being evacuated within five minutes. * Fire detection and firefighting equipment has been serviced in accordance with regulations. |
| 1. **Details of First aid provision/arrangements:** | * The School currently has eighteen qualified first aiders ten at Hartlepool and eight at Middlesbrough. All receive refresher training before their current certificates expirer. |
| 1. **Outcomes from H&S inspections:** | * No matters arising from monthly Health & safety inspections other than general housekeeping needs to improve * Internal audit by RSM Risk Assurance Services found only minor issues which are being or have been rectified. |
| 1. **Status of Risk Assessment process:** | * Regular monitoring to ensure existing controls are relevant, fully observed and risk assessments adapted as found necessary. * Room risk register produced for both sites. * All risk assessments are now produced on the new risk assessment form. |
| 1. **Training completed:** | * 30 members of staff have completed online fire warden training. * Refresher training to all staff on general health and safety plus risk assessment for Managers * Estates staff completed work at height and manual handling training |

The following figure provides a high level overview of accident statistics within the School, showing a relatively consistent level across the last three years, with a return to lower levels of accidents in 2017-18, consistent with 2015-2016 (not shown).

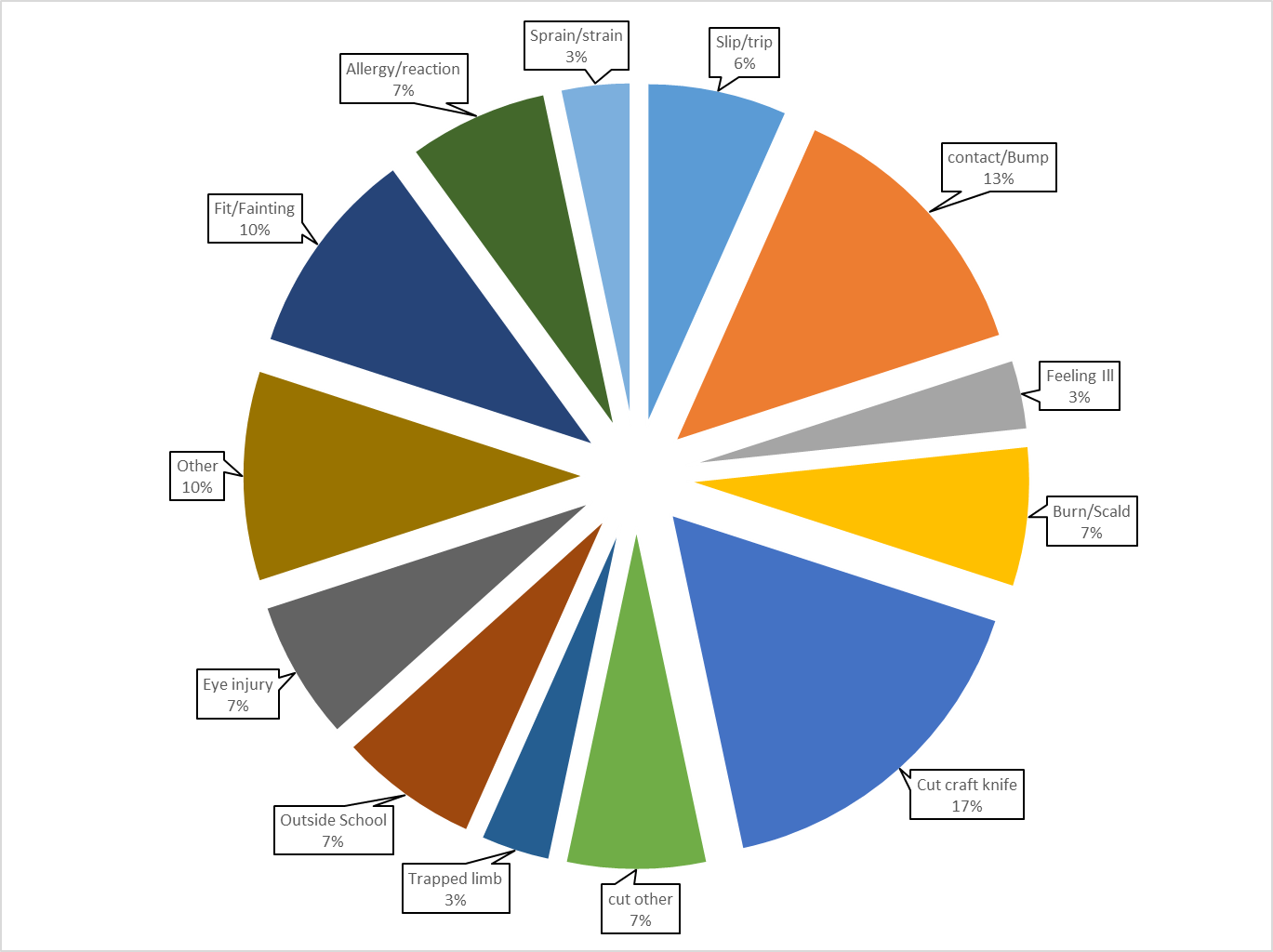
The following figure shows the headline data and a more detailed analysis of accident types.

It can be seen that following a continuing campaign, craft knife cuts have again been reduced year-on-year.

The following chart shows that this year there were no Riddor reportable incidents.

The following chart breaks down the data for 2018-2019 by type.

ACCIDENT KIND



## Equality & Diversity

The following are the key Equality and Diversity updates and data for 2018-19.

1. Equality & Diversity Statement

The Northern School of Art is committed to providing an inclusive learning and working environment that recognises the value of every individual regardless of their background or personal characteristics. It aims to do this by encouraging a culture which actively welcomes, respects, promotes and embraces diversity; employs fairness in all aspects of employment and teaching and thereby creating and sustaining a positive and supportive environment for all members of its community.

1. Equality and Diversity Committee

The Committee met termly last year to raise and address issues and drive the Equality and Diversity agenda forward within the School.

1. Student Feedback

Results from the FE Student Survey (QDP Survey Services) for 2018-19 were positive in relation to equality and diversity issues. 96% of students responded that the School makes sure that all students are treated equally, and also that the tutors treat them fairly and with respect. Additionally, 96% feel that the School deals with bullying, harassment and discrimination well.

At HE the Student Perception Survey highlighted that 97% of students agreed with the statement “I am treated with respect”.

1. Matrix Assessment Feedback

The Matrix Assessment feedback received in March 2018 stated: “The end-to-end CCAD IAG experience is championing values of equality and diversity; putting the student first; empowerment; and dignity and respect. Innovative approaches to embedding British Values are in keeping with the curriculum team's approaches to ensuring applicability to their specialism within Arts and Design.” During 2018-2019 the School has continued to build and develop upon these approaches.

1. Estates / Facilities

Estates are always conscious of health & safety in the workplace and ensure that safety and security are put at the front of all projects and site inspections. A proactive approach is taken to assist where possible on any issues that may require special attention.

The School provides medical rooms, disabled toilets with hoists and facilities for those in need of additional toilet changing facilities. Lifts and ramps and disabled parking spaces are also made available. Induction loops and hearing alert fire alarm systems are in place for those who may have difficulty in hearing; glow strips are present on stair nosings and where floor levels differ for those who may have impaired vision.

1. Curriculum

Equality and Diversity issues are embedded very effectively in the curriculum with the majority of learners taking part in discussion, debate, research, and projects associated with a broad range of themes from culture and society. External moderation reports highlight the breadth project proposals which engaged learners in a range of social/ethical issues including transgender, social class, conspiracy theory/propaganda and multicultural Britain.

At HE all of the External Examiners provided positive responses to the criteria within the summary feedback section of their reports, therefore confirming their satisfaction with academic standards and the quality of student work; and that each of the School’s undergraduate programmes conforms to the QAA Subject Benchmark and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications [FHEQ].

1. Student Services

Students at both FE and HE are made aware of Student Services and the support that can be provided at the earliest opportunity, from Open Days, enrolment and induction. Students who declare a disability and/or a support need at interview or enrolment are offered an opportunity to discuss their requirements so that appropriate support can be arranged as quickly as possible. Both the documentation used in this process and the process itself have been reviewed this year to make sure that information gathered is more relevant and is shared and acted on in a timelier fashion. Students with protected characteristics are appropriately supported within their programme of study, ensuring progression and excellent achievement is attained. Student Services works closely with local organisations to ensure that students requiring more specialist support are able to access this easily, for example, CAMHS for mental health issues, Hartgables for our LGBTQ students or those transitioning. Student Services also undertakes preventative and educational work around equality and diversity issues, such as delivering workshops and arranging talks on issues such as bullying and harassment and respecting equality and diversity. The School has also collaborated with other local post 16 providers and the Local Authority’s Headstart Project to successfully secure funding from Nesta to improve awareness and support for student wellbeing, through staff development, student workshops and dedicated resources to support emotional resilience and wellbeing.

1. The Governing Body

The Governing Body seeks to remove any barriers that might deter people from expressing an interest in joining the Board and welcomes applications from people from all backgrounds for consideration for appointment during its search to fill vacancies, with the aim of achieving a balance of membership that reflects the diversity of the School, its activities and the region. During 2018/19 the gender balance of the membership was 56% male and 44% female which makes the School relatively well-placed amongst UK Higher Education Institutions that are gender-balanced, and above the average of 36% of women filling places on UK HEI governing bodies in England, 38% in Scotland and 34% in Northern Ireland and in Wales (Jarboe, 2016 and The Guardian, 2018). The Higher Education Funding Council for England previously set a target of 40 per cent female representation on higher education institution (HEI) boards by 2020.

The AoC report ‘A Practical Guide to Improving the Diversity of College Boards’ (2015), identified that in the UK 88% of governors are white British, 4% have Black Caribbean, Black African or Other Black backgrounds and 3% of governors are Indian, Pakistani or British Asian backgrounds. In addition, 3% assess themselves as having a disability. During 2018/19 the School had no Black or Minority Ethnic members. Further work is also required to identify members who assess themselves as disabled. This will be addressed as a future agenda item for the Equality & Diversity Committee.

1. Staffing Information

*Gender - including part-time working*

The overall male/female split within the School is 35% male and 65% female, (2017-2018: 33% male and 67% female). The male/female split for Senior Managers comprises of 65% male and 35% female. In addition, the split for the entire management structure within the School equals 49% male and 51% female (2017/2018: 50% male and 50% female).

82% of Senior Managers are contracted on a full-time basis compared to 85% in 2017/2018. It is relevant to note that 18% of Senior Managers work on a part-time basis, thus aiding childcare responsibilities in some cases. In comparison, 70% of non-managers work on a part-time basis, indicating that there is still a tendency for more female non-managers to work part-time (81% female and 19% male). This is partly due to a large proportion of female catering and cleaning staff falling into the non-manager category.

*Disability*

9% of all staff declared a disability or long-term health problem (2017/2018: 12%), suggesting that the School does not see disability or long-term health issues as barriers to appointment/progression. As there is usually considerable movement in hourly paid staff and exit interviews are not completed it is difficult to determine if there are any barriers to employment but monitoring will continue.

*Ethnicity*

Staff declaring their ethnicity as BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) has dropped to 1% in comparison to 3% in 2017-2018. This category will be closely monitored by adding this to the Equality and Diversity Action plan which the Equality and Diversity Committee will report upon in 2019/2020.

*Age*

Due to the removal of the statutory retirement age, there continue to be 6 employees (5 in the previous year) who work beyond the age of 65. The most significant age band within the School is between 45 and 54 (36%). As expected, fewer managers (5%) than non-managers (95%) are in the age band 16-34 as a result of managers being required to have knowledge of the professional field they manage, and this knowledge is, in most cases, gained with experience.

*Pay Equality issues*

The School adheres to published pay scales to ensure all staff doing a particular role are paid within the same band, with the same opportunity for progression via annual increments (where appropriate) within the band. Some Senior Managers are paid on a spot point salary and progression is awarded via consideration of performance reviews by their line managers. All business support staff are able to apply for a higher grade should they feel that this is warranted, via the Re-grading Procedure. This takes into account issues of internal pay parity when assessing the appropriateness of pay grading.

Academic staff also have the opportunity to increase their salary via the Contribution Based Pay Procedure. This incorporates criteria for Academic staff and Technician Demonstrators to assess whether they are eligible to move up the salary scales or move to a different salary scale for appropriate work-based contribution.

*Gender Pay Gap*

The gender pay gap is the percentage difference between the average hourly earnings for men and women. The School was required by the Government to submit gender pay gap data by March 2019. The results showed that the School has a gender pay gap of 14.6% as opposed to the national average of 14.8% for Education. Although the Schools gender pay gap is below the national average it has increased from 8% the previous year. To date, the steps that the School has taken to promote gender diversity include the following:

* monitoring of the proportions of men and women applying for jobs and being recruited;
* encouraging salary negotiations by showing salary ranges;
* monitoring of the proportions of men and women applying for and obtaining promotions;
* monitoring of the proportions of men and women leaving the organisation and their reasons for leaving;
* assessing the numbers of men and women in each role and pay band;
* offering flexible working arrangements;
* removing the 26 weeks’ service clause from the Flexible Working Procedure, thus, enabling an employee to apply for flexible working regardless of how long they have worked for the School;
* monitoring the proportions of men and women who returned to their original job after a period of maternity/paternity or other parental leave;
* monitoring the proportions of men and women still in post a year on from a return to work after a period of maternity/paternity or other parental leave;
* paying the living wage;
* training the next generation of managers; and
* creating an inclusive culture.

To further reduce the gap, the following actions include:

* Considering a flexi-time procedure to further improve work-life balance and help elevate childcare issues;
* giving regular updates - the School will share progress through the staff newsletter;
* using skill-based assessment tasks in interviews;
* exploring any barriers to women entering leadership positions, and actively encouraging applications for leadership roles through mentoring and leadership development;
* developing a clear strategy to ensure inclusivity and diversity across all of our protected characteristic groups driven by the Equality and Diversity Committee;
* expanding on wellbeing strategies to address the particular challenges faced by women in the workplace and also help managers to better understand how to provide appropriate support; and
* introducing transparency to promotion, pay and reward processes.

*Applications for flexible working*

There have been 20 formal applications for flexible working in 2018-2019 which were granted in comparison to 11 the previous year. There are ongoing flexible working arrangements which are working well, adapting working patterns to meet the needs and other commitments of employees without having a detrimental impact on delivery. Every employee has a statutory right to request that an application for flexible working be considered.

*Applications for training and development*

All staff are encouraged to undertake staff development activities by individual application for external events.

*Disciplinary and Grievance cases*

There was 1 disciplinary hearing and no grievance hearings in the period.

*Developments and Priorities for 2019-20*

* Annual Equality and Diversity activities/action plan to be reviewed by the Equality and Diversity Committee to ensure continued relevance including the need to meet the Access and Participation Plan;
* Review evidence gathering regarding Equality and Diversity issues and activity;
* Develop more inclusive practice across the School;
* Enhance staff and student awareness of Equality and Diversity issues; and
* The creation of a School Equality and Diversity Strategy.

## Safeguarding

In recent years the Safeguarding Committee has ensured completion of audits of the School’s approach to Safeguarding and has monitored these effectively. This included an audit by Middlesbrough Safeguarding Children Board (now the South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership) in July 2018.

From the results of audit and the annual review process the Safeguarding Committee has concluded that the School’s approach to Safeguarding is effective. The strengths identified in the audit and annual review are identified in full in the 2018-19 Self-Assessment Report (considered on 15th November 2019 by the Corporation Board). The following areas for further improvement have formed the basis of the Safeguarding Action Plan 2019.

* We will work towards better using the School website to communicate our Safeguarding approach to parents.
* We will carry out a Pulse Survey to identify staff’s confidence in identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns. This would allow the School to more effectively measure the impact of Safeguarding training.
* The School has recently developed a more strategic approach to safeguarding training planning by creating a safeguarding training plan for 2019/20. This will be monitored by the Safeguarding Committee.
* Safeguarding training and updates will have an increased focus on sexual harassment, violence and consent with a particular focus on HE students living in rented accommodation.
* We will continually review procedures related to suicide prevention, mental health and Wellbeing with a particular focus on vulnerable adults living in rented accommodation.

## Wellbeing

The School recognises the benefits of supporting and encouraging mental wellbeing in both its staff and students. This year it has formalised this in the development of a Health and Wellbeing Policy, underpinned by a Wellbeing Action Group comprised of representatives from across the School and led by two Wellbeing Champions - one for staff (Head of HR and Organisational Development) and one for students (Student Services Manager) and overseen by the Vice Principal (Student Experience).

The School has been working in conjunction with the two Local Authorities, with involvement in the following two projects Future in Mind (Hartlepool) and *Headstart* (Middlesbrough). Both projects aim to increase the wellbeing and emotional resilience of young people.

The two Wellbeing Champions have completed a course in Mindfulness as part of Future in Mind and continue to be part of a Network of Champions across the Hartlepool area.

As part of *Headstart* the School has been an active member of a newly formed Post-16 group, a partnership across 5 post-16 providers across Middlesbrough. The group has successfully submitted a bid to Nesta and been awarded funding to be able to offer a programme of staff development, additional resources, including a dedicated website and a series of workshops to support young people’s ‘academic resilience’, commencing in 19-20.

The Wellbeing Champions presented a number of ideas to Principalship to support the work around Wellbeing. Those approved were the notion of Wellbeing Wednesdays – time on a Wednesday afternoon for a focus on wellbeing; a dedicated Principalship member to support wellbeing; mandatory basic mental health awareness training for staff;

Staff have contributed ideas for activities to support wellbeing leading to the establishment of a book club, fitness sessions and walking activities. A team of staff participated in Red January to promote the positive effects of exercise on wellbeing and raise funds for Mind.

An ‘Introduction to Wellbeing’ Workshop was offered to all Level 4 students, which was well received.

Students led on a Wellbeing week which included chill out sessions, walks and a focus on healthy food.

At the end of the academic year a survey was completed with staff (*Public Health England - Workplace Health Needs Assessment - PHE & Healthy Working Futures survey*) to gauge current thoughts and activities around wellbeing and also to establish a benchmark against which to measure the impact of activities in the next academic year.

Although much has been achieved during the year, work is ongoing to encourage participation in wellbeing activities and communication of positive messages to both staff and students.

## Governance Issues

The Northern School of Art is committed to demonstrating best practice in corporate governance.

*Statement of Primary Responsibilities*

The Governing Body has adopted a statement of primary responsibilities, which is published on the School’s website. This statement sets out the Governing Body’s responsibilities in respect of the proper conduct of public business, strategic planning, monitoring effectiveness and performance, finance, audit, estate management, human resource management, equality and diversity, student welfare, health and safety and the appointment of the School senior post-holders.

*Conduct of Business*

The School has a duty to conduct affairs in a responsible and transparent way, and to take into account the requirements of funding bodies, the Association of Colleges’ *Code of Good Governance for English Colleges* (2015) and the Committee of University Chairs’ (CUC) *Higher Education Code of Governance* (2014, as amended 2018) – “The CUC Code”. Both of the Codes are underpinned by the standards in public life enunciated by the Nolan Committee. Consequently, the Corporation Board seeks to discharge its functions with due regard to the 'seven principles of public life' defined by the Nolan Committee:

1. ***Selflessness***: Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
2. ***Integrity***: Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
3. ***Objectivity***: In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
4. ***Accountability***: Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
5. ***Openness***: Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
6. ***Honesty***: Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
7. ***Leadership***: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

The School has complied with the AoC’s *Code of Good Governance for English Colleges* since the Code’s inception. However, as a further education corporation (FEC) prior to 2017 the School had not considered compliance with the CUC Code. In 2017 the School assessed its compliance with the CUC Code and determined that it was close to compliance, and that it would work towards full compliance. Publication of the Office for Students’ (OfS) registration requirements in February 2018 hastened the School’s decision to seek to comply fully with the CUC Code by the end of 2018.

The CUC Code identifies the following seven primary elements of governance that underpin the values and beliefs outlined in the Code:

1. The governing body is unambiguously and collectively accountable for institutional activities, taking all final decisions on matters of fundamental concern within its remit.
2. The governing body protects institutional reputation by being assured that clear regulations, policies and procedures that adhere to legislative and regulatory requirements are in place, ethical in nature, and followed.
3. The governing body ensures institutional sustainability by working with the Executive to set the institutional mission and strategy. In addition, it needs to be assured that appropriate steps are being taken to deliver them and that there are effective systems of control and risk management.
4. The governing body receives assurance that academic governance is effective by working with the Senate/Academic Board or equivalent as specified in its governing instruments.
5. The governing body works with the Executive to be assured that effective control and due diligence take place in relation to institutionally significant external activities.
6. The governing body must promote equality and diversity throughout the institution, including in relation to its own operation.

The CUC Code states that the governing body must ensure that governance structures and processes are fit for purpose by referencing them against recognised standards of good practice.

*Additional Assurance and CUC Code Compliance*

The Corporation Board, acting through the Governance and Search Committee, has sought to achieve CUC Code compliance. To this end it has implemented a number of new assurance measures in 2017-18, as follows:

* The Academic Board has provided a detailed report to the Governing Body covering academic standards and related issues in order to provide appropriate assurance and to comply with the CUC Code;
* The Remuneration Committee has provided a detailed report to the Governing Body covering the remuneration of senior post holders in order to provide appropriate assurance and to comply with the CUC Code;
* The Audit Committee has sought an additional opinion from the School’s external auditors in relation to compliance with the publicity requirements which fall on all charities;
* Assurance statements have been sought and obtained from the Clerk & Governance Advisor and senior managers in relation to regulatory compliance, including that during the year the School’s business has complied with the Instruments & Articles of Government and Standing Orders, that publicity materials comply with the requirements of the Competition & Markets Authority, that finance and data returns to ESFA and other bodies have been complete and accurate, and that the School’s policies have been correctly applied throughout the year;
* The Governance & Search Committee has reviewed a detailed assessment of the School’s compliance with the CUC Code; and
* The Governance & Search Committee has produced an Annual Report to the Governing Body in order to provide assurance in relation to governance issues.

This comprehensive range of measures was implemented in order to move the School towards full compliance with the CUC Code.

*Overall Opinion*

The Annual Governance Report concludes that the School is now compliant with:

1. the Association of Colleges’ *Code of Good Governance for English Colleges* (2015);
2. the Committee of University Chairs’ (CUC) *Higher Education Code of Governance* (2014, as amended 2018);
3. The College Senior Staff Remuneration Code (AoC); and
4. The Higher Education Senior Staff Remuneration Code (CUC).

# Excellent Student Experience & Curricula Offer

## Student Experience Team

The Student Experience Team (SET) has met regularly during 2018/19 to effectively manage the Student Experience across the School. The SET have a particular focus on teaching, learning and assessment, student support, student engagement, information technology and the development of learning resources.

The impact of the work of the SET has been reviewed in the Academic Strategies Implementation Group (ASIG) that has met five times during 2018/19. The terms of reference for this sub-committee of the Academic Board identify objectives and responsibilities that include.

* To review and evaluate activities relating to the aims of the Student Support Strategy, Student Engagement Strategy, Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, Scholarly Activity & Research Strategy and the Learning Resource Development Strategy.
* To support the integration of activities across strategies.
* To support the development and dissemination of activities.
* To ensure that the impact of activities across the institution are captured and recorded.

Progress against these strategies has been made during 2018/19 and effectively recorded, it also identified areas for future development to support the School achieve the objectives of the overarching Academic Strategy and the Strategic Plan. Following the success of the ASIG, in reviewing and evaluating progress, a specific Further Education ASIG will be introduced in 2019/20 to support the work of the FE Academic Committee.

*Student Engagement*

The Student Engagement Strategy was updated during 2018/19 and identifies the School’s continuing commitment to involving students throughout its academic governance and decision-making structures. This includes a higher and further education student governor on the Corporation Board of the governing body and student representation on the Academic Board.

During 2018/19 the School recommended Georgia Bell (SU President) to be a member of OFS Student Advisory Panel, which facilitates discussions between students and OFS on developments in the higher education sector. Georgia was successfully elected to the panel and attends regular meetings in London where she has the opportunity to share best practice and to offer input into the work of the OFS on a national level.

The School also maintained and further developed the well-established system of student representation for each of its programmes at both HE and FE. Typically, two representatives for each cohort were selected to serve for one academic year (or one representative for small cohorts). Student Assemblies were held in the Autumn and Spring Terms. At HE Support for Students Representatives was provided by the Student Liaison Officer and other non-programme staff. At FE course staff led on the Student Assembly process during group tutorials.

Programme Boards of study also took place in the Autumn and Spring Terms at Higher Education. In Further Education the Head of Further Education chaired two meetings, one each semester, attended by all Student Representatives who provided feedback on behalf of their student cohorts.

The School accepts that there are insufficient opportunities for all students to engage through the formal structures described above. However, the School has provided opportunities for every student to contribute to broader institutional decision-making and enhancement processes through their participation in feedback mechanisms such as the National Student Survey [NSS], the Student Perception Survey [SPS] at both FE & HE, Student Assemblies and the FE Choices Student Satisfaction Survey.

The Northern School of Art’s Student’s Union Constitution has been developed to identify the Union's constitution and bye-laws and is a list of rules and regulations which the Students' Union works to. It covers areas such as Students' Union Officers powers, committee, clubs and society regulations, the Union complaints procedure and policies. The School recognises that its Students’ Union has a key role to play in encouraging broader student engagement and has a commitment to supporting the Students’ Union, where possible, to carry out this duty effectively. The School acknowledges that the development of its Students’ Union relies on the willingness of students to become involved and take responsibility as active members of the School community.

During the year 9 different SU Executive roles were held by students from 6 different programmes representing level 4, 5 and 6 students. Roles included HE Student Governor, Accommodation Officer, LGBTQ+ Officer plus other roles related to the organisation of clubs and societies. For 2019/20 new SU Exec roles have been introduced as the union develops and grows, an example of this is the role of a Mature Students’ Officer which was suggested via students from one of our school committees. The SU is continuing to be developed by a proactive SU Exec team with our President and Vice Presidents driving the direction of the Union and also being involved in external panels and forums.

*Learning Resource Development*

Arts University Bournemouth commended the progress achieved in the quality of the library during 2018/19. The report produced by AUB followed a meeting at The Northern School of Art to consider the development of an MA offer and was attended by Professor Emma Hunt (Deputy Vice-Chancellor) and Professor Paul Ward (Principal Lecturer and Course Leader). The report stated:

“*The team undertook a tour of the proposed resources and was very impressed by the potential. In particular, it commended the considerable progress achieved in the quality of the library. The Learning Resources Development Manager had produced a strategy for the library and outlined the particular areas where further development was planned. The team was also pleased to note the new accommodation and on-going contact between staff at AUB library. It fully supported the Learning Resources Development Manager in her plans for development and felt that achievement of development in certain key areas such as e-journals, SCONUL and Eduroam were important in developing an appropriate learning environment for postgraduate study.”*

As part of the Learning Resource Strategy, the Learning Resources Development Manager (Rosie) is beginning some research into information literacy. The aim is to identify how we can incorporate good practice in this area into our curriculum and develop an understanding of what ‘information literacy’ means to us at The School. This will be achieved by the mapping of Information Literacy across the institution using ANCIL (A New Curriculum for Information Literacy) Framework. Future development of library staffing to support information literacy development at MA Level (initially) and across the wider institution in the longer‐term is considered essential by the team. Proposals that suggest introducing a Digital Resource Librarian and a Teaching & Learning Librarian would hugely support this aspect of the strategy.

Moodle has been redeveloped in‐line with the School’s new branding, and learning technology staff continue to support academic staff and students with the use of learning technology. During the summer the School appointed a new Learning Technologist following Michael Egan’s departure. Katherine McDonagh joins us having worked in Stockton Libraries for a number of years. She is a former Northern School of Art student having attended Burlam Road on the Foundation Diploma course and also completed a degree in Fashion at Northumbria University. The strategy to employ a learning technologist with a ‘creative’ focus and background seems to be paying off and whilst Katherine has only been with us a short time she has engaged very effectively with academic staff. Working with our quality manager she has already introduced DIG, a digital interest group at FE which is intended to meet and share best practice in the use of learning technology.

*Information Technology*

During 2018/19 the School created an IT Strategy. The aim of the strategy was to assert that:

* We can design services for students that are both highly tuned to individual needs and efficient.
* We can build an IT infrastructure that is both flexible and cost effective.
* We can deliver IT services that are both better and cheaper.
* We can provide IT services that support the School achieve its Strategic plans.

The need for a focussed IT Strategy was highlighted by Student Surveys across both FE and HE. During completion of the SPS survey students were asked to identify ‘The one thing I would most like to improve about the School is.’ To summarise, the most consistently identified issues related to IT were concerns about access to good quality computers. Where access is available the computers are defined as slow. This is most noticeable on TV & Film, Graphics and Production Design / VFX.

The School has made targeted investments over the summer to remedy issues raised in the SPS. Every Mac at the HE site has been, or is in the process of being, upgraded with a solid state drive (SSD). The School currently has 139 Macs at the HE campus and this upgrade should significantly increase the speed of these computers. SSDs have also been used to upgrade a number of student PCs across the HE campus. 30 new Apple Macs have been bought for Level 4 Graphic Design / DDA to create a new purpose-built studio in the old lecture theatre. 10 ‘high end’ PCs have been bought to create a VFX / Production computer room suitable for use of 3DS Max. £60,000 was allocated and is available to support development of IT Resource in TV & Film.

The greatest challenge in achieving the aims of the IT Strategy is the number and quality of computers at the FE Campus. A recent audit was completed identifying that there were 381 student computers with 442 student enrolments for 2019/20. This ratio - approaching 1 computer per student - is clearly unsustainable. The SET has been working together along with the architects for the new build to develop our approach to teaching and learning and the use of IT. The SET is targeting reduction in the number of computers to 250-260 through course adjacencies and better space utilisation and access. It is considered that this target number can be supported and would remain appropriate to the projected increase in student recruitment following completion of the new build. For context there are 272 student computers at the HE campus for 611 full time students.

*Student Support Strategy*

The Academic Strategies Implementation Group (ASIG) identified progress towards achieving the aims of the Student Support Strategy. However, it is recognised that this work is taking place with increasing demands on student support services internally and externally to the School. This report will focus primarily on the School’s work regarding staff and student wellbeing and safeguarding.

*Learning, Teaching and Assessment*

In Further Education the School’s new approach to the teaching observation process has operated for its first annual cycle. As well as formal teaching observations the School introduced Advanced Notice observations to support the sharing of best practice and encourage further reflection upon teaching strategies. The new approach provided increased opportunities at course and leadership level to evaluate the quality of education received by FE students; it has supported staff to be more experimental and reflective regarding their teaching practice without the al stress and anxiety of a formal observation; it has promoted the sharing of best practice and also identified staff developmental opportunities. However, whilst the new process has been effective, a further review of our approach is required to ensure that the School’s procedures support Ofsted’s recently introduced Education Inspection Framework (EIF). It is considered that the School needs to be more reflective of Ofsted’s ‘deep dive’ approach, where the emphasis will be on attending sessions and speaking to staff and students about their experiences, rather than merely watching the teaching and learning process. A full review of the quality of our FE education including teaching and learning is available in the School Self-Assessment Report.

In Higher Education, work towards achievement of the objectives of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy is progressing. The quality mechanisms in place, such as Peer Observation and Standardisation, are being implemented successfully by academic staff. The Learning and Teaching Development Manager has taken an active role in the validation of new programmes, with a particular focus on teaching approaches and strategies. Staff are successfully referring to the strategy in the development of the new provision.

A particular focus for the SET is Level 4 retention. The team is working together to understand better why students withdraw, in particular during the summer prior to transition from Level 4 to Level 5. This work is currently in progress but key areas for exploration include identification of why and when students at level 4 withdraw from their studies, linked to our approach to teaching, learning and assessment; review of student engagement with the School environments (both physical and virtual); and students’ readiness for Higher Education, including our approach to transition.

As part of the continuous review of our approach to teaching, learning and assessment we are also looking externally at how other HE providers deliver in the art and design sector. This is part of a wider project to support the future sustainability of the School with the increased financial pressures and potential policy changes in Higher Education funding. A key aspect of this work will be entering into research of and discussion with external institutions and internally through ‘debate’ with our academic teams to continuously review our approach.

A priority of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy during 2019-2020 will be to support the School towards achievement of the Access and Participation Plan. This will include reviewing the curriculum and supporting staff to ensure we are using appropriate and differentiated teaching strategies to raise standards in access, participation and achievement for students with underrepresented characteristics.

## Further Education Curriculum Development

*A-level*

Throughout 2018/19 the FE Curriculum Management team, working with Principalship, has monitored the quality of provision in our A-level Pathway. Significant issues were identified, most notably in Psychology and Sociology. There were also issues generally with progress data that suggested that students studying A-levels were not making as much progress as other students in the School and compared to other institutions. Feedback from the ‘student voice’ identified that the student experience, including opportunities to engage in enrichment activities, was not as good as in the rest of the School. Therefore, a number of key changes were made in our A-level provision including:

* A change was made to Course Leadership. Year 1 and Year 2 Tutors were introduced overseen by the FE Quality Manager.
* The A-level enhancement was withdrawn from the School curriculum offer. This is where students were studying an additional A-level along with a full time UAL qualification.
* Removal of the AS-level year with students now studying A-levels across a 2-year programme instead of an AS year followed by an A2 year. This will reduce staff and student workloads and allow for a more developmental year 1 for learners without the anxiety of assessment pressures.
* Update of the A-level Pathway curriculum offer by removing Psychology and Sociology options and introducing an extended tutorial programme to support enrichment and engagement opportunities.

*TV & Film in Further Education*

From September 2019 the School has added a TV & Film qualification to the offer at Level 3. The course has joined the Interactive Design and Graphic Design cluster, overseen by the Cluster Leader for this area, Tom Burton. Students will study the UAL Extended Diploma in Art and Design qualification which will support students to progress into higher education in TV & Film associated degrees and the TV & Film industry. This has been seen as beneficial to the School’s Higher Education plans in this sector. The academic year started promisingly for the new cohort with 13 students enrolled on the course.

*Future Provision*

The School considered offering acting courses at Level 3. Some work was completed by the Head of Further Education and the Programme Leader for Acting in Hartlepool, in particular around local facilities such as performance space. At this time, it is considered too problematic to deliver this due to lack of spare capacity in staffing and resource constraints. The assessment may change for 2021.

The Department for Education (DfE) has announced that 163 Level 3 qualifications across the sector will no longer receive funding from August 2020. This is part of a government initiative to reduce the number of publicly funded qualifications available. Two UAL Awarding Body qualifications delivered at The Northern School of Art are affected. The School will replace the defunded qualifications from September 2020 with the UAL Level 3 Applied General Diploma and Extended Diploma in Art and Design which has been guaranteed funding until at least 2023. The curriculum content of this qualification is similar to current qualifications but assessment is greatly reduced, with the focus on assessment at the end of the year in a similar way to A-level provision.

The School is awaiting the outcome of the DfE’s post-16 review which is expected in Spring 2020 regarding the continued future of Applied General Qualifications. The School responded to the consultation, identifying the importance of Applied General Qualifications to the Art & Design sector.

## FE Provision

*Self-Assessment Report (SAR)*

The School’s FE Quality Committee considered the 2018-2019 Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and recommended its approval to the Corporation Board, which subsequently received and approved the SAR and Quality Improvement Plan (QuIP). Extracts from the SAR are presented in this annual report.

*Overall School Grading*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | ***Current Year*** | ***Previous Years Grades \**** | | | |
|  | ***2018-19*** | *Previous Judgements* | *2017-18* | *2016-17* | *2015-16* |
| **Overall Effectiveness:** | ***1*** | **Overall Effectiveness:** | *1* | *1* | *1* |
| Quality of Education | ***1*** | Outcomes for Learners | *1* | *1* | *1* |
| Behaviour and Attitudes | ***1*** | Quality of Teaching, Learning & Assessment | *2* | *1* | *1* |
| Personal Development | ***1*** | Personal Development, Behaviour & Welfare | *1* | *1* | *1* |
| Leadership and Management | ***1*** | Effectiveness of Leadership & Management | *1* | *1* | *1* |

\*Note:*these are not direct comparisons to the revised framework; these judgements give an indication of previous performance*

*Individual Study Programme Grading*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Course** | **Overall Effectiveness** | **Quality of Education** | **Behaviour and Attitudes** | **Personal Development** | **Leadership and Management** |
| A-level\* | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Art & Design | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Textiles | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Fine Art | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Graphics | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Photography | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| 3D | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Interactive Design | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Fashion | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Foundation | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Level 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Access to HE | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total 1s** | 8 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 8 |
| **Total 2s** | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| **Total 3s** | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| **Total 4s** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

*\* The A-level grading is based upon full-time AS and A2 study programme learners. In previous years the School has ran an optional A-level qualification as part of the level 3 Extended Diploma qualifications. After consideration and consultation with learners this option was removed from the School’s provision.*

***Overall Effectiveness****: Outstanding*

The Northern School of Art provides a range of arts-based study programmes that allow learners to; learn, enjoy, and achieve their aspirations in preparation for their next steps. Learners develop new knowledge and skills that support them to develop greater independence and confidence whilst they are encouraged and challenged to take risks in a safe environment. Learner achievement is very high. Through well planned and delivered curriculums, learners are inspired and motivated to produce exceptional examples of artwork. A high proportion of diploma learners also achieve high grade outcomes demonstrating excellent progress. Achievement and progress are also very good in GCSE maths and English. Learners are acquiring the overall skills and behaviours necessary to successfully progress onto their intended destinations. The vast majority of learners progress on to study a creative discipline at a higher level of study.

The behaviour and attitudes of learners are excellent. Through fostering a welcoming, harmonious, and respectful place to learn, the School has a pleasant and positive community. Learners are encouraged to ‘be themselves’ whilst respecting the views and opinions of others through exposure to topical themes. Often such views are expressed through personal investigations and the production of artwork. Learners understand their responsibilities within the School and develop healthy relationships with others. Learners are developing social responsibilities through an enriched curriculum that promotes social engagement with local communities through art and design opportunities.

The School has very effective safeguarding processes. Keeping learners safe at The Northern School of Art is a priority. Staff work collaboratively to ensure learners are safe. Staff receive the necessary up to date training to ensure they understand their responsibilities in keeping young learners and vulnerable adults safe. Each study programme has a designated member of student services staff dedicated to those learners. The School is swift to identify, respond and report upon any potential safeguarding matters. Learners have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe including online safety.

Senior leaders have developed and implemented a strategy that focuses upon continually developing the opportunities for learners to excel in creative disciplines at a specialist provider. This includes providing an ‘exceptional education for creative careers’, and also investigating future opportunities such as a relocating the further education campus to a new estate. School governors have a clear and detailed overview of the quality of all aspects of FE provision. This is presented through the annual report and monthly updates at governor’s meetings. High standards are maintained through an effective performance management system which includes: target setting; in year and end of year reviews plus staff development action planning. Senior leaders are quick to identify any areas of underperformance and implement appropriate actions to make improvements. There are clear lines of communications between teaching staff, support staff and senior leaders. Leaders and managers respond to the voice of the work force to implement ideas that can improve efficiencies, motivation and morale. Overall staff morale is high which reflects upon the student experience whilst studying at The Northern School of Art.

## FE Quality Strategy

The School graded itself outstanding in the FE Self-Assessment Report 2018-2019. There remain areas for development and challenge. At the October 2019 FE Academic Committee, and in the Self-Assessment Report, courses with ‘causes for concern’ were highlighted. A-level provision was graded 3 for Overall Effectiveness and the Fashion and Interactive Design courses were graded 2. The quality review process in 2018-2019 has identified that these programmes have areas for improvement. The quality assurance procedure identifies approaches to achieve this, and involves a cycle of activities:

* Establishing performance indicators/targets against which provision is judged, bearing in mind those used externally, by Ofsted and other stakeholders. This includes:
* The FE Course Forecast (Course Level Target Book)
* Attendance targets (Overall, maths and English)
* Individual Target Setting (Performance Management)
* Collecting and monitoring data in order to measure performance:
* The FE Course Forecast
* Attendance Reporting
* Termly FE Course Quality Monitoring Review meetings.
* Centralised drive for storage and audit of documents (planning for learning et cetera)
* Identifying areas of strength and for improvement at curriculum team level, linked to the Education Inspection Framework and Matrix criteria. This includes monthly course performance meetings with Course Leaders and the Head of FE and in-year action plans for immediate intervention in areas for improvement and tracking of ‘at risk’ learners.
* Individual Performance Management:
* Initial Target Setting
* Regular update meetings
* Mid-Year review against targets
* End of Year Review
* The student voice - key to quality improvement and includes:
* Student Assemblies (course level)
* Student Forums (School level)
* Student Perception Surveys
* Student Rep meetings to allow discussion of key School strategies and approaches
* Implementing the teaching Observation Process including formal teaching observations (with action planning), Advanced Notice Observations, and Learning Walks. The process allows for a targeted approach, with members of staff being observed at least once a year. Cluster leaders manage learning walks in their subject areas to gain a more comprehensive picture of teaching and learning.
* Encouraging continuous updating and skills development of all staff, including quality improvement strategies to drive up standards and promote outstanding teaching and learning. Opportunities include:
* Annual Staff Development Week
* Annual HE/FE Conference
* External Staff Development (funded via Human Resources)
* Online staff development opportunities
* In-house sharing of best practice
* FE+ regional membership
* Internal and external verification processes.
* The Course Review process builds on the action planning and interventions from the academic year, reviewing performance and developing an action plan for next year.
* Regular quality review meetings to explore all aspects of delivery in maths and English.

## Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

During 2017/18 the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS) was reviewed, revised and approved by Academic Board. The LTAS is part of the institution’s wider academic strategy and has been developed to support our overarching character vision statements. The strategy has been developed through discussion with our academic community. The strategy is presented as 5 themes and 7 approaches. For our experienced staff it is as an ‘aide memoire’ of our ideals, for newly appointed staff an introduction to our ethos or a developmental tool.

*The Themes of the Strategy*

**Theme 1 – Recruitment, Support and Recognition.** People are critical to the delivery of excellence in learning and teaching. To achieve our academic vision, we will continue to develop our approach to staff recruitment, support and recognition.

**Theme 2 – A Creative Curriculum**. We will continuously review and develop our curriculum to encourage critical thinking, curiosity and creative learning opportunities and approaches.

**Theme 3 – Digital Futures.** We will incorporatedigital approaches across all our provision including learning and teaching experiences, to ensure we appropriately support students in their digital futures.

**Theme 4 – Inclusive Teaching and Learning.** We will ensure we promote inclusion and diversity within all learning, teaching and assessment activity.

**Theme 5 – Employability and Professional Practice.** On course curriculum design will develop and enhance employability skills and opportunities for further study.

*The 7 Approaches of the Strategy*

The 7 approaches of good teaching stated in the strategy have been adapted from the “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education” (Chickering and Gamson, 1987). Their research identifies that when all these principles are practiced other forces emerge including: activity, expectations, cooperation, interaction, diversity and responsibility.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Approach 1 - Encourage student engagement with their course / programme and the wider Institution  Approach 2 – Develop a course / programme community and collaboration among students  Approach 3 – Encourage active learning | Approach 4 – Give prompt feedback  Approach 5 – Emphasise time on task  Approach 6 – Communicate high expectations  Approach 7 – Respect diverse talents and ways of working |

*Delivering the Strategy*

The strategy is an ‘active’ document and should be used by all as a reference point for evaluating the quality of all future learning and teaching activity including curriculum design, validation, delivery and review.

The Academic Strategies Implementation Group (ASIG), a sub-committee of Academic Board, is responsible for ensuring the School is effectively working towards the aims of the strategy. Work has already begun in this respect primarily led by Eyv Hardwick, the Learning and Teaching Development Manager.

The strategy was launched at the School HE / FE Conference in June 2018. As part of the launch academic staff were asked to review their practice against the 7 approaches of good teaching. The strategy is also used to form the basis of academic staff mentoring sessions. These sessions are used as an opportunity to provide support to newly appointed staff, newly qualified lecturers and also to share best practice where areas of developmental need are identified. Peer observation methodologies have also been developed and approved by Academic Board. This includes a greater focus on the approaches and themes of the strategy, particularly in reflection paperwork. The strategy has also been used as an evaluative tool in the review of module guides and assignment briefs. This will also be a consideration for future curriculum developments as part of programme validations.

## Quality of HE Student Academic Experience

*Annual Report by Academic Board to the Corporation Board*

The School has previously undertaken to comply with the provisions of the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) document *The Higher Education Code of Governance* *(Revised June 2018)*. Specifically, with reference to Element 3 page 20 *‘That the governing body receives assurance that academic governance is effective by working with the Academic Board or equivalent as specified in its governing instruments in order to maintain quality’* the Academic Board provides the Corporation Board with a detailed and comprehensive report covering the continuous improvement of the student academic experience and student outcomes. The Report includes, *inter alia*, details in respect of:

* The constitution and operation of the Academic Board;
* The standard of taught awards, including a detailed review of retention, achievement, high grades, referral rates, module average marks, restudy opportunities offered, academic dishonesty and external examiner comments;
* The student academic experience and student outcomes, including academic governance and the systems and processes relating to the management of quality, as well as NSS data and much detail on the student voice, graduate destinations, complaints and academic appeals;
* An update on the prior year action plan;
* Learning and teaching enhancement;
* Staff development;
* Resources;
* The operation of key partnerships; and
* The quality assurance action plan.

The Report was considered by the Academic Board at its meeting on 6th November 2019. The assurance and opinion statements to the Corporation Board set out below were approved by the Academic Board.

*Assurance*

In the opinion of Academic Board, the Governing Body has received a report and accompanying action plan relating to the continuous improvement of the student academic experience and student outcomes, and that report is fit for purpose. The report includes evidence from the School’s own periodic review processes, which fully involve students and include embedded external peer review.

*Quality of Academic Outcomes*

The standards of the awards delivered by the School remain, ultimately, the responsibility of the Arts University Bournemouth as the degree awarding body. Nevertheless, the School inevitably views itself a jointly responsible for the standards of these awards, and therefore also states that, in the opinion of the Academic Board, standards of the undergraduate awards of the Arts University Bournemouth which we deliver have been appropriately set and maintained.

*Management of Academic Quality & Standards*

The methodologies used as a basis to improve the student academic experience and student outcomes are, to the best of Academic Board’s knowledge, robust and appropriate.

# HE Orientation, Growth

## Scholarly Activity and Research

Significant progress has taken place, with evidence of curriculum and teaching impact from many programmes and individuals. Scholarly Activity & Research (SAR) is more aligned to the Scholarly Activity & Research Strategy (SARS), though there still levels of inconsistency. Many projects were linked to practice, and greater focus on pedagogic activity are a future priority. A number of staff presented at national conferences with two staff presenting at international events. Regular reports on SAR activity and alignment to the supporting strategies takes place to the Academic Strategies Implementation Group.

Impact is now measurable in regards to application and student experience on a number of programmes. There was, in the first semester, a need to engage more with the student voice to provide focussed evidence of learning and teaching. The implementation of a different Student Assembly format, and the creation of the Academic Forum in the second semester, has led to much student led evidence of impact being measured. HEA Fellowships applications for 2019 is lower than anticipated, with only a small number being submitted at the end of the year. These are now expected by the end of November 2019.

The creation of *PAD*, the online Scholarly Activity & Research Development Group (SARDG), was launched and the newly organised *PAD* Seminars have created an embryonic research community which should be fully established in the future.

## Curriculum Changes

The School approached AUB to discuss the potential validation of our first postgraduate provision. Our Curriculum Development Group considered a number of postgraduate proposals and selected two for further development. Two teams of academic staff contributed to the proposed content, structure and student experience with the revised provision approved for presentation to AUB by the Academic Board. The two programmes are, MA Creative Enterprise Practice, and MA Design History.

AUB visited the School in relation to the proposed L7 provision to assist the School in avoiding issues that they had encountered. Following our meeting, AUB raised a number of considerations and conditions that have helped us to shape our offer. A validation event in respect of postgraduate provision is planned for March 31st and the 1st of April 2020.

The School undertook two periodic reviews, which included:

* BA (Hons) Fine Art
* BA (Hons) Illustration for Commercial Application

This year saw a significant change in the validation process as the School organised and chaired the validation events with an observer from Arts University Bournemouth (AUB) present. This represents a step-change for the School in working towards autonomy and the growing confidence from AUB that the School has the capacity and capability to manage and govern the development of academic provision. Both programmes demonstrated clear teaching and learning strategies, student experience and alignment to vocational and industry expectations.

## Managerial Changes

There has been renewed focus on the Annual Programme Review (APR) and the alignment of SAR to the programme vision and the public facing information on programme philosophy. Due to the retirement of Francis Fitzgerald, Dr Carol Harris has taken over as first contact line manager for the programme teams working more closely with the Vice Principal (Higher Education). There was a small restructure of staff affecting Photography, Textiles and Contextual Studies lecturers. This was completed in Sept 2019.

## FE/HE Progression

The 2018-19 recruitment cycle saw a continued emphasis on the management and quality of FE to HE progression. Engagement with FE students included a refined HE Experience Event at Hartlepool, and a piloted Progression Fair led by HE students, at the Green Lane campus.

The HE Experience Event attracted better feedback this cycle. Programmes worked in clusters to promote cross-course collaboration and managing student expectations. 75% of participants found this event useful.

Earlier in the cycle, FE students visited the Degree Show with 100% stating the event as ‘good to outstanding’.

In terms of the overall internal progression programme, over 60% of FE students said they were likely to apply for HE. 94% felt they had received enough information from the School to make better decisions about HE study.

However, despite the increased efforts to improve internal progression rates, conversion of Level 3 completers enrolling on one of our HE programmes improved slightly to 28%.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Internal Progression to TNSA HE** | | | | |  | **Progression to HE Overall** | |
| Academic Year of Completers | L3 Completers | HE Firm | HE Enrol | HE Apps | Conv of L3 to HE Firm Apps | Conv of L3 to Enrols |  | L3 Placed into HE | Conv of L3 to HE |
| 15/16 | 258 | 56 | 59 | 119 | 22% | 23% |  | 188 | 74.3% |
| 16/17 | 258 | 78 | 80 | 154 | 30% | 31% |  | 209 | 81.3% |
| 17/18 | 239 | 62 | 63 | 127 | 26% | 26% |  | 183 | 77.2% |
| 18/19 | 233 | 65 | 61 | 113 | 28% | 28% |  | 175 | 74.2% |

As market conditions continued to intensify, we saw many institutions rapidly adapting their recruitment approach, in particular, increasing the use of unconditional offer-making. The School responded similarly by maximising unconditional offer-making to all eligible applicants, including our own FE completers. Training was also given to HE staff to enhance the interview experience. Despite these changes, the increased firm-up rate in 18/19 was negligible.

Moving forward, the 19/20 internal progression plan has been developed with consideration to the key phases of the student journey, for example, the previously-piloted ‘HE Progression Fair’ will evolve into a ‘HE Progression Week’ aiming to capture, build and retain student interest much earlier in the cycle.

*National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NECOP)*

The School is a member of NECOP, a partnership of the 5 universities and 15 colleges in the region working together to support NCOP target students to progress to higher education. This activity attracts a small amount of funding to support progression activity to HE. In 18/19 this related to 58 target students at our FE site. NECOP has quoted the North East region has having consistently the lowest progression rate to higher education in England at age 18 and it is their ambition to instigate a step change in attitude and expectation of young people to apply and progress to HE in all its forms. Therefore, the School’s involvement in this collective endeavour is pertinent and has the added benefit in supporting objectives outlined in the Access & Participation Plan.

## Recruitment

The 2018/19 recruitment year continued to be challenging in both FE and HE.

*Higher Education*

In HE we fell short of a challenging recruitment target. The final UCAS reporting week (week 45) shows a 10% dip in applications against 2018. However, we show a 12% increase when compared to 2017. Likewise, **firm** applicants fell 5% compared to 2018 but were still up by 8% when compared to 2017.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Week 45 | | | |
|  | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | |
|  | **Actual** | **Actual** | **Target** | **Actual** |
| Applications | 553 | 691 | 591 | 621 |
| Firm | 215 | 244 | 250 | 232 |
| Insurance | 95 | 95 | 86 | 62 |
| Decision Pending | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Declined | 127 | 145 | 130 | 168 |
| Outstanding | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Rejected | 33 | 76 | 65 | 61 |
| Withdrawn | 83 | 131 | 60 | 98 |
| Decline rate | 23 | 21 | 22 | 27 |
| Withdrawal rate | 15 | 19 | 10 | 16 |
| **Check total** | **553** | **691** | **591** | **621** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Number of interviews held** | **437** | **484** | **466** | **462** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Interview rate (%) | 79.0% | 70.0% | 78.8% | 74.4% |
| Firm rate (% of those interviewed) | 49.2% | 50.4% | 53.6% | 50.2% |
| Firm rate (% of those applying) | 38.9% | 35.3% | 42.3% | 37.4% |

Significantly, changing market conditions meant that we failed to attract the anticipated levels of applicants post July (week 45) and up to enrolment. However, this reflected a tough market in which we saw applications in creative arts and design subjects fall by 7.45% since 2017, equating to around 19,000 applications.

Feedback on the applicant journey continues to be very positive in terms of applicants’ experience at events, open days and interview stages. Feedback on comms and publicity material is also rated highly. The applicant journey group conducted a full review of the recruitment process to identify areas to support improved conversion and reduce withdrawal rates. The response involved promoting open days and accommodation more effectively, as well as, improving content online. We also provided formal staff training and introduced a Saturday interview day, which turned out a 60% conversion rate to firm. Analysis on our 2019 HE enrollers shows open days as being a significant factor on firm conversion rates. This recent insight will steer our recruitment approach for the 19/20 cycle.

In terms of outreach and recruitment events, our level of engagement has risen by 34%. This year we have delivered 50 additional recruitment talks and doubled the number of careers events attended. We recognise that the local market is finite and growth must come from outside the Tees Valley, therefore, attendance to national events has increased from 25 to 32. The pull-through to open days from other regions reflects our extended reach and the proportion of 2019 applicants from outside the Tees Valley is 72%.

*Further Education*

In FE applications were down 7.2% compared with 2018 and 14.9% compared with 2017. The offer rate fell marginally to 65% from 67%. Enrolment stands at 90.6% of ‘Firm’ acceptances – this was an improvement on the previous year. Enrolled numbers are 0.7% down on last year.

The rate of ‘Withdrawn Before Interview’ applicants has risen once more to 21%. The rate of ‘Withdrawn After Interview’ has improved, falling back to 5.75%.

Our market share of c.3.6% in the Tees Valley has been relatively stable over time, ranging between 3.6% and 4.1%. This underlines the two continuing external causes of this drop-in numbers which are outside our direct influence:

* + Demography
  + EBACC in schools

These results are despite an ongoing intensification of recruitment activity across both phases and the deployment of more targeted marketing. For FE we increased our general FE liaison activity by 35% and more than doubled the amount of parents’ evenings attended. We kept our focus on school-based parent/options events and careers events. In 2018 we repackaged our outreach offer to be more appealing to the market. Our Saturday Clubs, outreach, Workshops, and support for teachers and careers advisers plays an important role in trying to mitigate the impact of the EBACC problem.

The demographic position is gradually improving – and the new course in Film and TV for 2019 attracted a healthy cohort of students. Further promotion of the expended network of bus routes is allowing us to penetrate new market areas, particularly in County Durham and Sunderland.

The FE Applicant Journey Group has ensured the following changes:

* Improving the online user experience through better navigation
* Changing the online application form to allow students to apply for different courses and improve functionality
* Improved the interview experience by making use of the Green Lane management suite
* Introduced Saturday interview days running alongside open days

## Marketing

Marketing has continued to focus on its strategic aims to further enhance the regional and national profile of the newly named The Northern School of Art as well as support recruitment to both Further Education and Higher Education campuses.

In relation to regional and national profile, we have secured wide-ranging media coverage through a high-profile presence at a number of exciting events throughout the School year including the BBC’s Radio 1 Big Weekend (with a large-scale graphic art installation with Jimmy Turrell) and The Guardian’s coverage of the Empty Shops Project comprising the first year Fine Art students’ exhibition ‘Generation Dystopia’. In addition, the biennial Festival of Illustration and the introduction of two new prizes, the international ‘The Northern Illustration Prize’ and ‘The Northern Foundation Art Prize’ brought awareness of the School to new audiences and secured nearly £1.4m in PR value.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2018-2019** | | **2017-2018** | |
|  | **Target** | **Actual** | **Target** | **Actual** |
| Users who visit website | 130K | 157K | 160K | 137K |
| Social Media Followers | 16.5K | 17K | - | 15.4K |
| PR Value | - | £1.398M | £1.4M | £1.61M |
| Domain Authority | - | 36 | - | 19 |

The marketing environment continues to be challenging and will only become more so; all marketing channels remain under review and new opportunities have been explored - elements of this included a new radio advertising campaign as well as billboard, bus route and electronic displays advertising throughout the region. The results of these will be analysed and will help to form future marketing strategy. New printed materials, including the two prospectuses, as well as supporting information for new courses (Masters degrees), accommodation guidance, application guidance, creative careers information and outreach activities for educationalists have also been published.

One of the measures of performance in relation to the School’s website is domain authority, in 16/17, the School had a high score of 52 but it was anticipated this would fall due to the impact of the name change and, indeed, in 17/18 this score fell to 19. We are now bouncing back and our current score is at 36.

Both operational performance targets have been exceeded indicating a continuation of strong levels of engagement with the School’s important online content both in terms of social media as well as website with both paid-for and in-house marketing activities contributing to this continued growth.

## Enterprise Plan 2016-2019: update

The Enterprise Plan sets the context for taking action to support students and graduates in entrepreneurial activity – notably the high levels of self-employment amongst our graduates and the lack of dedicated enterprise support for the creative sector in the locality. It sets out a series of current and developing actions under the following headings:

* The Enterprise Work of Folio
* Supported Workplaces
* Strategic Collaboration
* Enterprise Support within the Curriculum

Folio has continued to deliver a mix of one to one and small group support to students and alumni. In 2018/19 this included:

* A series of seminar programmes on marketing, fundraising, and participatory arts attended by 50 (mainly Level 6) students.
* Facilitated creative network activity in partnership with Hartlepool Council and Empty Shop CIC
* Mock interviews and pitches for 40 Level 6 students.
* Business planning advice for 17 level 6 students.
* 16 students supported in to post graduate learning.
* Support for 21 alumni.

In Spring 2019 The BIS- Whitby Street Studios opened – sadly, due the delays in opening – few graduates were amongst the first tenants of this impressive supported workspace for creatives. The centre is now approximately one third occupied with new tenants, including graduates, moving in.

Through 2019 we reviewed our current support for student and graduate enterprise – we have now developed a new format for delivery in 2019/20 involving a range of external partners.

2019 saw Tees Valley Combined Authority fund Northern Film and Media (the regional screen development agency for the north east) to launch and deliver Tees Valley Screen – this organisation is in its early days but is based in the BIS and has already held two of its network events in partnership with the School.

# Employability, External Relations, Creative Industry Links

## Employability & Creative Industry Links

In the past this section of the report would have summarised performance in the Destinations of Leavers of Higher Education (DLHE) survey. However, Government ended this Survey in 2018 and its replacement – the Graduate Outcomes (GO) survey – has not yet reported. GO looks at destinations at least 14 months after graduation and so we will see results for our 2018 cohort in 2020, following data collection and cleansing. We concerned that the new survey will not match the quality and response rates achieved by DLHE and that consequently the utility of data we get back will be reduced.

In the past academic year, HE Programmes have engaged with 65 visiting lecturers from industry in delivering talks, workshops and crit sessions. Alongside this, students took part in more than 20 live projects. The level of engagement is now formally monitored and considered through the Annual Programme Reviews and ongoing performance management.

The range of industrial engagement has been very wide, encompassing:

* BBC Radio 1 – designing and installing large scale art for The Big Weekend
* Amber Butchart – fashion historian
* The BBC, ITV and Rough Cut Productions (bafta winners) for whom we built sets and who provided work experience on a range of productions.
* The Bowes Museum for both Costume and Textiles
* Northern Stage
* Collaborated with a number of galleries on exhibitions where students have curated the displays of their work.
* A rich collaboration between The Arc (Stockton Arts Centre) and BA Acting.

## Stakeholder Engagement

The start of the academic year in 2018 saw the public launch of our new identity as The Northern School of Art – this was promoted across our stakeholder network with our new brand image. We secured a high profile speaker – the fashion historian Amber Butchart – to be the first visitor under this name and used this as a vehicle for further brand promotion.

This academic year saw the third iteration of the Festival of Illustration – now re-branded as The Northern Festival of Illustration. This year this enabled us to work with Northern Print, Tees Valley Museums Service, The Waterfront Festival and Crossing the Tees Festival – we ran participatory events for:

* + People living with dementia
  + Asylum seekers
  + Children and families
  + Public in general

In all, our workshops reached some 500 children and 356 adult participants

The exhibition attracted c. 39,000 visitors of which nearly half had not visited the previous festivals and c. 40% had not visited the Hartlepool Gallery before. We also held an exhibition in Newcastle – which attracted c2000 visitors. The festival also supported the appointment of three artists in residence – one working especially with children, one based in a pop-up studio on Church Street in Hartlepool for two weeks, and a third roving reportage illustrator who worked in pubs, clubs, sports venues and on public transport across East Durham and Hartlepool.

As part of the Festival we launched The Northern Illustration Prize in partnership with the Association of Illustrators (AOI) – this was an enormous success with respect to our profile, reputation, and reach, attracting hundreds of entries from 6 continents.

As outlined in the preceding section we have continued to develop and deepen our industrial liaison within the curriculum. We held a number of very well attended evening networking events with talks by internationally known creatives including Amber Butchart and Chris Riddell. We have developed strong relationships with ARC in Stockton which involves our acting students in wider community based projects. We have also developed good links with Northern Stage across a range of programmes and linked up with Atomhawk design studio which works on concept art for major games and film producers.

We have engaged with wider initiatives in Hartlepool notably the Economic Forum and #LoveHartlepool campaign. This has enabled us to extend relationships with civil society and local businesses.

There has been progress against areas identified in the earlier Stakeholder Action Plan:

* The Customer Relationship management (CRM) system is in regular use by support staff, Marketing, and Recruitment teams and has been rolled out to academic staff.
* The Alumni Action Plan was approved in autumn 2018 and its delivery has seen enhanced communications and engagement with our graduates.

We have been active in other areas:

* We play a very active part in Hartlepool based heritage and cultural projects. This has engaged us with local schools, asylum seekers and older people. It has also provided volunteering activity for our students.
* Our active role within the Hartlepool Greater Places project has enabled us to support the development of a network of creative practitioners in the town and to deliver pop-up spaces where students have been able to curate and show work – this even attracted national media coverage in the Guardian.
* In developing The Northern Studios, we have continued to develop our relationship with the screen industries including Pinewood Studios, Creative England and BFI etc., as well as the newly created Tees Valley Screen
* The Vice Principal (Employability & External Relations) is a member of The North Area Council of Arts Council England and has represented The School and ACE at a number of regional and national events.

From this firm foundation we will develop our stakeholder relations in the coming year – informed by the needs of the Strategic Plan, our objectives of growth and sector transfer.

## Public Value Statement

The Northern School of Art is a statutory corporation by virtue of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. It is also an exempt charity under the terms of Schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011. Consequently, the School has a commitment to deliver a significant public benefit to the wider community that it serves by developing the skills and knowledge of its students and thus providing benefit to society and individuals.

In considering its vision, mission and values and in setting its objectives The Northern School of Art Corporation has had due regard to the Charity Commission’s guidance on the advancement of education.

**School’s Wider Community**

As a specialist provider the School is committed to making a major contribution to the communities and stakeholders that it serves locally, regionally and nationally. The School’s wider community includes:

* + - Learners;
    - Parents/guardians/carers and families of learners;
    - Alumni;
    - Staff;
    - Educational partners including schools, colleges and higher education institutions;
    - Creative sector employers regionally and nationally;
    - Sector bodies such as the Creative Industries Federation, Guild HE and AoC;
    - Local residents and community groups, and business;
    - Local authorities;
    - The Tees Valley Combined Authority; and
    - Funding bodies and relevant Government departments and agencies.

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

We proudly serve our local communities in the Tees Valley and through our mission to enable people 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.

**School Vision**

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.

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.

**Values**

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.

*Creativity and Excellence*

We aim to place creative practice by students and staff at the centre of what we do, with excellent outcomes as our goal.

*Professional Practice, Employability and Enterprise*

We aim to develop students’ skills for employment and enterprise through curricula informed by staff and student engagement with creative industries. We value the encouragement of professional practice in students and the continuing professional development of staff, improving their performance and contribution to the education sector and creative industries.

*Student Engagement, Collaboration and Community*

We aim to promote student engagement within their learning environment as a partnership with staff, to aid delivery of a high quality student experience and to promote understanding and appreciation of art and design. We aim to develop complementary areas of study that support interdisciplinary collaboration and learning and engagement with external partners.

**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

**Measuring our Contribution**

The School is confident that through the implementation of its Strategic Plan it will continue to operate as a dynamic and creative specialist School within the region. Members of the public may assess the value added to the School’s wider community through:

* + Performance Tables published nationally (showing value added and student performance);
  + Published financial statements;
  + The public records of School Corporation meetings;
  + Equality and Diversity reports;
  + School Self-Assessment Report;
  + Ofsted reports;
  + QAA reports; and
  + Student surveys (including the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Destination of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE) surveys).

The School Corporation reviews and updates its public value statement periodically as part of its regular review of the School’s performance.