

# ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT Part 2

2024/25

[LINK TO ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT ON WEBSITE](#)

May 2024

## ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT 2024-2025 (PART 2)

### 1 Purpose

The Northern School of Art is a specialist art & design provider with equally important and significant Higher and Further Education provision across its twin campuses in Middlesbrough (FE) and Hartlepool (HE). We work in close alignment with the creative industries, promoting students' social mobility, and ultimate progression into creative employment in the Tees Valley and beyond.

#### **Mission statement:**

***“Exceptional education for creative careers”***

The School's Strategic Plan 2019 to 2024 sets out our 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.*

As the creative sector is predominantly qualified to at least graduate level, our principal orientation is to enable FE students to successfully progress to HE and then enter industry.

By the end of 2024 we aimed to:

- Gain Degree Awarding Powers and become an HEI enabling us to become ever more responsive to the needs of students and industry, making the School more visible in direct comparison to competitor universities and opening up new funding opportunities only available to HEIs.
- Grown, out-pacing demographic growth in both FE and HE student numbers as demographic growth kicks in, enabling us to secure our place in the region, re-invest in, and develop our curriculum offer and become more resilient.
- A new FE Campus in the heart of Middlesbrough, a location that is more accessible to our growing catchment area - adjacent to a creative industry hub.
- Established the School as a leader in thinking and practice in the creative sector in the North and beyond - allowing us to offer current and relevant teaching and industrial experience.

Since the Plan was published we have:

- Retained our Ofsted Outstanding rating (inspection in February 2022) for our FE provision – held since 2009;

Retained our Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Gold rating for our HE provision – held since 2017 (the inception of the TEF);

- Opened our new campus in Middlesbrough and seen significant growth in student numbers (more than outstripping demographic growth);
- Introduced new FE courses;
- Introduced new undergraduate and post graduate programmes;
- Submitted our formal application for Degree Awarding Powers though this process is delayed by changes in OfS and the HE DQB beyond our powers to influence; and
- Following a feasibility study taken forward an application for transfer to the HE sector. The School undertook a detailed public consultation on this in the summer and early autumn 2023 which demonstrated overwhelming support for the creation of a new group structure with a Higher Education Institution encompassing our provision in Hartlepool and a new specialist Further Education College taking on our FE provision in Middlesbrough. We are awaiting the outcome of detailed work with DfE to secure this position.

This final point is significant. As an institution our FE provision and its positive impact on young people in the region is very important to The School. We will always seek to preserve, enhance and grow our FE provision in recognition of its importance to local young people and the growing sector we serve.

## 2 Context & Place

The School serves an area facing challenges:

- Middlesbrough and Hartlepool were, respectively, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> most income-deprived of England's 316 local authority areas (ONS 2021).
- Across the six key FE feeder parliamentary constituencies, percentages of POLAR4 Quintile 1& 2 postcode areas (those least likely to participate in HE) range from 60.2% to 75.9% of all postcodes, with a mean of 68.4% (OfS).
- This mean figure places the area in the top 15% nationally for Quintile 1&2 dominance – and hence low likelihood of HE participation.

Against this backdrop our FE students achieve and progress well. Our Level 2 students have excellent outcomes, looking at the 5 years starting in 2017/18:

- 97.2% positive outcomes
- 93.4% progressed to Level 3 study

For those leaving after Level 3 study over the same 5 years:

- 94.1% positive outcome
- 74% progressed to higher education.

The School exists within the rapidly growing creative sector in the UK and the North, where our reputation is strong. Sector growth has been sustained over more than 20 years. More particularly, in the five years up to 2017 the sector in the north east grew faster than anywhere else in England apart from London (47% growth by value). The sector has grown faster than the UK economy since 1998 – the creative industries employ 1 in 11 people in the English workforce and are predicted to need an additional 700,000 graduates by 2030 (DCMS, 2018). The Creative Industries' Policy Evidence Centre states that 71 per cent of workers in the Creative Industries are qualified to at least degree level.

The alignment of the School to the creative industries, and the dominance of degree level employment in the sector, are significant in relation to the School's FE curriculum. The majority of FE provision is at level 3 with a clear focus on progression to undergraduate study.

The School has a well-established Curriculum Development Group which regularly monitors and considers all forms of FE and HE qualifications including; vocational, academic, and technical qualifications. In the UK the vast majority of creative industry employers are micro or small businesses and as a consequence there is very limited scope for them to engage with technical qualifications such as apprenticeships and T levels which require them to devote scarce resources to work placements. This issue is particularly relevant in our region which currently lacks large employers in the sector. We remain open to working with industry to develop bespoke provision or pathways to enhance the training offer and are already working with industry and the Combined Authority on this.

Our student recruitment to FE is regional, largely mapped on to the Tees Valley (and its LSIP) but extending into North Yorkshire and County Durham. Our HE recruitment is national, with the majority of students coming from the three northern regions.

### **Approach to developing the annual accountability Statement**

This statement and our approach to our learning offer is informed by our focus on the progression of students. It is focussed upon our research into, and collaboration and partnership with, the creative sector.

This Statement therefore reflects our annual curriculum review which is driven by:

- Feedback from our Industry Liaison Group members
- Direct engagements with large industry partners – notably Aardman Animation and Toon Boom
- National research – notably by the BFI, Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC), Creative Industries Council and Creative UK.

- Intelligence gathered through professional networks – notably Creative UK, BAFTA, Society of British Theatre Designers, Association of Photographers, UKADIA and the Costume Society.
- Regional partnerships – North East Screen Industries Partnership, North East Screen, TVCA Creative Place Advisory Group.

Links to some key evidence are cited below (see Supporting Documentation).

We are a member of FE+ the partnership between the five Tees Valley FE Colleges which has, collaboratively conducted a joint review of provision across the region and explored this alongside the labour market growth and change projected by the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA). This work is reflected in the later section on the Statement of Needs.

### **Contribution to national, regional, local priorities**

In the Tees Valley, the School is the only specialist provider of FE and HE education in the creative sector and highly performing on many measures – The School is a key part of the skills development pipeline for the sector, which is a strategic priority for the devolved Tees Valley Combined Authority. Notably, the School is a member of the Tees Valley Creative Place Advisory Group and Tees Valley Cultural Education Partnership. Within our local context, the School is making a significant contribution to social and economic development through its Saturday Clubs, free professional development for teachers through The Northern Creative Network, the award-winning Northern Festival of Illustration and participation in many other community-based projects. ‘Place’ is important to us, we will:

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

The particular context of the Tees Valley and its devolution deal mean that creativity and culture is recognised as strategically important and worthy of investment. This is recognised as a priority within the Strategic Economic Plan for the Tees Valley and in the Mayoral Authority’s Creative Place Growth Plan.

Following the opening of our commercial subsidiary, The Northern Studios (the only large scale film and TV production facility in the north east) we will continue to invest in our screen based provision working alongside the regional screen development agency North East Screen and as a member of the North East Screen Industry Partnership to grow and sustain the talent pipeline for people

entering the screen sector and also supporting inward investment and job creation in a Tees Valley cluster (of regional significance).

Our objectives for 2024/2025 are:

- Continue to grow FE and HE student numbers;
- Increase the number of FE leavers qualified at Level 3 who progress to positive destinations;
- Increase the number of graduates progressing to industry relevant employment;
- Continue to review curriculum relevance to industry; and
- Invest in the development of our screen sector related HE programmes.
- Continue to explore new technical education pathways with our industry partners, in line with DfE priorities.

The Local Skills Improvement Plan for the Tees Valley does not include our industrial sector as one of its three key priorities. However, it emphasises the need for transferable skills such as creativity, communication, and readiness for work – areas that we focus on in our curriculum delivery as recognised in our 2022 Ofsted Outstanding rating.

### Local Needs Duty

As mentioned earlier the FE+ group of colleges has undertaken a Curriculum Review, examining current levels and types or provision alongside projected labour market needs developing the joint statement below.

*During Spring 2024, all five colleges mapped our provision against local labour market needs and carried out a full local curriculum review including an independently facilitated workshop involving members of all college corporations. Data presented at the review and the subsequent analysis highlight that the colleges' curriculum offer and outcomes for learners support the Tees Valley economy especially in the engineering/manufacturing, construction and healthcare sectors.*

*The review identified a number of areas that all Colleges can work on to enhance our response to local employer needs as follows:*

<b><i>FE+ agreed actions to work on</i></b>
<i>Develop further employability skills in our young people while strengthening their confidence and resilience.</i>
<i>Improve digital skills of all of our students</i>
<i>Minimise impact of qualifications reform on level 3 numbers</i>
<i>Increase the numbers training in logistics, digital and professional skills</i>

This Review gives granular detail on learners in our subject areas. It shows that since 2020/21 there has been significant growth in 16-19 learner numbers (up by 37% for art and design) with a total of 1371 learners enrolled on 'arts, media & publishing' courses. This growth largely reflects our own success in attracting new students over this period. For the same subject areas the review shows some 600 HE learners. With more than 1100 FE and HE students it can be seen that the School is the predominant provider meeting the sectoral need for replacement and additional workers in the region. TVCA has predicted the creation of 6000 new jobs in the digital creative and cultural sub-sectors by the end of 2027, therefore our continued expansion is a key part of meeting this target.

### Corporation statement

On behalf of the corporation board of The Northern School of Art we can confirm that this Statement has been considered and approved for submission to DfE and for publication on our website.



**Mr Tim Bailey**  
Chair



**Dr Martin Raby**  
Principal & Chief Executive

Dated: 24 June 2024

### Hyperlink

<https://northernart.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Annual-Accountability-Statement-2024-25.pdf>

### Supporting documentation

This statement is informed by the following:

#### From The School

[https://northernart.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/StrategicPlan\\_A4\\_2019-2024-min-2.pdf](https://northernart.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/StrategicPlan_A4_2019-2024-min-2.pdf)

<https://northernart.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/July-2021-Academic-Strategy-The-Northern-School-of-Art.pdf>

#### From Ofsted

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/31/130571>

#### From Tees Valley Combined Authority

<https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/sep/>

<https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/business/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2023/03/Tees-Valley-Cultural-and-Creative-Industries-Baseline-Report.pdf>

<https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/creative-place/>

<https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/investments/north-east-screen-industries-development-programme/>

**North East Screen Industries Partnership**

<https://northeastscreen.org/about/nesip-page/>