

Nottingham College – Higher Education Teaching and Learning Strategy 2023-24

1. Context and purpose

1.1 This Higher Education Teaching and Learning Policy sets out the key objectives for enhancing and sustaining excellence in teaching and learning across Nottingham College. It offers precise, relevant, and contextual guidance for HE delivery as opposed to FE levels of study. As such, this document accords with sector expectations and duties of those delivering HE at levels 4, 5 and 6.

1.2 It outlines the College's commitment to promoting and sustaining the high standards which have consistently delivered the best possible learning opportunities for its students, summarises the processes used by the college to assure itself and the wider academic, industrial, professional, and public arenas of the quality of the learning and teaching provided across all campuses. It also describes the expectations for academic staff regarding their scholarship-informed curriculum delivery to uphold wider sector expectations of quality such as those of the QAA.

1.3 It is, therefore, one of several related, and independent strategies which enable the college to meet its overall strategic goals.

2. Strategic Aims

2.1 General aims with respect to four areas are that:

2.1.1 *Students*- All students will enjoy their learning, supporting their ambition through very high standards of academic and personal achievement enabling progression to employment, further study, and personal success.

2.1.2 *Leadership and management*- Excellence in leadership and management will ensure the highest possible standards of teaching, training, learning, assessment, and support for all students irrespective of background, discipline, or level.

2.1.3 *Economic need and employability*- Innovative and responsive courses will aspire to meet the needs of employers and students, in direct response to the demands of the local economy with continuous exploration of new market opportunities. Included in this are effective strategies to shape plans with external partners that respond to local and regional needs, developing economic need, growth opportunities and social priorities.

2.1.4 *Resourcing and learning environments*- Resources and inclusive learning environments that are of a consistently high quality, support the College's evolution, promote sustainability, and inspire learning.

3. Key principles

3.1 This policy sets out six key principles to directly guide all those involved in teaching, learning and assessment across college Higher Education.

3.2 Key principles are:

- 3.2.1 **Teaching is informed by research and evidence as to what works-** *Nottingham* College values teaching and effective pedagogy at the heart of its efforts to deliver high quality learning experiences to all its HE students. Through continuous professional development, and employment of wider college-based practices the most supportive environment is created with pragmatic reflection of what motivates, stimulates, and inspires our students. Staff are encouraged to discuss, debate, and contribute to dialogue about what methods achieve best outcomes through feedback mechanisms such as the Peer Review Process.
- 3.2.2 **A variety of delivery methods make learning accessible to all-** the way in which knowledge and skills are delivered is varied to suit the context and content of the discipline. At the same time, variety strengthens interest and makes topics more widely accessible by combining more progressive notions of education with those most associated with HE levels of study. Transparency in all assessment will be ensured through continual appraisal, review, and revision of assessment methods by internal quality assurers such as the College's Quality Team and deliberative HE committees.
- 3.2.3 **Varied and differentiated assessment strategies allow all students to realise their full potential-** The context and culture in which we work means that the variety and range of assessment methods confidently employed in delivery to present an environment where all students can achieve highly whilst at the same time are developed in more academic ways (see HE Assessment Policy 2023-24). Assessment will examine students on their strengths, with integrity in the subject disciplines, subject benchmarks and national academic standards, including accreditation requirements of professional bodies, whilst evaluating their capabilities against expected module and course outcomes.
- 3.2.4 **Supporting students to become autonomous, independent, and enquiring-** The College recognises the need to support the development of students as individuals in their quest to become autonomous and independent in their own approaches. An enquiring mind is also pursued by facilitating self-reflection and critical analysis at higher levels. As part of this development our specialist academic study skills resources aids students with needs in their own engagement with HE levels of study. This College wide, library-based support service is offered to all students, irrespective of ability, to elevate potential and develop habits of autonomy that can enhance overall, individual assessment outcomes.
- 3.2.5 **A focus on employability and skills for progression as a key characteristic of delivery-** As a key objective in wider College, this element is upheld as central to the way in which learning is shaped on all courses. Employers will be actively included in the design of courses and the appropriateness of assessment. Moreover, there will be a variety of ways in which this is delivered to students such as embedding employment skills within personal development modules and providing bespoke session to help with job searches and CV writing and interview techniques.
- 3.2.6 **A commitment to inclusion and diversity-** All learning environments will support interaction, engagement, and participation by all, irrespective of background or starting ability. Teaching materials, reading lists and activities will endeavour to represent a range of experiences, whether historical or cultural to strengthen inclusion.

3.3 As a teaching intensive HE provider we recognise that the value in teaching learning and assessment forms the backbone of our ethos to support students from a variety of progression routes irrespective of circumstance or background.

3.4 The mainstay of our staff development supports Continual Professional Development (CPD) around teaching practice and upholds recognition of skilled teaching as a form of 'scholarship' (see HE Scholarship Policy 2023-24).

3.5 This Policy offers further regard for its importance in Higher Education at levels 4, 5 and 6.

4. Principles in practice

4.1 **Teaching**-The nature of our commitment to students is that they benefit from student-centred learning, professionally trained teachers and teachers trained in college-based education providing the most effective pedagogy to support all. Scholarship of Teaching is celebrated as the primary function of staff and is underpinned by scholarly activity to enhance its success (see HE Scholarship Policy 2023-24).

4.2 **Variety**- A variety in delivery on all courses is crucial to the student experience and is regarded as the prerogative of course leaders and those involved in designing course modules. The following methods will be employed, with others, as appropriate, and may occur in different combinations:¹

<i>Learning/Teaching Method</i>	
Tutorial	Seminar
Demonstrations, practical classes, and workshops	Project supervision/Supervised time in studio/workshops
Work based learning	Fieldwork and External Visits
Placement	Guided independent study
	Lecture

These methods are considered most applicable to higher education and study, but others may be employed at the discretion of the teacher, commensurate to the nature, level, and discipline. The context of these modes of delivery is important, too as employer liaison created more vocationally driven experiences on all courses.

4.3 **Assessment**- Assessment of student produced work is the necessary process by which the college can ascribe and measure outcomes for students that present summative grades to determine an overall or final classification of ability for everyone, across all HE level courses.² It also presents an opportunity for staff to consider the effectiveness of their teaching (see HE Assessment Policy 2023-24).

4.4 **Supporting Students**- The transition to higher education is of huge challenge to many of our students. The student lifecycle is one where the concerted development of

¹ Taken from QAA 2011; see: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/contact-hours-student.pdf?sfvrsn=5046f981_8 for further explanation

² For further guidance on concepts and notions of assessment see QAA: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/assessment>

academic skills can be structured into all disciplines, to realise successful identities as confident higher education students. The College aims that:

- Independence and autonomy are fostered at every opportune moment in teaching and learning to promote individual student responsibility for their learning and an appetite to seek support.
- Courses will support the curiosity and enquiring mind of students as illustration of scholars who desire wider academic skills conducive to higher level study such as knowledge of scholarship and research; application of knowledge to their own field; analysis, evaluation, communication, and presentation skills; alongside up-to-date literacy, numeracy, and ICT skills.

4.5 A focus on employability- Today's world of work requires graduates to be highly confident in their approaches and in: critical thinking, ICT, communication and presentation skills, team working and commercial acumen. Our focus on employability is driven by wider College consensus. More specifically:

- Employers are invited and encouraged to shape the manner and nature of assessments which more closely align with economic need and skills in the locality.
- Each course highlights the development of employment skills that are useful to work and professional bodies in handbooks and literature.
- Each course considers development of further employer liaison in activities and assessment for teaching and learning that is monitored every year including work placements and vocational experience.

4.6 Inclusion and diversity- This Policy regards the nature of teaching and learning as indelibly linked to recognition of an increasingly diverse student body. Diversity means designing teaching and learning and assessment activities that meet individual needs. Significantly, the aim is to:

- Offer curricula that is inclusive of all students and learning styles with recognition of barriers to learning through periodic review and appraisal systems.
- Be responsive to a growing body of literature that considers course design, module content and progression routes as correlated with achievement of different, and diverse students' groups.
- Resource courses effectively to ensure all staff have the knowledge, understanding and skillset to support diverse students and widening participation groups.

4.7 Course design- Implicit in all aspects of upholding the highest quality in teaching and learning is the consideration given to designing and reviewing course content, specification and assessment for existing course or new courses. Whilst the HE Assessment Policy covers the range and types of assessments and offers guidance on design; the College supports its HE community of teachers to reflect upon the most appropriate curriculum for HE levels by:

- Supporting teachers through structured activities and CPD understanding of validation regulations for new and existing courses and for awarding body courses.
- Regard that the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) includes allocated time for course design and approval in accordance with validating and awarding body partners.
- Confirming course content meets sector expectations for rigor, levels, and subject specific benchmarks such as those published by the QAA.

Links to other policies:

[HE Assessment Policy 2023-24](#)

[HE Scholarship Policy 2023-24](#)