



HARTPURY
C O L L E G E

**Higher Education
Strategic Plan
&
Operational Plans**

Reviewed July 2015

1. Executive Summary

Higher Education (HE) is well placed to meet the Strategic Priorities outlined in Hartpury 2020. The successful Higher Education Review in 2014¹ built upon a substantial history of successful quality assurance and student enhancement over the last 23. However the external pressures affecting HE have the potential to impact significantly on these achievements. Recruitment patterns are undergoing significant flux between departments and regional and national competition continues to be significant. It is paramount that College commitments to Taught Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP) and transitional activities are managed effectively to ensure that a high quality student experience continues to be embedded in all activities. As such, the following are key themes for consideration:

Key themes for 2015/16

1. Ensuring the curriculum offer, marketing and conversion activities result in the predicted student recruitment, retention and planned growth in an increasingly competitive environment²
2. Resourcing HE activity in a financially challenging environment
3. Managing TDAP appropriately and the risks associated with transitional activities are mitigated ensuring enhancement of the student experience
4. Changes in senior staff are monitored and retention of research active staff is prioritised
5. Maintaining a positive relationship with the University during a period of significant change
6. Animal and Land is monitored closely, including staffing, student progression from FE, wider recruitment and investment in the Animal student identity³

¹ <http://www.gaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/provider?UKPRN=10002919#.VXdBI-JwaZM>

² See HE Annual Report 2013-14

³ See HE Annual Report 2013-14

2.0 Introduction

The 2015 review considers the strategic link between Higher Education and Hartpury 2020 strategy. This is informed by several activities within Higher Education including annual review at module, programme and Departmental levels, the recently instigated Higher Education Annual Report as well as the Higher Education Teaching, Learning and Scholarship strategy (TLSS), which extends until 2017. HE Executive has scrutinised identified priorities and Associate Faculty Board (AFB) will review and critical reflect on the HE Strategic Review and Operational Planning.

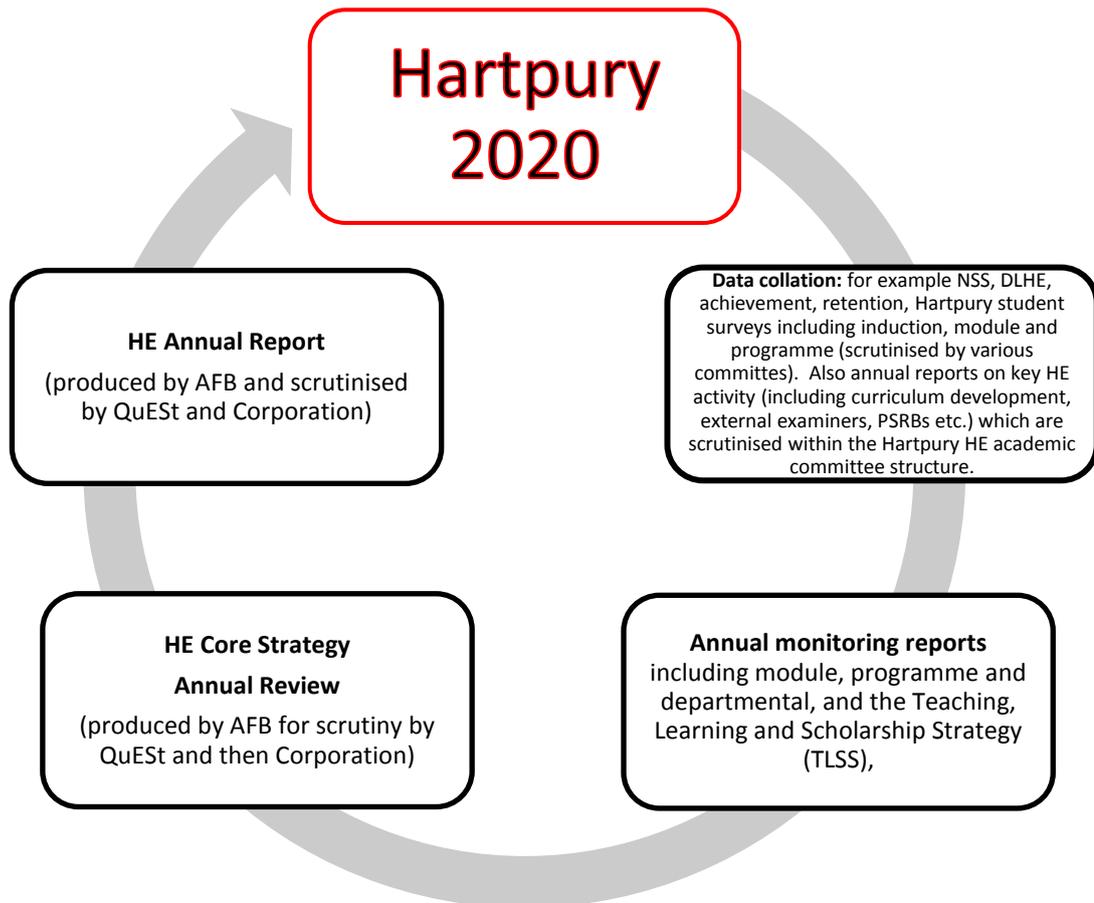


Figure 1: Illustration of the cycle of annual review and reporting within Higher Education at Hartpury.

3.0 Mission

College Mission

'Hartpury College will be a specialist niche provider delivering relevant, effective and high quality education and training for employment in land-based, sports and allied industries; locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.'

This directly informs the Higher Education mission; it was developed following staff and student consultation, which interprets the College mission within the Higher Education.

'To provide outstanding learning opportunities and develop employment ready graduates. Higher Education at Hartpury should free students to explore, to create, to challenge and to lead.'

4.0 Vision

College Vision

Hartpury will be an outstanding 21st century College – distinguished from others in its excellence with:

- **Outstanding Provision**
Offer provision that is forward looking and appealing to HE applicants, and which is academically robust and vocationally relevant. The provision is underpinned by a strong belief in the importance of scholarship and particularly research with impact, ultimately enhancing the student experience.
- **Outstanding Delivery**
Continue to lead the way in teaching observation processes, adopt cutting edge innovations to support delivery and ensure that all teaching staff remain appropriately supported through CPD.
- **Outstanding Benefits to Learners**
Continue to hold employability as a key priority and offer students outstanding links to practice and employers. Students will continue to be exposed to the very best facilities, professionals and industry contacts ensuring they are work-ready upon graduation.
- **Outstanding Performance**
Support all students to achieve high standards and be the best they can be. Our HE graduates will have not only a degree, but added experiences, work placements, volunteering opportunities and professional qualifications which will ensure they stand out from the rest.

5.0 The Local & National Context

The removal of the Student Number Control (SNC) for the 2015 / 16 cycle has resulted in an increasingly competitive environment for Higher Education recruitment. While there is limited evidence to suggest that the move to £9000 fees will impact on recruitment, the increasingly aggressive recruitment strategies applied by other institutions such as the red-brick Universities will impact on specific programmes and potentially the type of learner recruited (illustrated by drop in Tariff on entry⁴ and reduction in Foundation degree applications and increase in application to honours degree).

Departmental breakdown:

Sport: a significant refresh of the portfolio has undoubtedly supported this area in improving recruitment from internal FE programmes and externally. The significant regional competition in this area requires us to consider USPs which align with our specific strengths including links to elite sport performance at Hartpury and national sporting organisations. National challenges in achieving high retention and achievement within Sports provision is mirrored in some

⁴ See HE Key Performance Indicators

programmes at Hartpury, although the shift in student away from foundation degrees, to specialist Bachelor's programmes and the launch of BSc Sports Therapy which is the highest tariff on recruitment sport courses nationally, have the potential to support continued improvements.

Equine: Recruitment has plateaued over recent years, although the provision continues to be one of the largest in the world. With competitors investing in comparable resources, the development and marketing of Hartpury Equine USPs including the applied nature of the provision, staff support, the full utilisation of the facilities within the student experience and the evolving focus on Rider Performance is increasingly important. Curriculum developments spear-headed by the first Equine Science Integrated Masters aligns with such strengths. This academic year we have refreshed the curriculum by launching BSc Equestrian Sports Coaching and we are planning to validate a new Bachelor's programme for 2016 entry in Equestrian Sports Therapy.

Animal & Land: This Department continues to lead the way in student satisfaction, with areas such as Animal Behaviour and Welfare being flagships in terms of recruitment, retention, achievement and satisfaction. Recruitment to the ALS department overall has been challenging for 2015/16 with increased competition locally and nationally. The appointment of a new Head of Department to ensure the wider provision follows this good practice will support maximisation of developments in animal collections and the science laboratories. Investment in science laboratories is a key priority to keep pace with competitors. Land provision still lags Animal in popularity and a closer link to FE formalised by staffing structures continues to be a priority.

Veterinary Nursing: This continues to be a stable area in terms of student recruitment and leader in terms of retention and achievement – a significant achievement considering stringent PSRB requirements and substantial work based learning elements embedded within the provision. However staff appointment and retention continues to be a challenge (a sector issue); as numbers continue to grow the development of strategies to address these issues are critical.

6.0 Environmental Analysis

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) is undergoing a significant spending review, and indications suggests that HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) will be considered as a strong candidate for both in-year and longer term cuts⁵. While in-year cuts may have limited impact on the College, longer term changes present a significant risk to Higher Education funding, raising the priority further of reducing the University's top slice.

Additionally, the College will need to carefully monitor reviews impacting on HE policy and practice including:

- HEFCE review of mechanisms of assessing Quality Assessment within Higher Education⁶. It is likely the current practices will evolve, including the introduction of measures quantifying teaching and learning which will be used as a national benchmark.

⁵ <https://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/sector-stands-by-for-battles-over-cuts-fees-and-europe/2020205.article>

⁶ <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/reg/review/>

- Changes to key legislation including the Consumer Rights Act 2015⁷ and the Office of Independent Adjudicator requirement for membership⁸, which are currently being mapped against existing policies and processes.
- BIS is currently reviewing the criteria and guidance for degree awarding powers, university title and designation for HEFCE funding⁹. This will be completed in 2016 and the outcome inform the long term direction of HE at the College (for example, the process for application for University College Status is undergoing significant review).

7.0 HE Strategy

The following illustrates the HE specific components of the strategic priorities outlined in Hartpury 2020. Annually a detailed operational plan will be produced to illustrate how progress will be made on each of the strategic priorities (the draft is included within appendix B). This Plan will be monitored through the HE Annual Report, developed by the Associate Faculty Board, scrutinised by Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee and presented to Corporation.

Table 1:

Strategic Priority	Priority	Will be achieved by
Strategic Priority 1 - Outstanding Learning	1.1 The quality of provision, student experience and benefits will continue to be paramount and the vocational focus of our Higher Education programmes will be key to our unique offer.	1.1.a Maintain highest possible classification with the QAA by delivering an outstanding educational experience
		1.1.b Teaching Learning and Scholarship Strategy (TLSS) will be implemented, enhancing the quality of HE student learning opportunities
		1.1.c The skills support for the Student Success and Achievement Unit will be developed further as a model for delivering support for all students
		1.1.d Staff will undertake research and scholarship that has an impact on the academic community, our students and continues to inform professional practice
	1.2 We will make the most of technology to both add value to our students' experience and maximise their exposure to relevant technology wherever possible.	1.2.a Utilising technology in industry relevant settings to prepare students for progression to further study and / or the world of work.
		1.2.b Blended learning techniques will be developed to improve the learner/student experience and widen access to our programme areas.
1.3 Taught Degree Awarding	1.2.c. An Application has been made for TDAP	

⁷ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/15/contents/enacted>

⁸ <http://oiahe.org.uk/providers-joining-the-scheme-on-1-september-2015.aspx>

⁹ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/daput>

	Powers (TDAP) are being pursued as a priority to enable the further development of Higher Education at Hartpury	and if successful, University title will be sought for Hartpury's HE offering
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Table 2:

Strategic Priority	Priority	Will be achieved by
Strategic Priority 2 - Continue to Grow	2.1 Growth will continue to be a strategic priority and will be effectively managed to ensure resource-efficient delivery and the maintenance of quality.	2.1.a New income generating opportunities will be explored and implemented to contribute to curriculum breadth and financial performance.
		2.1.b We will target home HE student recruitment at 500 new level one enrolments per annum and achieve a stable FTE student body of over 1400 FTE home students and 100 international students.
		2.1.c Costing models will be developed to support recruitment targets in HE
	2.2 We will maintain our curriculum breadth and range, offering high quality and vocationally relevant provision from Level One up to Level Seven Masters	2.2.a Successfully validate planned new programmes
		2.2.b Develop and implement a Postgraduate Strategy
		2.2.c. Utilise periodic reviews to check the health of the relative taught provision, to identify areas for development and to identify and disseminate good practice in learning and teaching.
	2.3 We will maintain our curriculum focus on sports, equine, animal and land-based provision.	2.3.a Maintain and develop new curriculum offers within this strategic focus, aiming for an equal split across the departments.
		2.3.b Work with resource managers to ensure they align with curriculum offer and continue to prioritise enhancement of the student experience
	2.4 FE to HE Progression will continue through specific targeted activities and support.	2.4.a Continue to develop further opportunities for progression from FE to HE

Table 3:

Strategic Priority	Priority	Will be achieved by
Strategic Priority 3 - Develop students to be 'the best they can become'	3.1 We will produce well rounded citizens. We will produce students who are skilled and knowledgeable, employable and adaptable.	3.1.a Students gaining vocationally relevant knowledge and skills, embedded within their programme of study.
		3.1.b Students being exposed to relevant technology wherever possible.
		3.1.c development of an identity which supports students in recognising, developing and reflecting on their knowledge, transferable skills and ultimately employability.
	3.2 We will support students and alumni on their journey to fully achieve their aspirations.	3.2.a The Students Union will enhance the student experience.
		3.2.b The Hartpury Innovation Careers and Enterprise service will be launched to enhance employability.

8.0 Key Issues for 2015/16

1. Ensuring the curriculum offer, marketing and conversion activities results in the predicted student recruitment and retention and planned growth in an increasingly competitive environment¹⁰

Curriculum developments are largely in specialist programmes. By the very nature of the professional body links which make them so attractive to students, they are resource intensive. Programmes such as BSc (Hons) Sports Therapy and the planned BSc (Hons) Equestrian Sports Therapy will attract applicants, but require significant access to specialist human therapy facilities which are already working at capacity. In 2015-16 the addition of the Rider Performance Centre will ensure the student experience is protected, but as numbers increase, the importance of expansion of human sports facilities will be critical.

Additionally, there is significant evidence that accommodation on-site is highly desirable to HE applicants. Market research investigating animal recruitment patterns last year illustrated that BSc students who had onsite accommodation were 29 times more likely to enrol than those students with none. There is also evidence that income was lost last year due to accommodation being full. On-site accommodation is clearly a limiting factor to even restricted growth, and particularly when entering clearing.

While scrutiny for TDAP and providing an excellent learning experience for current students are the primary focus for HE, we must also consider how to future-proof the business and take sufficient account of what our competitors are doing, some of whom are aggressive (UoG aim to increase recruitment by 2k, Warks College etc). This will require substantial time and effort to gain a deep understanding of the market place so that emerging trends can be identified, ensuring we are able to meet changing demands as they arise rather than reacting to trends after they have emerged.

2. Resourcing HE activity in a financially challenging environment

The investment in HE related infrastructure will continue to be a priority as transition from UWE provided services continue. The Colleges' management of all the potential new IT related developments needs to ensure they are complementary and minimise overlap. This includes investment in and development of the Student Records System and enhancement of the Virtual Learning Environment. The development of a College-wide IT strategy is becoming increasingly necessary to ensure resource is applied to the most strategically important initiatives.

The award of £25,000 by the Higher Education Academy to support a pilot study in student support and the external financial support towards the rider performance centre are examples of external funding secured to enhance the student experience. Applications to external funding sources should continue to be developed, aligning with strategic objectives.

HE has a significant role to play in supporting the College's financial health; developing sufficient funds for future major capital budgets which will benefit all. The meeting of income and expenditure targets will be a key priority (e.g. HEFCE catalyst bid).

¹⁰ See HE Annual Report 2013-14

3. TDAP scrutiny is managed appropriately and risks associated with transitional activities are mitigated ensuring continuing enhancement of the student experience

The Developmental and Transitional Working Group (DTWG) chaired by the Principal ensures this College wide project is planned and monitored appropriately. DTWG has a key role in ensuring that the impact of undertaking these projects does not negatively affect the student experience and other risks carefully monitored.

4. Changes in senior staff within HE are monitored and retention of research active staff continues to be a priority

The importance of appointing the right permanent senior HE team following recent changes is illustrated by its presence within the College risk register. Investment in staffing structures including clear progression routes has benefitted and supported a HE culture within the academic staff. Challenges remain in retaining staff with significant local competition for academic employers in sport, equine and HE support staff. While salaries are considered lower than local University competitors, efforts continue to be made to develop attractive working conditions and opportunities to encourage staff retention. The development of research sabbaticals and further investments indicating a commitment to Scholarship has certainly been received positively. The financial health of the College has to be a priority, which ultimately results in job security for all staff – an area in which many competitors are struggling.

5. Maintaining a positive relationship with the University during a period of significant change

The College and University continues to focus on options for lasting relationships beyond achieving TDAP that benefit both parties. In the short and medium term, opportunities for sharing good practice will continue to be maximised as the review of the Academic Agreement is completed.

6. Animal and Land is monitored closely, including staffing, student progression from FE, wider recruitment and the investment in the Animal student identity¹¹

The current decline in Animal applications correspond with patterns in FE. Interview analysis of last year's applicants who went to other institutions exposed four emergent themes: campus location, course content or fit, campus facilities and the academic reputation of the institution. The recent periodic review in this area has identified curriculum development priorities which will be prioritised over the next 2 years. Retaining academic staff in this area will be a key focus, and the scholarship opportunities are hoped to support advances in the academic reputation. Continued investment in the animal collections and laboratory facilities will be key to converting applicants to enrolled students, along with the evolution of the 'animal' brand.

¹¹ See HE Annual Report 2013-14

Appendix A: List of supporting documentation used to inform this document

- HE Annual Report 2013-14
- HE Strategic Summary 2012-15
- Learning, Teaching and Scholarship Strategy (2014 – 2017) and action plan
- Departmental Theme Reports
- Annual Programme Reports
- External Examiner Feedback
- Higher Education Review, 2014
- Progress against Higher Education Key Performance indicators and underpinning analytical reports

Appendix B: Draft Operational Plan underpinning the HE strategic objectives (a final version to be approved within the HE Annual Report)

Strategic Priority	Priority	Will be achieved by	2015-16 targets		
			Target	Who	When
Strategic Priority 1 - Outstanding Learning	1.1 The quality of provision, student experience and benefits will continue to be paramount and the vocational focus of our Higher Education programmes will be key to our unique offer.	1.1.a Maintain highest possible classification with the QAA by delivering an outstanding educational experience	1.1.a.i Complete HER Action Plan	VPHE (AFB)	By July 2016
			1.1.a.ii Monitor QAA updates regarding the Quality Code including Subject Benchmark Statements	AD QS (ASQC)	By May 2016
			1.1.a.iii continue to develop and implement the quality cycle in line with external and internal expectations	ADQS (HE Exec)	August 2016
		1.1.b Teaching Learning and Scholarship Strategy (TLSS) will be implemented, enhancing the quality of HE student learning opportunities	1.1.b.i Complete associated actions within the TLSS for 2015-16 academic year	AD TLS (LTEC)	By July 2016
			1.1.c The skills support for the Student Success and Achievement Unit will be developed further as a model for delivering support for all students	1.1.c.i Student Success and Achievement (working title) to be launched, including learning support and study skills.	PL TL (AFB)
		1.1.c.ii Success to be monitored via annual report to AFB		PL TL (AFB)	By August 2016
		1.1.d Staff will undertake research and scholarship that has an impact on the academic community, our students and continues to inform professional practice	1.1.d.i Progress on the scholarship related targets within the TLSS is reflected upon positively in the annual report and scholarship metrics achieved.	AD TLS (Scholarship)	By July 2016
	1.2 We will make the most of technology to both add value to our students' experience and maximise their exposure to relevant technology wherever possible.	1.2.a Utilising technology in industry relevant settings to prepare students for progression to further study and / or the world of work.	1.2.a.i Utilise the HEFCE capital allocation to support the achievement of this priority, through a round of staff bids.	VPHE (HE Exec)	By July 2016
			1.2.a.ii Development of a cross-college Blended Learning plan and subsequent staffing and infrastructure capacity to enable the effective use on IT resources alongside conventional delivery.	VPHE and APFE	By September 2015
	1.3 Taught Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP) are being pursued as a priority to enable the further development of Higher Education at Hartpury	1.2.c. An Application has been made for TDAP and if successful, University title will be sought for Hartpury's HE offering	1.2.c.i Complete scrutiny successfully	Principal and VPHE (Corporation)	By July 2016
			1.2.c.ii Complete relevant actions within the transitional plan for 2015-16 academic year	Transition pro. Man. (DTWG)	By August 2016
			1.2.c.iii Review updated guidance for applications for University title (once released by BIS) and scrutinise implications to the College as a whole.	Principal and VPHE	By August 2016

Strategic Priority	Priority	Will be achieved by	2015-16		
			Target	Who	When
Strategic Priority 2 - Continue to Grow	2.1 Growth will continue to be a strategic priority and will be effectively managed to ensure resource-efficient delivery and the maintenance of quality.	2.1.a New income generating opportunities will be explored and implemented to contribute to curriculum breadth and financial performance.	2.1.a.i Review the feasibility of the following areas considering alignment with strategic objectives, academic credibility and resourcing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foundation years - Higher / degree Apprenticeships - Undergraduate Animal / Equine Therapy courses - Work based VN provision 	ADLTS ADLTS HoD VNS / HoD ALS HoD VNS (HE Exec)	January 2016
		2.1.b We will target home HE student recruitment at 500 new level one enrolments per annum and achieve a stable FTE student body of over 1400 FTE home students and 100 international students	2.1.b.i Achieve the following targets in line with budgets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 486 New Level 1 home - 105 New top up home - X international - X postgraduate 	VPHE & AD TLS (PMG)	November 2015
			2.1.b.ii Develop programme targets for next three years and set as KPI for programme managers	VPHE & AD ADTLS (HE Exec)	October 2015
		2.1.c Costing models will be developed to support recruitment targets in HE	2.1.c.i Develop HE equivalent to Projected Value Funding report as an initial step.	VPHE, ADQS and VPF (PMG)	October 2015
	2.2 We will maintain our curriculum breadth and range, offering high quality and vocationally relevant provision from Level One up to Level Seven Masters	2.2.a Successfully validate planned new programmes	2.2.a.i Validate for September 2016: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BSc (Hons) Equestrian Sports Therapy - FdA Sports Events Management, - BSc (Hons) Sport and Exercise Sciences - MSc Applied Sports Conditioning - Animal TBC 	Eq HoD Sp HoD Sp HoD Sp HoD ALS HoD	February, 2016
		2.2.b Develop and implement a Postgraduate Strategy	2.2.b.i Consult on and develop a Postgraduate Strategy designed to work symbiotically with the LTSS.	AD TLSS and SL Int (AFB)	September 2015
			2.2.b.ii Implement the first year action plan of the postgraduate strategy	SL Int (Scholarship)	July 2016
		2.2.c. Utilise periodic reviews to check the health of the relative taught provision, to identify areas for development and to identify and disseminate good practice in learning and teaching.	2.2.c.i Complete periodic reviews in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equine - Land 	Eq HoD	June 2016
	ALS HoD (ASQC)			June 2016	
	2.2.c.ii Complete periodic review action plan for ALS	ALS HoD (ASQC)	July 2016		

	2.3 We will maintain our curriculum focus on sports, equine, animal and land-based provision.	2.3.a Maintain and develop new curriculum offers within this strategic focus, aiming for an equal split across the departments.	See above		
		2.3.b Work with resource managers to ensure they align with curriculum offer and continue to prioritise enhancement of the student experience	2.3.b.i Development of the Rider Performance Centre to support planned curriculum developments	Director of Equine	September 2015
			2.3.b.ii Work with FE Sport and Sport facility managers to plan for increased sport student numbers utilising specialist facilities ahead of 2016-17 academic year	Sp HoD (Sp DCM)	May 2016
			2.3.b.iii Continue to support the 3 year plan for Animal Collections and engage with FE to ensure maximum utilisation to enhance the student experience	ALS HoD (ALS DCM)	July 2016
			2.3.b.iv Review the capacity and capabilities of the laboratory provision in line with all users and develop a plan to enhance provision	ALS HoD (Exec)	May 2016
	2.4 FE to HE Progression will continue through specific targeted activities and support.	2.4.a Continue to develop further opportunities for progression from FE to HE	2.4.a.i Appoint centralised outreach co-ordinator	Director of Marketing	Sept 2015
			2.4.a.ii Continue to lead a coordinated approach to outreach across the institution	VPFE (PMG)	July 2016

Strategic Priority	Priority	Will be achieved by	2015-16		
			Target	Who	When
Strategic Priority 3 - Develop students to be 'the best they can become'	3.1 We will produce well rounded citizens. We will produce students who are skilled and knowledgeable, employable and adaptable.	3.1.a Students gaining vocationally relevant knowledge and skills, embedded within their programme of study.	3.1.a.i progress employability actions within the TLSS	PL Emp (LTEC)	July 2016
			3.1.a.ii Build a proposal for the 2016-17 budget bidding round identifying programmes which will require budget allocation to support resource support in order to embed vocationally relevant skills / qualifications.	PL Emp and ADTLSS (HE Exec)	Feb 2016
			3.1.a.iii All Departmental Theme Reports to consider how this aim can be achieved across the provision	HoDs (DCMs)	Oct 2015
		3.1.b Students being exposed to relevant technology wherever possible.	See actions 1.1.b.ii and 1.2.a.i		
		3.1.c development of an identity which supports students in recognising, developing and reflecting on their knowledge, transferable skills and ultimately employability.	3.1.c.i Development of an identity incorporating all HE student support and employability initiatives under one 'umbrella' which encourages student engagement (ready to launch for sept 2016).	VPHE (AFB)	By March 2016
	3.2 We will support students and alumni on their journey to fully achieve their aspirations.	3.2.a The Students Union will enhance the student experience.	3.2.a.i Complete the student engagement project and report findings to AFB	SU (AFB)	August 2016
			3.2.a.ii Develop, approve and implement the cross-college 'Innovation, Careers and Enterprise Centre (ICE) Enabling Strategy'	APFE and PLEmp (AFB)	August 2015