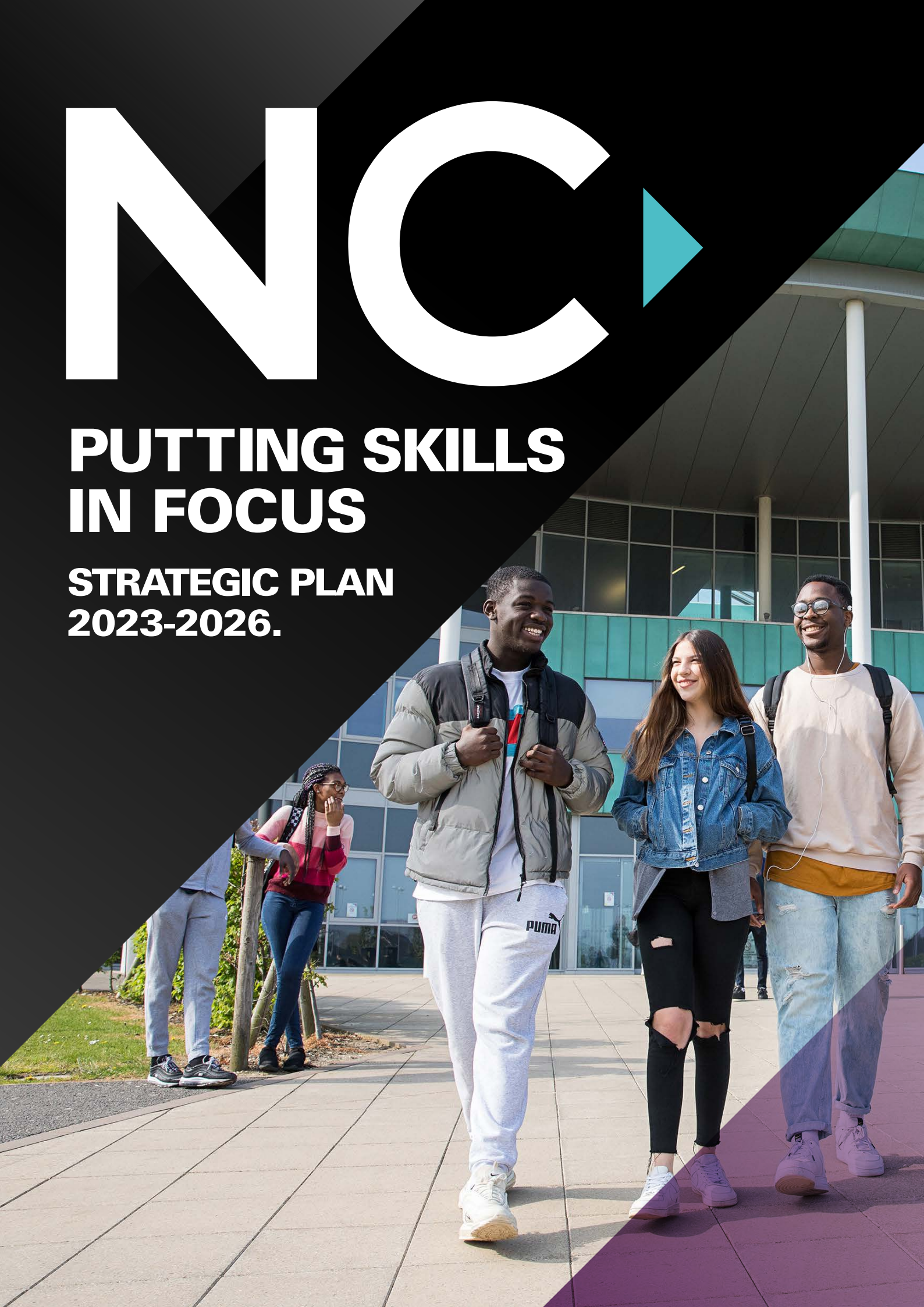


NCC

PUTTING SKILLS IN FOCUS

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2023-2026.**



▶ WELCOME TO 'PUTTING SKILLS IN FOCUS'

NORTHAMPTON COLLEGE'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2026



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO AND PRINCIPAL

Delivering our strategic ambitions over recent years has not been easy, nor without risk. COVID-19 posed extraordinary challenges for colleges, forcing us all to behave, work, learn and think differently, shaping our future in ways we could not possibly have predicted.

This, combined with the impact of Brexit, the cost-of-living crisis, the urgent need for action to address climate change and the planned reforms, has resulted in a much-changed landscape for further and higher education.

The immediate future is looking very different to the not-so-distant past.

Over the coming years, we have much to do and cannot afford to stand still. Our vision and mission for 2023-2026 has been adapted to reflect the changing policy landscape. Our strategic priorities remain as relevant as before, but the actions we now need to take to realise them need to be modified to reflect the world we find ourselves in.

We will continue to focus on building and maintaining financial strength and developing consistent high-quality education, while remaining crystal clear in our ambition to be an outstanding college.

Key to the success of the College has been the strong partnerships formed with businesses, educational establishments, civic and other partners. This plan sets out our ambitions and provides greater clarity of direction reflecting both opportunities and challenges. We will continue to work with employers to ensure they are at the heart of post-16 skills.

We remain committed to enriching the lives of students, helping them to thrive and achieve their potential through learning while creating the workforce of the future, with a generation of hungry, adaptable, and digital savvy young people at its core.

Over the next three years, we will embrace technology and best practices to deliver an outstanding and inspiring student experience. We will ensure our students develop life and career skills that will make them competitive in the workforce and are strongly supported in their physical and mental wellbeing.

Boosting Britain's skills is more important than ever before, and we remain determined to build an inclusive talent pipeline of people with the attributes and skills required for our modern, dynamic, and competitive economy. We are preparing the leaders and employers of the future. Our students will be the UK's new workforce. They will be the citizens who find solutions.



OUR MISSION

To enhance the lives of our students and other customers, maximising their potential through learning.

OUR PURPOSE

To support students and employers through outstanding education, training and skills development, to ensure their economic and social success.

OUR VALUES

- Strive to always be excellent
- Respect and support each other
- Put students at the heart of our college
- Ensure the wellbeing of staff and students, build resilience, and celebrate differences
- Make sure employer needs are at the heart of our plans
- Be a positive influence in our community

ABOUT US

Northampton College opened in 1973 and has played a pivotal role in the provision of vocational and technical education in Northamptonshire.

The College has been on a remarkable journey over the last five years. Having ranked seventh out of almost 200 colleges nationally for 16 to 18-year-old education and training, Northampton College is the leading college in the East Midlands, with significant strengths in health and social care, engineering, creative industries, construction, catering and digital.

The College has strengthened the alignment between its provision and local and regional priorities by developing an ambitious curriculum and clear line of sight to career opportunities. The facilities are outstanding; well-equipped specialist resources include high-quality workshops, laboratories and libraries which provide an excellent, modern environment for learning.

With access to highly regarded professional, technical and vocational qualifications, the College's 9,000 plus students thrive and progress into local and regional work and support Northamptonshire's economic development.

OUR LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

At the heart of the College's learning philosophy is a commitment to offering the very best student experience and an exceptional learning environment. Students are treated as individuals, and everyone is given a platform to fully achieve their potential, underpinning the College's ethos of 'putting our students at the heart of everything we do'.

The College has high expectations of its students and there is a culture of mutual respect. As well as improving their professional and technical skills, students are encouraged to develop resilience and confidence and take personal responsibility for these.

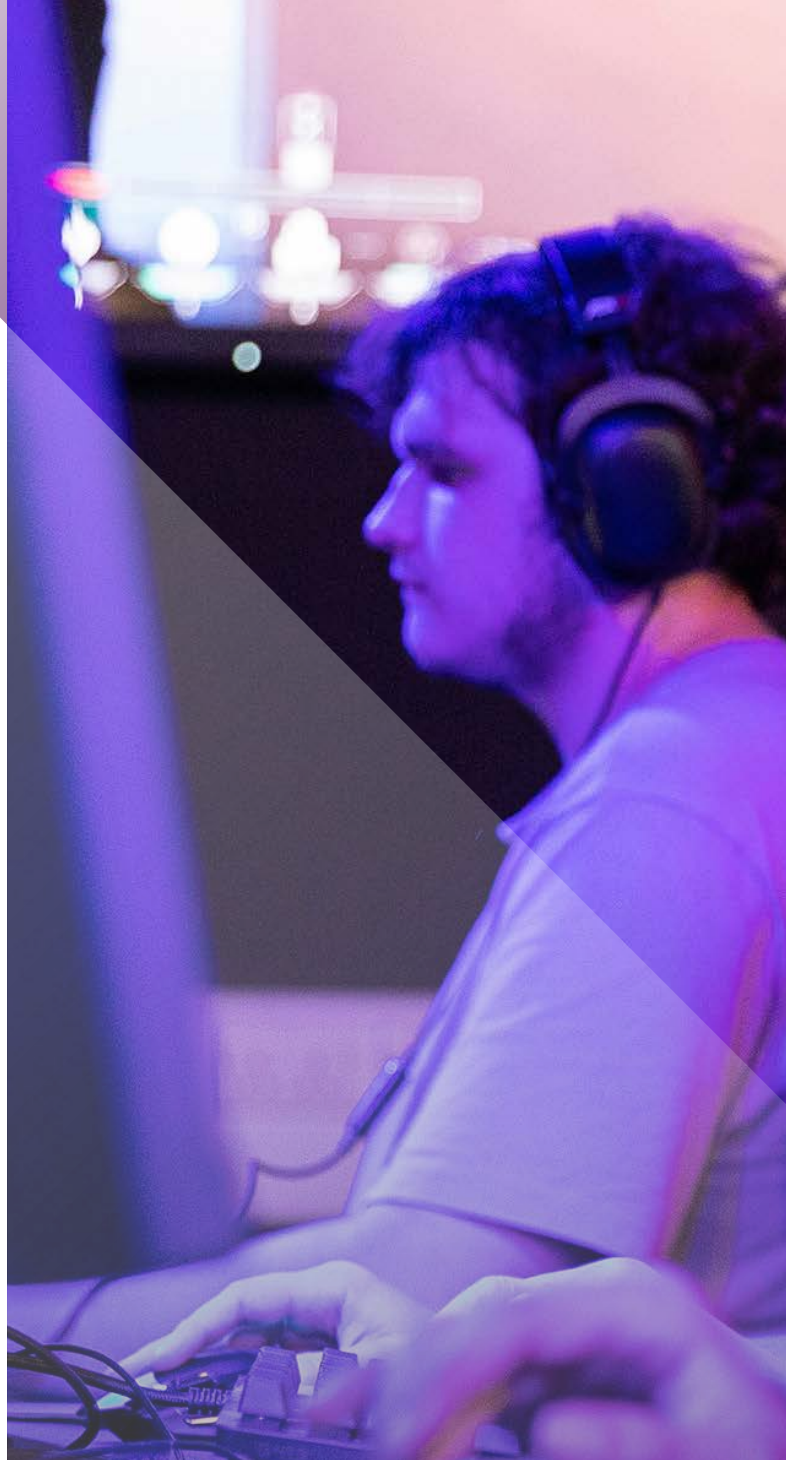
The College attracts industry experts to join its staff and then trains them to become excellent teachers so they have status as dual professionals. By supporting and building expertise and dual professionalism, we will improve our students' experience and outcomes which will positively impact on society, employers and the economy.

The curriculum is ambitious and diverse, and the College is passionate about building on its successes, with dedicated teams in all areas. Every student is given an individual learning plan and teachers gather data on student performance so that they can target students' learning needs.

Students are encouraged to think independently to come up with solutions and new ways of working. There is a strong focus on differentiated active learning and staff are encouraged to promote critical thinking and metacognition.

Digital Skills form a large part of the curriculum and students are supported to realise the powerful effect that using technology can have within their learning. Within their core qualification, students develop vital maths and English skills, and all students that do not have a grade 4 (C) or higher in these subjects at GCSE level are supported until they achieve these important qualifications.

When students leave the College, they go on to make a difference, both in the workplace and in the community.



**THE COLLEGE'S PASS
RATE STANDS AT AN
IMPRESSIVE 97%,
AND 94% OF STUDENTS
PROGRESS TO FURTHER
STUDY OR EMPLOYMENT.**



OUR SUCCESSES

The College's pass rate stands at an impressive 97%, and 94% of students progress to further study or employment.

This success can partly be attributed to our new School of Academic and Vocational Support, established during the pandemic to support students whose full-time study programmes were disrupted by COVID-19. Our Acceleration classes and support include providing additional assessments to ascertain which students needed extra support to help them catch up, comprehension and tuition groups, mentoring and support sessions to help develop and maintain students' academic and digital study skills.

This year the College helped more students than ever before to retake English and mathematics GCSEs, with more than 1,000 English students and 1,100 mathematics students completing exams.

All students on 16-18 study programmes, and some older students, benefit from the College's new laptop loan scheme which was launched to enhance digital skills and ensure flexible access to learning.

The College has developed its support for students with higher needs over successive years and has been endorsed by Ofsted with a rating of 'Outstanding' in this area. It innovates through developing support mechanisms for students with special educational needs and disabilities, additional learning support needs, looked after children, high needs and those who need help with mathematics and English.

The College is proud to have received the City & Guilds EPA Apprenticeship award in recognition of its high-quality apprenticeship provision and excellence in End Point Assessment (EPA) delivery.

The College's Digital Capabilities programme (DigiCap) also won the Best Practice category at the Council for Learning Resources in Colleges (ColRic) Awards.

CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

The last decade has been a challenging period for further education with significant changes to technical qualifications, higher education and Apprenticeships.

Many colleges have struggled financially and to support students during the past two years because of COVID-19 but Northampton College continues to buck the trend in both these areas.

The College has sustained impressive financial results and its turnover has grown to £32 million over a period when many further education budgets have been falling.

Over the next few years, with rises in the cost-of-living and a confirmed recession on the horizon, more people will need to re-skill or up-skill to gain sustainable employment.

Northampton College has a central role to play in supporting the Skills for Jobs agenda and we will continue to ensure that our curriculum matches the ambitions and demands of Northamptonshire's employers. We will forge a stronger and more dynamic partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders as they develop the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) to ensure local provision is reflective of emerging skills needs.

As well as the Levelling up White Paper and Education Bill, the Government has announced a range of ideas to help the UK recover, supporting people to up-skill and re-skill in the changing job market. These initiatives have resulted in significant changes for the education sector.

The next few years of reform are likely to focus on adult and higher technical qualifications, alongside further consolidation of the vocational and technical qualification landscape as T Levels are fully rolled out.

We aim to play a full part in helping young people and adults to get the skills that they need and work with employers to help them attract the skilled staff they need to thrive and grow. In doing so, we will make a vital contribution to our community and the local and national economy.

ABOUT NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Northamptonshire continues to enjoy one of the fastest growing populations and highest employment rates in the country, reflecting the vibrancy of the local economy and its status as one of the most desirable areas to live.

Northamptonshire is perfectly positioned at the heart of the country and acts as the crossroads of the rail and road network, providing a premier location for inward and local investors.

Importantly, Northamptonshire has an appetite for growth, welcoming employment and housing development to deliver on ambitions to expand further and play its part in helping Britain to 'build back better' in a post-COVID world.

The county is home to a series of world-class businesses including Barclaycard, Carlsberg UK, Cosworth, Mercedes Benz, Silverstone Circuits and Weetabix while numerous logistics and distribution companies are based in Northamptonshire.

An entrepreneurial spirit is omnipresent in the county, with Northamptonshire home to a vibrant and thriving SME base, which has previously resulted in the 'Most Enterprising Place in Britain' award.

Northampton College is proud to be 'the college in the community' and play our part in making Northamptonshire a trailblazing economic powerhouse, meeting the skills needs identified by the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership and working closely with businesses to create a study programme that delivers a generation of hungry, workplace-ready employees who we hope will be the employers of the future.



MEETING LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL SKILLS NEEDS

The College plays a key role in helping to support employers and learners by providing high-quality professional and technical training that supports local, regional, and national labour market needs and skills gaps.

The College has carried out a strategic review of the curriculum map. This is regularly reviewed and is based on employer feedback to ensure that students leave Northampton College with the skills and behaviours employers and stakeholders identify as most desirable.

Examples of innovative employer engagement include strong partnerships with local construction companies, the involvement of numerous award-winning chefs in the delivery of hospitality qualifications, the engaged presence of The Royal & Derngate in the arts and a burgeoning relationship with the British Footwear Association to support the redevelopment of Northampton's historic boot and shoe industry.

Many of our curriculum team come from industry and are well placed to ensure the College's study programmes and apprenticeships match the ambitions and demands of the county's employers.

The College also invests heavily in understanding the labour market, using and uses a range of tools and intelligence to identify current and future demand, ensuring our provision is aligned to local employment opportunities and supports regional and national priorities where relevant.

Examples of this include:

The creation of a new £13 million campus in Daventry and a £4.75 million Advanced Construction Engineering (ACE) Centre and £6.3 million Digital Academy at Booth Lane.

The ACE Centre provides a pipeline of 'work-ready' staff for local employers who require specifically trained teams to fill the skills gap identified by SEMLEP.

The College offers qualifications from Level 1 to 3 with a T Level in Onsite Construction coming onstream in September 2023. There is a focus on developing the skills needed for the most up-to-date construction and engineering technologies, with the Centre tackling the severe skills shortages threatening to hit the construction industry in Northamptonshire and beyond.

In addition to several state-of-the-art construction workshops is a new 'sustainable classroom' built as part of a focus on developing eco-credentials for our construction students in conjunction with several local employers. Students are given the opportunity to work alongside local employers to develop additional skills and learn new techniques required by the sector.

The sustainable classroom incorporates a number of environmentally friendly resources such as a green roof, solar panels and hot water systems creating an exciting learning resource where students can embrace the green revolution as part of their studies and keep up to date with what's going on in the construction industry.





Over the last three years, there has been a 54% increase (140) in the number of young people taking courses in construction with many progressing into local industry with employers such as Balfour Beatty, Euro Brickwork & Maintenance Ltd, Northampton Partnership Homes, Taylor Wimpey and Metcalfe Decorators. 331 students completed construction courses in 2021/22.

The Digital Academy will focus on growing the critical digital skills needed by employers, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI). The curriculum has been designed in conjunction with local employers and offers qualifications from Level 1 to 5 (HNC/HND). The College has also introduced a range of online and distance learning courses for adults 19+ and is expanding its provision with a new T Level in Digital Support Services being offered from 2023.

304 students made use of the Digital Academy in 2021/22, with a further 380 enrolled on courses for the academic year 2022/23. In 2021/22, students on the TV and Film course utilised our new TV studio and control room to produce Final Major Project work more in line with professional industry standards than any other year. The College was highlighted as a Centre of Excellence by our examining body – UAL – who visited the new facilities to promote their Esports courses to other centres. The College is currently hosting visitors from other colleges who are hoping to utilise the design of the Digital Academy and develop similar facilities in their own centres.

The College has also invested £1.6 million in its digital and EdTech capabilities including cameras, SMART boards, and laptops/Chromebooks to ensure that students are able to develop the digital skills they need for life, progression to further or higher education or apprenticeships and employment.

CASE STUDY

ADVANCED CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING (ACE) CENTRE

Addressing both the skills gap and the ageing workforce is seen as a top priority within leading construction companies, and local and regional employers backed the College's plans to build the £4.75million ACE Centre at the College's Booth Lane campus in Northampton, equipped to train the next generation of highly skilled construction professionals.

The ACE Centre provides a pipeline of 'work-ready' staff for local employers who require specifically trained teams to fill the skills gap; providing a sustainable, long-term and modern workforce for the construction industry and related services.

The project brings together employers, trainers and educators to address the issues faced by the Construction Engineering sector as defined by the recent Farmer Review of the UK Construction Labour model.

This state-of-the-art facility includes a revolutionary 'Digital Lab' featuring a Virtual Reality classroom, 3D printing facilities and industry-standard workshop equipment, and provides training opportunities for up to 350 students on full time study

programmes, professional development courses for adult students and Apprenticeships.

The new facilities were designed in collaboration with leading employer partners in response to high-volume growth in the local enterprise partnership region's economy – particularly the need for specialist and higher-level skills responding to the Strategic Economic growth plans for sustainable housing in both the public and private sectors. Specifically, the centre will respond to the target to build sufficient new homes – with 130,000 planned in the decade to 2025/26.

The ACE Centre addresses the emerging gaps between employer demands for new skills in this growth area of the STEM curriculum, and the existing baseline of 16-18 and 19-24 age groups. It also demonstrates a measurable impact on the contribution to the economic growth of the region in terms of overall productivity by increasing the volume of viable and relevant higher skilled employees in this sector.

Major companies, including Kier, Bowmer & Kirkland, Metcalfe's and the Murphy Group, act as industry-based partners, helping to produce a new generation of highly-skilled, high quality students, with the technical abilities and soft skills required by the sector.

The College's engineering programmes are aimed at tackling the skills gaps in the region, with a focus on supporting students into meaningful work or progression to higher level programmes. Courses are offered from Level 1 to Level 5 (HNC/D) and there is new provision for adults 19+ in Electric/Hybrid Vehicle Maintenance and Repair.

There is a central focus on STEM, and the College hosts a series of events under its 'Ignite the Spark' initiative which aims to boost the number of young people involved in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and digital subjects.

The transition to a green economy also requires a workforce with the right skills and the College is shaping its curriculum to support this.

The creative sector makes a significant contribution to the local economy and the number of jobs associated with this curriculum area (music performance, production and performing, and production arts) is expected to grow. The College offers courses from Level 1 to Level 5 (HNC/D) has excellent links with industry practitioners, companies, artists, and educators who regularly visit the college to provide workshops and talks to support students in their next chapter as creative professionals.

The excellent facilities enable the students to work at industry standard, with the same expectations for subject knowledge, specialist and technical skills and professional behaviours. In 2022, 87% of music and performing arts students progressed to HE or specialist training, and the remaining students found employment or secured positions within the industry.

The business sector has been cited by SEMLEP as the top occupational group with the highest number of employment opportunities and there is a projected increase in the number of jobs available over the next few years. The College has expanded its provision in business and finance to meet local demand with pathways in marketing, events management, finance, and HR/Law.

Part-time professional courses in Human Resource Practice and Leadership and Management are also offered for adults ages 19+.

The College has also recently launched a new course in international supply chain logistics which aims to demystify the sector, shining a light on much-needed skills such as IT, management skills and business admin rather than focusing purely on assumed roles such as fork-lift driving and warehousing.

The health/social work industry is the second largest in the SEMLEP area with a total of 86,000 employees, and there is a significant increase projected in the number of jobs available by 2027. The College is working closely with the NHS and other local healthcare providers to ensure students leave college with the skills required by the sector. These additional skills often extend beyond the study programme and are developed in conjunction with employers as part of work experience or through enrichment opportunities. 85% of students in this area progress to higher education and 15% find jobs within the industry.

The College is currently developing its curriculum to meet national demand in the Life Sciences sector to support the development of a skilled workforce. It is a growing sector with significant skills gaps ranging across all roles from research and development scientists, data science and informatics, bioprocessing specialists, regulatory professionals and clinical experts.

T Levels are gradually being introduced and the College is adding a further three subjects to its portfolio from September 2023 in Business Management and Administration, Digital Support Services and Onsite Construction.

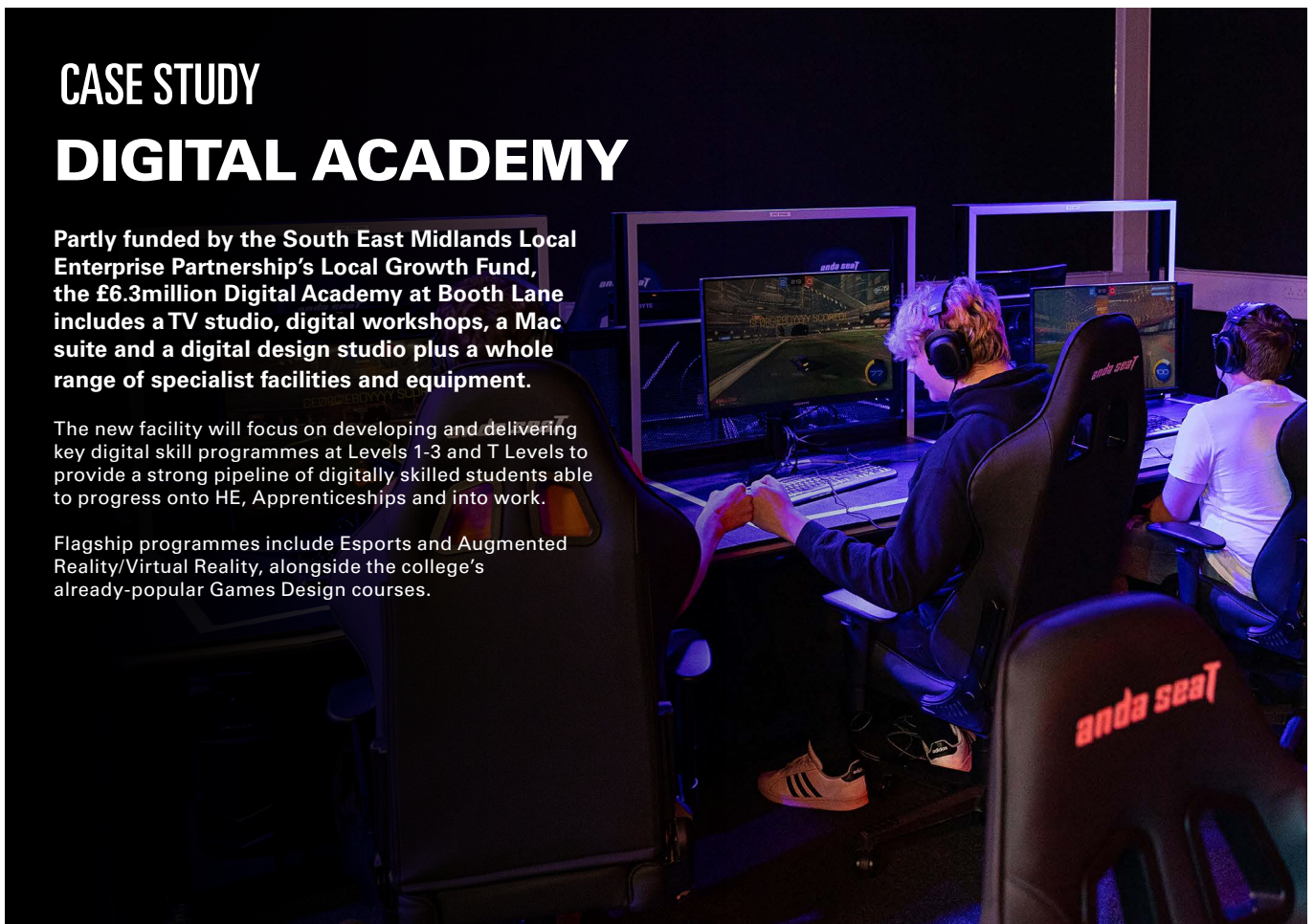
CASE STUDY

DIGITAL ACADEMY

Partly funded by the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership's Local Growth Fund, the £6.3million Digital Academy at Booth Lane includes a TV studio, digital workshops, a Mac suite and a digital design studio plus a whole range of specialist facilities and equipment.

The new facility will focus on developing and delivering key digital skill programmes at Levels 1-3 and T Levels to provide a strong pipeline of digitally skilled students able to progress onto HE, Apprenticeships and into work.

Flagship programmes include Esports and Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality, alongside the college's already-popular Games Design courses.





STRATEGIC PLANNING CYCLE

The key to our business planning process lies within our strategic priorities and key performance goals. These are informed by our self-assessment process, regional and national priorities and economic drivers.



STRATEGIC AIMS

1. Quality, teaching, learning, skills

Quality remains paramount. Our highest priority is to ensure that our students achieve well and grow during their time in college so that they are ready to move on with confidence into further study, employment or self-employment.

We will:

- Offer a portfolio of provision for 16 to 18-year-olds, adults, university level and apprentices which is current and equips students with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to readily support progression in education and/or employment
- Devise an employer-led curriculum that anticipates local skills trends and provides a pipeline of talent to shape the future skills landscape
- Develop a wider choice of flexible education and training that enables learners from all backgrounds to progress and succeed
- Strive for excellence across all areas of delivery and sustain the existing good practices which have elevated the College into the top 10% within National Achievement Rate data
- Stretch, challenge and inspire our students and close achievement gaps and experience deficits for different groups of students
- Remain the leading college in the region by providing an outstanding experience of teaching, learning and assessment

2. Be an excellent learning organisation

Our aim is to use the resources available to us in the most efficient way possible so that we develop and grow through effective planning.

We will:

- Recruit, retain and develop a highly engaged, flexible and high-performing workforce
- Be an exceptional employer and ensure staff feel valued, engaged and challenged
- Respond to the changing environment by using data, research and information effectively to influence sound business planning
- Promote a culture of sustainability throughout the organisation
- Continue to invest in world-class learning environments

3. Be the college in the community – drive productivity and grow the economy

We are passionate about our community. The College belongs to Northamptonshire and exists to serve the interests of local people. We will listen carefully to the communities we serve and develop our offer alongside other organisations to make sure we support wider economic prosperity and productivity.

We will:

- Ensure our values reflect a college where all staff and students are successful and able to thrive
- Develop the College's reputation through outstanding outcomes for students and employers
- Give our students an outstanding opportunity to reach their potential
- Develop the curriculum map to meet the needs of our community and the local and national skills priorities
- Listen and respond to the needs of our customers and develop our offer to make sure we support wider economic prosperity and productivity

4. Remain financially stable

We will:

- Achieve the college's overall financial plan to allow sustained investment in resources and infrastructure, and the financial resilience to continue to thrive in challenging times
- Deliver sustainable staff costs by maximising operational efficiency and staff utilisation
- Improve efficiency in business support areas by investing in technology that enables better productivity and streamlining administrative processes.
- Improve efficiency, reduce costs, improve resource utilisation and effectively target staff expertise and skill
- Ensure targets are met for enrolment and retention coupled with high levels of achievement and progression





Booth Lane
Northampton NN3 3RF
Tel: **01604 734567**

Daventry
Badby Road West, Daventry NN11 4HJ
Tel: **01604 736393**

Lower Mounts
Northampton NN1 3DE
Tel: **01604 736200**

E: enquiries@northamptoncollege.ac.uk

www.northamptoncollege.ac.uk



 **Northampton**
College