

# STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2019-2022

## MISSION

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

## VISION

### We will work:

- To raise ambitions and expectations
- To raise levels of knowledge and skills
- To improve employment
- To improve community cohesion

### We will do this through:

- The provision of education and training which meets the needs of students, other customers and employers
- The consistent improvement of quality and student achievement
- Continuous improvement and development of resources and staff
- Be excellent in a competitive market
- Delivering the local industrial strategy

## VALUES

Northampton College helps people achieve their potential by...

- Respecting and helping each other
- Engaging people through teaching with expertise and enthusiasm
- Developing people through learning
- Bringing out the best in each other
- Playing a positive role in our community



## INTRODUCTION FROM THE PRINCIPAL

**Northampton College is going from strength to strength, with Ofsted officially rating the college as 'good' with outstanding features. We are also one of the leading colleges in the country, and the leading provider of further education in the South East Midlands with excellent financial health and good governance.**

All of us at Northampton College are passionate about our students; we place them at the centre of all our activity. We have exceptionally high standards of teaching, training and assessment, combined with outstanding student support enabling each student to make good progress.

There is a culture of high expectation and high achievement with 95% of students passing their qualifications, and 94% progressing into employment or further study. We work closely with many partners for the benefit of our students.

We are committed to developing the professional and technical skills of our students, who are the workforce of the future and the next generation of industry leaders. We will deliver the region's industrial strategy. We pride ourselves on the support we offer employers through our Business Centre. Our Apprenticeship offer spans 800 employers and is tailored to our local and regional industries. We aim to support the labour market by making good use of everybody's talent, and strengthening and challenging our students to reach their potential.

As the education sector experiences radical changes in funding and education reform, this Strategic Plan provides greater clarity of direction reflecting both opportunities and challenges. As part of the process, we have involved our Governors, partners, employers, students and staff. Northampton College is a central resource for our community. We play an important role in reforming our region. We aim to be excellent in all we do and seek to extend our reputation nationally.

The most important part of our plan is our vision to be crystal clear about our ambition to be an outstanding college. We will use simple and straightforward language that gets to the point concisely, we will come up with concepts that challenges all of us to be the best we can be. We will ask

**'How can we change our college to an outstanding learning organisation?'**

This will have an overarching influence on what we do in a competitive landscape: we will differentiate our product to meet the needs of our current and future students.

Pat Brennan-Barrett



## CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

The college has a curriculum map that spans a wide range of subjects from Entry Level to Level 4, including programmes for students with learning difficulties and or disabilities, to those on higher education (HE) courses. The College also offers a wide range of training programmes for small and large employers. We have developed a dynamic employer engagement strategy which responds to local and regional businesses. Approximately 30,000 businesses are situated in Northamptonshire.

Over the last five years, there have been unprecedented challenges within the national and global economy. We expect similar challenges as we leave the European Union and have started to prepare for that. We are embedding our new curriculum with key local employers, we are actively exploring alternative funding routes and we are stressing the importance of the College in improving the competitiveness of the Northamptonshire economy, helping to meet the skills gap and fulfil the needs of employers now and into the future.

Developments in government policy have resulted in significant changes for the education sector and its funding. Northampton College has a central role to play in supporting the local industrial strategy to boost economic productivity for its communities and employers. We deliver a responsive curriculum that will ensure that we are meeting the needs of our county, surrounding areas and the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership.

Northampton College's purpose is to provide high quality further education, training and associated services to people and businesses in Northamptonshire.

**The College's mission is to enhance the lives of our students and other customers, maximising their potential through learning.**

Over the next three years we will build on our good foundations to further develop the College as a centre of excellence for our customers including young people aged 14-19, adults, apprentices, Higher Education students, partners and businesses. We will develop new ways of working with existing partners and find new partners; we will build our capacity to respond to the people of Northamptonshire, so that we can better serve our community. We will continue to improve our levels of efficiency within the market.

## RECENT PROGRESS

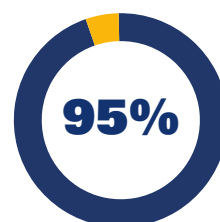
Northampton College has completely re-developed its campuses in Northamptonshire delivering state of the art facilities for the local community. Working in partnership with SEMLEP and Daventry District Council our new college building opened in Daventry in 2016. Further sponsorship from SEMLEP has enabled us to build a new Advanced Construction Engineering Centre at Booth Lane which will open in July 2019. Ofsted has confirmed that we are a 'good' college with outstanding features.

**Ninety-five per cent of our students passed their qualifications and 94% went onto further study or employment.**

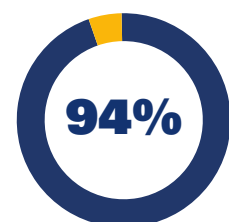
The national authority on quality and standards in higher education has awarded Northampton College with the highest possible rating for the delivery of its programmes in the Arts and initial teacher training.

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) judged that they had full confidence in its management of standards and quality.

Northampton College has won the highest accolade in the country for seven years running following its response to the national Reading Ahead Challenge organised by The Reading Agency. The College has collected Gold Awards every year since 2012 for the highest level of engagement with the scheme in the UK. The College is proud to hold the prestigious Association of Colleges (AoC) Beacon Award for the Effective Integration of Libraries in Curriculum Delivery. More than 30 colleges from around the country have now visited our state of the art library to find out about this project that is designed to help students develop research and study skills.



**of our students passed their qualifications**



**of our students went onto further study or employment**



## Innovation and Change

To ensure we can meet the needs of our students and partners, we have implemented a new IT infrastructure, new project management system and a leadership change management programme. We evolve our innovative curriculum map to mirror advances in our economy, business and industry for example our creative development of transferable construction skills in our new construction, engineering programme and introducing tattoo illustration.

## Higher Education

**Policy change from government allows new entrants into this market.**

In response to our Local Enterprise Partnership priorities, we have initiated a new Higher Education Strategy providing more choice and flexibility at Level 4 and above. We aim to grow our Higher Education offer to complement our extensive curriculum map and offer clear progression routes for Level 3 students.

Our new Higher National Certificates and Diplomas are accredited by The University of Northampton, The University of Warwick and Pearson.

## Schools

We aim to work with partner schools, building on strong relationships and developing others to strengthen the education for 14-19 year olds in Northamptonshire. In the future, we will invest in our support. As part of our inclusion strategy, we will work with parents, carers and partners to support disadvantaged groups, looked after children and those with disability, to improve their life chances.



## Our successes

- ▶ Data released as part of the latest 2017/18 National Achievement Rates Tables (NART) shows Northampton College is ranked 11th out of more than 200 colleges for 16 to 18-year-old education and training.  
  
That represents a rise of 198 places in the rankings in just four years, to become the leading provider of Further Education in the South East Midlands and among the very best in the whole country.  
  
The data has revealed that 95 per cent of Northampton College students pass their course, coming out as the best college in the South East Midlands region for achievement at level 1, 2 and 3. Performance in maths and English is also well above the national average. The data backs up the findings of a recent Ofsted inspection which rated the college as 'Good with Outstanding features'.
- ▶ The latest maths GCSE re-sit results have summed up a stunning year for Northampton College – with 83 per cent of 16 to 18-year-olds achieving a pass at grade 4 or better. The results are significantly above the national average for Further Education colleges. English also performed well, gaining re-sit marks at well above the national average. The full set of results show that, overall, 71 per cent of all those taking the November re-sits of GCSE maths at Northampton College – including those aged 19 and over – achieved a good grade pass.
- ▶ Two Northampton College students have been handpicked and appointed by one of the world's leading infrastructure companies, Balfour Beatty. Bradley Foley, 16, and 18-year-old Thomas Skinner, both Level 3 Civil Engineering students, have started industrial placements at the company's UK headquarters on Brackmills Industrial Estate, where they are now combining three days of classroom learning in college with two days on-site work experience.
- ▶ Northampton College's Student Governor has won a national film-making award for a piece explaining the importance of voting for young people. Ada Stone landed first prize in the National Association for Managers of Student Services (NAMSS) annual film competition, fending off competition from colleges from up and down the country. The judging panel was so impressed with Ada's film that it was shortlisted alongside entries from Burnley College and Cardiff and Vale College to receive an award at the NAMSS annual conference gala dinner at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, in Birmingham.
- ▶ A carefully crafted social media campaign to promote a classic sandwich has landed a group of Northampton College students £500 in Amazon vouchers. Level 3 business students Hannah Ferrin, Callum Buck, Verity Rust and Millicent Wincott teamed up to produce a fresh, low fat, take on the classic bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwich, which saw them reach the regional finals of a competition to create a new product for High Street fast food giant Subway. Their campaign to 'bring back the BLT' and see their healthy handcrafted sandwich sold in Subway stores across the region was an overall runner-up but they were named winners of the award for 'Best Social Media Campaign'.

Two Northampton College students have seen their work exhibited as part of an international display having been honoured by one of the leading bodies in cutting-edge fashion. Millinery students Olivia Dugmore and Lucy Dodd saw their hats featured in an exhibition curated by three judges of the annual competition held by The Worshipful Company of Feltmakers – a specialist body set up to champion the art and design of headwear across the world. ‘Unveiled - The Craft of Millinery’ was supported by the Feltmakers Livery and took place at The ArtWorkers Guild as part of London Craft Week. Olivia’s hat won second prize in the overall competition while Lucy was named the winner of the artwork and presentation category.

### Strategic planning cycle

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



## A Theatre for Learning:

### Priorities and strategic aims

#### 1. Quality teaching and learning – excellence for all

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:

- Place students at the centre of all our activities
- Be the leaders for learning within the region
- Provide an outstanding experience of teaching, learning and assessment
- Stretch, challenge and inspire our students and each other
- Build knowledge, skills, character and resilience
- Improve continuously through innovation – sharing ideas, supporting each other to improve
- Be an outstanding learning organisation
- Remain the leading College in the region.

#### 2. Be an effective learning organisation

Resources continue to be constrained by the national climate of austerity. 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:

- Achieve the college’s overall financial plan by ensuring that commercial reality drives decisions and directions
- Detail financial forecasting, market research: respond to opportunities
- Ensure sound business planning
- Use data, research and information effectively
- Maximise operational efficiency
- Promote a culture of sustainability throughout the organisation
- Continue to invest in world-class learning environments
- Respond to the changing environment.

#### 3. Be the college in the community – drive 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:

- Give our students an outstanding opportunity to reach their potential
- Develop unique capabilities through unique innovation in learning
- Penetrate new markets to ensure our growth strategy
- Develop the curriculum map for our community and local industrial strategy priorities – apprentices develop entrepreneurship and employment skills
- Deliver a skilled workforce through upskilling technical and professional workers
- Identify and respond to the needs of our customers
- Develop the College reputation through outstanding outcomes for students and employers
- Continue to build a complementary offer aligned with the needs of the region’s economic landscape.



## About Northamptonshire

**Northamptonshire has been identified by the Centre for Cities as one of the best places in the UK to start a business.**

**The economy is showing strong growth with turnover amongst the Top 100 private companies increasing by 5.6% in 2018 to £6bn according to Grant Thornton. Northamptonshire aims to grow its economy to £20bn overall by 2020.**

**Growth in the economy will be supported by £265m of government growth fund investment that will help deliver 32,500 new jobs, attract 1,600 new businesses and see the provision of 33,000 new homes in the County.**

The County is home to many significant brands and international companies including Barclaycard, Carlsberg UK, Mercedes-AMG, Weetabix and Cosworth. It hosts a high concentration of high performance technology businesses and supports key sectors such as logistics, food and drink and creative and cultural industries.

Employment levels are rising and increased by 1.4% in 2018 to 0.6% above the national average. Unemployment is at its lowest rate for six years across all the County's towns.

Northamptonshire has one of the fastest growing populations in the country and 82% of its residents are economically active (compared with a national average of 78.5%). The proportion of the population claiming out-of-work benefits is slightly below the national average at 1.8%.

In terms of educational attainment, the County lags behind the rest of the UK with lower levels than average qualified at Level 4 or above.

The County benefits from the support of the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) who are responsible for promoting economic growth in Daventry and Northampton. Its remit also extends as far south as Aylesbury and as far north as Corby.

SEMLEP also aims to increase the number of Apprenticeships in the region as part of the development of the Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone.



## The College's offer

**The College offers a broad range of full-time and part-time courses, many funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the European Social Fund (ESF). In addition, it provides higher education courses in conjunction with the University of Northampton, The University of Warwick and Pearson, and provides support for a range of other organisations including the voluntary sector.**

The curriculum offers programmes from within the following Subject Sector Areas (SSAs);

- Accounting
- Arts, Media and Publishing
- Beauty Therapy
- Business, Administration and Law
- Construction and the Built environment
- Education and Training
- Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies
- English and Mathematics
- ESOL
- Fashion
- Foundation Learning
- Hairdressing
- Health, Care and Public Services
- History, Philosophy and Theology
- Hospitality and Catering
- Information and Digital Technology
- Languages, Literature and Culture
- Leisure, Travel and Tourism
- Logistics
- Preparation for Life and Work
- Science
- Social Sciences
- Sport plus The Crystal Palace Football Academy
- Supported Learning

All full-time students follow a comprehensive Study Programme that includes a main qualification (BTEC and similar qualifications) which helps them prepare for employment, apprenticeships or university.

In addition, as part of the Study Programme, students continue studying maths and English and work towards a qualification if they haven't already achieved a GCSE in both subjects at Grade 4 or above. Study Programmes also include work placements and enterprise activities and students are helped to develop their employability skills through work experience.

For young people, the College offers a unique experience with opportunities to embrace greater independence and self-reliance while they continue to be supported.

For adults looking for career advancement or those returning to work, there are a number of options for gaining qualifications either in the workplace or through part-time study in the evening and at weekends. The College offers a popular Access to HE programme for which those aged over 24 can apply for a student loan, funded by the government, to pay for the cost of their course.

The College works with hundreds of employers and has developed advisory boards that help keep us informed about the latest industry requirements on education and training. Our aim is to be sufficiently flexible and agile so that we can respond to the changing needs of businesses and design our offer for the local market. Our apprenticeship programmes are designed to include technical skills development at work with experienced mentors, learning technical knowledge off the job, further developing English, mathematics and digital skills as well as building work ethics.

The College exists to serve everyone within our communities and that includes providing a service to those who may have missed out on education in their earlier years. Our Skills Centres in Northampton and Daventry offer help with maths, English and IT skills at flexible times to suit people who work. We are also pleased to welcome those who have been referred from Jobcentre Plus with whom we have been working to provide job-search skills, CV-writing and interview techniques.



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