

WQE Accountability Statement

Statement of Purpose

Our mission and vision at WQE is summarised below:

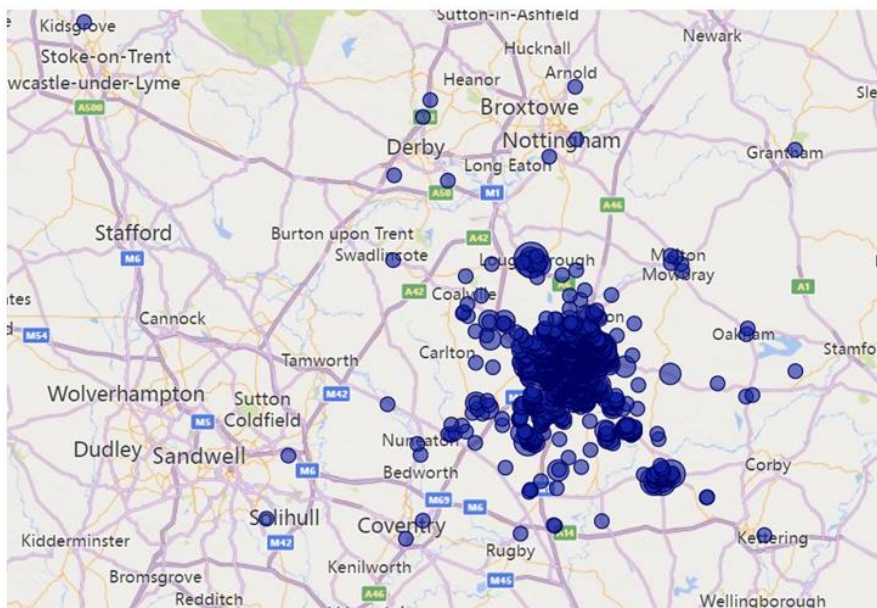
To inspire, prepare and develop young professionals, through the provision of appropriate, responsive and excellent post-16 educational opportunities.			
Qualifications & Academic Success	Personal Development	Experiences & Skills	Support for Progression to HE &/or Professional Careers
Responding to the ambitious young people, communities, schools, universities and employers of Leicester and Leicestershire			
Sharing and living by our values of Community, Challenge, Commitment, Curiosity and Consideration			

A more detailed statement of this mission and vision informs our strategic and operational planning. The [mission and vision statement](#) is published to our website and is regularly reviewed by the Corporation.

Context and Place

WQE is a large twin-site sixth form college, centrally located in the city of Leicester, which is a city served primarily by 11-16 secondary schools.

- Within the city, WQE operates alongside a large Further Education College and two 16-19 academies, collectively providing a broad range of academic, vocational and technical education in the local area.
- Across the two main campuses there is a student body of 3,800 students, making the College one of the largest sixth form providers in England.
- The college recruits from both the city of Leicester and the wider county of Leicestershire as well as into Northamptonshire and Warwickshire (see below)



- The college’s annual income from all sources is slightly in excess of £20 million and we have improving student outcomes.
- The college’s most recent Ofsted inspection was in April 2024 where we received a Grade 2 for Overall Effectiveness.

Curriculum development is primarily focussed on responding to the local demographic and their educational needs within the scope of the College’s overarching mission and vision to prepare and develop young professionals. The offer is planned in order to ensure a coherent range of mainly classroom-based pathways, offering extensive choice and flexibility to access appropriately personalised programmes for mainly full-time 16-18 year olds. Effective initial information, advice and guidance, allied to a highly effective provision of careers advice, supports students in planning for and achieving successful progression beyond the College. As part of our vision to prepare young professionals, lessons increasingly see a focus upon relevant knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skills, including reference to the world of work, that will be important in preparing students both for HE and/or their future careers as young professionals in the workplace. For qualification delivery the College is split in to nine curriculum areas, in addition we work with two external partners to provide specialist Dance and Musical Theatre provision. The proportional spread of provision in terms of the time spent by students studying subjects in the curriculum area is outlined in the table below.

Curriculum Area	Percentage Spread of Provision
Biology, Chemistry and Applied Science	11%
Business, Economics and Accounting	17%
English and Languages	7%
Health and Sport	8%
Humanities	10%
Mathematics	5%
Media, Visual and Performing Arts	13%
Physics, Computing and ICT	12%
Social Science	17%

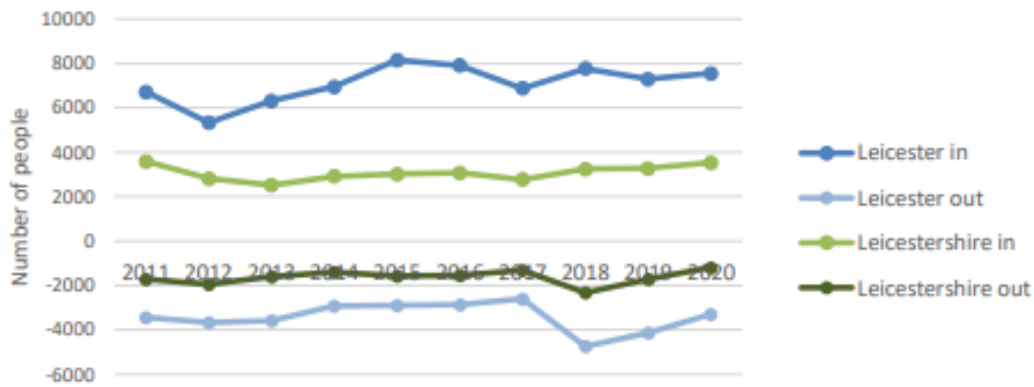
We have a small number of students with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) and/or High Needs, and a significant number of students with Exam Access Arrangements and/or Additional Learning Support. Our welfare and skills team works closely with our curriculum and support teams to help students achieve their full potential academically and their subsequent progression.

Local Context and Socio-Economic Characteristics

The college enjoys an enviable position as one of the most diverse Sixth Form Colleges, including in terms of socio-economic backgrounds, prior achievement profiles, ethnicities, cultures and faiths.

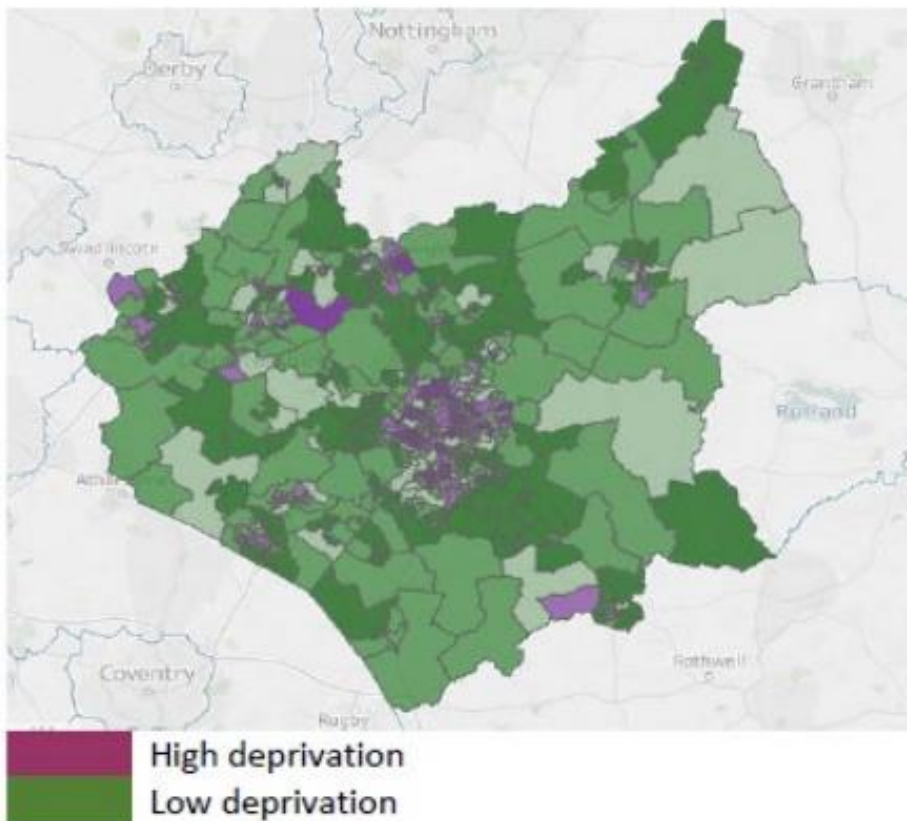
Leicester city has a population of 368,800, with a 59% ethnic minority population and 71% of school pupils are from non-White British backgrounds. Furthermore, the proportion of Leicester residents who were born outside the UK is one of the highest outside London at 41% and 30% of the population has a language other than English as their main language. The Future of the Workforce in Leicester and Leicestershire report (LLEP/De-Montfort University) also highlights that significant inward international migration has been a key feature over the past 10 years in the City and County, as outlined in the chart below.

Figure 7: Long term international migration into and out of Leicester and Leicestershire since 2011 (all people over 16).



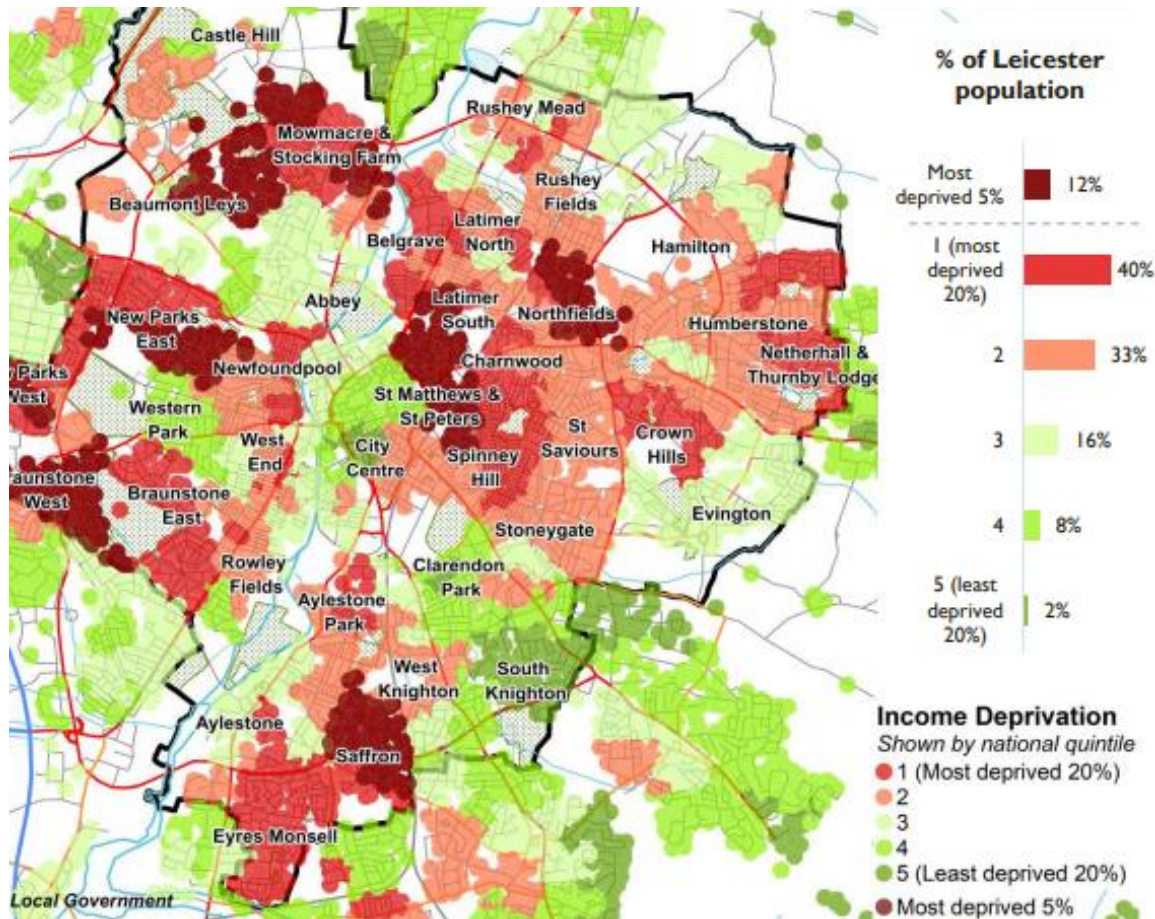
Our responsiveness to the diverse needs of our student population and the pathways WQE provides are important in continuing to enable level three success for young people and narrowing the gaps that exists between local and national educational outcomes after key stage 4, as well as supporting progression to Higher Education and/or professional careers. This has an important role to play in raising local aspirations, enabling social mobility and helping young people to break cycles of deprivation.

The LLEP Skills Evidence Base Summary 2020 highlights that there is a stark contrast between city and county deprivation levels, with 20.3% of city neighbourhoods in the most deprived 10% nationally. This is highlighted in the image below with the highest concentration of deprived neighbourhoods in the city and the central areas closest to the College.



When focussing in on the city area in greater detail, see the image overleaf, areas from which the greatest proportions of students travel to learn, this highlights the 7% of students reside in areas representing the highest

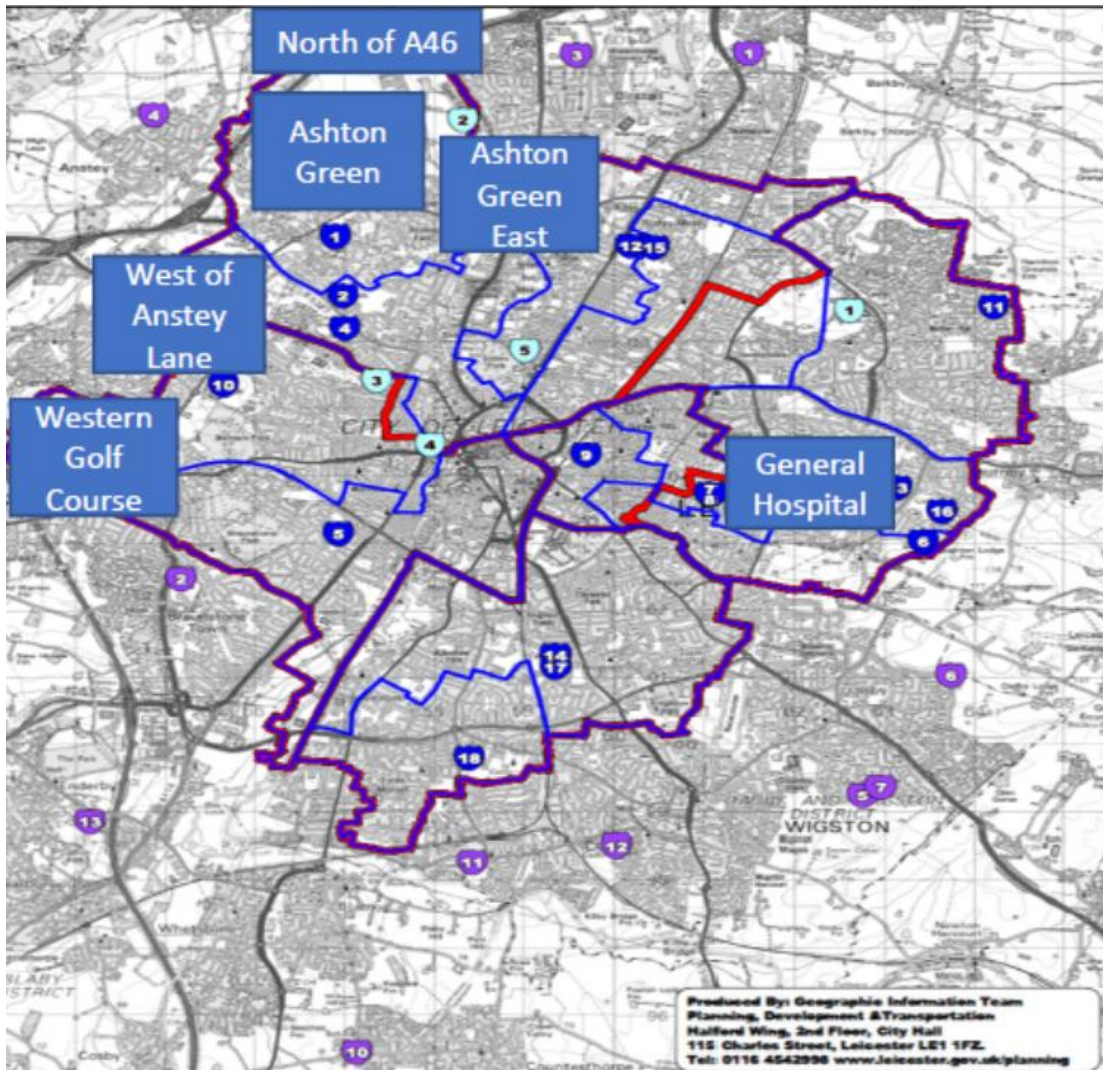
Index of Multiple Deprivation category nationally and 35% are in the most deprived quintile nationally. Furthermore, in terms of Income Deprivation outlined in the map below, 12% of students reside in areas representing the highest Income Deprivation category nationally and 40% are in the most deprived quintile nationally ([Source: IMD 2019 Map Pack for Leicester](#)). This ranks Leicester as the 18th most deprived region nationally, with some specific hotspots of extreme deprivation served by the College within this. Income deprivation in households with children in Leicester is even greater with 16% living in an area in one of the most deprived 5% nationally.



Analysis of the level 3 student cohort demonstrates the continuing importance of our work and mission to enable level 3 success and higher education progression, based on Polar 3 categories. 64% of subject level enrolments to Level 3 courses in 2020/21 were students whose area of residence was in the lowest ranked areas for having prior family history of HE progression (Polar Quintiles 4 and 5). Furthermore, this proportion was higher for those enrolled in STEM subjects (69%).

Polar 3 Category	1	2	3	4	5
	13%	11%	12%	30%	34%

The city of Leicester and the wider county continue to grow in terms of population and ONS data projects that this growth will accelerate over the next five years and beyond. There are substantial housing developments planned within the City of Leicester in coming years, all of which will potentially further increase demand for the core provision of the College. The map below outlines the expected areas of strategic housing development with the Local Plan. WQE is well positioned at the heart of the City within easy travel to learn distances of these developments, outlined in the map below.



Economic and Skills Needs

The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise partnership (LLEP) has led locally on the identification of skills needs, areas of strength and opportunities to support growth.

The recent LLEP Skills 2022-24 report [LLEP-Skills-Plan-2022-24.pdf](#) highlights some of the key local priorities and actions for Leicester and Leicestershire, based on their Local Economic Growth Plan. The report recognises that there is a key need to respond to workforce trends and to take steps to future proof the local workforce. This is summarised in the graphic below and includes an emphasis on replacement demands in the largest sectors arising from an ageing population, attracting workers to growth sectors and roles, the likelihood of more high skilled jobs, a need more level 4+ qualified workers and responding to changing technology needs. Digital skills, Core life skills and behaviours are also reflected as being key to future workplace needs.

Future work:	Future proofing the workforce:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mega trends are happening now – digital, low carbon, ageing population • New ways of working (including flexible time and place) • Multiple job and career changes • Planning for jobs that don't exist • Demographic trends impacting labour supply • More high skilled jobs and increased use of technology • Automation of routine jobs • The future of globalisation is unclear with technology, geopolitics and supply chains all being disrupting forces in recent years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound base of digital skills • More Level 4+ qualified workers • Lifelong learning, In-work training and reskilling • Core life skills and behaviours • Inclusivity • Local skills ecosystem to support the diverse economy of the LLEP • Sound evidence base of workforce requirements • Attracting workers to growth sectors and roles • Maximising awareness of local skills offers

The report also states “Common skills, also referred to as soft skills or Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) are increasingly demanded by employers who feel young people are not always work-ready despite strong academic achievements”. Our focus on preparing young professionals, alongside enabling the academic achievements to support level 4+ progression and/or professional careers also forms a key part of the College’s response to local and changing skills needs. The Chamber of Commerce has developed the Local Skills Improvement Plan and the approach to this is based upon a trailblazer project with an emphasis on key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours. The college engaged directly in this work and is seeking to align the outcomes with our curriculum approach and implementation.

The Leicester and Leicestershire Local Skills Improvement Plan for 2023-24 identifies as one of its strategic priorities Partnering with Further Education Colleges and others on the continued development of an education and skills offering that responds to local businesses. The information available via the Local Chamber of Commerce [Insight Unlocked website](#) and linked [Leicester and Leicestershire Collective Intelligence Skills Observatory](#) identifies the following:

- The most important knowledge area for future people needs is advanced literacy
- The top six skills identified are
 - Verbal communication
 - Team working
 - Written communication
 - Critical Thinking
 - Time management
 - Management and leadership
- The key behaviours identified are
 - Collaborative
 - Hard working
 - Resilience
 - Integrity
 - Self-motivation
 - Reliable
 - Polite and courteous
 - Flexibility
 - Eager to learn
 - Commitment and quality focus

- Adaptability
- Innovative
- Assertive and confident
- Curiosity

The culture and ethos of WQE and our commitment to developing students as young professionals who then contribute to the local, regional and national means that we consistently produce students with advanced levels of literacy and oracy. Our students also exhibit many of the valuable skills and behaviours outlined above. These are developed via our planned holistic approach to student development.

The Leicester Cultural and Creative Strategy Interim Summary Report (July 2023) – places priority on the growth and development of this sector, as well as highlighting the importance of workforce and skills development to support the associated industries. E.g. “Staff shortages and increased operating costs (including energy) threatens sustainability of some venue-based cultural organisations”; “Leicester’s universities, colleges, schools and creative businesses develop pathways into creative employment which are effective, innovative and accessible to all. They work in partnership to build a workforce which contains the convergent creative and technical skills for growth and is representative of the plurality of diversity which exists across the city.” At the heart of the City’s emerging vision for Cultural and Creative Industries it is recognised that “Leicester is an exemplar of diverse arts practice, working collaboratively to develop a cultural offer that inspires and delights. It engages local audiences that reflect the city and delivers global impacts across live and convergent media platforms.” WQE contributes strongly to equipping students with the skills needed for this area via our vibrant and successful Media and Creative Arts curriculum as well as our strong partnership arrangements with Studio79 and Leicester College of Performing Arts. There has also been considerable recent capital investment at the college to update product design workshop equipment so that students are learning the skills needed by 21st Century creatives.

The LLEP Skills Evidence Base (Jan 2020) highlights key business growth areas based on business numbers in the LLEP area. WQE already makes a substantial contribution to learning relevant to many of these areas, especially in Financial and Professional, which is one of the largest and fastest growing in terms of business numbers. The LLEP also produced a series of Sector Skills Profiles (April 2021) highlighting key sectors for the local economy. These covered the following and are referred to directly in the sector skills plan 2022-24:

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Low Carbon | • Digital Technology and Communications |
| • Agri Food and Drink | • Health and Social Care |
| • Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering | • Life Sciences and Biotech |
| • Aerospace and Satellite Technology | • Logistics and Distribution |
| • Construction and Development | • Professional and Financial Services |
| • Creative and Cultural | • Retail and Wholesale |
| • Sport and Physical Activity | • Tourism and Hospitality |
| • Textiles and Fashion | |

The College curriculum, in supporting the preparation of young professionals qualified to level 3 and ready to progress to level 4 and beyond, contributes to many of these sector needs, with substantial classroom-based provision enabling progression in STEM subjects, Creative and Cultural, Sport and Physical Activity, Textiles and Fashion, Health and Care, as well as Business, Economics and Finance.

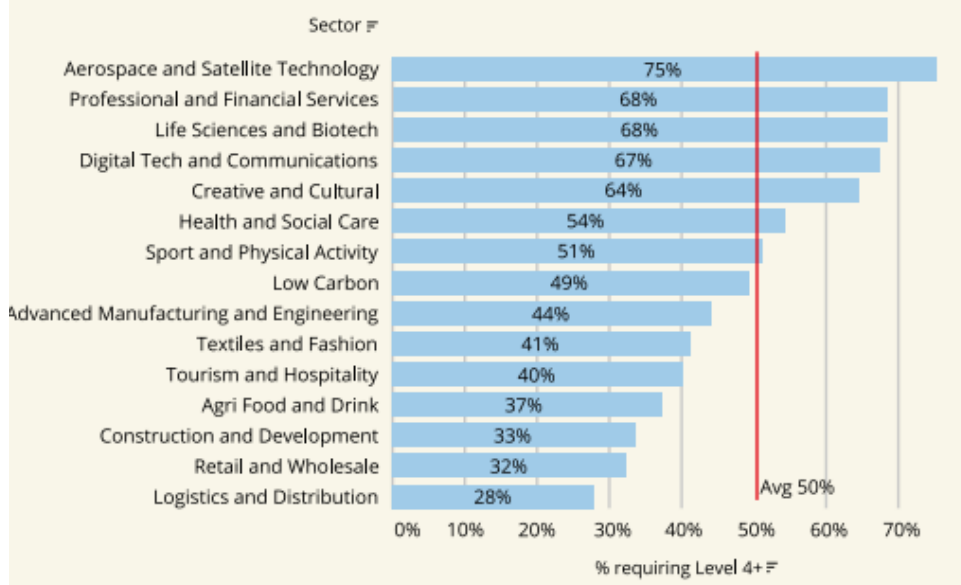
For example, the sector profile for Professional and Financial Services (including green finance and innovation) outlines that the sector is worth £3.6bn and accounting for 78,900 jobs. It reports that Leicester and Leicestershire is home to a large and increasing professional and financial services presence, with the third fastest growing professional workforce in the country. The seven areas with a percentage of jobs requiring above average numbers needing level 4+ qualifications are highlighted below and the College curriculum is intended to

align well with these sector areas too, especially in STEM, Professional and Financial, Creative and Cultural, Health and Social Care as well as Sport and Physical Activity.

The LLEP skills evidence base 2020 also summarises the key sector areas by volume of businesses and anticipated growth as below, with Financial and Professional again a headline sector, with business support services also featuring significantly, alongside Public Administration, Education and Health, ICT and Digital, as well as Creative Industries. These are all sectors that link closely to the curriculum offer at WQE.

Sector	A ₂ +	No. of businesses	Sector growth
Financial and Professional		9,515	36%
Construction		4,585	21%
Public Admin, Education, Health		4,135	20%
Hospitality, Leisure and Recreation		3,660	21%
Business Support services		3,420	68%
ICT and Digital		2,440	44%
Transport		1,785	68%
Creative		1,290	21%
Warehousing and Logistics		730	51%
Utilities and Waste		195	30%

Percentage of jobs in sector requiring Level 4+ qualifications by 2024



Health and Social Care is the largest sector by employment and in absolute terms, with Human Health being the largest industry employer locally (37,290 expected to be employed by 2023) and this is c13% growth (LLEP Skills for the Future Report). At WQE, we have a range of vocational provision in Health and Social Care and we have as of September 2022 1279 individual enrolments in Health, and Sciences (including Biology and Chemistry). Many of these students go directly into employment in Health industries or into undergraduate courses in a broad range of Health and Health/Science-related courses. Health and Social Care is a large and increasingly important sector for Leicester and Leicestershire, given the need to manage and oversee a fast growing and aging population. The report outlines that skills needs in the sector are varied, ranging from highly technical, STEM-based skills – to oversee increasingly advanced, technology-led diagnosis and treatments – as well as softer, social and care-oriented skills. Leicester and Leicestershire is also home to the UK’s first Space Park with the area at the forefront of research and development, including satellite technology. Science and Technology has been identified by the

LLEP as an area of strength and need. A strong skills supply will be required to support excellence and growth and at WQE we are committed to continuing to shape young professionals with the technical, leadership and business skills required by these industries.

With the proposed national changes to the L3 curriculum, WQE is committed to continuing to offer a package of courses for students wanting to progress to careers in the health and social care sectors as this is both a local and national skills priority and recognises the need to further develop industry partnerships to support progression into level 4+ qualified professional careers in these areas.

Higher Education Progression:

Higher Education is the progression option that the large majority of our Level 3 leavers take up. In 2023 the proportion was 76%. Of these 24% obtained a place at one of the 'Sutton 30' most highly selective universities. The College makes a considerable contribution to the local undergraduate population with 638 of our leavers in 2023 taking up a place at a university that is within commuting distance of Leicester, this is 55% of those progressing to higher education in 2023. The College also makes an important contribution to local, regional and national skills priority areas with 65% of those who progressed to HE in 2023 starting courses which are linked to these skills areas.

Approach to Developing the Accountability Statement

WQE's development of programmes of study is focussed on responding to the local demographic and educational needs in order to ensure a coherent range of pathways, extensive choice and flexibility to personalised programmes. The college's mission and vision is to prepare and develop young professionals.

In developing this accountability statement the College has engaged directly with:

- The Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP)
 - The Careers Education Manager takes part in termly LLEP College Community of Practice meetings (meeting with the LLEP and other education representatives).
 - The Careers Education Manager takes part in termly LLEP Careers Hub meetings (meeting with the LLEP and key local partners and employers).
 - LLEP Skills Plan 2022-24 report used as part of the process to identify key local priorities.
- The East Midlands Chamber of Commerce (this is the body who developed the LSIP for Leicester & Leicestershire)
 - The Principal of the College sits on the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Skills Accountability Board.
 - The college has engaged both with the Trailblazer LSIP Report used as part of the process to identify key local priorities and provided regular feedback on the Insight Unlocked project.
 - Ongoing contact with the Chamber of Commerce lead on LSIP development giving regular updates and feedback on the LSIP.
 - Regular attendance by key college staff at the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce events: East Midlands People and Skills Summit June 2023; State of the Economy Conference Dec 2023; booked for East Midlands People and Skills Summit June 2024 for networking and to keep up to date with LSIP work.
- Local Higher Education Providers:
 - The Principal has engaged with representatives from the University of Leicester, De Montfort University and the City Council to develop our approach and responsiveness to L4+ workforce needs and about local graduate retention strategy. Collaboration between local Universities and the councils across Leicester and Leicestershire, through the Universities Partnership and

associated research relating to graduate retention also informs our approach and future commitments.

- The Associate Principal with oversight for progression and the Careers Education Manager are involved with an ongoing data tracking project with the University of Leicester(UoL) to gain insight in to the numbers of WQE students who graduate from the UoL and then remain locally employed.
- Key Local Employers: Mindra (Tech company), Mazars (Finance), Weightmans (Law), LabelAppel (SME representative); Rowleys (Accounting); Severn Trent.
- Regular attendance at national update events run by the Sixth Form College Association and Association of Colleges as well as reference to the National Skills priorities outlined in the DfE Accountability Agreement guidance paying particular regard to Professional and Financial Services (including green finance and innovation); Science, Technology and Mathematics; Creative and Cultural Industries; Health and Social Care; Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering; Digital Technology and Comms.

Nationally, as part of analysis within the Secretary of State’s productivity and skills board policy [report on current and future skills needs](#) (May 2022), it is identified that a set of ‘core transferable skills’ are currently in high demand. The report further highlights these are likely to continue being in high demand in the future, stating that, “These include communication skills, digital and data skills, application of knowledge skills, people skills, and mental processes. The report identifies that, “because these skills are valuable across a wide range of jobs, firms have weaker incentives to invest in them than in firm-specific skills.” The report goes on to recognise that, across all occupations, the skills that are expected to see the largest growth in importance are:

- STEM knowledge: including specialist skills such as medicine and dentistry, biology, science, therapy and counselling, and psychology.
- Skills related to educating and training others, as well as being an active post- 16 learner.
- People skills: including negotiation, persuasion, and resolving conflicts.
- Mental processes and application of knowledge skills: including critical and creative thinking, complex problem solving, and decision-making.

Contribution to national, regional, local priorities

Aims/Objectives	Target Outcomes
To continue to provide and strengthen a very good pathway to HE, with increasing numbers of students securing University places and Higher Apprenticeships, well informed by careers market information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the 2025 leavers 1090 students gain a place in HE; compared to 943 for the 2022 leavers. • For the 2025 leavers 30 students gain a place on a Higher Apprenticeship; compared to 19 for the 2022 leavers.
To increase the proportion of students gaining places at high tariff ‘Sutton 30’ Universities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the 2025 leavers an increase of 11 percentage points compared to 2022 (19%) in the proportion of students gaining a place at a Sutton 30 university. • To consolidate the support for students available via the Sutton 30 enrichment
To collaborate with local HE providers and stakeholders to make a distinctive contribution to the local graduate retention priority and to develop the college strategies to further improve future retention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue with local stakeholder group to include representatives from local HE. • To continue established data sharing project with University of Leicester to

	<p>track numbers of WQE students who stay local after graduating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of students being successful in getting offers from HE institutions within travelling distance from Leicester. 1050 of the 2025 leavers have at least one offer from a local university compared to 880 for the 2022 leavers. • Maintain established links between key courses with close collaboration with local HE providers.
To build and refine the study programme offer to recognise students' aspirations as young professionals, patterns of demand, and to enhance prospects for local and national professional employment, including through higher education progression and/or training linked to professional careers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an evaluation of the current programme of study to ensure that it continues to support key national and local priorities.* • Have actions and targets in place as part of the college's action planning to make identified areas for improvement.
To develop course level curriculum planning so that what students learn includes the development of subject specific skills that will make them well prepared for their preferred progression route.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Level 3 courses to have at least one well developed link with HE or employers that informs and influences the skills development of students on the course.
To further develop the Young Professionals Model to ensure our students have the skills, attributes and behaviours necessary for their next step in their career and to maximise their ability to respond to the local, regional and national opportunities and needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint 5 Curriculum Champions to lead on the further development of the Young Professionals Model. • Refine systems so that all students regularly review their Young Professionals Profile and have targets in place to improve in identified areas.
To embed stronger links with employers, including through the formation and piloting of 'Sector Career Academies' to -enable earlier and targeted engagement -develop structured activities as part of study programmes that connect employers in key local sectors with aspirational students, such as in Health, Care & Medical, Creative Industries and/or Digital Sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include key partners as part of the college's stakeholder group. • To develop enrichment offers to students that focus on particular careers. • To take part in Unbox Your Future Pilot with the LLEP to develop live briefs and interactions with employers for a wider range of students.
To increase the number of students gaining workplace related experiences, relevant exposure to future professional opportunities, and opportunities to develop career awareness and personal, social and employability skills more directly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To at least maintain improvements in the college's scores in Gatsby benchmarks 5 and 6. • Benchmark 5 (now at 100%, up from 88% in 2022). • Benchmark 6 (currently at 75%, up from 50% in 2022). • Take part in LLEP pilot of unbox your future project.
Shape and support remaining vocational curriculum delivery to incorporate opportunities for direct local employer engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify current opportunities and areas for development for employer engagement for courses where there are fewer opportunities for meaningful work experience.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have actions and targets in place as part of the relevant curriculum areas action planning to make identified areas for courses where there are fewer opportunities for meaningful work experience.
--	---

*Professional and Financial Services (including green finance and innovation); Science, Technology and Mathematics; Creative and Cultural Industries; Health and Social Care; Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering; Digital Technology and Comms.

Corporation Statement

On behalf of the WQE and Regent College Group corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the college plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the corporation. The process for approval and sign off was agreed at the meeting of the corporation on 22 May 2024. The final version was circulated for comment 3 June 2024 and then approved via Chair's sign off.

Chair of Corporation:

Date:

Hyperlink

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

Supporting Documentation

[WQE Mission and Vision statement](#)

[WQE Ofsted Report](#)

[LLEP Skills report 2022-24](#)

[LSIP](#)