

INTRODUCTION TO THE COLLEGE

OUR CONTEXT

WQE is a large, thriving and vibrant Sixth Form College providing courses for around 3800 students overall. We are ambitious and determined to build on our recent success by providing the best possible learning experiences and outcomes for our students, in a welcoming and inclusive learning community. Our mission in 'Preparing Young Professionals' is central to all that we do.

WQE enjoys a strong reputation and popularity with students, attracting applications from the City, as well as from across the County of Leicestershire, Rutland and beyond. Our student cohorts typically reflect the diversity that Leicester is well known for and brings together students from a wide range of personal, socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds in a positive and focused community. The College operates as one from two very closely located and spacious sites, either side of the main University of Leicester campus and these provide pleasant, well-resourced and inspiring environments for our students and staff. Within this our curriculum teams have their own specialist bases and facilities along with extensive sports grounds and two sports halls.

THE CURRICULUM

The overwhelming majority of the curriculum offer is at Advanced Level and equivalent courses at Level 3, with the College being a specialist able to offer the widest choice of options available locally. Furthermore, WQE is committed to being accessible to students from a range of ability backgrounds and supporting progression to enable level 3 success and higher study, including through a smaller targeted offer from Entry Level. In summary, the broad offer includes;

- A levels and equivalent classroom vocational/applied courses at Level 3, including Extended Diplomas
- GCSEs and equivalent classroom vocational/applied courses at Level 2, including English and Mathematics for those close to and most suited to making the step to Advanced Level with us in due course
- Level 1 vocational/applied courses and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), intended to support those who have the potential to make accelerated progress to higher levels of study once initial language development needs can be met to support their future success at higher levels

STUDENT SUCCESS

Results each year are a reflection of our commitment to widening participation and a culture of high expectations, with very high proportions of students being retained to the completion of their courses. In a typical year a large majority of students progress to higher education, with many staying in the Midlands region but others going further afield to pursue their personal ambitions.

Alongside excellent teaching, high quality support and guidance are crucial to our students' success. We have invested heavily in support for our students, with specific teams overseeing students' progress and these teams work closely with teaching staff, with staff responsible for Careers or progression and with the Student Services and Academic Support teams. The college is proud of the sustained success our students have in their next steps beyond the college, with significantly above average proportions being resilient and retained in Higher Education, as well as succeeding at the highest levels.

STAFF

With around 370 teaching and support staff at the heart of our work and success, a striking feature is the loyalty staff have to the College; many have spent by far the greater part of their careers at WQE and remain as enthusiastic as ever. At the same time the College's continuing growth and popularity has provided opportunities for new staff to join, and the College is fortunate to still being able to attract high quality fields.

The College is strongly committed to continuous professional development and actively encourages all staff to reach their full potential. Very close links with five similar Sixth Form Colleges through the CENBASE peer development and review group provide opportunities to engage in a mix of subject specific networks and our annual joint training day, focused on sharing practice in teaching and learning.

Staff are rewarded with attractive packages of benefits, including access to local Government and Teachers pension schemes as appropriate to the role. There is a strong sense of community, and our staff wellbeing group also help us to innovate and add value to the main financial benefits on offer too.

RESOURCES

Our financial health is strong, and we currently have a turnover of over £22m pa. Teaching and support areas are well resourced, and we continue to invest in systems and infrastructure to improve students' experiences. Our buildings and estate create an inspiring environment and are well maintained. As student numbers have increased and to keep the buildings in good order we have continued to invest in our facilities and learning environments. Capital investments delivered and planned in the ten-year period from 2018/19 are set to exceed £20m.

The College has state of the art Media and Creative Arts building and has had a complete refurbishment of our specialist Science areas, including the construction of new laboratories and preparation facilities. Multiple dining and café areas, libraries and study centres, along with extensive sports grounds and two sports halls with gyms, all support the positive experience of our students and staff and staff have access to a reduced rate health club subscription.

The College's most recent Estates Strategy was approved by the Governing Body in Summer 2020. This Strategy set out an ambitious and exciting programme of refurbishment and remodeling to create outstanding teaching and learning facilities and learning experiences for all our students and staff. A particular focus has been given to the bringing together teams and specialist communities as well as improving the quality and flexibility of our spaces.