

INTRODUCTION TO THE COLLEGE

OUR CONTEXT

WQE is a large, thriving and vibrant Sixth Form College providing courses for around 4000 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 400 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 well-being group also help us to innovate and add value to the main financial benefits on offer too.

RESOURCES

Our financial position is strong, with an annual turnover of over £26, enabling continued investment in our people, facilities and learning environment. Teaching and support areas are well resourced, and we continue to invest in digital systems, infrastructure and campus improvements to enhance the experience of both our students and staff. Our estate provides an attractive and inspiring setting and is maintained to a high standard. As student numbers have grown, we have continued to enhance our facilities and learning spaces, with capital investment since **2018 exceeding £10m.**

The College benefits from a state-of-the-art Media and Creative Arts building together with extensively refurbished specialist Science facilities, including modern laboratories and preparation areas. Multiple dining and café spaces, libraries and study centres, extensive sports grounds, and two sports halls with fitness facilities support a positive and vibrant college experience. Staff also benefit from access to a range of well-being activities, including reduced rate health club membership.

We continue to invest strategically in our estate to ensure that our facilities support excellence in teaching, learning and student outcomes. Significant refurbishment and redevelopment projects have transformed teaching, learning and social spaces across the College, creating high-quality, flexible environments that bring together specialist curriculum areas and support collaboration, innovation and community.