College Development Plan
2024-2025

Content

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This College Development Plan (CDP) sets out the activity to be undertaken by Southern Regional College (the College) for the 2024-25 Academic Year and has been endorsed by the College's Governing Body.

Legal Status

Northern Ireland Further Education (FE) colleges are required, under Article 20 of the Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, to produce and publish annual business plans (College Development Plans).

The six FE colleges (collectively the FE sector) are Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB) and a key delivery arm of the Department for the Economy (DfE). The FE sector is unique in that it has a dual mandate, taking a pivotal role in generating a strong and vibrant economy through the development of professional and technical skills, increasingly at higher levels, and by helping employers to innovate; and supporting social inclusion by providing those with low or no qualifications, or who have other barriers to learning, with the skills and qualifications needed to find employment and to become economically active

The Further Education sector is the main provider of professional and technical education and training in Northern Ireland and has a key role to play in raising the skill levels in the region and in supporting the Minister for the Economy's Economic Priorities of Regional Balance, Good Jobs, Decarbonisation, and Increased productivity. The College is one of the largest education providers in NI and has a strong local and national reputation and maintaining a quality brand is essential for the College's success in attracting students and positively developing external relationships, and is well placed to provide learners, employers, and the local community with a wide range of education and training opportunities, delivering outstanding quality in teaching, training, and business support, not just within Northern Ireland but nationally and internationally.

Our Vision to be the provider of first choice for professional and technical education and training in the region – prized by individuals and employers, is based on the desire to provide relevant and meaningful vocational learning opportunities delivered through quality and innovative teaching, which is informed by effective quality improvement planning.

Our Mission is to positively transform lives through meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences.

Our Core Values are:

- PUTTING LEARNERS FIRST
- WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE MORE
- STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

The College seeks to help establish a context of progressive and effective management and help build an appropriate working and learning environment for the community that we serve. Students are

treated as mature individuals and are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning experience and to play an active role in decisions that affect them.

The future demand for skills is particularly relevant to Colleges across Northern Ireland as the NI skills barometer[1] highlights that delivering on Northern Ireland's economic potential will require a significant uplift in the number of people undertaking professional and technical qualifications.

The College aims to address three important areas through its curriculum offering and business support activities:

- economic development through the provision of courses designed to meet the needs of the local and regional economy particularly in priority sectors;
- personal development through opportunities for further study and learning at all levels in preparation for working life and into retirement; and
- social development, allowing people from different community backgrounds to participate on a wide range of courses at all levels.

It is in this context the College has developed an action plan for 2024-25 to successfully deliver on the following strategic aims:

The activities in the CDP demonstrate the Colleges contribution to fulfilling the aspirations set out in section 2.

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[1] Skills Barometer 2021 update | Department for the Economy (economy-ni.gov.uk)

2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Executive's draft PfG Outcomes Framework

Grow a Globally Competitive Economy

Action: Through a series of multi-million pounds committed investments, we will make this a more vibrant and inclusive place to live, work, invest and visit. Central to every part of our plan for a globally competitive and sustainable economy will be employers and workers, supporting them to build the skills needed both now, and in the future, will be vital if we are to harness our economic potential.

Minister's Economic Vision

The College is a key delivery partner in taking forward the Minister's priorities set out in his Economic Vision to:

- Increase the proportion of working-age people in **Good Jobs**;
- Promote a more **Regionally Balanced** economy;
- **Raise Productivity** of businesses; and
- **Reduce Carbon Emissions** in the transition to a greener and more sustainable economy.

Strategies / Priorities

a. Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland
b. Trade and Investment Strategic Priorities
c. Climate Change Act (NI) 2022
d. Review of the FE Delivery Model
e. Developing a More Strategic Approach to 14-19 Education and Training - a Framework to Transform 14-19 Education and Training Provision
f. Skills Barometer
g. Delivering the Economic Vision A three year forward look & 2024/25 Action Plan

3. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE/POSITION

2024/25 Forecast Position

The table below sets out the college resource and capital requirements of £38,013k for 2024/25.

PROGRAMME / ACTIVITY						
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**
	Further Education	**Higher Education**	**Apprenticeships / Traineeships**	**Business Development**	**Social Inclusion**	**Other**
	EL - Level 3 (not under B – F)	Level 4+	Programmes up to Level 3 including AppsNI; Traineeships; Skills for Life and Work; TfS	InnovateUs; Skills Focus; Assured Skills Academies; Flexible Skills; International Programmes; Innovation Voucher Scheme	Access NI; Essential Skills; ESOL; College Connect; NI Prisons Service; VEP; Princes Trust; UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Step Up	Skills Competitions
Direct Teaching Costs - Pay	8,627	3,460	4,909	1,381	4,217	26
Direct Teaching Costs - Non Pay	1,461	556	1,104	128	1,261	78
Non-Direct Costs*	8,950	3,406	4,329	330	3,150	27
Total Delivery Cost	**19,038**	**7,422**	**10,342**	**1,839**	**8,628**	**131**
Non-Grant in Aid Income	-1,279	-2,589	-4,266	-444	-2,669	-29
Net Requirement	**17,759**	**4,833**	**6,076**	**1,395**	**5,959**	**102**

* Includes total support service/non-front-line activity overheads apportioned based on delivery hours.

TOTAL RESOURCE REQUIREMENT (£000's)	36,124[2]

Capital Expenditure	1,740
Capital Receipts	-
Net Capital Requirement (£000's)	**1,740[3]**

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[2] Resource Requirement includes the following funding streams confirmed, but not included within the Funding Letter 5 June 2024 UK Shared Prosperity Fund 394k

[3] Includes £207k funding allocated from Invest to Save (email 20/08/24)

Staff numbers control has been provided by Southern Regional College and evidenced by the targets provided in the following table

Draft Format – still to be agreed with the Principals Group

Staff Type	Average FTE 31st July 2023	Total number of RtS Leavers[4]	Average FTE 31st July 2024	Target FTE 31st March 2025
Teaching	339	5	326[5]	334
Support	116		111	121
Administration	174	1	182	197
Premises	24		26	26
Total	**653**	6	**645**	**678**
Externally funded posts included above	(10)	-	(15)	(19)
Vacant posts	48	-	62	26
DfE funded posts	**691**	**-**	**688**	**685**

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[4] The leavers under the reform to save initiative have been permanently removed from the College Structures in line with the business case objectives and approval conditions, the exits occurred at 30 June 2024, with a full year effect not evidenced until 2025-26 financial year

[5] This figure is reflective of the days lost due to strike action during 2024-25, equating to 8 FTE

4.2024/25 COLLEGE PLANNED DELIVERY

The College takes into account the College profile and Sub-regional Operating Context to prioritise resource utilisation to areas of greatest need, aligned to the Strategic Context.

a. College Profile for 2024/25

Southern Regional College is one of the largest education providers in the Southern Region, with state-of-the-art campuses located in Armagh, Banbridge, Lurgan, Newry and Portadown. The College operates across the two council areas of Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon, and Newry, Mourne & Down in the southern part of NI.

The College enrols approximately 20,000 students annually and with over 900 members of staff, our core purpose is to link individuals to work, assisting them in finding a job, keeping a job and getting a better job.

The College continues to implement its Estates Strategy to deliver a new state-of-the-art campus at Craigavon to replace the existing Lurgan and Portadown campuses and develop a new Higher Education and Innovation Centre in Newry City.
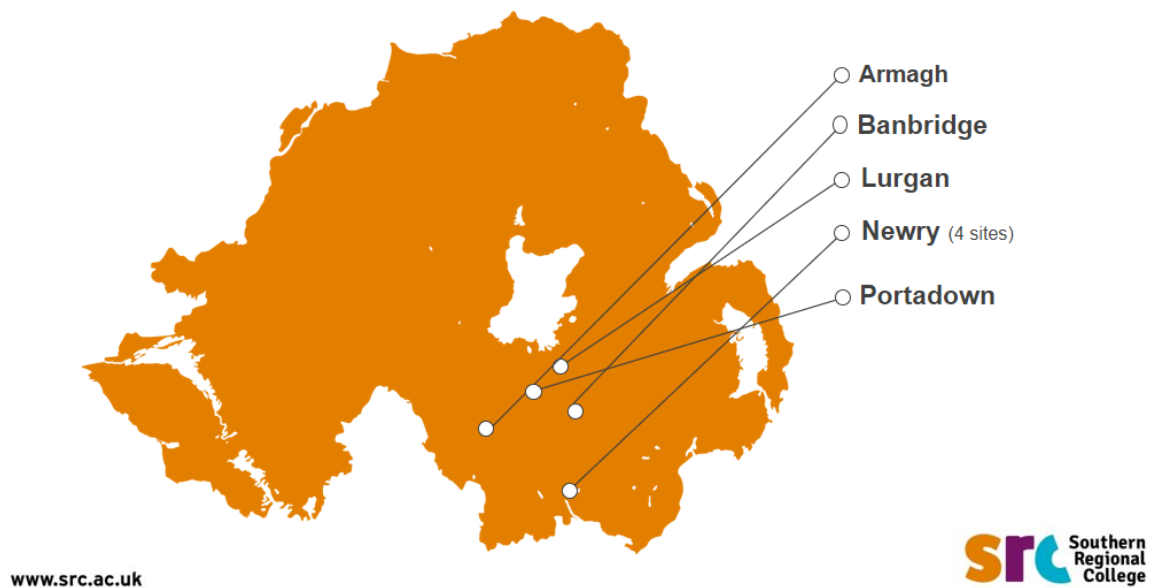
The industry standard learning and teaching facilities on our campuses provide aspirational and realistic environments for learning and we continue to be well placed to take on the challenge of enhancing the skills set of the population of the city and region.

The NI FE sector student profile is published by DfE[6]. The student profile for Southern Regional College in 2023-24 is set out below.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS UNDERTAKING:

LEVELS 0 - 1: **5,451**

LEVELS 2 - 3: **13,945**

TRAINEESHIPS: **333**

APPRENTICESHIPS: **1,264**

HIGHER EDUCATION: **1,612**
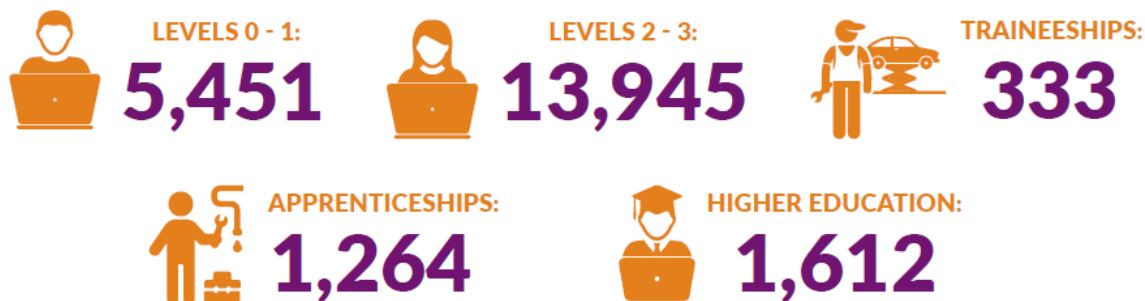
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS: **21,008**

NUMBER OF MALE: **10,868**

NUMBER OF FEMALE: **10,045**

NUMBER OF OTHER: 95

NUMBER OF FULL-TIME STUDENTS: **4,043**

NUMBER OF PART-TIME STUDENTS: **16,965**

The College enrolment trends are illustrated in the College Data Analysis section in Annex 1.

The courses at the College cover almost all subject areas and include full-time and part-time academic and vocational qualifications at various levels for pre-16, post-16 and 19+ (adult) options. Programmes

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[6] Further education sector activity in Northern Ireland: 2018/19 to 2022/23 | Department for the Economy (economy-ni.gov.uk)

range from recreational hobby courses, through to degree and master's level qualifications, in addition to Apprenticeships at Further and Higher Level.

The College delivers to over 4,000 full-time and 7,800 part-time learners annually, and works with over 90 community and voluntary groups, covering over 1,500 square miles within the southern region.

The College remains committed to supporting local post-primary schools in the delivery of the Entitlement Framework (EF) at Key Stage 4 and Post-16. The EF aims to guarantee all school pupils greater choice and flexibility by providing them with access to a wide range of learning opportunities suited to their needs, aptitudes, and interests, irrespective of where they live or the school they attend. The College plays an important role in providing access to a wide range of vocational learning opportunities that would not otherwise be available to pupils in local schools.

The Faculties within the College continue to nurture relationships with employers, public bodies, awarding bodies and the local area learning communities to ensure that the College's provision remains relevant and inclusive.

The College has developed the following seven strategic priorities which are delivered through an annual action plan and set out the practical means through which we will create an entrepreneurial, creative environment where all our staff, students and clients are encouraged and supported to fulfil their potential.

1. Provision of a high-quality learning experience through a relevant and meaningful curriculum.

> *"To place the College at the heart of lifelong learning within the region in order to strengthen economic and workforce development, to enhance social cohesion and to advance individuals' skills and learning"*

2.Support economic growth and innovation through flexible business support solutions   .

> *"To support local and regional economic development through the provision of flexible business services and training solutions aimed at improving the competitiveness and productivity of new and existing businesses."*

3. Inspired people and Organisation Development   .

> *"To be a high performing College through the recruitment, development and deployment of a highly skilled and well-motivated staff."*

4. Effective Governance and Financial Management.

"To continue to provide effective corporate Governance and ensure that the College operates within a robust system of internal financial management and control. "

5. Provision of a safe and stimulating environment.

"To create an environment that inspires learners to achieve their potential."

6. Increased International Links.

"To promote an outward and forward-looking College through the development of international links supporting staff, students and knowledge exchange"

7.Creating a sustainable inspired College.

"To use our position as an education and training provider to inspire and promote a sustainable culture in everything that we do."

In the June 2023 Leavers Survey 51.6% of level 1-3 students went into employment and 25% continued with their studies at the college highlighting the opportunities that the college provides at level 4-6 to support career progression.

Student retention and achievement performance has remained stable across a 5-year period, this is shown in Annex 1.

Student achievement in 2022-23 is outlined in the table below:

Student Achievement		Achievement	
		2022-23	
Further Education	**Full Time**	1,243	82%
	Part Time	7,695	81%
Higher Education	**Full Time**	110	87%
	Part Time	680	76%
Work Based Learning	**Tship/AppsNI**	1,155	91%
Essential Skills		1,071	56%

In the academic year 2023/24 the College maintained its position as the top UK College in World Skills with college students winning 5 Gold, 3 Silver and 4 Bronze in professional and technical areas such as Beauty Therapy, Automation, Mechatronics, Professional Cookery, Social Care and Science. The College will continue to promote competition as a means of

raising professional and technical skills. The college will continue to support the local intercampus based competitions leading to selection for regional and national competitions.

The college achieved success at the CITB Skills Training competition winning two golds and one bronze. As a result of the College's excellence in delivery of the Higher-Level Apprenticeships in Applied Industrial Science the college was awarded formal accreditation status from The Royal Society of Chemistry, the only Further Education College within Northern Ireland to achieve this accolade.

Most notable student achievements in 2023-24 were:

- In November 2023 Team SRC finished top of the UK medal table for the second successive year at the WSUK National Finals, winning five gold medals in Automation, Automotive Refinishing, Beauty Therapy Practitioner and Laboratory Technician, three silver medals in Automation and Health & Social Care. Four bronze medals were secured in Culinary Arts, Electrical Installation and Mechatronics.

- Following on from WorldSkills UK success, five College students were named as WorldSkills UK competition squad members, with one Cabinet Making student securing a place in the UK Team to take part in the WorldSkills 2024 competition in Lyon, France.

- Six construction students attended the SkillBuild UK National Final in November 2023 winning gold medals in Painting & Decorating and Wall & Floor Tiling as well as picking up a bronze medal in Plastering.

- In March 2024, a level 3 Wall and Floor Tiling apprentice was awarded the Montgomery Award for Excellence from The Worshipful Company of Tylers and Bricklayers' Craft Awards 2024.

- In May 2024, College construction students competed in the SkillBuild NI finals in South West College, securing eight medals which comprised of four gold medals, four silver medals. These successful competitors will go forward for selection to the National Final in November 2024.

- Having competed in a range of WSUK Regional Qualifiers across the UK, sixteen students across nine different vocational areas have been selected to compete in the 2024 WSUK National Finals in Manchester in November.

- In May 2024 four students represented the College at the cross-sector Project Based Learning Competition in North West Regional College, winning the Entrepreneurship category and securing runner up positions in the Innovation and Social Impact categories.

- Nine students attended IFEX 24, Northern Ireland's premiere showcase event for the food, drink, hospitality and retail industry winning two gold medals with one of the students going forward to represent Ireland in the "Gallo Risotto Chef of the Year" in June, four silver medals which included a Best in Class for "Young Seafood Chef of the Year" and three bronze Medals.

- A student who graduated with the University of Ulster Foundation Degree in Hospitality and Tourism with Specialisms won 'Student Management Potential Award' at the Institute of Hospitality Northern Ireland Awards for Professionalism 2023.

Staff Achievements

Staff Achievements for 2023-24 are listed below:

- A lecturer in Creative Arts and Digital Technologies launched her own art exhibition 'Memory Lane', which was on display at the Armagh Marketplace Theatre.

- A lecturer on the BA Degree in English and History secured a book deal in the field of Geocriticism and Literary Spatial Studies.

- The Principal and Chief Executive received the accolade of Outstanding Contributor to the Greater Newry Area at the Greater Newry Business Awards in June 2023.

- A lecturer was announced on the shortlist for Tutor of the Year at the 2023 IAB Awards.

- A lecturer in Hospitality won 'Lecturer of the Year' at the Institute of Hospitality Northern Ireland Awards for Professionalism 2023.

b. Sub-Regional Operating Context

Population Profile

The region served by the College also has some of the most deprived super output areas (SOAs) across Northern Ireland. College curriculum offer aims to serve the needs of the wider community across Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and the South Down and South Armagh regions of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

Of the top 100 most deprived SOAs 15 sit within the region served by the College, these are listed as follows:

Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	Newry, Mourne and Down
Woodwille 1	Crossmaglen
Drumgask 2	Drumgullion 1
Court 1	Creggan
Callan Bridge	Daisy Hill 2
Annagh 2	Ballybot
Drumgor 2	Silverbridge
Drumnamoe 1	Forkhill 2
Church	

Students living in areas falling within quintiles one and two, account for 49.4% of total enrolments (51.4% Male, 48.1% Female, 0.5% Other).

Enrolment profile - Quintiles 1 & 2

	21/22	22/23	23/24
Q 1 & 2 Enrol	10,518	10,496	10,508
Total Enrol	20,756	21,176	21,276
	50.7%	49.6%	49.4%
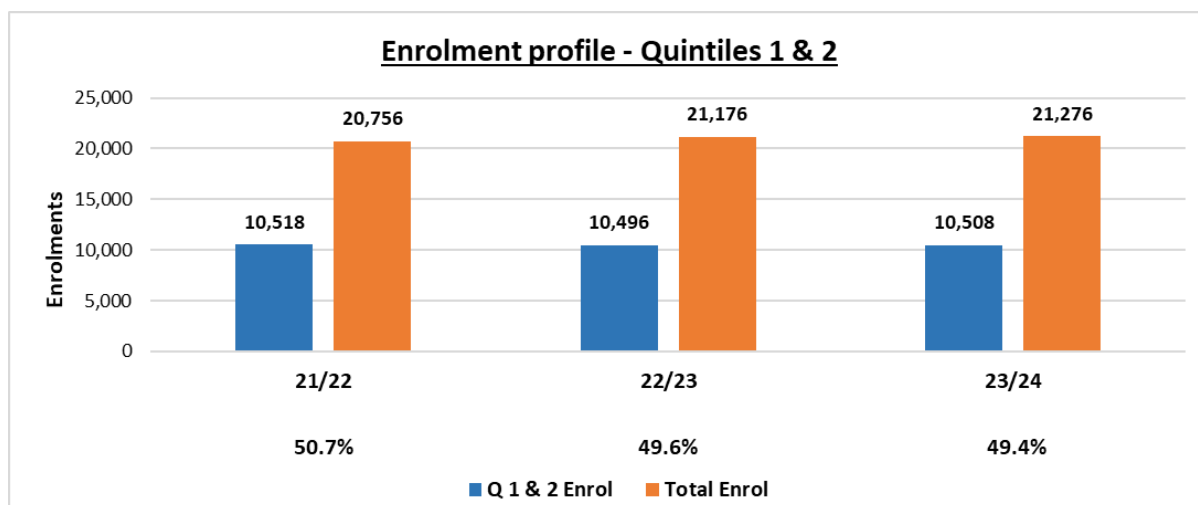
The College remains committed to widening participation of those who face significant barriers to education and training including those economically inactive, those with learning difficulties and disabilities, those from under-represented groups in society and those not in employment, education, or training (NEETs).

The latest NI seasonally adjusted unemployment rate (the proportion of economically active people aged 16 and over who were unemployed) for the period April – July 2024 was estimated at 0.9%, a decrease when compared with the same period in 2023, when the unemployment rate was 2.1%. There were an estimated 14,000 young people aged 16 to 24 years in Northern Ireland who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in January to March 2024. This was equivalent to 7.1% of all those aged 16 to 24 years in NI.

From a skills perspective, outcomes from compulsory education are getting better and the overall skills profile of the workforce continues to improve. This is undoubtedly positive, but significant disparities remain in outcomes, particularly for those living in the most deprived communities. The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) highlights that, in the most deprived communities, up to 60% of the workforce have low or no qualifications. For comparison, the same statistic in the best performing area is 11%.

We remain committed to delivering tailored programmes for young people with social and behavioural problems who have had a poor educational experience to date and for whom progression to full time education and training is not yet appropriate.

The College will continue to partner with other agencies including Clanrye Training Services to support a coherent regional offer at entry and Level 1 thus maximising the use of public resources.

In 2023-24 the College achieved 104% (Excluding Essential Skills) of its full-time enrolment target and 104% of our part time enrolment target.

Total Enrolment				
		Target	Actual	% Target
Level 0-7	Full time	3,983	4,142	104%
	Part time	14,247	14,879	104%

The College is committed to working with the Department for the Economy and the other regional Colleges to introduce a new Vocational Education and Training system (VET), that includes the well-established apprenticeship pathway, and a non-employed pathway based on the new Traineeships and Advanced Technical Awards. The development of this non-employed pathway is central to the strategic positioning of Further Education Colleges in the wider NI educational ecosystem.

The development of the Traineeship as the main full time offer at Level 2 for young people combined with the evolution of the Advanced Technical Awards at Level 3 offer learners a quality vocational ward that is based on the needs of industry. This includes both knowledge and skills development, embedding of softer or transversal skills and a mandatory period of work-based learning. These awards are based on a new pedagogy delivered through Project Based Learning.

The establishment of this new non-employed pathway aims to:

- Provide a quality training programme valued by industry;
- Simplify the vocational offer;
- Rationalise the use of vocational qualifications used across Colleges;
- Allow seamless transition to and from corresponding apprenticeships;
- Differentiate the vocational offer from that offered by schools.

The College's curriculum portfolio covers a wide number of vocational areas offering progression pathways from entry level through to level 5 and above. We recognise that the vocational or professional and technical qualifications landscape is both complex and often confusing. The evolving VET system through apprenticeships and the non-employed vocational pathway will increase the opportunity for transferability and progression for the learner by providing flexible sideways movement as well as longitudinal progression for learners to higher level study or sustained employment. The co-directional nature of the VET model is the key USP for the college and will continue to be promoted as such.

The qualifications reform programme and the out-workings of the traineeship and apprenticeship strategies will take time to generate a wider understanding and acceptance of this simplified vocational system of learning in Northern Ireland.

Progression Pathways

Progression Pathways

COLLEGE & TRAINING ORGANISATION PARTNERSHIP	FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGE	COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4-5	LEVEL 6 & ABOVE

EMPLOYED PATHWAY

	APPRENTICESHIPS AT LEVEL 2	APPRENTICESHIPS AT LEVEL 3	HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIPS	HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIPS AT LEVEL 6 & ABOVE

NON-EMPLOYED PATHWAY

Skills for Life and Work FURTHER EDUCATION Level 1 provision	NI TRAINEESHIPs LEVEL 2	ADVANCED TECHNICALS LEVEL 3 Further Education	Higher Education — Higher Education Qualifications e.g. Foundation degrees, HNC/Ds Combining academic & work based learning	Higher Education — Hons Degree

SUSTAINED EMPLOYMENT

Sustainable Practice

The United Nations has set a number of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which recognise that ending poverty and other societal barriers go hand in hand with other strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and support economic growth while tackling climate change and protecting our environment.

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) accord is the international university and college sector's collective response to the SDGs. As an education and training organization, we recognise our responsibility in promoting sustainable practice. The College will continue to progress this during the new academic year.

The College will adapt a whole college approach to sustainability through which we will evidence our actions against these goals.

Industry Profile

In our bid to continue to build a strong educational future and focus, the College has established an impressive portfolio of industry links on local, regional, national, and international scales. There are over 18,000 VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses within the southern region. The two council areas of Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon and Newry, Mourne & Down in the southern part of NI both report an aging population and a decline in the 16-64 working age population in their respective districts therefore putting pressure on businesses to attract and retain talent. Firms are turning to increased investment in technology and councils are trying to engage the economically inactive to address the skills shortages.

In a recent employer survey conducted by ABC Council (December 2022), 67% employers stated their ability to attract skilled and experience workers was decreasing, with 50% stating their ability to attract entry level workers was declining.

A recent economic outlook for NMDDC (September 2023), highlighted that the key considerations for the council area included an increased focus on driving productivity twinned with the supply of key employee and managerial skills. It also pointed to the need to attract more females, disabled people and older workers to enter the labour market to address the changing world of work.

NISRA7 employee earnings statistics published Nov 2023 noted the median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees ("weekly earnings") in April 2023 was £641, an increase of 7.4% from £597 in 2022.

In real terms (that is, adjusted for inflation) weekly earnings in NI decreased by 0.3% over the year to April 2023, which is the second consecutive real terms decrease, following the largest annual decrease in real earnings on record last year (3.7%).

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[7] https://datavis.nisra.gov.uk/economy-and-labour-market/Employee-earnings-NI-2023.html

Approximately 11% of all jobs in NI were 'low-paid'. Although this was a record low, it was the joint highest proportion of the 12 UK regions.

The gender pay-gap for all employees (full-time and part-time combined) in NI was 7.8% in favour of males in 2023. Median annual earnings for full-time employees in NI were £32,900 in 2023, lower than the UK median of £35,000.

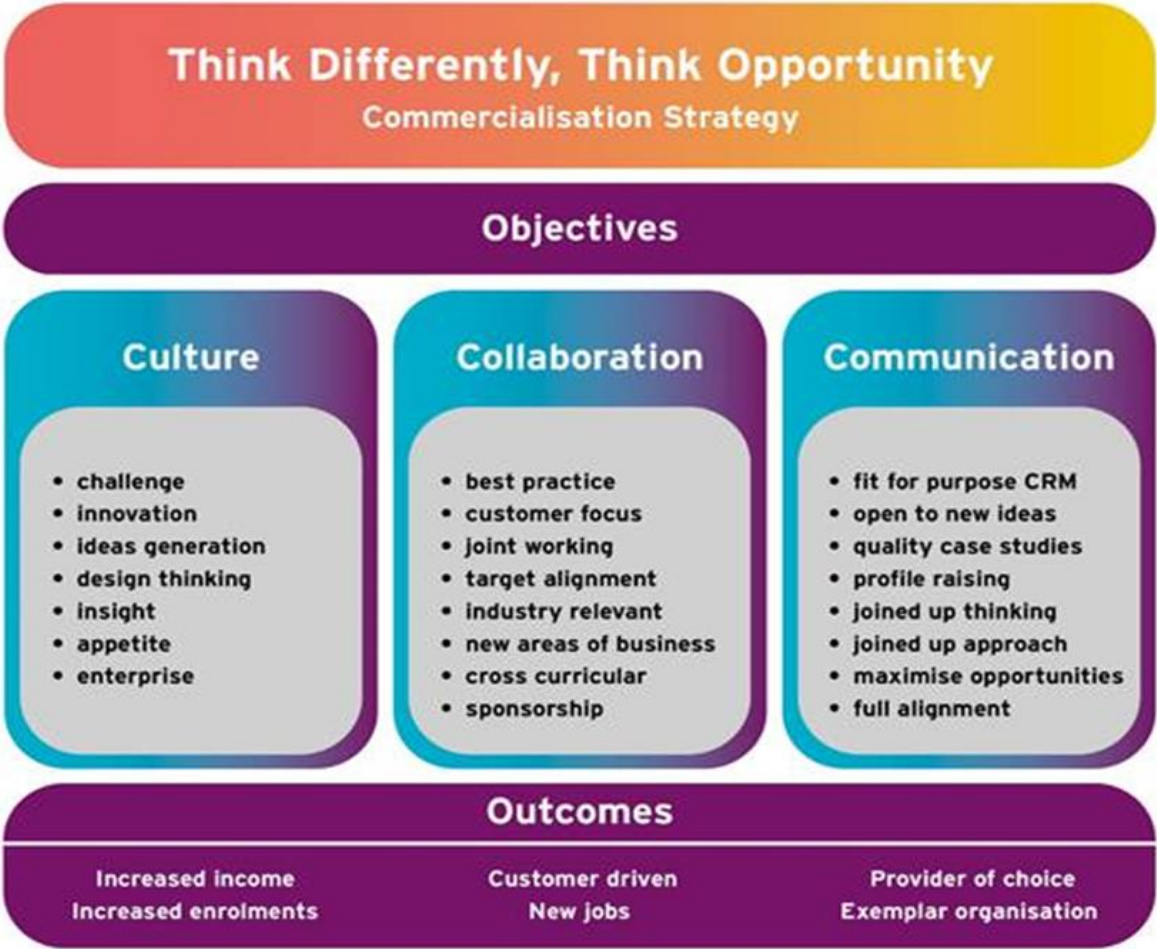### c. College Engagement/Collaboration

The main industry sectors in the southern region include manufacturing, agri-food, construction, business and financial services, pharmaceutical, health and social care, childcare, retail, hospitality and tourism. The College is committed to working closely with employers from these sectors to ensure the curriculum meets their needs through Apprenticeships, Higher Level Apprenticeships, and upskilling programmes. Typically, the College engages with 1,200+ businesses annually for Apprenticeships and business support solutions.

The College's Business Support & Innovation (BSI) plays a major role in identifying and responding to the needs of local business and industry, supporting increased daily engagement with businesses with a particular focus on supporting non-innovating businesses to innovate and for innovative businesses to collaborate.

The College is committed to supporting SMEs to address low levels of productivity in their business by offering funded supports specifically tailored to inform and upskill business owners and employees how to measure and improve productivity.

To enhance this support the College fully participates in the Labour Market Partnerships across ABC and NMD district councils and is an active member of local chambers of commerce and trade, NI Chamber and other local business networks.

Through the delivery of our 3-year commercialisation strategy our Business Support and Innovation unit work cohesively with Curriculum and Apprentiship teams to meet the needs of industry by ensuring an economically relevant, responsive curriculum.

Think Differently, Think Opportunity
Commercialisation Strategy

Objectives

Culture
- challenge
- innovation
- ideas generation
- design thinking
- insight
- appetite
- enterprise

Collaboration
- best practice
- customer focus
- joint working
- target alignment
- industry relevant
- new areas of business
- cross curricular
- sponsorship

Communication
- fit for purpose CRM
- open to new ideas
- quality case studies
- profile raising
- joined up thinking
- joined up approach
- maximise opportunities
- full alignment

Outcomes

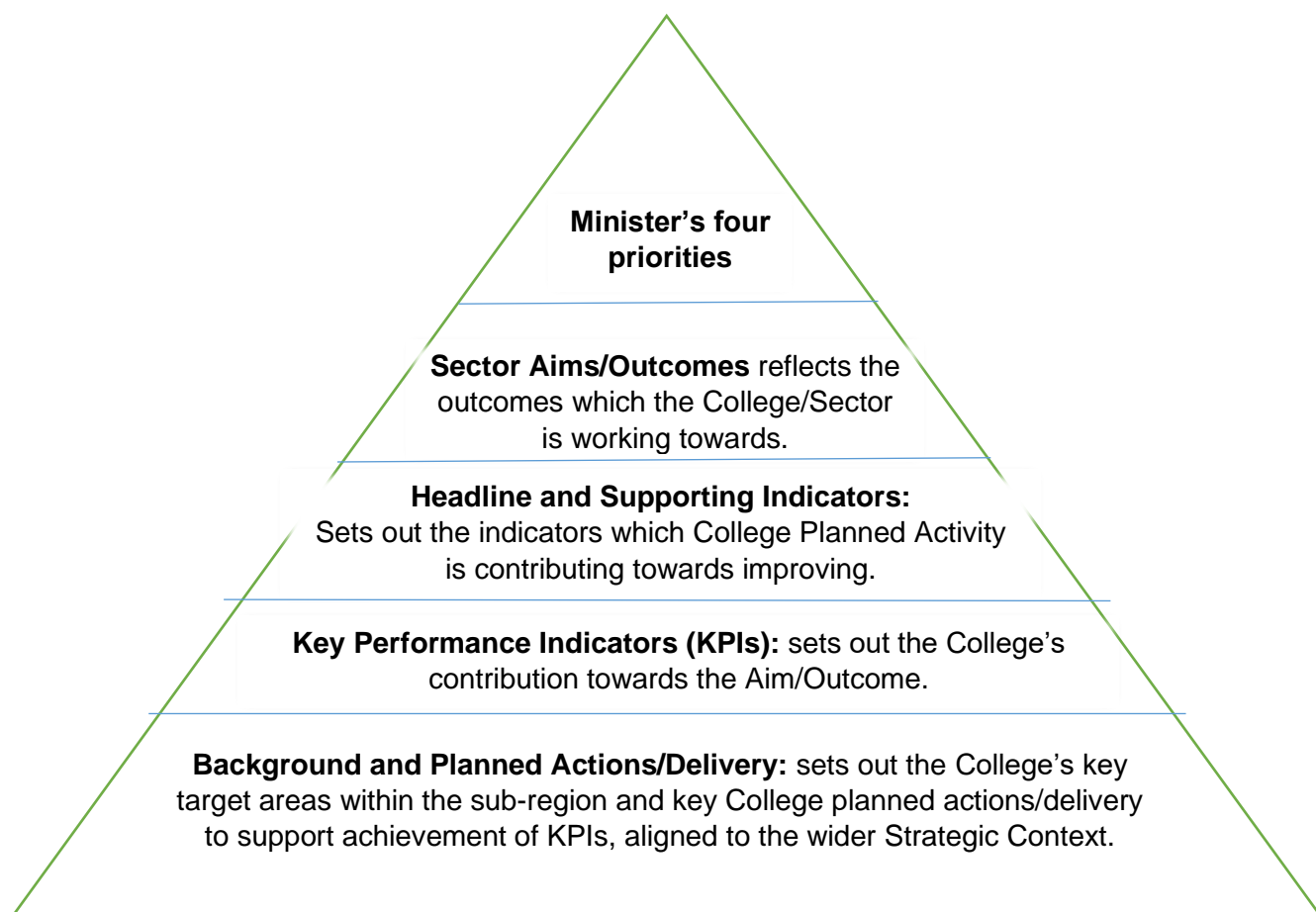| Increased income | Customer driven | Provider of choice |
| Increased enrolments | New jobs | Exemplar organisation |

The College will continue to strengthen its partnerships both formally and informally with higher education providers including the Open University, Dundalk Institute of Technology and Educational Training Boards to increase flexibility and widen the offering to meet local and regional needs both now and in the future. The College signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Louth Meath Education Training Board during the 2023-24 academic year. The aspiration is that this MOU will provide opportunities for workforce training and apprenticeship opportunities by developing a talent pipeline for students through knowledge exchange and skills acquisition. In addition, both institutes will leverage external funding opportunities in areas of mutual interest to support research, innovation and engagement initiatives for staff and students.

The College will continue to engage with all relevant stakeholders to implement the actions set out in the relevant occupational skills assessment action plans under City and Growth Deals for Manufacturing, Construction and Digital Creative Industries.

d. 2024/25 Planned Activity

The College Planned Delivery has been set out to show the College contributes to the Minister's four priorities as follows:

Minister's four priorities

Sector Aims/Outcomes reflects the outcomes which the College/Sector is working towards.

Headline and Supporting Indicators: Sets out the indicators which College Planned Activity is contributing towards improving.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): sets out the College's contribution towards the Aim/Outcome.

Background and Planned Actions/Delivery: sets out the College's key target areas within the sub-region and key College planned actions/delivery to support achievement of KPIs, aligned to the wider Strategic Context.

Development Plan Progress Reports tracking '**how well**' the College is performing will be provided to the Department for the Economy. The Department for the Economy will publish reports on performance against Headline and Supporting Indicators to show if actions are 'moving the dial' on the Minister's priorities i.e. **'anyone is better off'**, along with progress reports on the Department's Delivery Plan 2024/25.

The below table provides a summary of the Aims/Outcomes and associated KPIs included the proceeding tables.

	Aim/Outcome		KPI
1	To increase regional business productivity/growth through the delivery of tailored/bespoke training programmes.	1.1	To increase delivery of innovation-based projects in SMEs from 121 no. in 2023/24 to 126 no. in 2024/25 financial year.
		1.2	To increase delivery of tailored training programmes from 380 no. in 2023/24 to 408 no. in 2024/25 financial year.
2	To upskill/reskill individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to secure employment, meet employer needs for today and the future and support economic growth of the region.	2.1	To increase the total number of individuals enrolled in the College from 10,954 no. individuals in 2022/23 to 12,912 individuals in 2024/25 academic year.
		2.2	To equip 26 individuals participating in international programmes with key employability skills necessary through participation in Turing and Skills Competitions in the 2024/25 academic year.
		2.3	To increase the number of individuals supported by the College who are furthest away from the labour market and with low or no formal qualifications from 7,499 in 2022/23 to 7,789 in 2024/25 academic year.
		2.4	To increase the retention rate within the College from 91% in 2022/23 to 93% in 2024/25 academic year.
		2.5	To increase the achievement rate within the College from 86% in 2022/23 to 89% in 2024/25 academic year.
		2.6	To increase the number of 25-64 year olds participating in education and training from 2,245 individuals in 2022/23 to 3,172 individuals in 2024/25
3	To address the skills needs of the future workforce in green industries through upskilling and reskilling individuals in support of a net zero economy in Northern Ireland.	3.1	To increase from 1 to 4 College staff trained in the delivery of green sustainable skills in the 2024/25 academic year
		3.2	711 no. individuals participating on green/sustainable courses in the 2024/25 academic year.
4	To deliver against the Public Body reporting duties of the Climate Change legislation delivering an energy efficient and sustainable estate.	4.1	To establish the key actions to improve/maintain energy efficiency in the College in 2024/25 academic year.

Raise Productivity	
Aim/Outcome - 1	**To increase regional business productivity/growth through the delivery of tailored/bespoke training programmes.**
Draft Headline Indicator	**Output per hour worked**
Draft Supporting Indicators	• **Innovative active businesses (including number of Innovation Recognitions)**
Background	The Minister for the Economy set four key objectives to achieve NI's economic mission. 1. Increase the proportion of working age people in good jobs 2. Promote regional balance 3. Raise productivity 4. Reduce carbon emissions Running through all of these objectives is the need for businesses to embrace and adopt innovative practices. Changes in technology and manufacturing are at the fore of this economic mission as well as developing a culture that embeds and champions innovation and design thinking. The Business Support & Innovation (BSI) unit specialises in a range of knowledge transfer and support services to encourage innovation activities amongst SMEs. A team of innovation specialists, housed within the unit, exclusively work with SMEs offering a flexible and reliable service. Depending on the sector and size of the company, the College's Business Support and Innovation centre is able to offer interventions on a progressive basis as the company develops and grows - referred to as the "innovation escalator". BSI's innovation pillar aligns to the economic mission, by placing innovation at the heart of the College's business support offering. SRC aims to promote an enhanced culture of innovation and to encourage and facilitate innovation activities within local businesses through the following targets.

KPI 1.1	To increase delivery of innovation-based projects in SMEs from 121 no. in 2023/24 to 126 no. in 2024/25 financial year.	
Planned Activity:		
With an available budget of £480k for InnovateUs	Complete 90 projects[8].	
Innovation Vouchers – with a target income of £50k	Submit 15 Innovation Voucher applications, with delivery of 10 projects in year.	
Innovation Boost – with a target income of £160k	Engage with 18 businesses for various stages of project delivery.	
Innovate UK – with an available budget of £75k	Deliver 1 KTP project and submit 2 new KTP applications	
KPI 1.2	To increase delivery of tailored training programmes from 380 no. in 2023/24 to 400 no. in 2024/25 financial year.	
Planned Activity:		
With an available budget of £300k for Skills Focus (plus employer contribution of £80k)	Deliver accredited training L2+ to 160 businesses	
With a target income of £180k for Full Cost Recovery (including Council funded projects)	Deliver accredited and bespoke training solutions to 60 businesses	
With a target income of £153k for Skills Fund Breaking Barriers & Women Returners Programme	Engage with 13 businesses for placement opportunities for learners	
With an available budget of £99k for Assured Skills	Deliver 3 x academies to 15 businesses Fintech Foundation Academy 2024 Welding Academy Collaborative 2024 Legal Administrators Academy 2024	
With an available budget of £365k for Skill Up	Upskill 475 individuals	
With a target income of £58k for Productivity Booster	Deliver 10 x Productivity Booster projects to local SMEs.	
Through a series of events and collaborations with other key stakeholders	Engage with 150 businesses through the delivery of themed workshops and seminars in a range of technical areas.	

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[8] Calculated by number of businesses who completed a project (DER) minus those who completed more than one in the year

Good Jobs/Promote Regional Balance/Raise Productivity	
Aim/Outcome - 2	To upskill/reskill individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to secure employment, meet employer needs for today and the future and support economic growth of the region.
Draft Headline Indicators	• **Good jobs measure based on earning, permanent contracts and minimum guaranteed hours.** • **Regional Employment Rate** • **Output per hour worked**
Draft Supporting Indicators	• **Work Quality Indicators** • **Proportion leaving NI HEIs with narrow STEM qualifications**[9] • **Qualifications by Level of Study** • **Economic Inactivity Rate excluding students**

Background	**Background:**
	
	The College continues to be a key driver in supporting the supply of skills solutions both locally and regionally. The College's curriculum offer continues to be targeted on the current and future skill needs of the local and regional economy aligned to the Economic Vision.
	
	The College curriculum aims to support individuals by getting a new job, keeping a job or getting a better job! The focus is on addressing the skills deficit and social inclusion but developing a curriculum offer that is both regionally relevant and industry facing. Consequently, there is a key focus on the following areas of activity:
	
	• Level 0-3 including Level 2 Traineeships.
	• Level 2 and 3 Apprenticeships.
	• Level 4-6 Full Time, Part Time and Higher-Level Apprenticeships as well as professionally accredited programmes and micro-credentials.
	• The College will focus on the following programme areas to support those individuals who are furthest away from the labour market and with low or no formal qualifications:
	    ○ Step-Up across all pathways.
	    ○ Targeted programme Employ Me.
	    ○ Target ESOL Programmes.
	• All provision targets both broad and narrow stem provision where possible and is aligned to the sub-regional needs as reflected in the NI Skills Barometer.
	
	This inclusive curriculum offer, particularly at Level 0-1, includes programmes such as 'Step-Up' and 'Employ Me' which provide individuals who are economically inactive, the opportunity to

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[9] First degrees and postgraduate qualifications. Indicator to be updated to include narrow STEM qualifications via Further Education College and/or Higher Level Apprenticeship route.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">develop skills, achieve qualifications and enhance their employability and quality of life with a view to progressing into employment.

In March 2024 the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) advised that the Quality Improvement Planning Whole College Quality Improvement Plan 2022–24 submission contained sufficient evidence that the College is planning effectively for learning and quality improvement, which maintains the College's annual record of full proficiency in this significant area.

The College will closely review and monitor all provision to ensure excellent retention and achievement by all students and that effective and timely interventions are put in place to support as appropriate.</td></tr>
</table>

KPI 2.1	To increase the total number of individuals enrolled in the College from 10,954 no. individuals in 2022/23 to 13,004 individuals in 2024/25 academic year.

Plans to achieve in the 2024/25 academic year:

Level 0 - 3	No. of individuals on PT FE	5,416
	No. of individuals on FT FE	1,813
	No. of individuals on Traineeships programme	654
	No. of individuals on Apprenticeships NI programme	1,242
	No. of individuals on Essential Skills programme	2,292
Level 4+	No. of individuals on PT HE in FE	802
	No. of individuals on FT HE in FE	264
	No. of individuals on High Level Apprenticeship programme Yr1 (271), Yr2 (175), Yr3 (75)	521

KPI 2.2	To equip 26 individuals participating in international programmes with key employability skills necessary through participation in Turing and Skills Competitions in the 2024/25 academic year.[10]

Planned Activity:

World Skills UK	Support 16 competitors through participation in World Skills UK Competitions in 24/25.
World Skills Final 25	Support 1 Competitor through participation in World Skills final Shanghai China 2025
CITB Skill Build	Support 8 competitors through participation in CITB Skill Build Competitions in 24/25.
World Butchery	Support 1 competitor in the Finals in Paris March 2025

[10] 367 Students will have participated in inter-campus/college regional heats and finals in academic year 2024/25 for selection in national and world finals.

KPI 2.3	**To increase the number of individuals supported by the College who are furthest away from the labour market and with low or no formal qualifications from 7,499 in 2022/23 to 7,837 in 2024/25 academic year.**

Plans to achieve in the 2024/25 academic year:	
No. of individuals Quintile 1 and 2	5,539
No. of individuals declaring a disability/long term health problem	1,721
No. of individuals on ESOL programmes	258
No of individuals supported through Step-Up across all strands	319

KPI 2.4	**To increase the retention rate within the College from 91% in 2022/23 to 93% in 2024/25 academic year.**

Planned Activity:	
L3 Adult Access Diploma Science Newry	To improve final retention from 83% to 90%
L2 Health and Social Care Traineeship	To improve final retention from 73% to 80%
L2 Childcare Learning and Development Traineeship	To improve final retention from 82% to 90%
L3 Travel and Tourism	To improve final retention from 77% to 85%
L2 Media	To improve final retention from 69% to 73%
L3 Performing Arts	To improve final retention from 88% to 90%
HND Games	To improve final retention from 71% to 83%
HND Music	To improve final retention from 86% to 90%
OU Healthcare Practice (nursing home pathway)	To improve final retention from 50% to 70%

KPI 2.5	**To increase the achievement rate within the College from 86% in 2022/23 to 89% in 2024/25 academic year.**

Planned Activity:	
L3 Uniformed Protective Services	Improve achievement from 59% to 69%
L3 Art & Design	Improve achievement rom 79% to 89%
L3 Ext Diploma in Childcare Learning and Development	Improve achievement from 62% to 75%
L5 Foundation Degree in Counselling	Improve achievement from 88% to 95%

KPI 2.6	**To increase the number of 25-64 year olds participating in education and training from 2,245 individuals in 2022/23 to 3,172 individuals in 2024/25**

Planned Activity:	
Adult Access	Target 69 individuals
Further Education (FT & PT)	Target 855 individuals
Higher Education (FT & PT)	Target 595 individuals
WAAP - Community, Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRA) and SLDD	Target 1,330 individuals
All Age Apprenticeships	Target 70 individuals
Step Up	Target 53 individuals
Skill Up	Target 200 individuals

Reduce Carbon Emissions	
Aim/Outcome - 3	To address the skills needs of the future workforce in green industries through upskilling and reskilling individuals in support of a net zero economy in Northern Ireland.
Draft Headline Indicator	CO_2 Emissions per Capita
Draft Supporting Indicators	• Proportion of electricity consumption generated from renewable sources • Energy Intensity • Energy Efficiency • Circular economy material and carbon footprint
Background	
KPI 3.1	To increase from 1 to 4 College staff trained in the delivery of green sustainable skills in the 2024/25 academic year.

Planned Activity:	
Level 2 Diploma in Heat Pump Systems.	Increase from 0 to 2 staff members in the delivery of Level 2 Diploma in Heat Pump Systems.
Level 2/3 City & Guilds Award in Domestic Electric Vehicle Charging Equipment Installation.	Increase from 1 to 2 (100% increase) staff to deliver City and Guilds Level 2/3 in Domestic Electric Vehicle Charging Equipment
KPI 3.2	711 no. individuals participating on green/sustainable courses in the 2024/25 academic year.

Planned Activity:	
City & Guilds Level 2/3 Award in Domestic Electric Vehicle Charging Equipment Installation	32 individuals
IMI Level 2 & Level 3 Award in Electric/Hybrid Vehicle Routine Maintenance Activities	48 individuals
OCN NI Level 2 Award Reducing Carbon Footprints through Environmental Action	36 individuals
EAL/City & Guilds L3 Award in Fundamental Principles & Requirements of Environmental Technology Systems	195 individuals
Mandatory training on Health, Safety and Environmental/Sustainability training.[11]	400 no of staff to complete

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[11] Staff undertaking mandatory training in Health, Safety & Environmental Sustainability will not be delivering courses, and therefore this sits within KPI 4.2

Reduce Carbon Emissions	
Aim/Outcome - 4	**To deliver against the Public Body reporting duties of the Climate Change legislation delivering an energy efficient and sustainable estate.**
Draft Headline Indicator	**CO^2 Emissions per Capita**
Draft Supporting Indicators	• **Proportion of electricity consumption generated from renewable sources** • **Energy Intensity** • **Energy Efficiency** • **Circular economy material and carbon footprint**
Background	
KPI 4.1	**To establish the key actions to improve/maintain energy efficiency in the College in 2024/25 academic year.**
Planned Activity:	
In 2024/25 financial year, to apply for monies towards minor works projects[12] that contribute towards a sustainable College estate.	Successful application for Invest to Save £207,000 for Newry East Building PV Array.
In 2024/25 academic year, to establish key actions to improve/maintain energy efficiency of College campuses.	• Install PV Array at Newry East Building • Reduce Opening hours at Banbridge and Lurgan campuses. • Implement Work from Home initiatives at half terms for support staff. • New water heating solution at Newry East building.
Improve baseline position across all College campuses.	2% reduction tCo2e on 23/24

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[12] Includes Invest to Save Funded projects.

5. KEY CHALLENGES/CONSTRAINTS

The below table sets out the top five corporate challenges/constraints towards achievement of planned delivery set out in section 4 above.

Challenge	Potential Impact	Mitigating Actions
Economic Planning Complexity – Pace of change of the key drivers for education and skills in FE Sector with new economic priorities and target actions	• Challenges in aligning College Development Plans to evolving indicators. • Staff resources committed to existing curriculum delivery with limited flexibility. • Work required to integrate local College curriculum plans with regional LEP plans. • Differential levels of engagement between College, Councils and FE in developing regional plans.	• CDP working group now established between DfE and Colleges. • Ongoing engagement to refine performance indicators from FE programmes to link to economic priorities. • More clarity required on the approach to regional planning and LEPs and alignment with Council and InvestNI roles. • Formal re-engagement with InvestNI commenced September'24
Uncertainty and Complexity Around Funding Streams and Delays in LOOs – impacts on ability of Colleges to include planned delivery in curriculum build and associated targets	• Late approval or visibility of additional funding streams becoming available can make it difficult to build into delivery planning which starts at different time-frames compared to the commencement of the academic year in September whilst requiring full-spend by March. • Range and variety of funding pots and compliance and eligibility issues takes time to put in place and test learner eligibility.	• More visibility through NIFON and Curriculum Directors on scale of opportunities • Explore the opportunity to pull a number of separate programmes in over a central theme : Business and Innovation, Support for Inclusion • Wider consideration of the funding model requires NIFON input in terms of different rates to ensure consistency and viability. • Work with funders for release of LoOs earlier in the year to enable full integration into curriculum planning and delivery • Identification earlier from funders of new or additional

Challenge	Potential Impact	Mitigating Actions
		in-year allocations to enable building of capacity
Recruitment challenges Impacting on Enrolment – Colleges not being able to attract lecturers/trainers in traditional trade and STEM areas.	• Trend for last 5 years of significant interest in trade and STEM areas which cannot be accommodated due to recruitment challenges. • Aging profile of the workforce may have longer term impact in key sectors with significant critical skills gaps. • Negative impact on curriculum offer, quality of service provision and learner success.	• Initiate review through HR sector working group of trends in applications and enrolments in last 3 years • Understand the opportunity for more flexible approach in terms of recruitment premium for agreed occupational areas • Secure pay remit approval to progress towards salary expectations • Industrial Relations review to commence following reestablishment of the CEF, focusing on pay parity and terms and conditions
Investment in facilities (including IT and AI) and infrastructure to ensure competitiveness and to support action towards net zero targets in context of one year budgetary landscape	• Inability to be at the forefront of new advances in technology developments. • Failure to implement full obligations under the Climate Change Act and impact on net/zero/sustainability targets	• 3 year bids placed to DfE to secure funding to deliver new initiatives • In-year bids and realignment to cover emerging pressures • Progress commenced with establishment of baselines and initial progress towards targets

The College has a Risk Management Framework in place including Corporate and Operational Risk Registers from which key risks are reflected.

COLLEGE DATA ANALYSIS

A. Enrolment Trends

The trend tables below have been sourced from the Further Education Sector Activity report 2018/19 to 2022/23 published by DfE[13].

Table A2: All enrolments by age band and FE College (2018/19 to 2022/23)						
FE College	**Age Band**	**Academic Year**				
		2018/19	**2019/20**	**2020/21**	**2021/22**	**2022/23**
Southern Regional College	**19 and under**	15,650	15,460	10,700	14,395	13,645
	20-24	2,370	2,160	1,805	2,080	1,910
	25 and over	7,985	6,710	4,460	5,760	6,365
	Total	26,005	24,330	16,960	22,235	21,920

Table A4: All enrolments by mode of attendance and FE College (2018/19 to 2022/23)						
FE College	**Mode of Attendance**	**Academic Year**				
		2018/19	**2019/20**	**2020/21**	**2021/22**	**2022/23**
Southern Regional College	**Full-time**	4,340	4,120	4,040	4,330	4,005
	Part-time	21,665	20,210	12,920	17,910	17,915
	Total	26,005	24,330	16,960	22,235	21,920

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[13] Further education sector activity in Northern Ireland: 2018/19 to 2022/23 | Department for the Economy (economy-ni.gov.uk)

| Table A21: Regulated enrolments by sex, STEM indicator and FE College (2018/19 to 2022/23)							
			Academic Year				
FE College	Sex	STEM	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Southern Regional College	Female	Non-STEM	8,850	7,755	5,815	6,970	7,185
		Broad STEM	875	940	800	950	1,070
		Narrow STEM	535	460	450	560	615
		Total (Broad STEM plus Non-STEM)	9,725	8,695	6,620	7,920	8,260
	Male	Non-STEM	7,705	7,420	5,285	5,395	5,700
		Broad STEM	3,380	3,150	3,080	3,860	4,190
		Narrow STEM	2,100	1,965	1,830	2,400	2,710
		Total (Broad STEM plus Non-STEM)	11,085	10,565	8,365	9,255	9,890
	Total	Non-STEM	16,555	15,170	11,100	12,365	12,890
		Broad STEM	4,255	4,090	3,880	4,805	5,260
		Narrow STEM	2,635	2,430	2,280	2,960	3,320
		Total (Broad STEM plus Non-STEM)	20,810	19,260	14,985	17,170	18,150

Trends for FT FE are shown in the chart below (based on EBS data):
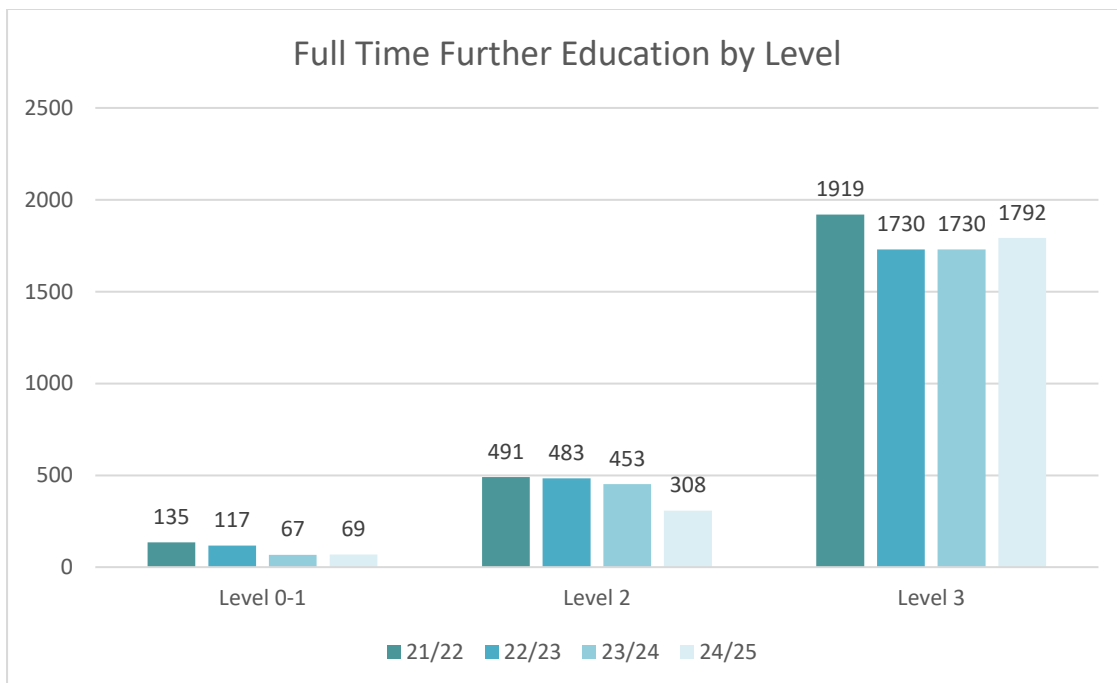
Trends for School Partnership are shown in the chart below (based on EBS data):

School Partnership

Year	Enrolments
19/20	2699
20/21	2540
21/22	2863
22/23	2974
23/24	3046
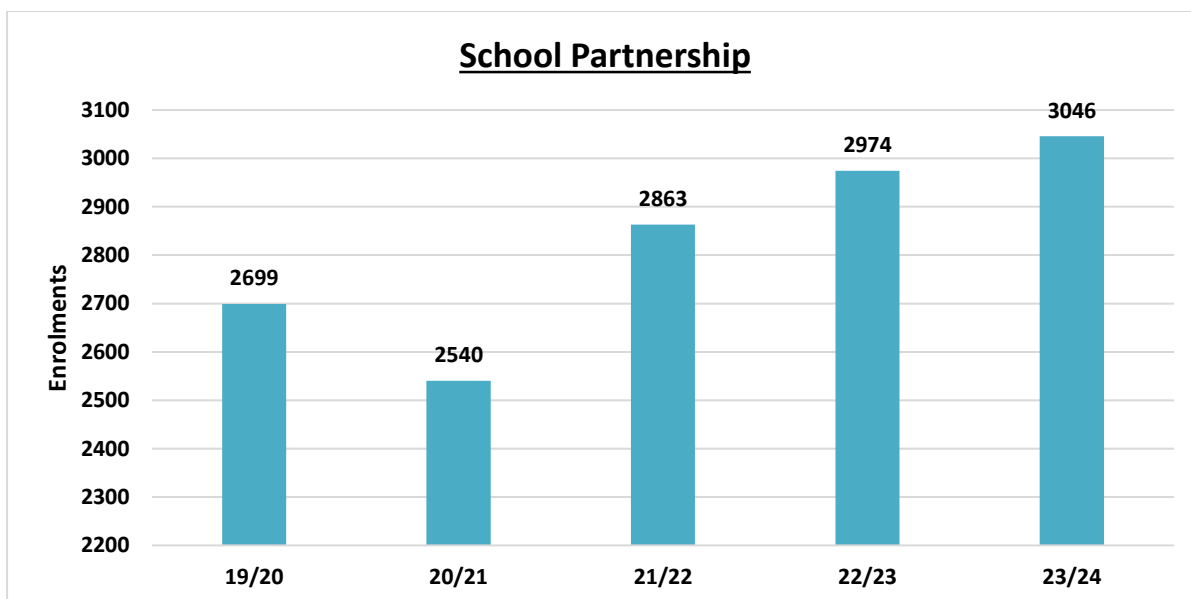
B. Performance

Student Achievement		Achievement	
		2022-23	
Further Education	Full Time	1,243	82%
	Part Time	7,695	81%
Higher Education	**Full Time**	110	87%
	Part Time	680	76%
Work Based Learning	**Tship/AppsNI**	1,155	91%
Essential Skills		1,071	56%

Note: 2023-24 achievement cannot be measured until completion of eFELS due 30 Sept 24

The following tables show 23/24 enrolments against the 23/24 target

NOTE: Source data for all the following tables is taken from EBS

Total Enrolment		Enrolments		
		Target	**Actual**	**% Target**
Level 0-7	Full Time	3,983	4,044	102%
	Part Time	16,089	16,970	105%

Further Education		Enrolments		
		Target	**Actual**	**%**
Levels 0-3	Full time	2,045	2,169	106%
	Part Time	11,720	12,315	105%
	Total	13,765	14,484	105%

Higher Education		Enrolments		
		Target	Actual	%
Levels 4-7	Full time	294	275	94%
	Part Time	1,531	1,338	87%
	Total	1,825	1,613	88%

Traineeships		Enrolments		
		Target	Actual	%
Level 2	Full Time	489	333	68%

Apprenticeships		Enrolments		
		Target	Actual	%
Level 2-3	Full Time	1,155	1,267	110%
Level 4+	Part Time	446	409	92%
	Total	1,601	1,676	105%

Essential Skills	Enrolments		
	Target	Actual	%
Age >=16 and <20	1,479	1,750	118%
Age 20 or over	363	484	133%
Total	1,842	2,234	121%

Table 13: Students achieving regulated qualifications by FE College (2018/19 to 2022/23)					
	Academic Year				
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
SRC	7,970	7,030	6,070	6,570	6,980
FE Sector Total	44,105	39,575	33,925	34,710	36,710