

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2019/2024

Update October 2021

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**HARLOW  
COLLEGE**

**Not Just Courses. Careers**

## Strategic Summary

We are committed to ensuring that we change and transform the lives of young people and adults in our community. We want all of our learners to achieve their ambitions, contribute significantly to the productivity of the economy and have happy and purposeful lives. We have a relentless focus on “Not Just Courses, Careers”.

Our next phase builds on key partnerships we have established with employers, business, community groups, schools, colleges and universities – we pride ourselves on our enterprising approach, ensuring that we develop the skills needed for our thriving innovation corridor.

At the core of our Strategy we maintain our values:

- Students at the heart
- Be your best, be your future
- Work hard, work together
- Be innovative and enterprising

We have shaped our plan around the following intentions:

- Career-led curriculum – developing through our partnerships the technical, academic, digital, employability, maths and English skills required to be successful in the next steps in life. Offering a strong pastoral support programme with personal development and well-being at its heart.
- Quality of Education – continuing our drive to be excellent, providing high quality learning, teaching and assessment, with digital technologies effectively embedded. Equipping our students with transferable learning skills that means they are well equipped for a rapidly changing world.
- Resources – Shaping our learning spaces to mirror the workplace, investing in our infrastructure, technologies and partnerships to grow and diversify. Ensuring our staff have cutting-edge industry skills and access to a high quality CPD programme. Maintaining our financial stability to enable investment in our approach to ultimately benefit students.

## Strategic Planning Context

Harlow College is recognised by Ofsted and others for providing good quality education to the West of Essex. This document outlines our strategic intentions for the next 5 years and lays out the key principles for our Strategic Plan. This update also includes any changes we may have made due to the impact of Covid-19 on our activities.

We have achieved a lot in the past 5 years, and are now ready to move into our next phase of development. Key achievements include:

- The development of the Harlow Advanced Manufacturing Centre
- The building and opening of a new College at Stansted Airport
- Achievement of Apple Distinguished Status, a recognition for innovation in learning and teaching technologies, and an EdTech Demonstrator
- Recognition as a Maths Centre for Excellence, 1 of 21 national centres
- Achievement of two Good Ofsted grades
- A strong focus on diversity and inclusion, including work with the unemployed, high needs students, looked after children and ESOL learners
- Ongoing Good Financial Health from a position of Satisfactory at the start of the period
- Continued development of our employer-led curriculum and key partnerships with new employers, including Stansted Airport, Public Health England, Princess Alexandra Hospital and the Garden Town development
- A strong response to the Covid-19 pandemic, switching learning online and supporting our students to be as successful as possible in the changing circumstances

We continue our commitment to ensuring that we change and transform the lives of young people and adults in our community. We want all of our learners to achieve their ambitions, contribute significantly to the productivity of the economy and have happy and purposeful lives.

Our next phase builds on key partnerships we have established with employers, business, community groups, schools, colleges and universities – we pride ourselves on our enterprising approach, ensuring that we develop the skills needed for our thriving innovation corridor. We know that the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the young people, adults and employers that we work with, therefore we will need to review our approaches.

At the core of our Strategy we maintain our current values:

- Students at the heart
- Be your best, be your future
- Work hard, work together
- Be innovative and enterprising

We have shaped our plan around the following intentions:

- Career-Led Curriculum
- Quality of Education
- Resources

In this document, we describe our strategic goals and partnerships. We present this to you for review and comment, and look forward to working with you on our journey.

### **Career-Led Curriculum**

- Our curriculum planning will focus on the maintenance and development of the 'Not just courses. Careers' approach, in particular partnerships with key employers including Stansted Airport, PHE, Princess Alexander Hospital and any development linked to the Garden Towns.
- Our students, whatever their age, background or mode of study will have access to a career-led curriculum that develops more than a qualification and allows them to successfully progress to their next stage.
- The College's curriculum will be designed with clear pathways for learners to enter the system at every level and succeed. This will be increasingly important as we identify lost learning from the Covid-19 pandemic, embrace curriculum reform (for example T-Levels) and review our partnerships with employers.
- We will build on our successful Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy to ensure that students are equipped with the digital skills, industry skills, and the English and mathematics skills required to be successful.
- We will develop our students to be independent learners and thinkers, equipping them with the flexibility and resilience they will require for an unknown future. We will use digital technologies to equip them for a changing world, in particular the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution and rapid technological changes.
- Our students will need the skills to be active citizens, understanding and changing habits, in terms of sustainability, low carbon technologies and health. We will build these, alongside our digital approach, into the curriculum, as well as College policies and procedures.
- We will work with the Chamber of Commerce to develop sector-based employer boards to inform our curriculum. As well as working with large employers, like Stansted Airport, we will also ensure small and medium sized enterprises have a voice. National and global trends will be considered, as well as, the local economy. We will partner with Essex based colleges to have a coherent voice and approach.
- We will continue to work with employers and community partners, to develop pre-apprenticeship programmes for young people and adults.
- Our curriculum will be designed to meet industry standards and wherever

possible provide students and apprentices with the professional status required in their sector.

- We will develop our technical provision, including new T-levels and progression pathways to Levels 4 and 5, reviewing our Higher Education Strategy and ensuring we have a sustainable model for the future. We will also partner with South Essex College as an Institute for Technology (IoT)
- We will continue our regional work with job centres supporting adults back into work in a flexible and pro-active way. However, we also need to shift the balance of this work to in-work training with the current post-pandemic low unemployment rates. We are also committed to life-long learning and ensuring that our response to the Government White paper is strong, providing good opportunities to retrain and up-skill.

### **Quality of Education and Experience**

We want everyone to reach their full potential and receive a good quality education, to do this we will:

- Set aspirational targets that ensure the highest outcomes in terms of attainment, progress, value added and destinations.
- Invest in the highest quality learning, teaching and assessment, (LTA) building on our successful LTA Strategy Embed our new LTA quality processes to continue our focus on peer evaluation, improvement, innovation and sharing good practice, integrating our innovative digital approach as a norm.
- Provide a head-start to our students through our extra curricula and work experience programmes, that builds their confidence and skills for the workplace
- Ensure all our learners have meaningful, positive destinations
- Continue our focus on improving English and mathematics as a critical part of our curriculum
- Build on our successful Ofsted Inspection of 2019, with the aim of being Outstanding under the new Education Inspection Framework
- Establish and embed the practice of our Maths Centre for Excellence, developing a strong network of other colleges and an action research-led approach to educational improvement
- Be seen as a regional centre of excellence for the delivery of technical education and apprenticeships, in particular focusing on our partnerships with key employers in the region and establishing an IoT
- Be recognised through the achievement of awards, for example, the maintenance of Apple Distinguished School status

### **Resources**

The biggest challenge is to manage the investment in the College infrastructure whilst responding to a challenging policy and funding environment from Government.

Our priorities will be to:

- Achieve continued 'Good' financial health and meet our bank covenants, in order for us to invest in our curriculum, resources and staff
- To improve the efficiency of the curriculum whilst offering high quality outcomes
- To manage the increasing cost-base as effectively as possible, reviewing processes and procedures to ensure we are getting best value for money
- To meet the challenges of the apprenticeship levy and continue to secure new business from levy paying employers
- To review and develop a sustainable funding model for Higher Education and Level 4 and 5 work with a focus on higher level technical skills
- We will work to develop pathways for industry professionals into teaching, providing a 'scaffolded' system of development and training, bidding for funds to support new teachers where available.
- To invest in our staff through continued support for professional development, e-learning development and our well-being programmes
- The further rejuvenation of our estate, including identifying capital funds to redevelop Buildings J and K as an Health Technologies Innovation Centre, and the establishment of a 147 Training Centre at Stansted Airport
- Consolidation of our previous strategy, including embedding of HAMEC, work on Modern Methods of Construction, the establishment of the CITB Hub, partnerships with PHE and Stansted Airport College
- Developing a sustainable model for investment in our technological infrastructure, including iPads and new technologies to support the continued development of digital skills