

ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT

2024-25

MAY 2024

**PETER
SYMONDS
COLLEGE**
WINCHESTER

Approved by the Board of Governors 13 May 2024

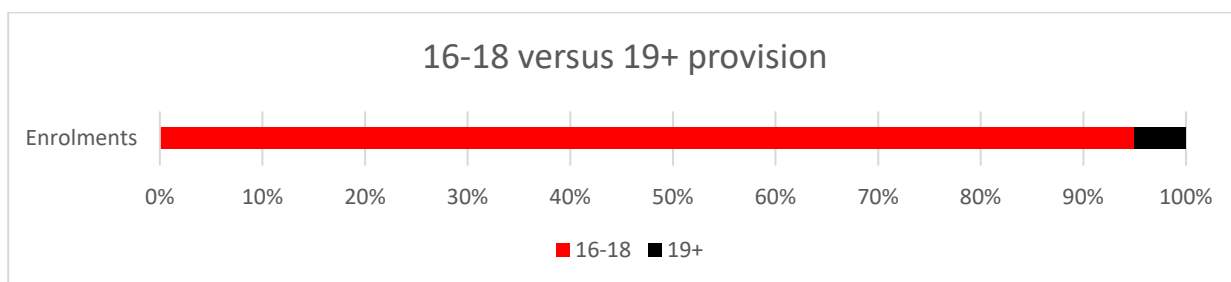
THE ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT

It is a requirement of Colleges to produce an annual Accountability Agreement to set out its contribution to meeting national and local skills needs and the steps it is taking to develop its provision to meet skills needs more effectively over the coming year. In this document we explore the purpose of the College, the context and place in which we operate, how we have developed the plan, our statement under the Local Needs Duty, and our targets for contributing to skills needs over the coming year.

PURPOSE

Peter Symonds College is an incorporated sixth form college situated in Winchester, Hampshire. The College currently has 4,394 16-18-year-old students who are almost exclusively full time. The vast majority of provision is A level, with around 85% of students following a 'pure' or mainly A level programme, and the majority of the remaining 15% following pure or mainly applied general qualifications courses. The vocational offer includes T levels (currently Education and Childcare), level 2 (OCR, Cambridge Technical Qualifications and GCSEs), level 3 courses from the BTEC and Cambridge Technical families, criminology and medical science (WJEC), and courses in beauty therapy and childcare. While the College is best known as a centre of excellence for A level provision for young people, it also has substantial provision for adult learners ranging from ESOL courses at E1 and E3, GCSE and level 2 vocational courses through to Access to HE and higher education courses. In the year 2022-23, 388 enrolments were recorded in the college's Adult and Higher Education Division. In 2022-23, there were 120 students on higher education courses, delivered in conjunction with the Universities of Middlesex and Chichester. The College also runs a substantial programme of leisure courses. The primary purpose of the College is to produce university-ready students who have an excellent grounding in their subjects and are skilled at navigating the independent learning strategies used at university. Alongside this, the College offers a range of 'second-chance' courses aimed at providing opportunities for both 16-18 and 19+ learners who have struggled to achieve high grades at GCSE and wish to enhance their employability in later life.

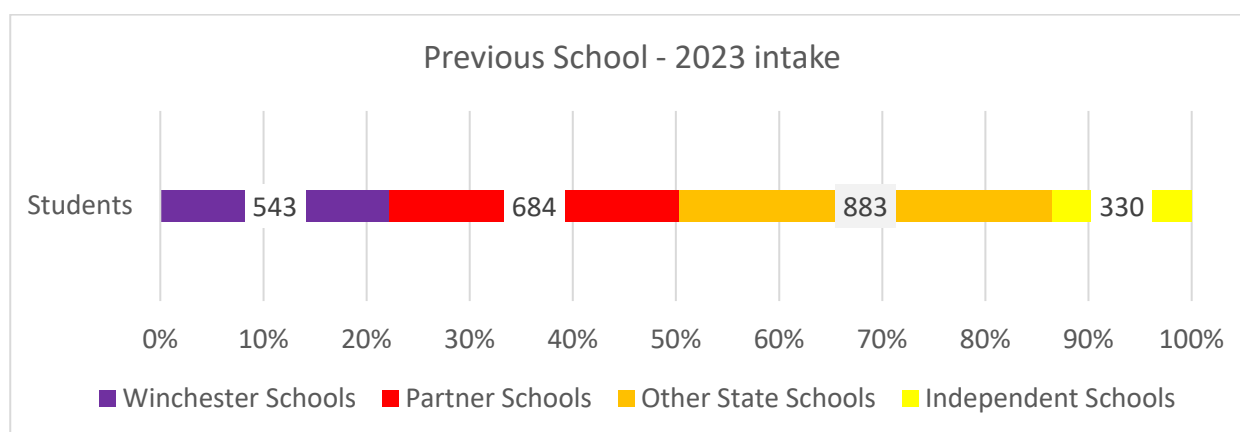
1: Curriculum offer: 16-18 versus 19+



As well as the 16-18 work for which the College is renowned, the College has an Adult and Higher Education Division offering 'second chance' courses (Access to HE, GCSEs) and vocational courses in a tightly focused range of curriculum routes (Counselling, Childcare, Hair and Beauty). In 2020-21, 19+ enrolments made up 5.7% of the College's offer.

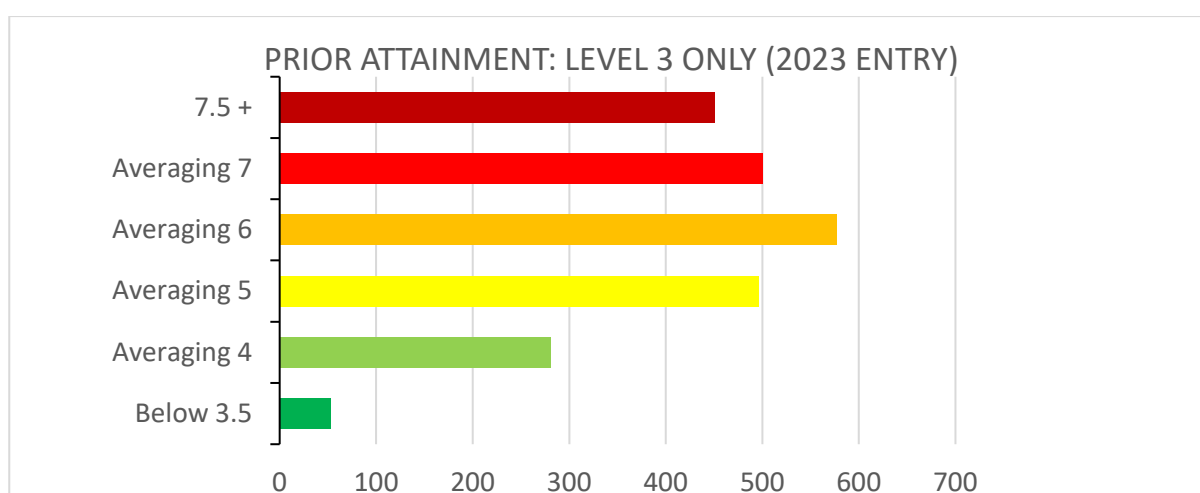
2: College intake: 16-18 year olds

Just a quarter of the College's intake comes from Winchester, and in all the college engages with over 150 feeder schools. The College is also home to around 70 boarding students.



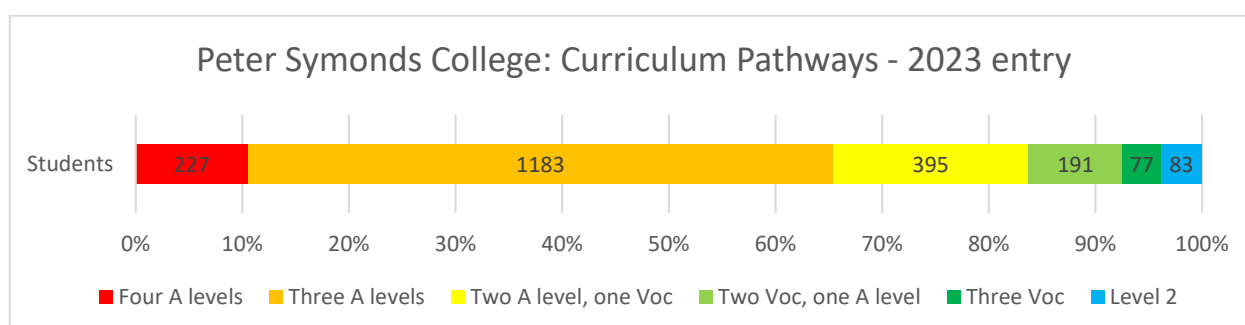
3: Prior attainment profile: 16-18 year olds: level 3

While the College is best known as one that attracts highly qualified learners, the College has an inclusive entry policy and a not insignificant proportion of learners (around 10%) are averaging around the pass grade (grade four). It should be noted that the grades reported here are inflated grades from 2020 and 2021 GCSEs, and will fall going forward.



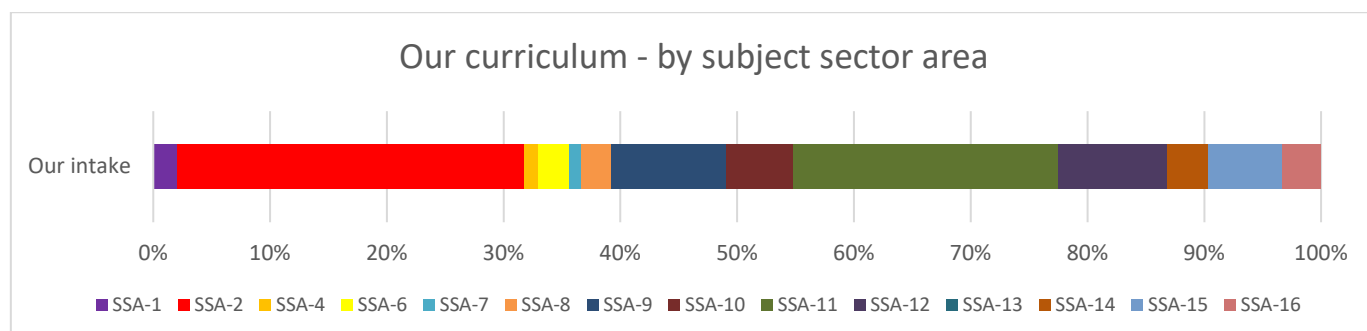
4: Curriculum breakdown: level 3

While the vast majority of students pursue A level programmes, the College has a growing stable of vocational courses (BTEC, CTEC and WJEC) to cater for the needs of more modestly qualified students.

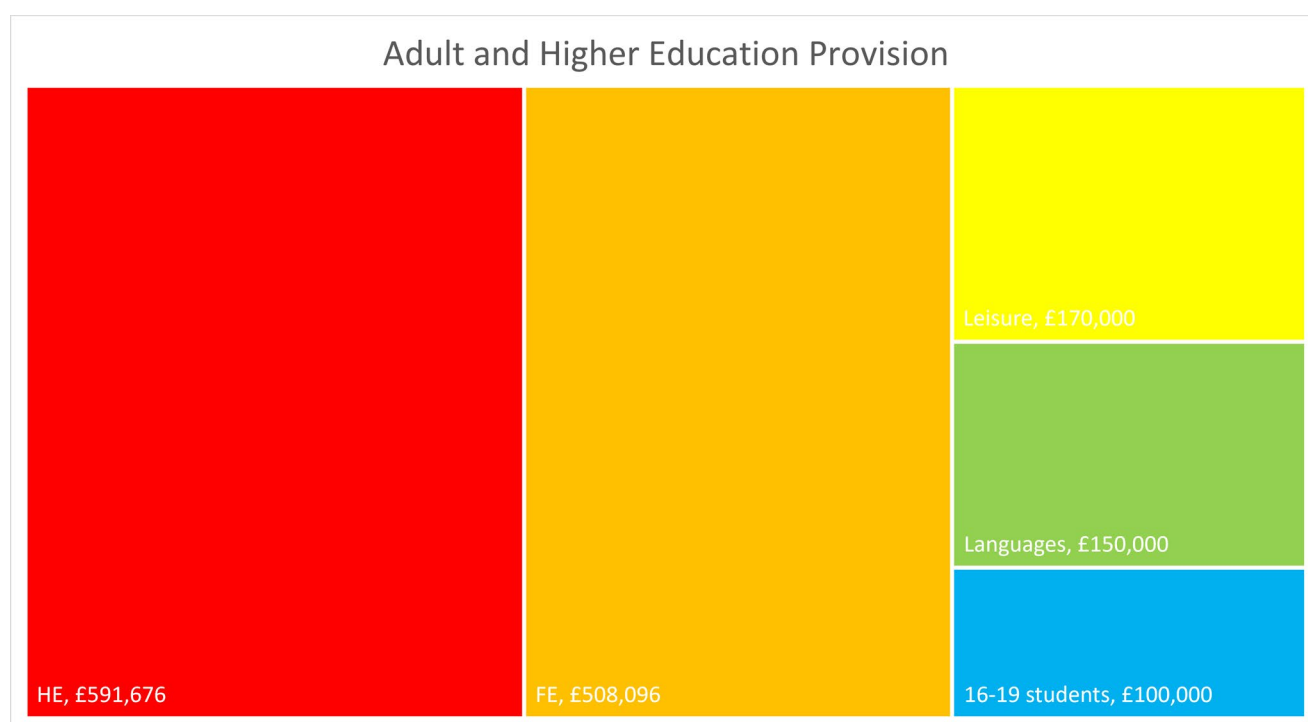


5: Curriculum breakdown: subject sector area

The analysis of enrolments by subject sector area (SSA) helps identify the largest curriculum areas in the College. The three largest areas are SSA 2 (Science and Mathematics), SSA 9 (Arts Media and Publishing), SSA 11 (Social Sciences) and SSA 12 (Languages, Literature and Culture).



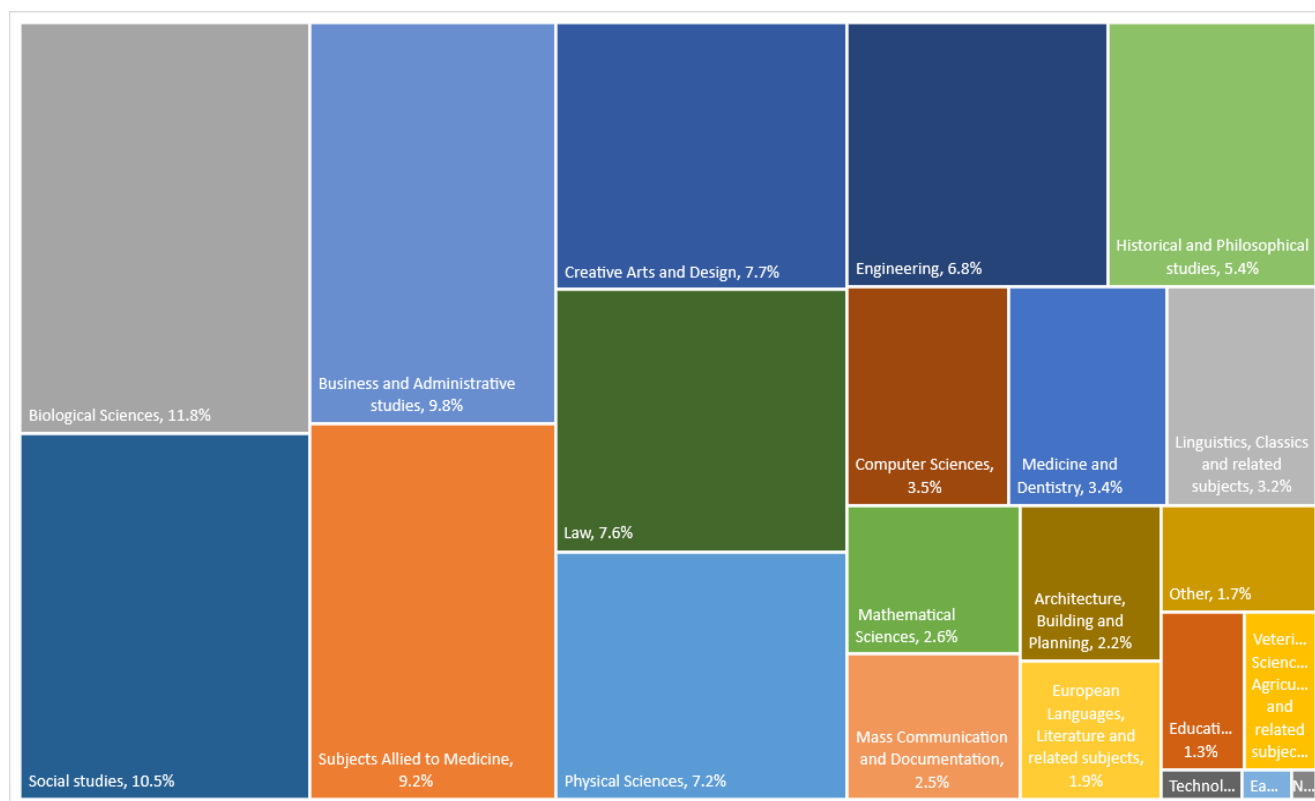
6: Adult and Higher Education Division



The balance of College's Adult and Higher Education Division is a three-way split between higher education, further education and other courses.

7: Destinations

Within two years of leaving the College, 88% of students will have started courses at university. As such, our contribution to skills needs has a national focus rather than a local one. The subject breakdown of the university intake is as follows:



The ethos of Peter Symonds College centres on the individual. ‘Counting in Ones’ is our motto and is the principle which guides everything we do. Each student at the College deserves the very best and our primary purpose is to enable students to progress. Peter Symonds College is a diverse, inclusive and ambitious community in which each person is valued and encouraged to achieve. Students and staff are united in their enthusiasm for learning and the College is committed to providing a stimulating educational experience of the highest quality. Whatever their future aspirations, we nurture our students’ potential and challenge them to develop personally, academically and creatively, and develop a sense of responsibility towards the communities of which they are a part.

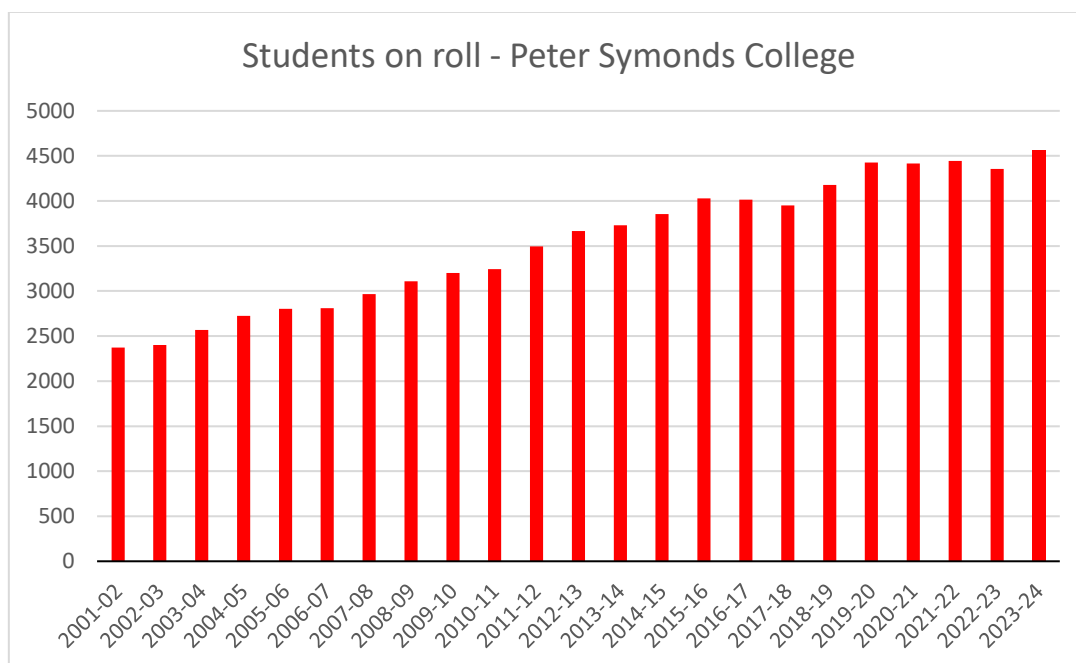
OUR MISSION

- To be a sixth form college of size in order to utilise economies of scale and professionalisation of support services, and to offer a rich and diverse experience to students
- To offer a wide range of A level and level three vocational subjects to best meet the needs of individual learners
- To offer level two courses to 16-18 students to provide a pathway to level three study for students in Winchester and the surrounding area
- To offer courses to adults which allow progression in work
- To pursue a strategy of managed and sustained incremental growth in student numbers, twinned with sustained renewal of College buildings and facilities
- To provide an exceptional boarding experience
- To contribute to meeting the wider needs of the community through adult higher education provision

- To maintain an ethos of continual improvement and aim for excellence in everything we do, building on our strengths and responding decisively when provision falls short of excellence.

OUR VISION

The College has long had a strategy of sustained managed growth; careful development of provision and capacity over time. In October 2022, the College opened a new twelve classroom block part-funded by a successful bid to the Capacity Improvement Fund.



Recent Developments

In recent years the College has focused on refining its 16-18 offer, and re-focusing courses available to 19+ learners.

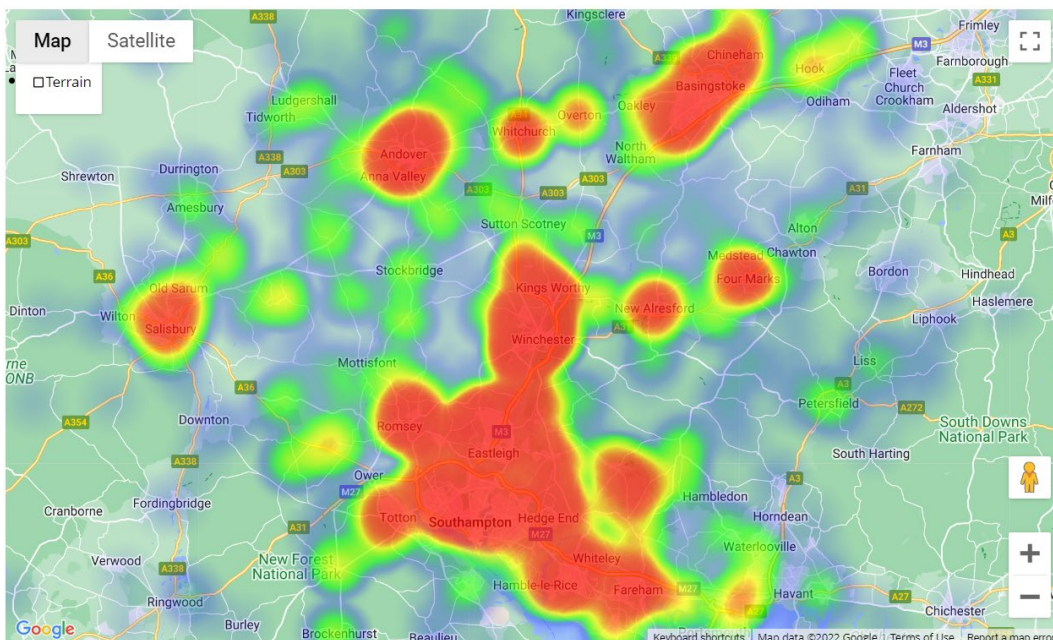
- In 16-18 provision, this has involved expanding the range of applied general courses to best meet the needs of students who have averaged around a 4 or 5 at GCSE.
- In 16-18 provision we have been one of the first group of colleges to offer T level qualifications, and in Summer 2022 we saw our first students achieve the T Level in Education and Childcare qualification.
- In our adult provision, we have withdrawn from offering apprenticeships. When these were introduced the intention was to become the provider of choice for Hampshire County Council, but the anticipated demand from this area was reduced when the Council introduced its own apprenticeship programmes.
- In our adult provision, we have withdrawn from functional skills qualifications in literacy and numeracy but have reintroduced ESOL courses to meet the needs of Ukrainian (and other) refugees hosted in the Winchester district, and further developed our work with adults with learning disabilities.

CONTEXT AND PLACE

Peter Symonds College is a sixth form college located in Winchester. Of its 4,394 full time learners, only a quarter are drawn from Winchester itself. The College draws students from across Hampshire, and has 70 boarding students. These are all ESFA funded students and we do not have Tier 4 status, so have no international students. The College's intake spans Hampshire and the Southampton and Portsmouth unitary authorities, with small numbers of students from Dorset and Wiltshire.

Our three largest contributors are the 11-16 schools in Winchester: Kings School, The Westgate School and the Henry Beaufort School. One thing that makes Hampshire unusual is the very small number of schools with a sixth form, and the fluidity of movement for post-16 study. Our location (200 metres from Winchester Railway Station) provides easy access for students from across Hampshire. 880 have railway season tickets (processed by the College) and we liaise with local bus providers to ensure bus provision matches student applications. 14% of our students were previously educated in the independent sector.

The boarding provision at the College has its origins in the military connections to Winchester, and in the past many students were the children of forces families. The withdrawal of UK forces from Germany (in particular) has reduced the proportion of students from a military background, but boarding remains full.



Our recruitment 'heat-map' reveals significant 'hot-spots' of recruitment some distance from the College with Salisbury, Basingstoke, Eastleigh, Southampton and Fareham seeing significant numbers of applications. In socio-economic terms, the College's intake is relatively affluent: 60% of our students are drawn from districts in the 25% least deprived nationally.

APPROACH TO DEVELOPING THE PLAN

Much of the decision-making process around curriculum offer is driven by national intelligence about curriculum routes for 16-18 year olds derived from interaction with the Sixth Form Colleges Association, the Association of Colleges, the Wessex Group of Sixth Form Colleges and the Hampshire Principals Group. Senior Managers at the College are on the AoC Sixth Form Colleges portfolio group, the HE in FE group, the SFCA Curriculum and Quality Policy Group, the SFCA Governance Policy Group and AQA's Research Committee. This underpinning knowledge is complemented by interaction with students about course choices, direct interaction with universities and discussions around quality assurance, focusing on providing a curriculum of high quality which achieves its intended outcomes. Our 19+ vocational provision and work in the fields of childcare and education and hair and beauty involves significant interaction with employers.

In formulating this plan we have considered the Local Skills Improvement Plans produced by both the Enterprise M3 LEP and the Solent LEP, as our students are drawn from territory covers by both LEPs. The plan for the EM3 LEP has been shared with providers and is included below. It focuses on general principles, rather than specific curriculum areas which need attention.

Key External Stakeholders

- Hampshire County Council
- ESFA territorial team
- Falkland Islands Government
- Employers (particularly for T level Education and Childcare, and Hair and Beauty Therapy)

Engagement with Other Providers in the Area (and beyond)

- Wessex Group of Sixth Form Colleges
- Hampshire Principals, Hampshire Vice Principals groups
- Sixth Form Colleges Association (SFCA), Association of Colleges (AoC), Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
- Local 11-16 providers to meet the needs of students with EHCPs
- Our eighteen partner schools, particularly the three Winchester schools: Kings, Westgate and Henry Beaufort
- Hampshire careers officers, deputy heads and heads of year
- Cambridge University and Trinity College Cambridge
- SUN university programmes, and compact arrangements with local universities (Winchester, Southampton and Southampton Solent)
- Russell Group universities

Recent engagement with employers and charities regarding curriculum offer and design includes:

- Clinical Academy – Laser module for L4 advanced Beauty
- Ambitions Academy Trust – Bournemouth Education Degree links
- Winchester City of Sanctuary – Development of ESOL programme for Ukrainian refugees
- International Rescue Committee – ESOL provision in the South East
- Blue Apple (learning disability charity for performing arts)

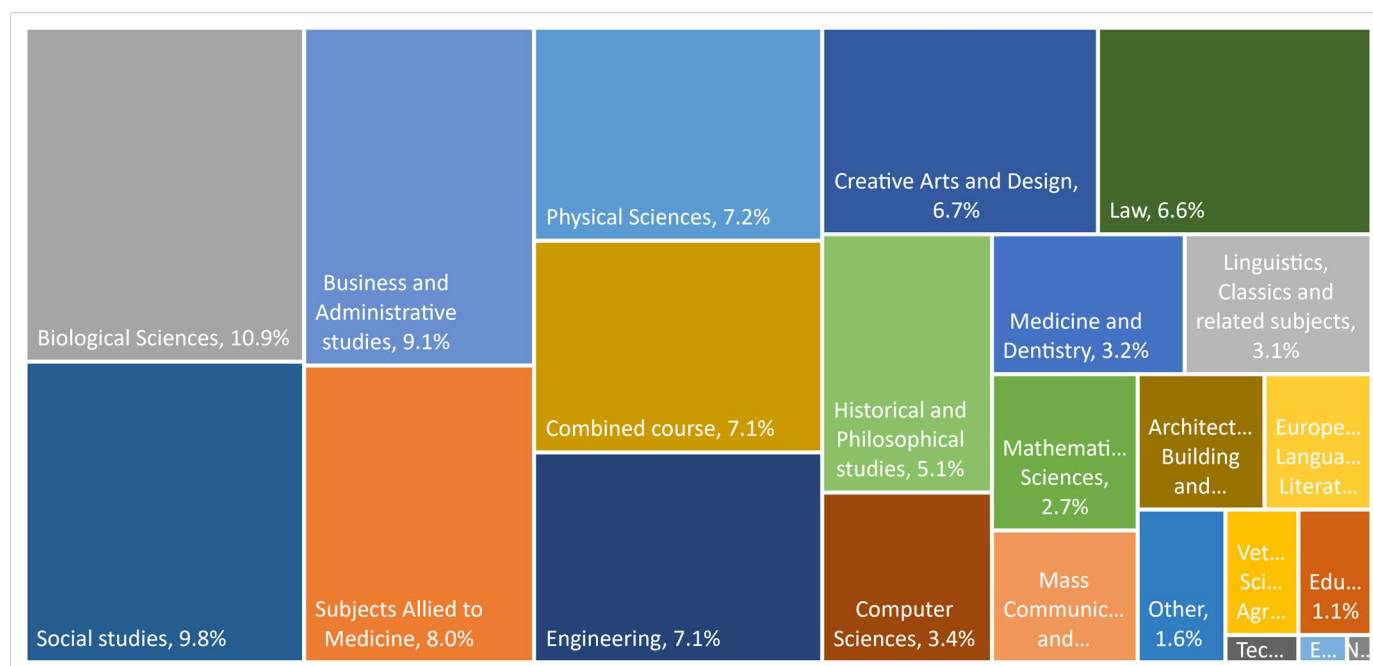
- GoLD – learning disability charity in Winchester
- Education and Training Foundation (work on development of Hair and Beauty T level qualification, including hosting regional events)
- Job Centre – (work on developing short courses in digital skills and starting your own business)
- Middlesex University (development of franchised MA in Education (Leadership and Management), working with a local executive headteacher on course content)
- Winchester Hotel and Spa/Limewood Hotel – Student placements and employer feedback re content of the complimentary therapy/beauty therapy courses
- Southampton Hospital – Oncology – Providing therapies for clients with cancer or other life limiting conditions – student placements and course content feedback
- Kryolan – Media Make-up Organisation – Business side of the programme – products/supply/R&D
- Southampton University – Nursing – Progression from Access to HE (Nursing and midwifery) – course content discussions.
- CAMHS Andover – Mental Health/Health Psychologist – Progression from Access to HE (Psychology) – course content discussions.
- Hampshire ambulance service – alumni student (Paramedic) – Progression from Access to HE (Allied Health Professionals)
- Two Saints – Charity – starting to work with them to signpost individuals to our courses and work to create bespoke courses for them
- MHA – Charity – Delivering guest leisure lectures to work with the charity to reduce loneliness in older people
- Hampshire Youth Justice (Children’s Services) – Design and delivery of bespoke programmes for young people and/or parents who require extra support/motivation
- Winchester Bid – Winchester fashion show and also working with business leaders as part of this network
- Local primary schools (Colden common and Rucstall) – working with them to aid recruitment of TA’s using a combined package with our Education Degree programme
- 20+ Counselling providers – student placements and feedback re course content/focus/development
- ELCAS – Forces Laver Programme – targeted offer of courses specifically relevant for individuals leaving the forces (e.g. Education, Counselling and Sports Massage)

National Skills Priorities:

- On 15 April 2023, the government published its national skills priorities. This identified key curriculum areas where recruitment needs are suspected to be particularly acute in coming years.
 - Construction
 - Manufacturing
 - Digital and Technology
 - Health and Social Care
 - Haulage and Logistics
 - Engineering
 - Science and Mathematics
- It also asks providers to prioritise a small number of high-quality programmes with a proven track record of delivering good outcomes for learners (T levels, skills bootcamps and apprenticeships)
- It recognises that sixth form colleges are more focused on academic provision and will not necessarily be involved in more vocationally focused programmes, but asks us to consider how we provide an offer that enables students to progress in priority areas
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1149695/DfE_accountability_agreement_guidance_April_2023_FINAL.pdf

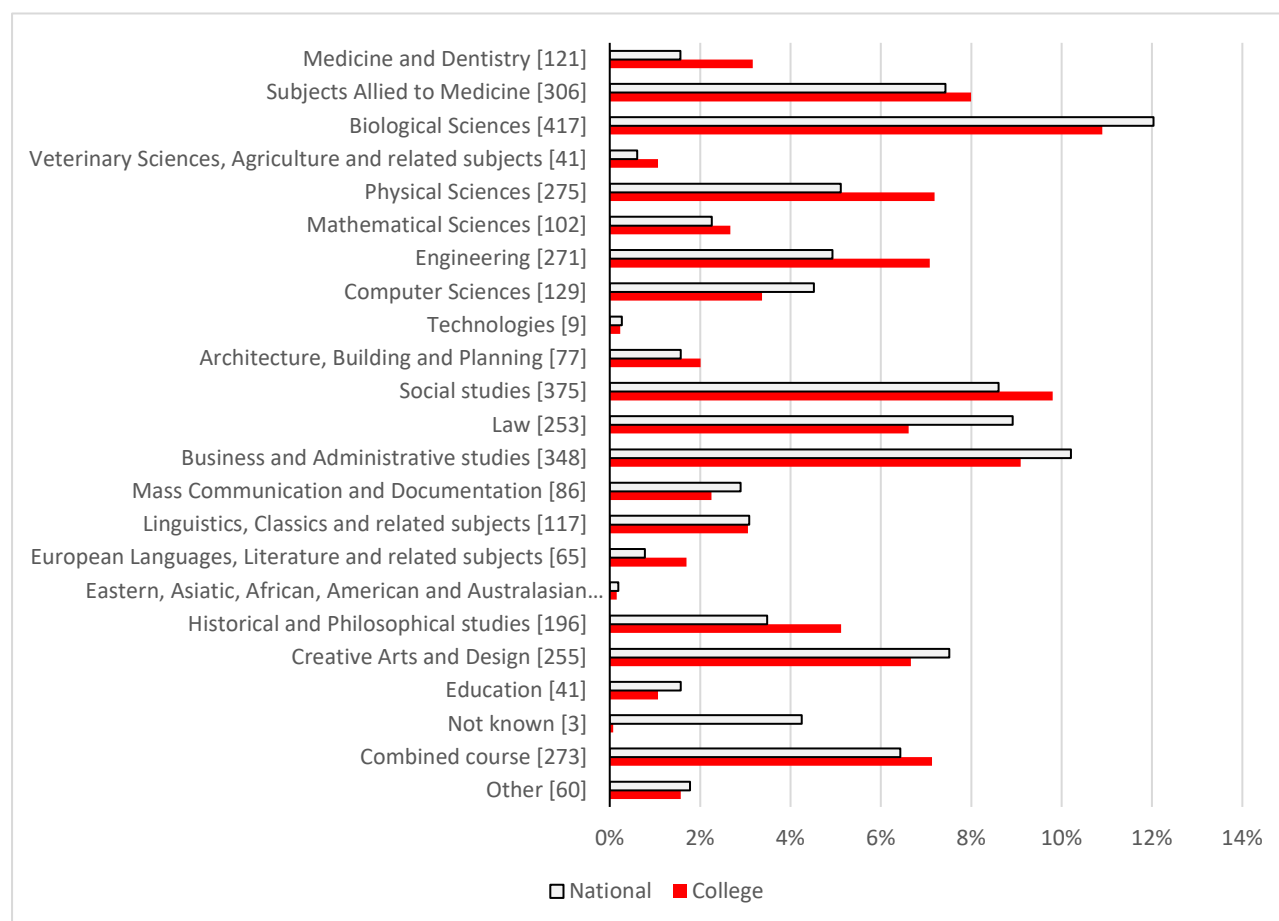
The destination map for Peter Symonds College groups the university outcomes for our students by broad curriculum area. Our largest curriculum area is biological sciences, with 10.9% of students progressing to courses in these areas. Performance is particularly strong across the national priority areas with 44.5% of university places being in STEM courses.

University Destinations by broad subject area: Peter Symonds College



We can also look at how our progression rates to different courses compares to progression in other sixth form colleges.

University Destinations compared to sixth form college averages: Peter Symonds College



Students from Peter Symonds College are twice as likely as students elsewhere in the sixth form college sector to progress to Medicine and Dentistry, and progress to vocational pathways in science (Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science, Nursing, Midwifery and other subjects allied to medicine) in significantly higher numbers than are found in other colleges.

Emerging LSIP Priorities:

- The LSIP priorities (for the Enterprise M3 and rest of Surrey) have been shared with providers, and are arranged around four themes. We have reviewed these priorities in formulating our contribution to national, regional and local priorities.

Overview: Draft priorities for change

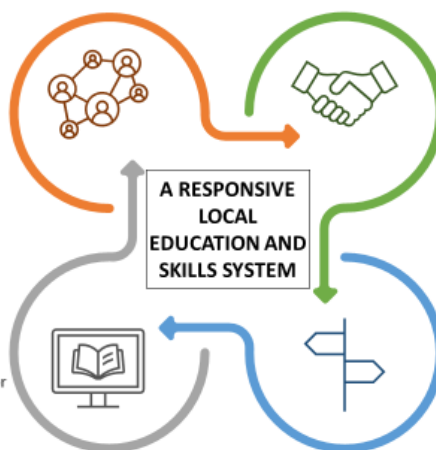
What is needed to make technical education and skills provision more responsive to the changing needs of employers and the local economy in the EM3 + rest of Surrey area?:

NETWORKS AND COLLABORATION

- Enhanced network approach and collaboration between FE providers at multiple levels across LSIP area
- Utilise existing employer networks and clusters, support them, and encourage the development of more

RESPONSIVE CURRICULUM

- Understand and consider the specific challenges and skills needs of key local sectors
- Develop clear and consistent approaches for the ways businesses can support and input on course delivery
- Embed cross-cutting skills development and interdisciplinary working into curriculums



DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BUSINESSES AND PROVIDERS

- Identify opportunities to enhance the “connective tissue” between businesses and the FE sector
- Proactive engagement with larger “anchor” businesses to identify innovative solutions

INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

- Accessibility of information and support available to businesses
- Improved brokerage solutions to match the supply of skills with employer demand
- Support businesses to access “hidden” local talent

In conversation with the EM3 LSIP team we have identified a specific local priority regarding what employers want. In short they have identified ‘employability skills’ as a focus.

Hitherto, we have examples of subject areas canvassing higher education institutions. For example, in 2023 the Health and Social Care team surveys universities about the skills they wanted to see in nursing and midwifery students. As a result of intelligence gathered, the subject has made changes to its course delivery to reflect the skills identified.

In 2024-5 we will conduct work with key higher education institutions and employer representatives to identify what they feel the most important skills are that we could be equipping our students with.

LOCAL NEEDS DUTY

As a sixth form college our core purpose is preparing students for university study. However, our purpose extends significantly beyond that and involves a commitment to lifelong learning for the people of Winchester. This commitment finds its expression in GCSE re-sit courses for adults, Access to HE courses, HE provision, ESOL and our leisure programme.

In 2024 we conducted a review of the curriculum and made a number of changes to provision to better meet local needs. Some changes were aimed at providing coherent pathways for particular groups of students (eg level 2 students and students following performing and expressive arts courses), others were about fine-tuning the qualifications offered (eg A level Music Technology, level 2/3 Hair and Beauty pathway), and others were about meeting the needs of new groups of students in the travel to learn area (eg ESOL reading and writing courses), and offering courses in response to growth areas (eg counselling supervision courses).

A full account of the process followed and the actions agreed are found in the document **Curriculum Review 2024**.

Contribution to National, Regional and Local Priorities: Targets for 2024-25

Aim / Target Outcome for 2024-25 Academic Year	Impact and Contribution to Strategic Aims, Skills Priorities and Priorities for Improvement
<p>1. To continue to provide an exceptional pathway to higher education with more students securing University places</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,775 students securing a university place in 2025 compared with 1,649 in 2021 	<p>The College continues to partner with the University of Cambridge and Trinity College Cambridge to run the HE+ programme for Hampshire, focused on increasing participation from those groups which are historically under-represented in competitive university applications.</p> <p>We partner with the Southern Universities Network (SUN) to provide mentoring and support to university applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p> <p>Many subjects offer additional subject support for university entrance.</p>
<p>2. To increase the numbers of students securing places to study Medicine and subjects allied to medicine at University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 65 students securing a university place to study medicine in 2025 compared with 50 securing places in 2022 75 students to secure places on courses allied to medicine in 2025 (53 in 2022) 	<p>The College runs a 'future medics' programme aimed at maximising students' chances of success in competitive university entrance. The number of successful applications to medicine is already remarkably high, as are the applicants to subjects allied to medicine (nursing (all routes), paramedic science, pharmacology and physiology).</p> <p>This is a national priority area.</p>
<p>3. To focus T levels offer on the Education and Childcare route and develop a non-T level pathway for hair and beauty students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To secure a distinction grade for all students completing T level in childcare (91% for 2022 cohort) To successfully introduce a 16-19 study programme pathway for level 2/3 hair and beauty: Target 16 enrolments for 2024-25 Target enrolment of 15 T level students for the 2024-25 cohort Rehome T level provision 	<p>The College has elected to develop T levels in areas in which it has a track record of success in offering vocational provision and strong links with employers.</p> <p>It had intended to offer T level in Hair and Beauty but the cutting of the hair route has made this unviable for the College.</p> <p>The College will develop a level 2 to level 3 pathway for hair and beauty students for 2024 starts.</p> <p>This is a national priority area.</p>
<p>4. To build state of the art provision for Music courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete construction project within agreed timescales for new music building (occupation September 2025) Secure improved provision for music and music technology courses and music performance courses Achieve Steinway status 	<p>The College has received funding and planning permission to construct a new music block. It has a remarkable record of supplying students to top conservatoires and other prestigious music courses. It is currently housed in a converted late Victorian villa, with compromised acoustics.</p> <p>The plans for the building involve significant engagement with industry about the required standards.</p>

	(LSIP priority – responsive curriculum)
5. To strengthen the employment pathways for students in expressive and performing arts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce the Arts Award, to allow expressive and performing arts students to strengthen their employability prospects. Target 30 students to commence course in January 2025 Switch applied general music production course to the A level (for September 2024 start) 	<p>The Arts award is aimed at student who with to pursue a career in the arts industry. In effect, it ensures that students across expressive, performing and digital arts broaden their art portfolio and gain experience of ‘work’ in their chosen field.</p> <p>(LSIP priority – responsive curriculum)</p>
6. To further strengthen our understanding of higher education and employer needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene a panel of educators and employers to help guide the direction of the College’s work in developing employment and other transferable skills (September 2024) 	<p>While individual curriculum areas have engaged with employers and higher education providers, there is a useful piece of work to be done establishing those skills that employers and educators find valuable.</p> <p>(LSIP priority – dynamic relationship between businesses and providers)</p>
7. To strengthen the senior team’s capacity to engage with the national and local skills agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint a senior manager with specific responsibility for developing the College’s work in the context of skills and stakeholders 	<p>This will help the College to engage with stakeholders in a systematic and timely way, and ensure that developments are implemented.</p> <p>(LSIP priority – dynamic relationship between businesses and providers)</p>
8. To broaden the College’s provision to ESOL students to maximise the employment prospects of students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce ESOL pathways that extend to reading and writing skills (alongside the successful speaking and listening provision) 	<p>This development is in response to the ESOL community’s suggestion. Note that those displaced from Ukraine make up the vast majority of learners in this provision, and the ongoing conflict means that the needs of communities to interact in written form is greater than originally anticipated.</p> <p>(LSIP priority – responsive curriculum)</p>
9. To focus the College’s level 2 pathway to progression to level 3 study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the level 2 curriculum pathway, providing additional focus on the skills students need to secure their next steps 	<p>The College saw increased numbers of students on this course in 2023-24 (an increase from 40 to 80), and as part of the curriculum review has considered what the right provision is for us to be offering: what courses are most appropriate, and what skills students need to develop.</p> <p>(LSIP priority – responsive curriculum)</p>
10. To provide digital skills induction for all students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a digital induction programme focusing on Google Calendar, Classroom, Drive and Documents for the 2024 intake 	<p>The College uses the Google suite of products as its core platform for teaching and learning. IT literacy is a core competency for both the College and the wider world. A digital induction programme has been completed previously, but the new proposal focuses on core transferrable competencies (LSIP priority – responsive curriculum – cross cutting skills)</p>

Appendix One: Contribution to National, Regional and Local Priorities: Review of targets from 2023-24

Aim / Target Outcome for 2023-24 Academic Year	Review notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue to provide an exceptional pathway to higher education with more students securing University places 1,750 students securing a university place in 2024 compared with 1,649 in 2021 	Target to be reviewed in September 2024, once final university destinations are known
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the numbers of students securing places to study Medicine and subjects allied to medicine at University 60 students securing a university place to study medicine in 2024 compared with 50 securing places in 2022 70 students to secure places on courses allied to medicine in 2024 (53 in 2022) 	Target to be reviewed in September 2024, once final university destinations are known
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To embed T levels as a sustainable element of the College's curriculum portfolio To secure a distinction grade for all students completing T level in childcare (91% for 2022 cohort) To successfully introduce T level in hair and beauty from 2024/25 (target 20 places for September 2024 intake) Target completion of at least 40 T level students (in 2026) 	<p>Target for distinction grades to be reviewed in September 2024, once final university destinations are known</p> <p>Plans for T level in Beauty withdrawn after national changes to pathway</p> <p>Target for 2026 no longer practical, as only T level in Education and Early Years will be offered.</p>

Aim / Target Outcome for 2023-24 Academic Year	Review notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To maintain and update the vocational curriculum offer Replace WJEC Medical Science with BTEC Applied Human Biology for 2023 intake (target 40 starts in September 2023) Target 70% progression to university in 2025 To review the whole vocational offer and complete a benchmarking exercise against the national sixth form college offer To monitor emerging government policy regarding applied general qualifications and position curriculum accordingly 	<p>The BTEC Applied Human Biology course was successfully introduced in September 2023, with 80 enrolments (double the original target)</p> <p>University progression target to be reviewed in September 2025</p> <p>Curriculum review currently in progress, but likely to pause decisions about applied general provision until after the election</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To migrate provision to the new Carville Building, and plan for improvements in specialist provision in capacity released by this expansion 	The Carville Building is fully occupied by the subjects identified.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House Business, Economics and Criminology in new building • Secure improved accommodation for Digital Music Technology and Music Performance; Performing Arts, Dance and Drama, and Art and Design courses. 	<p>Successful bid for construction of Music block completed.</p> <p>Improved accommodation for Photography courses secured and some adjustments to performing arts accommodation being costed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To complete investment programme in pastoral provision • Complete restructure of pastoral and curriculum management (redistribution of subjects across five faculties rather than four) • Embed new roles in overall pastoral structure • Maintain two-year retention rate at 92% or higher; maintain 16-18 pass rate at 98% or higher 	<p>Restructure of pastoral and curriculum management complete.</p> <p>New roles embedded.</p> <p>Targets to be reviewed in September 2024, once outcomes are known.</p>

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