

# Annual Review Report 2023-24



Farnborough College  
of Technology

## **ANNUAL REVIEW REPORT (ARR) FROM ASSOCIATED AND ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS for 2023/24**

### **1. Programmes covered by this report and key staff responsibilities**

- **University of Surrey validated provision for 23/24 includes:**

BA (Hons) Business Management; BA (Hons) Business and Psychology; BA (Hons) Games Design and Development; BSc (Hons) Computing; BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Counselling; BA (Hons) Early Years Education and Practice; BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies; BA (Hons) Education (Learning Support); BEng (Hons) Engineering; BA/BSc (Hons) Joint Honours (Various Pathways); BA (Hons) Graphic Design; BA (Hons) Broadcast Media and Film Production; BA (Hons) Photography; BSc (Hons) Sports Science and Performance Therapy.

- **The key staff responsible for Higher Education at Farnborough College of Technology are as follows:**

- Vice Principal with responsibility for Higher Education – strategic and operational lead for higher education
- Director of Quality – quality assurance and enhancement
- Academic Registrar – academic regulation and operational lead for higher education

### **2. Action points addressed from previous Annual Review Report**

The Annual Review Action Plan for 2023-24, is provided at the end of this report and contains an update on the progress made thus far. The Annual Review Action Plan for 2024-25 follows, including actions to sustain the significant gains made in student outcomes and experience alongside further developments specific to higher education.

### **3. Student enrolments**

There were 412 prescribed higher education learners in 23-24 of these 257 were new starts, a marginal increase of 4 students when compared with the previous academic year.

### **4. Changes to provision**

The validation of new programmes for 2023-24 included BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies to join the current provision of fast-track, accelerated degrees.

The focus for validation this year was upon Initial Teacher Training courses including the validation of BA (Hons) Primary Education, PGCE Primary Education (5-7 & 7-11), PGCE Secondary Education and PGCE Further Education.

Programmes included within this year's Periodic Enhancement cycle included BA/BSc (Hons) Joint Honours programmes, BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Counselling and BA (Hons) Business Management.

## **5. Student Outcomes**

The overall 2023-24 continuation rate for undergraduate students was significantly above Office for Students threshold and also above benchmark at 93%.

The overall 2023-24 completion rate for undergraduate students was significantly above Office for Students threshold and also above benchmark at 95%.

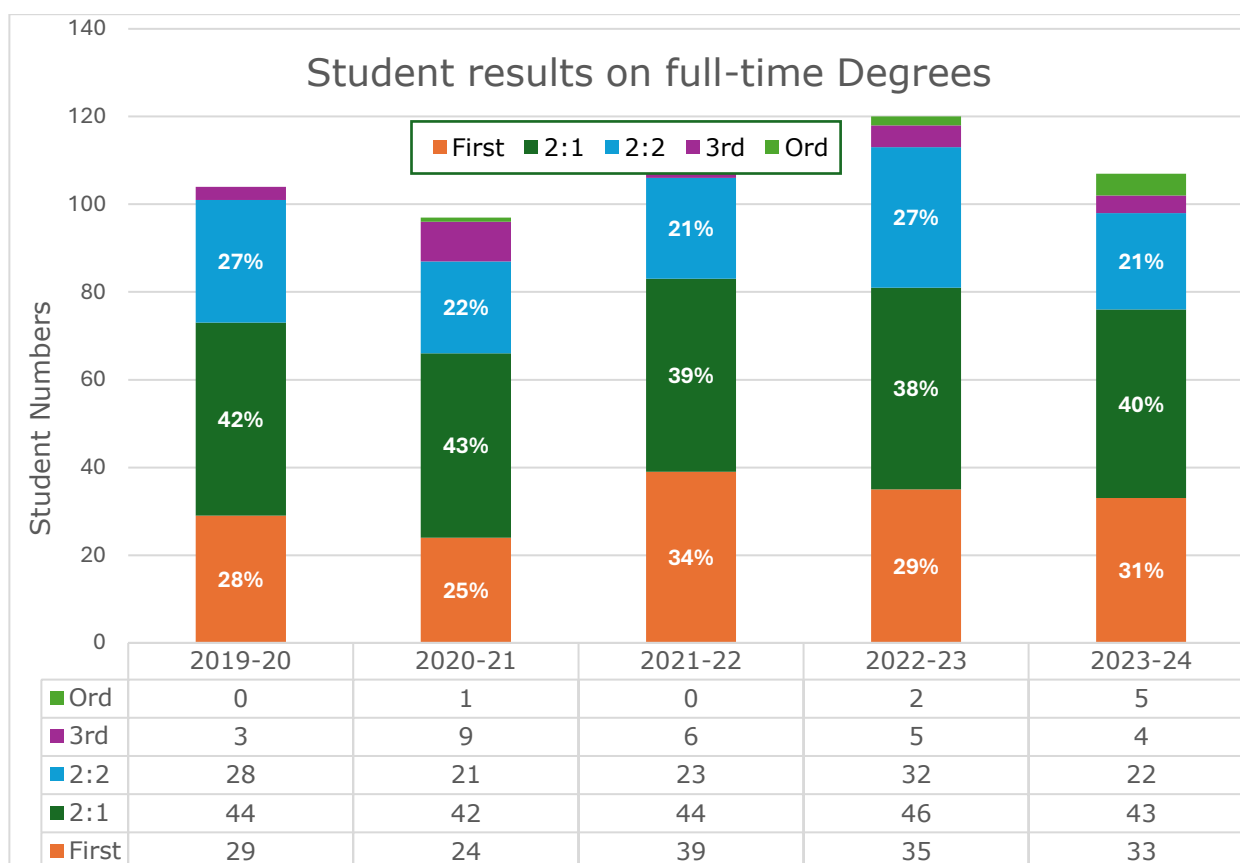
The measures taken to ensure positive outcomes (as included within the University of Surrey B3 Action Plan) were effective and include additional student support, the enhancement of learning to learn strategies, a 6-week student probationary period, interim boards of examiners, the systemised use of exit awards and additional training for staff to ensure that the parameters for achieving good outcomes were met. The action plan will remain in place to ensure that outcomes above both threshold and sector average.

Despite the positive outcomes achieved within 2023-24 the current 4 year Office for Students data set (released in 2024) confirms overall Continuation for F/T learners (2018-19 to 2021-22) as 80.1%; Completion (2015-16 to 2018-19) as 78.1%; and Progression (2018-19 to 2021-22) as 69.8%. All remain above threshold, but below benchmark, other than Progression which is slightly above.

The continued prioritisation of Student outcomes and adherence to the University of Surrey B3 Action Plan (in place since 2023) will see future Office for Student data sets improve as the four year cycle is refreshed. The expectation of a 2027 Teaching Excellence Framework review will see four year Continuation and Progression data in scope (for entrants and qualifiers) from 2020-21 to 2023-24 and Completion data (from cohorts commencing their full time study) from 2017-18 through to 2020-21.

## **6. Student awards**

The percentage of students achieving good degrees (First or Upper Second) in 2023-24 increased by 4 percentage points to 71%. The number of firsts increased from 29% to 31%. The trend of classifications since 2019-20 is shown in a summary of attainment below.



## 7. Comments made by External Examiners

2023-24 External Examiner (EE) reports were received for all programmes including many examples of outstanding practice.

External Examiners noted the strength and variety of individualised, personalised, detailed feedback to learners, the high standard of assessment and moderation, examples of excellence within student dissertations and the quality of support provided to learners. Recommendations from External Examiners included the extension of industry links and use of the full marking range (beyond 80%), to reward academic excellence. There were no areas of concern reported by External Examiners.

External Examiner reports and the programme team’s responses (External Examiner Action Plan) are presented at each board of studies meeting, with any points requiring attention, reviewed and the corresponding action plan updated and agreed by the board. In addition, these updates are reported at board of examiner meetings and in the presence of the External Examiner. Each programme is also asked to reflect and refine through individual programme self-assessment reports and quality improvement plans. Broader issues of commendation or recommendation are shared across College via the Higher Education Working Group and Curriculum Management Committee.

## 8. Evaluation and feedback from students

The College seeks the views of students in several ways. Students provide survey feedback after induction, in relation to specific modules, during each year of study and at the end of their programmes. Module evaluations provide information that

impact directly upon the teaching of modules by individual staff. This allows course managers to assess the success of individual modules and to undertake any necessary improvements in quality. The views of students are also obtained through participation in boards of study meetings, in College higher education forums and with representation at the Corporation Board via the higher education student governor. In addition, groups of students meet with external panels for validation and periodic review events, which provides another valuable source of student voice. Self-evaluation is undertaken by programme teams at course level. Student feedback data is reflected upon as part of this process.

Completing graduates also partake in the National Student Survey (NSS) to assess their student experience whilst at Farnborough. This response is then measured against the sector average to benchmark the quality of student satisfaction. Core questions revolve around Teaching and Learning, Assessment and Feedback, Student Support, Resources & Student Voice. Once published, the data is made available for all learners, potential learners, and providers to understand the success of the provision.

The 2024 National Student Survey (NSS) student satisfaction rating for Farnborough College of Technology was 87%. This is 5% higher than the sector average and 5% higher when compared with the previous academic year.

The 27 NSS questions are divided into 7 themes with satisfaction ratings per theme as listed below:

1. **Teaching on my course: 96.1%** (+4.7% higher than previous year) (+8.9% higher than sector average)
2. **Learning opportunities: 94.3%** (+4.1% higher than previous year) (+9.7% higher than sector average)
3. **Assessment & feedback: 91.6%** (+6.4% higher than previous year) (+8.1% higher than sector average)
4. **Academic support: 95.3%** (+6.6% higher than previous year) (+7.3% higher than sector average)
5. **Organisation & management: 80.5%** (+12.6% higher than previous year) (+3.5% higher than sector average)
6. **Learning resources: 81.6%** (-1.9% lower than previous year) (-5% lower than sector average)
7. **Student Voice: 84.6%** (+6.7% higher than previous year) (+7.6% higher than sector average)

Some of the many positive responses to individual questions included: *How good are teaching staff at explaining things: 100% satisfaction; How often does your course challenge you to achieve your best work: 99% satisfaction; How well have assessments helped you to demonstrate what you have learned: 98% satisfaction; How well have teaching staff supported your learning: 96% satisfaction & To what extent have you had the opportunity to explore ideas and concepts in depth: 96% satisfaction*

3 of the 27 questions were below sector benchmark and require further investigation to ensure future improvement: IT Resources (-6.3%); LRC (-2.1); Subject specific resources (-2.4).

## **9. Changes to programmes and issues raised through validation, periodic enhancement, professional accreditation, programme benchmarking, etc.**

The College continues to utilise the quality assurance processes and procedures provided by the University for its undergraduate programmes and overseen by the Academic Registrar, Director of Quality and Vice Principal with responsibility for Higher Education. The College quality assurance and enhancement processes and activities are stated in the Total Quality Assurance Framework (TQAF) that is underpinned and shaped by the following key principles:

- Aspects of the quality framework should be informed by appropriate internal and external involvement.
- Students should be encouraged to engage with quality processes to improve the student experience.
- Quality assurance and enhancement processes and activities should be evidence-based, drawing on a range of quantitative indicators and qualitative information to identify issues, evaluate effectiveness and inform action planning for quality improvement.
- The quality assurance and enhancement framework should be informed by frequent self-evaluation and reflection.

Examples of internal and external stakeholder feedback, learner voice, self-evaluation and the impact upon the provision of higher education are set out both within the commentary of this report and in the concluding action plan.

The strong links which are maintained between the College and the University ensure that quality assurance at the College is in line with University expectation. The University retain membership at the College Board of Governors and also membership at the College Quality & Standards Committee. Relevant representatives from the College attended meetings with the University to ensure current quality and future direction, including reporting at the University Quality Enhancement Sub-Committee and University Education Committee.

### **Validation and Periodic Enhancement**

The validation and periodic enhancement process is chaired by the Vice Principal with responsibility for Higher Education and supported by the Academic Registry. The pre-validation check of programme documents includes the continued use of an external expert reader to provide an initial, subject specific critical evaluation of the validation documents. The validation panel itself continues to include external academics from other appropriate higher education institutions, representation from industry and from the current student body.

Validation/periodic enhancement reports were published after each event, detailing the panel processes and decisions made. The following programmes were subject to periodic enhancement in 2023-24:

BA/BSc (Hons) Joint Honours (Criminology, English Literature, Modern History, Sociology, Psychology)
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BA (Hons) Business Management
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BA (Hons) Business and Psychology
BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Counselling
PGCE Further Education

<b>Commendations – General Themes</b>
Assessment – a strong variety of assessment
Student feedback – support in work placements, students’ sense of belonging and in the student voice within the reviews
Employment – meeting local needs, employer voice within the reviews, programme relevance to work placement practice
Teaching – quality of modules, dedication to innovation, teaching team knowledge and support

<b>Recommendations - General Themes</b>
Modules – greater use of larger credit modules
Assessment – consider use of formal examinations (reduce); continue to consider balance of assessments and workload
Guest speakers – strive for parity in the number of opportunities across all courses; continue to develop speaker programme

### **2023-24 Validation and Review Summary**

All conditions were met by the respective programme teams resulting in open-ended approval for all programmes until the periodic enhancement process review is required (normally a period of 5 years). Programme teams also responded effectively to recommendations suggested by the individual Panels.

### **10. Student appeals, complaints and grievance**

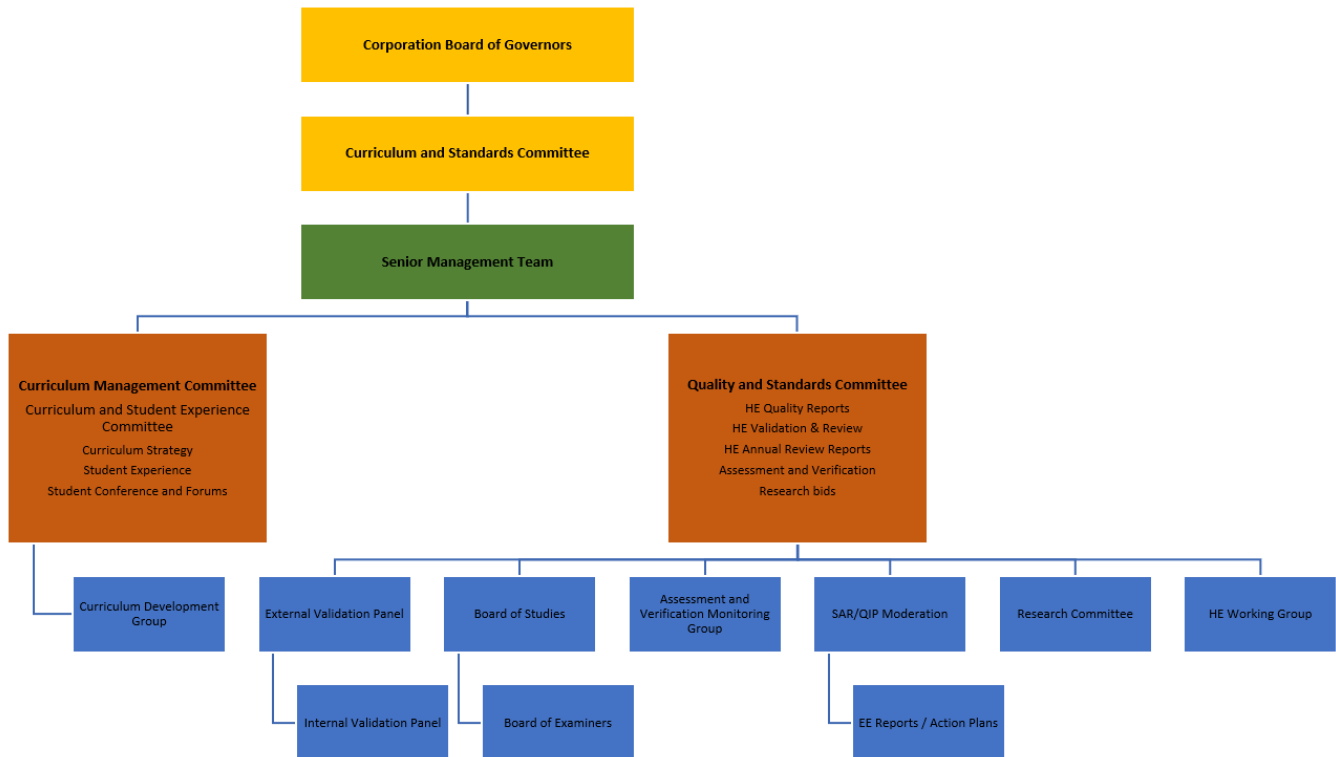
The College operates a comprehensive system for dealing with any complaints, concerns or representations made by students. The full details of the nature of all complaints made and the outcome of the resulting investigation are reported in the 2023-24 complaints analysis, which is scrutinised by the Board of Governors - Curriculum & Standards Committee.

There was one formal appeal and one formal complaint. The appeal was upheld, with appropriate action taken. The complaint was not upheld. There were no complaints to investigate from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

### **11. Educational Oversight procedures**

For context the College is a mixed economy provider with significant proportions of its provision falling within both the further education and higher education sectors. For the purposes of the College’s further education Tier 4 delegated responsibilities, educational oversight is provided by Ofsted and for higher education the Office for Students. The organisation inspects provision using the Education Inspection Framework and with adherence to Office for Students regulation. The College was inspected by Ofsted in 2022 and was awarded an overall grade of Outstanding. The College was inspected by the Office for Students in 2023 as part of the Teaching Excellence Framework and was awarded the overall grade of Bronze.

The Corporation has overall responsibility for educational oversight of both further education and higher education. This is overseen via the Curriculum and Standards Committee including reporting on academic matters from the senior management team. The College Quality & Standards Committee receives reports from higher education examination boards and external validation panels. Quality processes and the approval of new programmes are overseen by the Curriculum Management Committee, reporting to the Senior Management Team. The Annual Review Report is approved by the Principal and reviewed at the Quality & Standards Committee.



The internal arrangements for academic oversight are robust. The communication of higher education issues arising at programme level to the Senior Management Team and the Corporation is effective. The strategic direction for higher education is a priority of the College’s governing body as is student experience and outcome.

**12. Student placements**

Most higher education programmes offer work placement as an integral part of validated programmes. Some students are in employment and complete credit bearing modules in the workplace supported by an approved mentor and assessed by the College. Other students attend full-time and complete work-related modules during a scheduled period of work experience. A work-based and placement learning handbook is provided for all parties involved within the placement.

Some programmes do not have learning outcomes related to placement learning, and the need for these is considered when a programme is scheduled for re-validation. The programme self-assessment process requires programme managers to reflect upon the provision of work placement and experience, where it does not form part of the assessed programme.

**13. Students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties**

Where a student discloses a learning need or disability that may affect their ability to learn, a reference is made to the relevant learning support specialist. The specialist makes contact with the applicant as appropriate upon enrolment to ensure that support needs are met. Students access advice and support in relation to learning difficulties or disabilities and the development of study and academic writing skills. Where appropriate learners are supported to make applications to the Disability Student Allowance.

The Higher Education Support Tutor and Peer Mentor team also provide additional 1:1 support, workshops and seminars to support learners. Learners can self-refer or alternatively be referred for support by their tutor. The Learner Services Team provide additional specialist advisers including counselling, careers advice and health advice.

Overall, 97 students who enrolled on HE Programmes in 2023/24 identified that they had a disability and/or a learning difficulty. This is slightly above on last year's figure of 94 but down from the 100 in 2022-23. There are minor fluctuations in the declaration of disabilities but not significant change.

Disability Code	No. in 21-22	No. in 22-23	No. in 23-24
10 - Moderate learning difficulty	4	2	4
11 - Severe learning difficulty	1	1	1
12 - Dyslexia	29	27	24
13 - Dyscalculia	0	1	1
14 - Autism Spectrum Disorder	10	11	11
15 - Asperger syndrome	3	6	5
17 - Speech, Language and Communication Needs	1	2	2
4 - Visual impairment	2	1	1
5 - Hearing impairment	2	3	2
6 - Disability affecting mobility	6	2	2
8 - Social and emotional difficulties	2	1	1
9 - Mental health difficulty	22	17	21
94 - Other specific learning difficulty (e.g., Dyspraxia)	2	3	2
95 - Other medical condition (for example asthma)	11	12	14
96 - Other learning difficulty	1	2	2
97 - Other disability	4	3	4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>97</b>

All students identifying as having a disability and/or learning difficulty receive offers of academic and pastoral support and this is reflected within continuation and completion outcomes. Attainment of good degrees for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) had previously been noted as a risk to equality and included as a target within the 2021-2025 Access and Participation Plan (APP). The controls in place to mitigate this risk have been effective and can be seen in the 13% increase of higher attainment for LDD learners achieving a 2:1 or higher (61%), now exceeding the five year APP target of 60%. The College have recently submitted a new four year Access and Participation Plan 2025-2029 (for approval by the Office for Students) to further reduce the risks to equality.

**14. Comments on quality enhancement activities within the programmes and practice which might be usefully disseminated to other Associated and Accredited Institutions/University of Surrey Faculties/colleagues**

The College’s Higher Education Working Group provides an effective forum for the discussion of matters relating specifically to the organisation and delivery of higher education programmes. The group has taken a lead in key quality enhancements, such as the development of educational gain. Chaired by the Vice Principal with responsibility for higher education the group combines operational matters alongside strategic developments to enhance the provision of higher education across the institution.

**15. Changes in resources**

The College has continued to provide additional resource, specific to the delivery of higher education programmes. This has included continued investment in redeveloping the building infrastructure in accordance with the College Sustainable Transformations Strategy. Subject specific investment has been significant, for example within Engineering, where the purchase of high specification specialist equipment, including the aeronautical flight simulator equips learners with the skills required for industry. The most recent Teaching Excellence Framework review considered current learning resources at Farnborough to be of a very high quality.

**16. Any specific learning and teaching issues to bring to the University attention**

None

**17. Other**

The College will continue to ensure that student outcomes as prescribed by the Office for Students remain beyond both threshold and sector average.

**18. Review of the 23-24 Action Plan**

Issue	Areas to be addressed	Who is responsible?	Target date	Progress review
Adherence to the B3 Action Plan generated for the University of Surrey to ensure Continuation and Completion are above OfS threshold and benchmark.	6-week student probation to ensure students are progressing and able to achieve. Training to ensure all staff understand the parameters for achieving good outcomes. Exit awards to ensure learners are rewarded for achievement and to support outcomes. Additional academic support for all learners including targeted support for learners at risk. Learn to learn strategies including enhancement of Academic Skills. Interim boards of	VP TLC & HE	September 2023	Significant improvement to student outcomes: Continuation 93% Completion 95%  Controls remain in place including refinement and additions.

Issue	Areas to be addressed	Who is responsible?	Target date	Progress review
	examiners / intervention for specific programmes.			
Develop <i>Teaching and Excellence Framework</i> strategy to better Student Outcomes and Experience.	Develop strategies that support Student Experience & Student Outcomes. Establish a whole College strategy for Educational Gain including intent, implementation and impact.	VP TLC & HE	December 2023	<p>Controls remain in place including refinement and additions</p> <p>Introduction of <i>Flying Start</i> HE induction platform to support student progress and attainment.</p> <p>Additional HE specific activities including Autumn Fair, University Challenge, Autism Awareness day, additional cross College HE speakers, departmental collaborations to enhance student experience.</p> <p>Increased NSS satisfaction.</p> <p>Heightened academic support including the targeting of EDI outcomes including a raise in LDD attainment of 13%. Refined Peer Mentor scheme and HE Progress Tutor roles to better meet OfS Student Outcomes and Experience expectation.</p>
Tackle areas of weakness as identified within NSS	<p>The 4 areas of weakness identified by learners include LRC resources, IT resources, mental wellbeing services, course organisation and communication.</p> <p>To improve these areas additional signposting will be provided including the creation of an all HE information / support Microsoft Team of which every HE learner is a member. The inclusion of the topic as an agenda item to be covered at each Board of Studies, SAR moderation and within the Curriculum Management Committee.</p>	VP TLC & HE	July 2024	<p>Controls remain in place including refinement and additions.</p> <p>NSS 2024: 87% Satisfaction</p> <p>5% higher than previous year and the benchmarked sector average.</p> <p>Learning resources remain lower and are identified within the 24-25 Action Plan</p>

Issue	Areas to be addressed	Who is responsible?	Target date	Progress review
Extend partnerships within the Higher Education community to develop best practice.	Maintain AoC membership and attendance of HE Reference Group. Extend relationships with the University of Surrey to share best practice and adhere to performance measures. Further analysis of providers achieving Silver or Gold and specifically those with similar FE/HE characteristics.	VP TLC & HE	July 2024	<p>All controls remain in place.</p> <p>Further engagement with AoC and OfS to extend best practice including regular attendance and memberships of AoC HE reference group and visit with OfS to extend working relationship and better understand context of provision.</p> <p>Excellent relationship with UoS including meetings with academic registry and quality team to maintain high quality provision and attendance at Surrey boards. Representatives from UoS attend FCoT Quality &amp; Standards termly meeting and are part of Governing body for College.</p>

### 19. Annual Review Action Plan for 2024-25

Issue	Areas to be addressed	Who is responsible?	Target date	Progress review
Capacity to achieve beyond bronze within future TEF submissions <b>(Student Outcomes)</b>	<p>Maintain beyond threshold and sector average student outcomes with continued adherence to the UoS B3 Action Plan (see 23-24 Action Plan above).</p> <p>Enhance Educational Gain strategy including systemised reporting</p>	VP TLC & HE	July 2025	
Capacity to achieve beyond bronze within future TEF submissions <b>(Student Experience)</b>	<p>Maintain high student satisfaction (NSS and internal surveys) including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. actions to remedy areas of weakness within NSS</li> <li>ii. actions to further learner support and experience</li> </ul>	VP TLC & HE	July 2025	

Issue	Areas to be addressed	Who is responsible?	Target date	Progress review
Continue to implement revised and refined APP action plan to reduce risks to equality	Implement APP action plan including monitoring and intervention.	VP TLC & HE	July 2025	
The validation of new programmes and periodic enhancement for 25/26	Effective delivery of validation / periodic enhancement cycle	VP TLC & HE	July 2025	
Future growth and the ability to meet the skills agenda	Readiness for LLE; Further Level 4 and 5 offer to meet local / national need including HTQ; Growth of ITT and higher apprenticeships; extension of common modules / pathways to provide the skills needed by industry.	VP TLC & HE	July 2025	

Vice Principal – Teaching, Learning, Completion & Higher Education

Name: Ian Graham



Date 07-01-25

Principal CEO – Farnborough College of Technology

Name: Virginia Barrett



Date 07-01-25