



Coleg Gŵyr Abertawe
Gower College Swansea

Higher Education Strategy

**Higher level skills for employment
at Gower College Swansea**

2022-2026

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Context

College Strategic Plan, Vision and Values

The College has published a Strategic Plan 2020-24 which is available [here](#).

This Higher Education Strategy is directly informed by, and aligned with, the 'Golden Threads' identified within this:

Lifelong learning - Providing opportunities for learning throughout life.

Quality - Delivering the best outcomes in teaching and learning.

Value for money - The best use of limited financial resources.

Employability - A focus on the long term progression and employment opportunities for all our students.

Wellbeing - A focus on our student and staff health and wellbeing.

Digital - An increasing use of technology in the development and delivery of teaching and learning.

Higher Education (HE) at the College

Higher Education courses are at Level 4 and higher. The College will have a particular emphasis on Technician Level (4 and 5) programmes and will support specific employment sectors up to Level 7.

This HE Strategy has been developed, informed and shaped through the external context of the current and developing HE, FE and PCET sectors of Swansea, Wales and the region, including those outlined below:

The **Regional Learning Skills Plan** (RLSP)

<http://www.rlp.org.uk/eng/home>

As part of its strategy the College will maintain, enhance and extend the key contribution it makes to supporting skills development and planning for South West Wales through provision at Level 4 and higher.

The **Swansea Bay City Deal**

<https://www.swanseabaycitydeal.wales/>

As part of its strategy the College will support the education and training infrastructure for the projects and employers of this vital regional development.

The development of the Post Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) sector and in particular the **Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER)** planned for establishment in 2023. <https://gov.wales/tertiary-education-and-research-commission>

As part of its strategy the College will respond to the challenges and seek to maximise the benefits and opportunities for students, employers, the College and the region presented by these developments. This strategy and the operational approaches used by the College will continue to develop as greater information and detail emerges regarding the direction of travel for the PCET sector in response to the bill.

The **Digital 2030** initiative

<https://digital2030wales.jisc.ac.uk/>

Whilst the College is committed to, and convinced of, the benefits of face to face delivery as the prevailing delivery model, it has a digital first focus. As part of its strategy the College will seek to ensure that its Higher Education provision is enhanced by the highest quality and best practice in digital delivery. Through this it will ensure that learners are equipped with the digital skills required for their future success and employability.

The **Additional Learning (ALN) Act Wales**

Whilst the ALN act does not directly address learners studying on HE courses the College is committed to providing learning support, neuro diversity and additional learning needs for all of its students.

The **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

<https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>

The College will use its HE provision to actively support the implementation of the Future Generations Act for Wales.

Partnership Working

The College is aware that it does not exist in isolation and is committed to successful Collaborative Partnership. This includes the maintenance, development and enhancement of productive collaborative partnerships with Employers, Schools and Universities.

Sustainable Development

The College is aware that all provision must support the economic development of Wales and the region in a sustainable way as outlined within the Future Generations Act.

Higher Level Skills for Jobs

The College will directly align its HE provision with the skills required for high quality skilled employment in the region. It will provide College Based Higher Education which is vocational, industry relevant and complements the established Higher Education offer of local Universities.

The College will map the qualifications it delivers to existing and future job roles ensuring that learners receive the skills they need for successful progression into employment and employers gain access to skilled employees.

The College will equip graduates of its HE courses with skills which are employment focused, marketable and transferable, offering the opportunities for skilled, well paid employment for their future lives.

The College recognises the challenges facing students, and young people in particular, following the Covid 19 pandemic and will provide a HE provision which supports upskilling and positive progression to continued education and employment.

Full Time HE Courses for Progression into Employment

The College recognises that traditional academic progression routes such as University provision does not support the needs of all learners progressing from its own FE provision, Sixth Form provision of local schools and those returning to education.

The College will support Higher Level Skills and deliver full time progression for level 3 learners within the College and in partnership with schools through courses which prepare, and qualify, them for direct entry into relevant skilled employment.

The College will work with key stakeholders, including Partner Employers and Partner Universities, to design and deliver a Full Time HE curriculum which supports key employment sectors for Swansea and the region.

Full Time HE Courses which Upskill students for Progression towards Employment

The College recognises that many learners are not, or do not feel, ready to enter employment at this stage in their lives. The College will deliver Higher Education courses which increase confidence and skills for learners for future employment.

The College will support this through HE courses which increase exposure to the workplace, enhance skills and confidence and raise awareness of a range of employment progression routes. These courses will boost employability skills to progress into future skilled employment.

Part Time HE Courses for Access to Skilled Careers

The College will deliver industry recognised HE qualifications that support the sustainable development of South West Wales. These courses will be mapped to the qualifications and entry requirements of relevant industries.

The College will design and deliver provision which provides access to skilled careers in industry and employment sectors important to the region.

Part Time HE Courses for 'In Work' Students

The College will deliver high quality courses, which support career progression.

The College will work with stakeholders including employers, students, awarding and accrediting organisations to deliver the programmes and skills which employees and employers require.

The College will deliver Work Based Learning (WBL) through Higher and Degree Apprenticeships.

The College will deliver Higher Professional courses which support career progression and access to higher paid employment.

Progression and Employability

The College will design, develop and deliver full time provision which focus on progression for Further Education learners and Partner Schools to facilitate progression and increase employability of students.

The College will ensure that all its students are fully aware of the College HE provision and both FE and HE teams will actively promote this route as a positive progression option.

The College will work with Partner Schools aware of the College HE provision and promote its offer as a positive progression route for pupils.

The College will design, develop and deliver part time provision which focuses on access to skilled, well paid employment in vocational and technical sectors.

The College will ensure exposure and support for careers with strong career and employment progression including those outside of conventional areas of awareness.

The College will ensure that employability is a constant thread throughout all aspects of its HE courses.

The College will offer all Higher Education students direct Real World Experience (RWE) through options which include apprenticeships, placements, live briefs, internships and tasters.

The College will ensure that the qualifications awarded to its graduates are highly recognised, working with leading Universities, awarding organisations, professional bodies and employers.

The College will provide access to the Employability services of its Better Jobs Better Futures (BJBF) provision for all HE students.

Accreditation and Professional Status

Where 'License to Practice', Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) approval is a required pathway for employment the College will ensure that its qualifications are mapped to the relevant framework or qualification required within the industry.

High Quality Facilities and Resources

The College has invested in, and will continue to invest in, high quality HE facilities such as the University Centre at the Ty Coch campus and the new Sketty Hall Business School. This will provide a higher education and professional environment whilst retaining the supportive and accessible culture of Further Education.

Equality and Diversity

The College will use its HE provision to actively promote equality and diversity through all of its actions and activities.

The College will use its HE provision to promote diversity as a positive influence and strength of communities and society.

The College will operate HE in line with the Welsh Government Race Equality Action Plan a 'Zero Tolerance' approach.

<https://gov.wales/consultation-race-equality-action-plan-anti-racist-wales-html>

The College will be Anti-Racist in all its actions and activities and will use it's HE as a platform to challenge inequality in all forms.

The College will use its HE to actively promote and increase the progression of underrepresented groups into its programmes.

The College will actively work to close the attainment gap for all widening participation groups and those from groups underrepresented in HE.

The College will operating a fair admissions system which supports contextual admissions for widening participation groups in line with HEFCW guidance
<https://www.hefcw.ac.uk/en/publications/circulars/w22-01he-fair-admissions-in-higher-education-contextualised-admissions/>

The College will use its Teacher Training provision to promote the widening access to the teaching profession within the PCET sector for underrepresented groups.

Addition Learning Needs (ALN)

The College will provide a seamless transition for learning and neuro diversity support for College Further Education progression to HE courses.

The College will work with partner schools to provide a supported transition for learning and neuro diversity support for College Further Education progression to HE courses.

The College will offer tailored learning and neuro diversity support, as required, for all of its HE students which is flexible, appropriate and responsive.

Wellbeing

The College recognises the importance of wellbeing and maintaining good mental health as key life skills and that the development of the skills to manage your own wellbeing and health and build resilience are essential employability skills.

The College will use its HE provision to develop and promote positive wellbeing for all of its students.

The College will use its HE provision to support the development of skills and approaches to empower learners in managing their own wellbeing and mental health.

Welsh Language

The College will use its HE provision to support and promote the development of the Welsh Language.

The College will actively work to increase the bilingual delivery of its HE courses.

The College will use its HE provision to support the development of bilingualism in its students as a key employability skill.

The College will provide a seamless transition for fluent Welsh speakers who progress to HE.

The College will use its Teacher Training provision to promote the use of the Welsh Language for teaching within the PCET sector.

Partnership

Throughout its HE activities the College will actively work in collaborative partnership with all stakeholders, including those highlighted below:

Students as Partners in Learning

The College will fully engage with current and potential learners to co-design its HE courses and provision.

The College will maintain robust and effective learner voice mechanisms to inform the development of its HE provision in a co-designed model with the Student Body.

The College will annually appoint a HE Lead Representative for the College Student Union Management (SUMG) and HE Operational groups.

The College will work with the HE Lead Representative and the student body to annually review the HE Learner Engagement Framework.

Partner Employers

The College will engage with current and potential partner employers to co-design its HE courses and provision.

The College will engage with employers to provide a HE offer which supports their activities and the sustainable development of the region, support specific sectors as part of long term, sustainable relationships.

Partner Universities

The College is committed to maximising effective partnership working and collaborative in an arrangement which is mutually beneficial.

The College will work collaboratively with a range of Partner Universities based on curriculum need, areas of congruence and strategic alignment.

The College is committed to the benefits for all of its stakeholders of working with a range of awarding organisations, it does not aspire to develop an exclusive relationship with a single Partner University or body.

The College will engage in collaborative activities including franchise delivery, joint delivery, work based assessment and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) agreements in a manner which enhances the benefits for all stakeholders.

The College will work with Partner Universities to ensure that HE students receive the fullest possible benefits of 'Dual' enrolment through collaborative partnership.

Partner Schools

The College will work with Partner Schools in collaborative partnerships to support progression to HE at the College for 6th Form pupils.

The College aspires to work with Partner Schools in a seamless partnership where transition from 6th Form to HE at the College is perceived as 'Internal' progression.

Benefits for Students, Employers and the Region

Benefits for Students

All HE students will receive an admissions and advice experience which will enable students to make well informed choices about their future career.

Full time HE students will receive high quality education for progression which provides access to skilled employment and careers.

Full time HE students will receive education which reduces the financial burden of study and provides the greatest value for money in the sector.

Full time HE students will receive a highly supportive transition from Further Education and Schools, and for those returning to education which addresses and removes barriers to progression.

Full time HE students will be supported to enhance their skills and employability throughout all aspects of their study.

Full time Higher Education students will be supported through Higher Education provision with relatively smaller class sizes a vocational focus and active learning approach.

All HE students will be supported to make positive transitions into education, employment, or training.

The College will use its HE courses to motivate and inspire learners to build employability skills and develop clear career plans that transform their ambitions into reality.

All HE students will be supported with their health and wellbeing whilst studying and will be given the skills to help manage their own health and wellbeing, now and in the future.

The College will offer a high quality, professional environment for the delivery of it's HE provision.

Benefits for Employers

The College will offer courses, qualifications and provision which supports the needs of employers in a range of key sectors helping to provide a skilled workforce.

The College will deliver Higher Education courses and provision with delivery models and teaching patterns which support industry.

The College will move, from September 2023, to a Semester based delivery pattern for all of it's HE courses, facilitating multiple entry intakes.

Benefits for the Region

In Swansea, there is planned to be a demographic increase in the number of 16-18 year olds in the next four to five years, which may well be of benefit to the College (College Strategic Plan 2020-24). Clearly an increase in 19 plus learners will follow this and the College Full Time Higher Education provision, in particular, will respond to this agenda and form part of its growth strategy.

The College will actively utilise employer, RLSP and Labour Market Intelligence to ensure that it provides the educational and training needs of the region.

The HE offer at the College will support the sustainable development of the region through education and training which supports Higher Vocational and Higher Technical professions.

'Net Zero' and Sustainability

Through its actions and activities, including the development of HE courses, the College will support an infrastructure and workforce for Wales which supports a sustainable and low carbon future.

The Higher Education Offer at the College

The College delivers high quality, vocationally and industry relevant courses in subjects and sectors that support sustainable development of the Swansea Bay and South West Wales region. It will produce highly employable 'Job Ready' graduates, support the positive progression of 'In Work' students and build the skills, confidence and employability of progressing students. The College is committed to long term planning for its HE Curriculum and will introduce provision in areas which support future sector developments in the region, in particular for the growth of its HE offer in the key sectors outlined below. The College will plan for two courses in new areas to be introduced per year.

Key Sectors

- Engineering, Construction and 'Green' Technology - Technical and Management disciplines
- Science and Health (STEM) – Technical disciplines
- Digital Technologies – Technical disciplines
- Education and Additional Learning Needs – Delivery and Support disciplines
- Care, Protective Services and Law – Professional and Support disciplines.

Higher National courses (HNC/D)

The College will deliver HNC and HND courses for industries and sectors where recognition for these qualifications is high and where they form the 'Technical' element of Higher Apprenticeship frameworks.

This will include Higher Nationals awarded by Pearson and Partner Universities based on the sector and the needs of students and employers, in a co-designed model.

Foundation Degree courses (FdA, FdEng, FdSc)

The College will deliver Foundation Degree courses which reflect key employment sectors and provide vocationally focused progression with meaningful placement, life brief and work based activities.

The College will work with awarding Partner Universities based on the sector and needs of students and employers, in a co-designed model.

Full Undergraduate Degree courses (BA, BSc, BEng)

Whilst the College will focus on Level 4 and 5 provision, it will offer Level 6 courses in areas including *Graduate professions* and those where it is a 'Threshold' requirement for relevant employment within the sector.

The College will offer Level 6 'Top Up' options or Full Undergraduate Degrees based on the employment requirements of these sectors, which may be delivered collaboratively with Partner Universities.

Education and Teacher Training courses

The College will offer Initial Teacher Training (ITT) which support its own teacher workforce development and that of other training providers within the region. The College will work with University partners to award these qualifications and ensure they meet PSRB requirements such as for the Education Workforce Council (EWC).

The College will provide a supported transition to teaching in the PCET sector for those individuals considering the profession, through its Teaching Academy.

The College will offer Higher Education provision which supports the Post Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) sector and is responsive to sector developments such as ALN.

Higher Apprenticeships

The College will offer Higher Apprenticeships which support the sectors and job roles required by employers within the region.

The College will offer Higher Apprenticeships which include qualifications awarded by Partner Universities and Awarding Organisations, based on the needs of students and employers in a co-designed model.

Where the College has specific areas of expertise it will offer higher level Work Based provision across the UK.

Degree Apprenticeships

The College will offer Degree Apprenticeships, working collaboratively with Partner Universities, where a Full Undergraduate Degree is a 'Threshold' qualification for relevant employment within the sector.

Professional courses

The College will offer Professional Courses which are highly recognised by industries and sectors, supporting skilled employment.

The College will offer Professional Courses from Level 4 to 7 of the Professional Courses supporting professional recognition such as Chartered Status and PSRB recognition.

Micro credentials

The College will work with partner universities to offer vocationally and industry relevant Micro Credentials In line with the, in development, QAA Characteristic Statements.

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/news-events/blog/micro-credentials-stackability-and-portability>

International

The College will support access to its HE provision for individual learners, where possible and desirable.

The College may develop international specific provision which aligns with new or existing areas of expertise, in particular for fully sponsored groups within the engineering and business sectors.

Teaching and Learning for Higher Education at the College

The College will provide a HE teaching and learning approach which is skills focused and based on active learning in a highly supportive learning environment.

The College will provide a HE teaching and learning approach which reflects vocationally and industry practice with Real World Experience.

The College will provide a HE Teaching and Learning approach where Face to Face delivery is enhanced, not replaced, with a 'Digital First' approach developing the digital skills required for future employment.

The College will provide a HE teaching and learning approach where employability, wellbeing and digital skills are essential threads running through all aspects of the provision.

The College will provide flexible delivery approaches which fit the needs of 'In work', Full Time and Part Time HE students.

Quality Review, Accreditation and Regulation

External Quality Review (QAA):

The College has successfully undertaken QAA Review in 2016 and 2021.

The most recent review report is <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/quality-assurance-reports/Gower-College-Swansea>

The College will undertake and achieve External HE Quality Review as a 'Kite Mark' ensuring that its learners receive the highest quality education.

The College will also ensure that it undertakes External HE Quality Review to ensure in a position to respond to developments in the sector and maximise the benefits for all stakeholders.

Regulation (Regulated Provider Status):

The College will maintain the Quality Baseline required by HEFCW* and its successor as part of the CETR developments for Regulated Provider Status, or equivalent.

The College will monitor developments of the PCET sector in response to the establishment of the new commission and ensure that it positions itself to make the greatest contribution to vocational education and training in the region.

* Currently QAA Gateway Quality Review.