



THE ISLE OF WIGHT COLLEGE



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1. Assessment Information

Assessment Type	ACCREDITATION REVIEW
Assessor's Decision	STANDARD MET
Assessor's Name	CHRIS JAMES
Visit Date	10/12/2019 – 13/12/2019
Client ID	C10838
Assessment Reference	PN104663
Continuous Improvement Check Year 1 due by	02/02/2021
Continuous Improvement Check Year 2 due by	02/02/2022
Accreditation Review on-site visit to be conducted by	02/02/2023

2. Organisation – Introduction, Aims, Objectives & Outcomes

The Isle of Wight College (the college) is a Further Education (FE) college situated on the outskirts of Newport. The college offers a full range of programmes for young people and adults covering; Vocational courses, Apprenticeships, Traineeships, Higher Education (HE), School Links courses (14-16-year olds), and services designed with, and for employers. The college also has a good range of education and support for international students, as well as specific provision for students in receipt of high-needs funding. The number of young people on the island leaving school with a grade A* to C in GCSE mathematics and English is significantly below the national average and many students attending the college arrive with low grades. The college prides itself on being inclusive, and potential students regardless of their 'starting point' are able to access a wide range of programmes from Foundation level to HE. The island has a significant number of home-educated young people and the college provides them with access to courses to enable them to study further, and work towards GCSEs.

Around 2,000 young people access the college each year – around a quarter of them being apprentices. Around 6,000 adults also access a range of services including Access to HE. The college is rightly proud of the support it offers students with complex needs (and as recognised in the 2017 Ofsted inspection which judged the provision to be 'Outstanding'), and the newly opened 'Pathways' building provides specialist facilities for them which includes; a Sensory Room, a Hydrotherapy Pool, as well as a fully equipped kitchen for students to develop new skills in readiness for independence. The college recently opened CECAMM (Centre of Excellence in Composites, Advanced Manufacturing and Marine), a high specification building which was designed and built in collaboration with local employers and funded through the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). It is located a short distance from the main college campus and is supporting the growth in local skills across the island.

The Mission of the college is; *To deliver outstanding education and training driven by putting students first, working with employers, and supporting our community*'. The mission is demonstrated in a number of ways including the partnerships with employers and schools which are particularly strong. During the assessment an employer commented positively about the commitment the college showed to their staff, and the inclusivity of the college 'offer' is demonstrated through its equality & diversity data which shows that students represent the island's demographic.

A Strategic Plan covering 2017-2020 outlines 5 key strategic objectives;

Apprenticeships - implementing the new apprenticeship standards, the levy and securing growth to meet the government target of creating 3 million apprenticeships by 2020

Inclusion - responding to the needs of students who may face barriers to their learning. For example, those with special educational needs (SEN), equality and diversity protected characteristics and those with emotional, behavioural, or social issues.

English and maths – supporting students to develop their skills in these fundamental subjects

Higher education – developing higher education programmes, including higher and degree level apprenticeships, to build students' knowledge and skills and help address local skills shortages

Teaching and learning – innovating to ensure students are challenged and enjoy learning.

A set of values govern how the college operates and embrace the spirit of the Nolan Principles (which are the basis of the ethical standards expected of public office).

Leadership - displayed by everyone and characterised by honesty, impartiality, objectivity, and recognising the contribution of others

Learning - taking every opportunity to grow and develop

Empowerment - supporting personal responsibility and accountability

Diversity - being respectful, tolerant, inclusive, and acting with integrity

Innovation - encouraging creativity, enterprise, entrepreneurship, and the use of technology

Caring - promoting individual and shared responsibility for each other's well-being.

These values are also considered during annual appraisal conversations with staff. There is some evidence that these values have been adopted by students and are having a positive impact on the way they behave with each other through 'positive role modelling.'

The college has a Board of Governors with strategic oversight and who represent a broad range of experiences and skills but is managed on a day-to-day basis by the Principal, supported by three Assistant Principals and a Deputy Principal. Curriculum Heads manage Curriculum Managers who in turn manage Tutors and Assessors (tutors). The Careers Manager oversees careers education, information, advice, and guidance (CEIAG) which is particularly well-embedded into the college. Admissions staff and tutors carry out interviews with potential students and where appropriate refer to CEIAG staff who offer additional support based on needs. Staff refer to 'students', 'learners', and 'apprentices' depending on the nature of their learning programme. For the purpose of the report, the term 'student' is used unless otherwise stated.

A policy document sets out the purpose and manner in which CEIAG (referred to as 'the service' throughout the report), is delivered. The document includes the following Policy Statement, *'The Isle of Wight College is committed to providing high quality, independent, professional careers education, information, advice, and guidance which enables learners and potential learners to make informed decisions and plan and manage their progression through learning and work. The College will help all learners achieve their potential and work towards achieving their career aspirations by making successful choices.* The policy also states, *'The delivery of careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) also underpins the achievement of the college strategic objectives'*. These objectives focus on; increasing participation, student retention and achievement, successful progression by raising aspirations, helping students to make informed choices, and for students to develop career management skills. Key measures have been set to provide data on the achievement against these objectives and include; results from student feedback, feedback from employers, (particularly those with apprentices based in the college), data from UCAS (measuring the number of applications to HE), data in relation to equality and diversity, (do some students achieve more than others), destination data, (progression to HE, employment or further education).

The target for retention (all FE students) for 2019/20 is set at 93%, and currently stands at 98% (although this could change during the year). The target is up from 92% in 2018/19. A large proportion of apprentices go on to positive destinations with an increase from 74% in 2015/16 to 89% in 2017/18. Students commented on how much they enjoy their time at the college, and this is evidenced by the positive attendance of students, currently at 88%.

More 16-18-year-old students are making positive progress with maths and English (from their original starting point) year on year, increasing from 64% for maths in 2016/17 to 79% in 2018/19, with similar trends for English. Student satisfaction is above national average (90%), currently standing at 94% - in line with the target for 2019/20. Feedback from employers is generally positive and external benchmarking of employers satisfaction indicates the College remains above national average. Support for students with additional needs, and those in receipt of high-needs funding is particularly effective in supporting them to achieve their learning aims and many go on to secure employment. Robust equality & diversity data identifies where there are any differences and actions are taken quickly to address any inequalities. Disabled students are now more inclined to score their satisfaction levels higher due to the inclusion of training for tutors on how to interact and communicate more effectively with these students. Achievement rates for students with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) remain positive at an average of around 90%. Looked After Children (LAC) also achieve well with an increase from 71% in 2015/16 to 88% in 2018/19. The vast majority of adults on access courses go on to study in their chosen area with 97% of them progressing to University. Enrolments for Access courses continues to grow as a result of more targeted publicity, resulting in more students meeting their HE aspirations. More young people are attending events such as the Island Futures Careers, Jobs and Education Fair which regularly attracts around 600.

The majority of potential students apply for courses online, many with more than one request. In these initial stages, they benefit from highly effective, impartial information and advice before they start their programme of learning, as well as during their time at college as students. Where only one course is applied for the applications process is relatively straight forward where interviews with industry experienced tutors within the relevant curriculum area are used to ascertain the potential student's aspirations, previous experience, as well as eligibility and suitability for the course. Where multiple courses are applied for, a referral to a qualified member of the careers guidance team is made which helps potential students to consider their next steps. Enrolment sessions are held twice a year, in the last week of June and the last week of August. Everyone involved in the students' 'journey' understands the process, the part they play in it and the purpose of the service. This results in the vast majority of students being on the right programme of learning. Staff also understand the associated 'boundaries' with the service and many commented on the difference between information, advice, and guidance, and were able to describe the point at which they would refer to others. Students commented on how valuable the guidance interview was in helping them to make informed choices about their future, *'I don't know what I'd have done if it hadn't been for X, I had no idea what I wanted to do'*. The majority of apprentices are interviewed and recruited by employers although there are a larger number of students who progress their learning through this route with liaison staff nominating students to employers who meet the requirements. Most apprentices have inductions with their employer, followed up by an induction within the curriculum area which provides more detailed information about reviews, what to expect, and where appropriate off-the-job training, and End-Point Assessment. Where appropriate students complete an initial assessment through BKSB with eTrackr being used by tutors and students to monitor progress and document the outcomes of guidance interviews. Through inductions and ongoing support, students have a good understanding of the importance of Health & Safety, the dangers of alcohol and drugs, Equality & Diversity, how to access the Library and other learning resources, the college view on bullying as well as the importance of a healthy life-style. Students believe the college offers good levels of support to students with mobility needs (98%).

The college has recruited tutors with industry experience, and this supports students to increase their understanding of the area they are, or hope to work in. Staff described being given the necessary levels of 'trust' to carry out their role in the way they feel best meets the needs of students with many examples of staff taking the initiative to find placements for students with employers they have personal knowledge of. Everyone interviewed was enthusiastic about their role and conveyed a genuine commitment to supporting students. Students confirm this themselves – one commented, *'I don't think my tutor has ever left on time – I'm always asking if they've got a couple of minutes after class and they've never said no'*. Guidance plays a big part for the more vulnerable or less able students and there are examples of students having multiple interviews with the Lead Careers Adviser. Regular 6-8 weekly reviews with apprentices and their manager ensure that apprentices are aware of their achievements and next steps. Those who are on-track and need minimal support are seen less often, allowing additional time to be offered to those who need a little more support. Students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are well supported with dedicated resources and staff on-hand to ensure they meet their aspirations with additional external support being sourced where needed, for example, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, (CAMHS), and Speech and Language Therapists. This results in many going on to secure employment. Partners described how 'individualised' support is for students with one describing the Careers Manager contacting them regularly with 'scenarios.' Students who wish to visit other HE providers off the island are supported with travel costs through partners, which without this would make it prohibitive for many.

The team are clear about the difference they want the service to make to students, regardless of whether they are full time, part time or apprentices. 'Realising their potential', 'Believing in themselves', and 'Having all the information they need to make the right choice' were all cited as outcomes. The CEIAG Policy also sets out desirable outcomes for students, *'Enabling learners and potential learners to make informed decisions and plan and manage their progression through learning and work'*, with many of the team using this term to describe the overall purpose of the service.

The service certainly meets student needs and has seen many improvements over the last year. The breadth of the service has been extended throughout the college, into key areas such as admissions and student services resulting in students being able to access qualified support from a greater number of sources. Students themselves gave many examples of the difference the service had made and all of those asked were especially positive about the Careers Manager. *'X has been brilliant, I never thought I'd amount to much and school didn't offer me much support. It's been amazing I've got a career plan now'*. College staff also commented on the effectiveness of the service in meeting the needs of students, *'X somehow manages to hold it all together but it would still operate without X, There's so many more people now offering that level of support'*. The CEIAG Policy is supported by its own Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and subsequent Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) which helps to keep the quality of the service high on the agenda. The addition of a Careers Adviser to specifically supports Free College Meals (FCM) and LAC students is intended to increase the proportion of these students applying to HE. It is too early to report on the actual number, but the analysis so far is predicting this to be particularly positive.

3. Strengths

A number of strengths were identified during the assessment. These are detailed below. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard.

- Potential students benefit from highly effective, impartial advice before they start their programme of learning, as well as during their time at college as students. Interviews with industry experienced tutors provides them with appropriate information, enabling them to make choices about their course and their future. Everyone involved in the students' 'journey' understands the process, the part they play in it and the purpose of the service. This results in the vast majority of students being on the right programme of learning. Staff also understand the associated 'boundaries' with the service and many commented on the difference between information, advice, and guidance, and were able to describe the point at which they would refer. **(3.1, 3.4, 3.6)**
- The college has strong and supportive leadership and many of the staff were particularly complimentary about the senior team. People like working for the college and many commented that it was the best place they had worked and enjoy 'enviable' levels of personal and professional development. People described being given the necessary levels of 'trust' to carry out their role in the way they feel best meets the needs of students, with many examples of staff taking the initiative to find placements for students with employers they had personal knowledge of. **(1.2, 3.2)**
- Partnerships with employers, schools and other stakeholders are particularly effective. Collaboration with the local LEP and employers has led to the development of CECAMM which is providing students with high specification facilities aimed at addressing local skills shortages. Work with schools provides young people with real experiences of different jobs through the 'Try-a-Trade' event. Industry talks and insights from local employers enable young people to consider a wider range of career options. **(3.4, 4.4)**
- Support for students with additional needs, and those in receipt of high-needs funding is very strong. These students achieve their learning aims and many go on to secure employment. Robust equality & diversity data identifies where there are any differences and action is taken quickly to address any inequalities. Disabled students are now more inclined to score their satisfaction levels higher due to the inclusion of training for tutors on how to interact and communicate more effectively with these students. **(1.3, 4.1)**
- The college has developed an informal succession plan for CEIAG which has resulted in the breadth of the service being extended throughout the college. Key areas such as admissions and student services now have highly experienced staff (many with Level 6 IAG qualifications) in place to ensure that the service is sustainable, should people move on or retire. **(2.4)**

4. Areas for Development

Areas for development are offered in the spirit of continuous improvement and a way for an Assessor to add value e.g. where the service is of a high-quality development area are offered to help the service be even better than it already is; or to give insight to practice seen elsewhere. There is no correlation between the number of strengths and areas for development. Where development areas are greater in number this is not intended to indicate that the information, advice, and guidance service is in anyway lacking. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard. These will form the basis for discussion at the Continuous Improvement Checks (CIC) conducted twelve and twenty-four months from the date of this Assessment, along with any other notable developments.

- Feedback from employers is generally very positive and external benchmarking of employers satisfaction indicates the College remains above national average. Overall scores though show a declining trend with communication being the top area of concern. It is unclear what is causing this although it could be due to a number of factors such as employers familiarity with the changes in the apprenticeships process – many of them recruit their own apprentices. It may be beneficial for the team to consider additional communication ‘touch points’ with employers where messages are communicated via more than one method, or by adopting a ‘3 point process’ such as that developed by Aristotle, *“Tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you told them.”* **(4.3)**
- Feedback from students is generally very good with all areas of the service being scored high. Feedback is collected at the end of the programme and the admissions process could benefit from being collected much earlier – ideally immediately through for instance a feedback terminal on a tablet. Although this would not provide qualitative data it would provide the team with an immediate overview of satisfaction which could then be used to act on any ‘dips’ much sooner. **(4.3)**
- CEIAG is well embedded into the college and key areas are covered with highly qualified staff. It may be beneficial to extend this further to ensure tutors, those carrying out observations of tutors and staff involved in working with apprentices are trained and, if deemed necessary, complete an appropriate IAG qualification (for instance level 2 or 3). This could include curriculum managers, tutors and work-based learning assessors who do not have prior experience of FE – such as those who have come straight from industry. **(2.4)**
- Since the last **matrix** assessment, the college has developed a process of monitoring and tracking student’s soft skills scores which are logged and tracked on eTrackr. As yet thought, there is little in the way of analysis of overall scores by for instance age, sector, or cohort and it may be beneficial consider developing a series of reports which could be run and analysed as part of the college overall SAR process. This could provide the team with data on successes as well as areas for further improvement. **(1.5, 4.2)**

The annual **matrix** Continuous Improvement Check will allow the organisation to demonstrate on an ongoing basis the developments they are continuing to make in order to support individuals <http://matrixstandard.com/continuous-improvement-checks/> . These may include the Areas for Development above.

Please note that annual Continuous Improvement Checks are mandatory and non-completion within the required timescale will impact on your organisation's accreditation, please see Section 1 for dates.

5. Methodology

The following methods were used to gather evidence against the **matrix** Standard during the assessment process.

- Planning conversations with the Careers Manager
- A brief tour of the main campus
- Face to face interviews with 1 partner, 24 students, (across the range of college delivery), and 49 members of staff
- Telephone interviews with 4 partners
- Review of a range of documentation including; Careers Education & Guidance Policy, Careers Advice & Guidance Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan, Tutor Job Descriptions, student survey data, employer survey data, Management Information (MI) reports, Student Handbook, Staff Code of Conduct, and promotional literature
- A demonstration of the College website, social media pages and MI systems
- Observation of informal interactions between staff, and between staff & students

A brief 'catch-up' was provided at the end of day one, two, and three to the Careers Manager and Assistant Principal (Students, Teaching & Learning and HR). Feedback was given to the Careers Manager, Assistant Principal (Students, Teaching & Learning and HR), the College Principal, and Director of Curriculum Quality and Student Records, at the final meeting.

Conditions of Accreditation

Holders of the **matrix** Standard Accreditation must:

- Maintain and continually improve upon their services.
- Throughout the period of accreditation satisfy Assessment Services Ltd that the organisation continues to meet the requirements of the **matrix** Standard via the annual continuous improvement checks and the three-year accreditation review.
- Complete annual continuous improvement checks in a timely way, it is expected these will be carried out annually by the accreditation anniversary date.
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd or their Assessor if the key contact name/contact details change.
- Submit their Booking Form for re-accreditation to the **matrix** Standard at least 3 months prior to the accreditation anniversary date ensuring all pre-on-site activity is completed in a timely way including planning, payment, and interview scheduling. Accreditation Reviews are due 3 years from the anniversary accreditation date; it is expected that organisations will be assessed by this date or will risk being de-accredited.
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd of any significant changes made to the organisational structure, senior management or systems that may impact on their accreditation; email: matrix@assessmentservices.com.
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd immediately if they wish to extend or reduce the scope of their accreditation.
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd of any serious complaint or rise in numbers of complaints received (within the scope of the accreditation).
- Not undertake or omit to undertake any activity that may be misleading and/or may cause Assessment Services Ltd and/or the **matrix** Standard to be brought into disrepute.
- Only use the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark for the areas within the scope of the accreditation and in accordance with the guidelines. For example, if a certain department is successfully **matrix** accredited, the Quality Mark can only be used on that department's letterhead or on that department's page on their internet homepage.
- Ensure in cases where accreditation is withdrawn or where they do not come forward for accreditation review, remove from display any certificates or plaques issued by Assessment Services Ltd and do not display the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark nor refer to being a former holder of the **matrix** Standard.
- Be aware that Assessment Services Ltd reserves the right to remove any accreditation and/or certification previously applied if payment is not received for services provided.

Whilst accredited the organisation will be signed up for IAGonline - a community website for all **matrix** holders. Once signed up, any employee of the organisation can join the community and access regular posts and join specialist interest groups for support and discussion.

	
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