

July 2018



# DUDLEY **Insight**

**MEASURING LEARNER  
PROGRESS**

THE  
**UPGRADE**  
MISSION

This is one of a series of papers aimed at providing our stakeholders, both internally and externally, with up-to-the-minute information on how we are strategically responding to local and national challenges. The papers may be of interest to many relevant stakeholders including parents, employers and the Local Enterprise Partnership.

**hands-on  
thinking**  
Since 1862

## CONTEXT



The college is committed to ensuring learners who study at Dudley College of Technology achieve the best outcomes possible when they leave us. This has seen us achieve and maintain achievements rates which are above national averages for the past four years. We are rightly proud of our 2017, Ofsted 'Outstanding' rating which noted that our 'learners and apprentices make significant progress compared to their starting points in achieving their qualification goals and in gaining very good professional, vocational and work-related skills.' (Ofsted Report, 2017)

The impact we have on our learners is measured through a number of outcomes including their destinations, where do learners go on to after college, and achievement rates, how many of our learners achieve their qualifications. One measure that is considered in terms of college performance is a value added score. This is measured by the Department for Education's performance tables.

The Progress Score of our learners is a measure of their final grade compared to the grades and qualifications they achieved prior to their enrolment with us. It determines whether our learners are making enough sufficient progress with their studies compared to similar learners across England. These scores, known as 'value added' scores, only affect a limited number of learners, but are still an important way that our stakeholders recognise the impact the college makes. In 2016/2017 the grades of 1,425 learners, just 15% of our 9,500 leavers, contributed to our value-added scores.

A score above zero means learners made more progress, on average, than learners across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 4. A score below zero means learners made less progress, on average, than learners across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 4. A negative progress score does not mean learners made no progress, or the school or college has failed, rather it means learners in this school or college made less progress than other learners across England with similar results at the end of key stage 4.

The majority of schools and colleges have progress scores between -2 and +2.

Academic Year	Progress score
2016/2017	0.32
2015/2016	-0.52
2014/2015	-0.24

### Applied general qualifications progress score for Dudley College of Technology.

The mission we still have in front of us is to ensure our learners leave with the highest grades possible. It is no longer about a learner passing their qualification but about improving the progress they make on their study programmes at all levels, or the 'distance travelled' by each individual learner.

## THE CHALLENGE



Our 'above national' achievement rates and high progression rates demonstrate the impact outstanding teaching and learning has had on young people from the Black Country, although we recognise that further work is required to ensure all of our learners not only succeed but do so with the highest possible grade.

Recent reforms to A level qualifications, including linear delivery, saw fewer high grades achieved than in previous years. We have also seen lower performance in some learners where universities are now giving unconditional offers for places. Vocational qualifications have seen revised specifications, the introduction of examinations, externally marked assessments and revised quality assurance processes including the tightening of resubmission criteria.

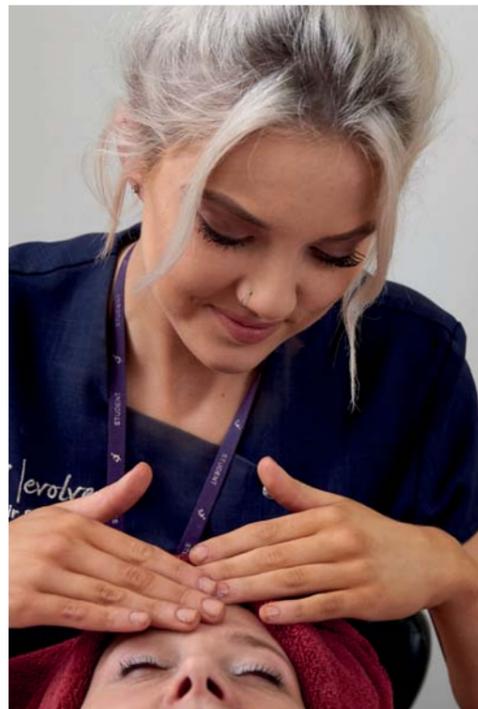
In addition, significant numbers of learners begin their study at Dudley College of Technology at age 16, without the required grade C (4) in English and mathematics, which we know has a negative impact on learner progress compared to those who achieve this.

	English	Mathematics
2016/17	41.4%	48.4%
2017/18	37%	47.9%

### % Learners aged 16 with GCSE grade D (5) or below on entry.

The challenges we face require new approaches to ensure our learners make the very best progress they can. More demanding content and earlier examinations call for an aspirant culture that challenges and supports every learner to achieve the very highest grades and reach their individual potential.

## OUR RESPONSE



To respond effectively, we required our whole organisation to understand and respond to the challenge. We needed to communicate a shared goal and create collective responsibility in order to shift the mind-set of learners and staff. With this in mind, we created a brand that would set out the challenge, further enhance our aspirant culture and empower our talented people to exceed expectation. The brand would recognise our strength in ensuring learners achieve, but raise the bar in our quest for high grades. It would seek to stretch and challenge our staff and learners to aim higher and achieve more. No longer would a pass be sufficient, our learners and staff should strive for merits and distinctions, always looking for the opportunity to Upgrade.

Our cross-college marketing campaign, The Upgrade Mission, was launched to college staff at College Conference in November 2017.



**This rallying call-to-action set out the high grade challenge to every member of staff and outlined the key steps we were to take:**

- Further improved initial advice and guidance to ensure learners aspirations raised from the point of engagement with college,
- Set aspirant target grades on learners' ILPs enhancing the Aspiration section of our 4As strategy. Inspiring learners to strive for the best results they can get and a clear aspiration about where they are going next,
- Re-configure our Support Services to ensure support focusses on high grades and not just on the remedial support,
- Developed our tracking tools so we were able to quickly see where learners were falling short of their aspirant target grades and put in intervention to get them back on track,
- Dedicated staff training sessions to the Upgrade mission including use of new tracking tools and setting of target grades,
- Challenging Performance Management Review targets set for all curriculum staff to embed Upgrade into their teaching and improve value added scores for their area.

**A re-brand of 'REACH' week saw the launch of 'Upgrade' Week with a focus on learner progress, stretch and challenge, raising aspiration and English and mathematics. Activities included:**

- Inspirational address to 2,000 learners by Richard McCann from the iCan Academy including a keynote address to staff to kick the week off,
- Targeted intervention for learners working below target,
- Stretch and challenge activities for learners working at or above their target grade,
- HE taster workshops delivered by Discover Brookes,
- Ace your Exams, Time Management, Study Sensei and Student Elevation workshops run by Elevate Education,
- Erasmus International work placement opportunities for high achievers,
- Upgrade to Higher Apprenticeships/Higher Education Talks,
- Make Me A Mentor sessions,
- Set up; Start up - Business Enterprise and Entrepreneur programme,
- Exam preparation workshops (BTEC; English; Mathematics),
- The Speaker's Trust workshops.

## WHAT NEXT?



The college will maintain our relentless focus on improving the distance travelled by our learners. We aim for a three year trend of improvements in our value-added scores for vocational learners.

We will continually review our support services so they best meet the needs of our learners whilst providing staff with the very best tools to manage and measure the learning journey of each individual.

We will continue to foster an aspirant culture that challenges every learner whilst providing them with the very best teaching and learning experience within an innovative and inspirational learning environment.

We will review and remodel our curriculum to enhance the learner experience and provide our dedicated staff with professional development opportunities.

**This will include a shift to a semesterised delivery model from September 2018 for vocational programmes, including:**

- Revised assignment briefs to stretch and challenge which only cover merit and distinction criteria to embed aspiration,
- Standardised assessment and feedback points to ensure fast and effective intervention where learners are falling short of their target,
- Revised PIP programme to include opportunities to Upgrade work and assignments,
- Introduction of weekly Upgrade support sessions for learners to complete stretch and challenge activities,
- Upgrade Week brought forward in line with semesters.

**There will also be considerable reform of our A level delivery model, to include:**

- Removal of AS exams,
- Enhanced induction,
- Increase to 6 hours delivery per week per subject,
- Early delivery of content,
- Programme of intervention,
- Revised PIP programme (A level Mindset Programme, Mega-PIP sessions and Stretch Groups),
- Parent workshops,
- Focus on exam coping strategies and healthy minds,
- Investment in PiXL6 (Partners in Excellence) to monitor progress more effectively.

**Across college we will continue to:**

- Review e-learning resources to enhance accessibility and learner interaction/participation,
- Build upon and enhance the tools we have developed to track learner progress,
- Provide targeted staff CPD where required.

**If you would like to know more about the Upgrade Mission, please contact: Karl Veltman - Head of Learning Full-time courses.**

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## **Dudley Insight catalogue:**

**Issue 1: The STEM Challenge - October 2014**

**Issue 2: The Maths Challenge - October 2014**

**Issue 3: The English Challenge - October 2014**

**Issue 4: The Apprenticeships Challenge - November 2014**

**Issue 5: The Management of Student Attendance - November 2014**

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**Issue 9: The Learning Technology Challenge - April 2015**

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**Issue 12: The English challenge GCSE Resits - March 2016**

**Issue 13: The Mathematics challenge GCSE Resits - The Results - October 2016**

**Issue 14: The English challenge GCSE Resits - The Results - October 2016**

**Issue 15: The Apprenticeship challenge - February 2017**

**Issue 16: Meeting our corporate and social responsibilities - May 2017**

**Issue 17: Safeguarding and Prevent - May 2017**

**Issue 18: Measuring Learner Progress - July 2018**