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## **FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS**

The College's journey towards excellence continues. Having committed to being a Grade 1 College by the year 2010 we are pursuing this relentlessly. Our focus on quality and the learner experience is challenging but necessary. Both staff and governors believe that we can achieve our objectives and understand the context in which we are doing so although we recognise and are concerned about the constraints brought about by funding.

We work extensively in partnership and collaboration, we respond to the national, regional and local agendas whilst putting the learner at the centre of all we do. We do not underestimate the climate of change that the FE review will bring but we feel the governors and managers have strategically led and managed the College to be positioned for a long term successful future.

We welcome the opportunity to continue to be part of the Welsh FE sector delivering high quality academic, vocational and work based provision to a diverse learner population working with our partners and those that fund us.

A key element of our vision is to establish a 21<sup>st</sup> Century College for 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners in the heart of the City of Swansea. We believe that this approach is consistent with the policy document entitled 'The Learning Country – Vision into Action.'

This Strategic Plan and PDP is approved and endorsed by the Corporation of Swansea College.

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**Alan Thomas**  
**Chair of Governors**

## **FOREWORD BY THE PRINCIPAL**

Over the last four years, I have led and managed the College through a period of rapid and ever demanding change. This will be my last Strategic Plan for Swansea College and I feel that it will stand the test of time and lead the College into another phase of its development, with particular emphasis on working together, both internally and externally. Although challenging, it is an exciting vision that the College has for itself and its partners. I will be very interested to see how Project Swan progresses and ultimately, how an “integrated learning network” for Swansea will provide both quality and excellence for its learners.

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**Maxine Room  
Principal**

## **SECTION 1 STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND KEY PRIORITIES**

Swansea College is reviewing its position and reflecting on its progress towards achieving its vision of being a Grade 1 College by 2010.

In response to our extensive research of external strategies and initiatives, the College has developed plans to respond to a wide variety of Government and stakeholder strategies such as the Regional Statement of Needs and Priorities (RSNP), Annual Recommendations for Learning (ARL) and Community Consortium for Education and Training (CCET) recommendations. In addition to this, the College has undertaken extensive work in consultation with its key stakeholders to identify and confirm its strategic vision and plans towards achieving it. Meaningful consultation and discussion has taken place with organisations such as the LEA, 14-19 Area Network, CCET, Job Centre Plus, Sector Skills Councils, Employer Groups, SCVS and many others to ensure our plans complement and negate competition/duplication with others.

Examples of how this review of strategies, initiatives, labour market information and consultation with partners has influenced the planning of the College can be evidenced by our collaborative development in provision for 14-16 year olds; the Adult Community Learning Programme at Forgefach; the delivery of European funded Basic Skills; IT and Management projects; the delivery of Work Based Learning and Jobcentre Plus contracts.

Over the last four years the College has, in challenging circumstances, both internally and externally, used its key strengths to address:

- quality and excellence
- focus on the learner
- financial viability
- partnership and collaboration

The College is very aware of the changing external climate that will affect it in the future. The NPFS, the FE/Post 16 Review together with the strategies and initiatives driven from the Welsh Assembly Government all combine to indicate the way in which FE needs to change and develop to respond to key issues of:

- the quality agenda
- the financial environment
- collaborative and partnership working
- addressing the duplication/replication issues in post 16 provision

Examples of how the College is responding to the external climate is evidenced by the importance the College has given to reviewing its structure to ensure that managers and staff focus on the quality of provision and support for the learner and our customers. The faculty management structure is now embedded and focuses on the needs of learners. A new Customer Relationship Unit has been established to provide a 'one stop shop' approach to communication with the economic community. A large staff development programme is in place to ensure staff are up-skilled and re-skilled in modern business practices to enable us to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.

The implementation of the NPFS this year has affected the College in several ways and is likely to have an increasing impact over the next few years. Swansea College has the ability to grow in the targeted sectors linked to the RSNP and the ARL. We are hampered by a national strategy that is focussed very particularly on 16-18 recruitment in an environment that includes both another FE College private training providers and schools with 6<sup>th</sup> forms, all competing for enrolments in a demographic downturn. The recent shift away from funding for Adult and Community Learning and towards provision for 16-

18yr olds is particularly challenging and may drive an unintentional aggressive approach from providers towards competitive marketing. To respond to this the College is promoting the quality of its provision, its resources and staff commitment to putting the learner central to all we do. However the College recognises the importance of partnership and collaboration to ensure the success of our plans for the future.

The College is perceived to be delivering at above the harmonised rate but in reality, when taking into account all of its actual current delivery, the College is delivering at, or even below, the harmonised rate. The College needs to be recognised for all its current delivery, measured under the NPFS, and not historic delivery under the old funding methodology. If this is not recognised, not only will this impact on the College, but more importantly, it will have a significant impact on the learners of Swansea in terms of the offer and what can be delivered.

The College is making strategic use of all its funding streams via DELLS, including core funding, initiative funding and targeted funding such as Work Based Learning. The College has worked extensively in the past with partners to access and use ESF funding and is now looking to work in partnership and collaboration to develop Convergence Fund bids.

The shift to convergence funding with its lack of clarity is not helpful; however, the College is engaged with others in looking at some integrated projects that meet local, national or regional agendas. We are making the strategic connections through the Wales Spatial Plan, the South West Wales Principals' Group, the CCET, the Swansea Learning Partnership and the Swansea Economic Regeneration Partnership, as well as making links at an operational level with HE, schools, private organisations and employers.

The College has been extremely successful in using Common Investment Fund (CIF) funding to work with partners on Quality, Information Learning Technology (ILT) and Adult Community Learning (ACL) projects. These projects have added value to the work of partnerships in building up trust and developing more collaborative ways of working to the benefit of the learner. The 14-19 Network funding has also increased the capacity for the city providers to undertake activity and developments that previously could not attract funding. The College sees that a range of funding streams could contribute to the overall vision of an integrated learning network. This would culminate in a high quality build for Swansea that encompasses 14-19 pathways, community use, adult and community learning, workforce development and schools link programmes that benefit learners of Swansea.

Under the umbrella of the Better Swansea Partnership and through the delivery of the Community Plan, the College engages with a number of key partners and stakeholders. This will stand the city in good stead for the Local Service Board model and allow for even more collaborative working.

The College has proactively positioned itself to be a key partner in contributing to and delivering outcomes linked to:

- CCET Annual Recommendations for Learning
- the LEA Learning Policy and Strategy (through the Swansea Learning Partnership)
- the Swansea Economic Regeneration Strategy which includes the skills agenda, the knowledge economy, economic equity, learning for children and young people
- children and Young Peoples Partnership Policy and Strategy
- 14-19 Network Development Plan

The College has invested heavily in terms of time and money in the partnership and collaboration agenda but always with one thing in mind - the learner. Over the life of this plan we see this being strengthened even more with our resolve to put the learner at the heart of all we do and to question our motives in undertaking work which does not do this.

The College is mindful of the need to be financially viable and in the timeframe of this plan is taking steps to secure the College for its long term future by addressing issues that have been signposted through benchmarking and its own analysis of costs and benefits. This will ultimately lead to staffing efficiencies. The impact on the curriculum will be managed to have a minimal impact on provision and learners.

Given the opportunity we would like to increase the Work Based Learning offer through a larger contract plus retain and grow our Jobcentre Plus contract.

We have a healthy growth in our international work both in terms of individual students and in our contract work which provides us with a return on our investment and broadens and diversifies our student cohort.

The key challenges and potential implications faced by the College during the period of this plan are identified in Annex 1.

In summary the College has a sound basis to go forward; it recognises the need to work with others and can clearly demonstrate that it is doing this. Examples include working in partnership with a variety of public and private organisations such as the Sector Skills Councils in developing curriculum; working with City and County of Swansea partners in the delivery of basic skills, adult community learning and programmes for 14-16 year olds.

The College has developed a vision coupling both a 21<sup>st</sup> Century College for 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners with a learning quarter for Swansea that can deliver high quality Post -16 provision working with the Swansea Learning Partnership that has all providers represented. This has been called Project Swan and the College has sought and gained support for this locally, regionally and nationally.

## **SECTION 2 KEY INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES**

The College does not underestimate the challenge and the complexity of its priorities. In summary, for the period 2007 – 2010, we will work towards:

- **Achieving a Grade 1 in all we do by 2010, this includes:**

- gaining Grade 1's across the board in the Estyn inspection
- getting awards that indicate we have Grade 1 practice
- exceeding our own internal benchmarks and "stretch" targets
- identifying Grade 1 practice elsewhere and replicating it within our own context

- **Delivering Project Swan through:**

- extensive, coherent partnership and collaborative working
- identifying and acquiring a prime site in the City Centre
- a Business Plan that draws together a focus on the learner, choice for the learner and evidence of effective collaborative working within an appropriate curriculum plan

- **Responding to the challenges/opportunities of the NPFS and convergence, through:**
  - understanding of the planning and funding system embedded through the college
  - maximising the core funding to the benefit of learners
  - identify ways in which the College can contribute to partnership working using convergence funding
- **Revising the Middle Management Structure**
  - assuring the management structure is fit for purpose through the changes ahead
  - clarifying roles, responsibilities and targets for Middle Managers
- **Partnership and collaboration**
  - continue to forge links with key stakeholders to the benefit of learners across the City and County
  - investigate the opportunity for an integrated learning network through a "Pathfinder" project
- **Maintain financial viability through**
  - efficient curriculum delivery
  - continued benchmarking of financial performance
  - undertaking efficiency measures where required
- **Prepare for the implications of the FE Review for Post 16 Education and Training**

### **SECTION 3 CONTEXTUALISED INFORMATION**

The Principal, Maxine Room, will be leaving Swansea College at the end of the College year to take up a post in a college in Leeds.

This could be viewed as an opportunity for the Corporation to stop, take stock and not instigate an immediate replacement through a recruitment process. However, although there are considerations, such as the FE Review, the FE Bill (in Wales) and more locally, Project Swan to take into account; it is felt that the College needs continued strong leadership at this time. The outcomes of the Review, the Bill and the Project, may not be known for some time and the role is a catalyst for change and development on a wider platform than just the College Principal. Although the College will continue to focus on Grade 1, there is a need for long term commitment and focus at the highest level. Discussions with key stakeholders are ongoing as to handover and the maintenance of a seamless service across the City and County.

The College is a diverse institution of some 14,000+ students, 12% of whom come from the BME communities. It supports a range of students with specific and different learning needs and offers real choice in terms of routes and pathways through academic, vocational and work based provision from entry through to level 4, 14–19, and adults.

The College works with a range of employers, in the main SMEs, but has contact and contracts with over 3,000 employers.

The College has grown in what has been a competitive environment. The College delivers high quality provision and service (evidenced by March 2006 Estyn inspection predominantly Grade 1/2 provision), which meets diverse learner needs, achieves good financial results and responds to the wider community needs.

The local context is to provide a curriculum relevant to local employment, enable progression within further and higher education and widen participation in Swansea Bay and adjoining areas. The College, where possible, is working with other providers to provide a coherent curriculum offer across Swansea. In response to this, the College is working with the Swansea Learning Partnership, Sector Skills Councils, employer groups and a variety of relevant agencies and organisations to undertake a strategic curriculum review each year. This ensures that the College will deliver the education and skills that are needed in the City and County of Swansea to enable it to achieve economic growth and meet the needs of all its learners.

The change in our student population, which reflects an increasing number of adults with a wide range of abilities, has continued to require recruitment of staff with new and different skills. This is becoming increasingly challenging in some areas of our delivery but is also a unique selling point of FE and its strength in delivering the skills agenda.

We are currently developing a Human Resources Strategy that will provide staff with the skills to meet the challenges of the next four years as well as support the embedding of the new nationally agreed Performance Management and Review System.

The structure of the College was modified in light of issues identified by internal stakeholders when the new Principal joined the College. A managed process identified that the College needed to be more learner focused as well as supportive of staff. The management structure and the focus on core values are key outcomes that are being embedded year on year.

The College has moved from being finance driven to identifying ways of putting the resources as close to the learner as possible through the development of curriculum teams supported by curriculum team leaders. This change process has been relatively fast and is beginning to show evidence of improvements for learners and staff.

Governors have been supportive of a process that shows evidence of quality improvement, financial viability, stability and clarity in leadership and management. They are concerned that the lack of autonomy that colleges have diverts College managers from the operational issues that affects the learner, into processes that are externally driven e.g. audit, for large amounts of time. Governors are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds and have a wide experience and understanding of business and business processes which benefits all aspects of College activities. They would welcome systems that are proactive and allow for real planning to take place e.g. linked to funding mechanisms. One year advance funding and two year indicative funding would provide the basis from which to plan more efficiently and effectively and optimise scarce resources.

The College recently had an opportunity to contribute to the FE review and provide a response. This gave us the opportunity to reflect on the changes and developments made since the review of the plan last year. Early indications confirm that the College's Strategy is in line with Government Strategies for Post 16 Education.

The College has observed with interest the 'Pathfinder' models across Wales and the development of a vision of an integrated learning network in line with the FE review and partnership agenda. This vision is aligned to the College's curriculum and estate plans.

An aspect of the College Estates Plan has therefore turned into what the College has named Project Swan. However, Project Swan is not just an Estates Strategy, but a

catalyst for change for post-16 education for the whole of the City & County of Swansea. This has been underpinned and informed by a learning policy and strategy developed through the Swansea Learning Partnership. This partnership has evolved out of the Swansea CCET and includes key leaders from post -16 providers.

The College is of the firm belief that a new college build in the city centre would:

- assist in creating a vibrant learning quarter in Swansea City Centre Strategic Framework
- develop and provide a curriculum which will deliver the education and skills needed for the future prosperity of Swansea
- create an environment which is modern and stimulating and which inspires learners and learning
- create a catalyst for change which will offer an opportunity to attract more learners of all ages into education and training and promote interest in clear career pathways for learners of all abilities
- provide state of the art settings and technology which will equip our learners with the skills they need for Swansea to compete in a global economy
- provide an opportunity to more fully integrate the College into the community by offering shared resources and common footfall areas
- provide economies of scale and efficiencies in Swansea's Further Education provision

The Principal therefore, with the support of the Swansea College executive team, the Corporation, and a special Project Swan Executive Team are committed to fulfilling the aspirations of Wales, City & County of Swansea and College stakeholders.

## **SECTION 4 REVIEW OF PROGRESS**

A key strategy running through all our work is a commitment to working collaboratively with local, national and international partners, not only develop and improve our provision, but to involve and gain support for our estates strategy and Project Swan.

In support of the new partnership agenda, the College has played a leading local role, particularly between public and private sector organisations, to achieve Government objectives in education, lifelong learning and skills. The College is mindful of the Leitch review and to ensure we meet the challenges of the economic agenda we are working closely with Sector Skills Councils, Job Centre Plus, Employer Groups, Recruitment Companies and other relevant support agencies to link our training to the learning styles and locations of our learners.

The College views partnerships and collaboration with key stakeholders as fundamental to delivering its provision for learners. The College, therefore, is involved strategically with a number of key groups. The connections between the Better Swansea Partnership, the Swansea Economic Regeneration Partnership and the Swansea Learning Partnership cannot be underestimated to deliver together the aspirational targets and objectives that have been set and deliver the vision of a 'City of Learning'.

The College has committed itself to its learners by raising standards across the board, working collaboratively and in partnership with key stakeholders, addressing economic deficits through the provision of effective education and training.

Furthermore, the College has made considerable effort to focus on the various initiatives of the Welsh Assembly Government, particularly in relation to collaboration and partnership. Additionally we have considered the Beacham Report the Making the Connections agenda and have been instrumental in drawing up a Memorandum of Understanding with the local HEI's to be involved with their reconfigurations work. We are particularly concerned to increase participation of the NEET (those not in employment, education or training) group and the 50+ age group and plan to help them become and continue to be economically active.

Partnership and collaboration in Swansea continues to be a challenge but there have been some noteworthy successes:

- moving from a CCET model towards a Learning Partnership model where all strategic decisions on learning are made with the key leaders round the table, (HE, FE, LEA, SCVS)
- prioritising the activity e.g. a focus on NEET to decrease the differences in numbers on the East side compared to the West
- joined up thinking from the Community Action Plan, the Better Swansea Partnership and the Swansea Economic Partnership
- formation of school/college consortia e.g. to support a coherent 'A' level offer across City & County of Swansea
- the inclusion of the College in the LEA's 14-19 Strategic and Operational Planning Groups
- working strategically with HEI's

The College has continued to strengthen its financial position through effective planning and budgetary management. This financial management has enabled the College to continuously invest in resources for the benefit of the learner. The College has a Grade 1 for Management of Resources and is in Category 'A' for Financial Health monitoring. However, through its effective financial management, the College recognises that it needs to make further efficiencies in order to maintain future financial viability.

The College responds positively to the wider Wales agenda, namely the 'Learning Country 2 – Vision into Action', 'Making Connections' and 'Winning Wales' and is integrating the Beecham Report agenda where possible.

A comprehensive range of FE provision is offered for 14-19 yr olds and adults across all College programme areas. These programmes are available at all levels, from the entry and foundation levels up to advanced and higher levels. Progression pathways have been established between levels and students have the opportunity to integrate academic and vocational study within individual programmes. We also offer Work Based Learning routes and have a unique Job Centre Plus contract within the FE sector.

The College's work is supported by approximately 1,000 full time and part time staff that perform a number of roles and functions. The College has invested heavily in staff and their development believing that getting the right staff in the right places will support the drive for quality and excellence and the focus on the learner.

We recognise our responsibility to provide a curriculum which is dynamic to meet the needs of Swansea's people, employers and communities. We have always aimed for parity of esteem between vocational and academic programmes and between college and Work Based Learning routes. Over the past 4 years we have experienced a shift in learner numbers. Our 16-18 full-time learners in College and in part time Work Based Learning have increased, whilst there has been a shift from academic to vocational provision.

This has been driven by our focus on increasing our 16-18 full time cohort and has been supported by:

- an extensive 14-16 programme delivered in collaboration with schools offering clear pathway progression
- the expansion of entry, Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications
- the complete integration of Work Based Learning into our provision
- a focus on learners and learning

**PROGRESS WITH REGARD TO THE STRATEGIC AIMS IDENTIFIED IN THE INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING DOCUMENT 2006-9 ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

<b>Strategic Aim</b>	<b>Progress To Date</b>	<b>Executive Lead Person</b>
<p><b>SA1</b> To Provide the highest standard of education, training and support for all our learners ensuring equality of opportunity for all</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus on assessment differentiation and higher level linking skills and active learning through staff training, the work of advanced practitioners and an accredited assessors programme</li> <li>• student reward systems introduced to reinforce high expectations and aspirations</li> <li>• thorough College and course induction for all learners</li> <li>• innovative events to address imbalance in curriculum</li> <li>• wide ranging focus groups to ensure customer satisfaction</li> <li>• realignment of curriculum relevant to needs and priorities following rigorous planning process</li> <li>• continued development and investment in ILT</li> <li>• entrepreneurship given high profile with outstanding results in Global Challenge</li> </ul>	<p>Sandra Hickman</p>
<p><b>SA2</b> To raise standards by supporting, developing and maintaining a culture of continuous quality improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improvement in quality grades evidenced by Estyn (March 2006)</li> <li>• development of QDP and quality processes focused on Grade 1 by 2010</li> <li>• development of a SAR that supports continuous quality improvement through monitoring at every level in the organisation both in functional and curriculum areas</li> </ul>	<p>Jo Fowler</p>
<p><b>SA3</b> To further develop and recognise a team of well motivated and committed staff who achieve and deliver a high professional standard of performance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whole College staff development programme which includes leadership and management development and links directly to achieving Grade 1 in all we do</li> <li>• whole College support mechanisms or staff to enable them to achieve their objectives and therefore the Institutional Plan</li> </ul>	<p>Jo Folwer</p>
<p><b>SA4</b> To embrace project Swan as an exceptional planning opportunity, which will deliver the knowledge and skills needed for the future prosperity of Swansea</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• development of a collective vision of an 'integrated learning network' working with partners across the City and County of Swansea</li> <li>• 21<sup>st</sup> Century College for 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners embraced by CCS, DELLS, DEIN, College governors and staff</li> <li>• investigation and research 1<sup>st</sup> phase completed which culminated in the appointment of a project manager</li> <li>• development of an Executive Group that is steering the project</li> </ul>	<p>Principal</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identification of a shortlist of appropriate sites</li> </ul>	
<p><b>SA5</b> To collaborate with local, regional and international partners in strategic alliances to wide participation and respond to the needs of local, social and economic communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• expansion of programmes for 14-19 age groups in partnership with local schools</li> <li>• production of in-depth Labour Market information report based on Government strategies and local employment trends to support institutional planning</li> <li>• partnership activities to support Swansea Adult Community Strategy</li> <li>• expansion into 3 Asian countries to promote programmes for international students</li> <li>• partnership applications for externally funded projects</li> <li>• development of a new range of programmes to meet the needs of the economy and economically inactive</li> <li>• expansion of partnership working to support economic and social developments</li> </ul>	Sian O'Neill
<p><b>SA6</b> To continue to invest in resources whilst ensuring that the College achieves a break-even financial position over the period of the plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitoring &amp; achievement of financial budget and maintenance of strong cash reserves</li> <li>• Estyn Grade 1 for KQ7 – How Efficient are leaders and managers in using resources</li> <li>• continued Financial Health Category A</li> <li>• capital investment of £1m in line with capital plan</li> <li>• continued updating of rolling capital programme</li> <li>• continued maintenance programme in line with condition survey</li> <li>• improved space utilisation</li> <li>• updated Financial Strategy (recognised as best practice for the sector)</li> <li>• increased unit delivery under NPFS within same level of resource</li> <li>• continued benchmarking of financial efficiency of all areas of the College</li> </ul>	Anthony Roberson
<p><b>SA7</b> To value and promote the Welsh Culture and Language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• welsh culture and language considered as part of curriculum planning process</li> <li>• working collaboratively to deliver bilingual courses</li> <li>• celebrated events relating to Welsh heritage and culture</li> <li>• identified bilingual College champions</li> <li>• increasing pool of bilingual staff and provision delivered bilingually</li> <li>• whole College awareness raising</li> <li>• appointment of co-ordinator</li> <li>• a wide range of staff development events</li> <li>• monitoring of Action Plan</li> <li>• actions achieved in line with plan</li> </ul>	Sandra Hickman

Each Strategic Aim and Objective as well as the annual Operational Objectives are reviewed three times a year and a progress report is provided for Governors. All Strategic Aims will be monitored and progressed throughout the duration of this plan.

The College has reviewed the distance travelled towards the achievement of the Strategic Aims and Objectives for the Institutional Plan 2006-9 and can confirm we are on line to achieve these targets within the timeframe.

The College has undertaken some modifications of the Strategic Aims and Objectives for the period 2007-10 by combining them where appropriate and linking them to the Estyn Common Inspection Framework and its Key Questions. This enables the College to integrate both the Institutional and Quality plans to enable us to have a clear emphasis on quality improvement and the management of performance.

## Benchmarking

The College continues to benchmark its performance against national comparators at course level and against 5 KPIs: Recruitment, Retention, Attendance, Attainment and Successful Completion.

Recruitment is measured against target enrolments based on previous trends. These targets are finalised through the annual programme process.

Attendance rates are measured against common internal standards.

The development of the LLWR has impeded access to an accurate set of KPI benchmarking data for retention, attainment and successful completion across the Welsh sector. The College has therefore sought to use benchmarks from the English FE sector.

Each programme has been mapped to the closest possible equivalent course within the LSC benchmarking dataset. In cases where more than one course could be used, the one which reflected performance from a large cohort and which provided the highest possible benchmark for successful completion was adopted. This strategy has resulted in the provision of benchmarks for most courses. These comparators are not ideal as they do not have a Welsh focus but serve a purpose in terms of self assessment.

An actual example of this at course level is shown below.

Title	Retention		Attainment		Successful Completion	
	Benchmark	Actual	Benchmark	Actual	Benchmark	Actual
NVQ 2 Hairdressing	78.54%	<b>82.35%</b>	84.02%	<b>85.71%</b>	63.56%	<b>70.59%</b>
Reflexology	90.00%	<b>88.24%</b>	90.10%	<b>100%</b>	80.79%	<b>88.24%</b>

In addition, some courses have been benchmarked against other high performing institutions.

“Value added” is also measured using the Greenhead model for ‘A’ and ‘AS’ level courses.

Future developments envisage a regional database of KPIs in South West Wales and a value-added consortium using the ALIS system.

The Tribal Benchmarking project provides a further tool for both delivery and functional areas and we are using it as part of our Institutional review and review of the Financial Strategy.

The annual PPR process, initiated by DELLS, sets standards and evaluates performance. Outcomes serve as benchmarks within the Welsh FE sector.

Stakeholder feedback, via internal surveys, also provides a tool to measure, compare and evaluate performance across the college.

The data gained from the various benchmarking activities informs College Management monthly meetings where management information and faculty and functional area is discussed in depth. This management information is reported to and discussed at relevant Governor meetings.

## Quality

The College, its managers, governors and staff realise that the way forward is to develop the vision that the Colleges' focus is on quality and efficiency. In 2003/4 the College made a commitment to be a Grade 1 College in all we do by 2010.

We have made some progress towards this challenging target. The table below illustrates our latest Estyn inspection outcomes.

### Estyn Inspection Grades 2006

Area	Work Based Learning	College
Construction	2	
Engineering	2	
Business Administration	1	
Hospitality and Catering	2	1
Hair and Beauty	2	1
New Deal	1	
Science and Mathematics		3
Art and Design		2
History, Philosophy and Theology		3
Social sciences		3
Language, Literature and Culture		2
Independent Living Skills		1
Key Question 1		2
Key Question 2	2	2
Key Question 3	2	2
Key Question 4	2	1
Key Question 5	2	2
Key Question 6	2	3
Key Question 7	1	1

## Recruitment

At Swansea College we recognise our responsibility to provide a curriculum which is dynamic to meet the needs of Swansea's people, employers and communities.

We have always aimed for parity of esteem between vocational and academic programmes and between college and work based learning routes. Our change in student numbers is analysed below:-

### Student numbers

Year	FULL TIME				PART TIME	Grand Total
	WBL	Vocational	Academic	Total	All	
2003/04	437	1,987	310	<b>2,734</b>	<b>16,086</b>	<b>18,820</b>
2004/05	474	1,894	358	<b>2,726</b>	<b>12,313</b>	<b>15,039</b>
2005/06	571	1,888	335	<b>2,794</b>	<b>13,279</b>	<b>16,073</b>
2006/07 <sup>1</sup>	872	2,125	284	<b>3,281</b>	<b>10,363</b>	<b>13,644</b>

<sup>1</sup>- These are current student numbers at the time of production of this report. Enrolment continues until July 2007 and is currently on target

Over the past 4 years we have experienced a shift in learner numbers. Our 16-18 full time learners in College and in Work Based Learning have increased and there has been a shift from academic to vocational provision.

The College is expecting a reduction in part time learners as the funding priorities are focused on 16-18 full time learners.

It should be noted that the College has the ability to increase full time and part time, 16-18 and 19+, WBL and vocational activity, if funding was made available.

In the light of this performance and shift in trends the College has realised that we are in a position where our estate does not offer us the flexibility or the potential to meet our current or future accommodation needs. The College realises that other colleges, predominately in England, have experienced improved quality, increased efficiencies and have achieved the flexibility required to respond to ever changing curriculum needs through a new college build. This strategy was, and continues to be, actively supported in England by the Learning and Skills Council. There is recognition that Wales has constraints on its capital funding, but a 'big picture' vision is needed to meet the aspirations and needs of learners.

The strategy has recently been validated by research published evaluating the impact of capital expenditure which indicates "New buildings not only attract students but improve results" (J. Gravatt, Association of Colleges Director of Funding and Development, March 2007 based on Frontier Economics Research).

## Retention

The College has worked hard on a number of strategies to continuously improve retention. There has been a significant improvement from 2003/04 to 2004/05 and this continued in 2005/06 for part time learners. Furthermore, whilst there was a slight reduction in full time retention in 2005/06 this is expected to once again improve in 2006/07.

### Retention (Recurrent Funded Students)

Year	FULL TIME	PART TIME
2003/04	77.4%	89.1%
2004/05	84.9%	92.8%
2005/06	84.4%	93.1%

## Attainment

The College has consistently improved its attainment over the past few years in our mission towards Grade 1 Excellence in all areas.

Year	Whole College
2003/04	77%
2004/05	78%
2005/06	80%

Attainment is expressed as a percentage of all main qualifications studied

## Work Based Learning

Work Based Learning continues to be a growth area for the College as indicated by the enrolment figures earlier. Moreover, the College has matched this growth with continued improvement in quality of both early completion rates and framework completion rates.

Year	Early Completion Rate	Framework Completion Rate	Framework National Comparator
2003/04	16.5%	57%	Not Available
2004/05	20.1%	55%	Not Available
2005/06	25.9%	68%	34%

Early completion rate are completers who left early expressed as a percentage of the total number in training across the year. Framework completion rate is expressed as a percentage of those who left training during a year.

The National Comparators for Work Based Learning change every period (quarter), however, the College is consistently significantly above this average.

## **SECTION 5 VALUES, MISSION STATEMENT, STRATEGIC AIMS AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

The College has a set of core Values which represent our beliefs and behaviours.

### **College Values**

Respect, trust and support each other

Excellence – in all we do

Success for all – embracing diversity and cultural heritage

Progression – enabling our learners to meet their aspirations

Enterprise – inspiring and supporting creativity and innovation

Collaborate – the partnership road to success

Teamwork – one united College team

### **College Mission Statement**

We will provide high quality relevant provision for all our learners.

### **College Vision**

We will achieve Grade 1 in all areas of work by 2010.

## **SECTION 5.1 2007-2010 STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

As stated in Section 4, the College has made some modifications to its Strategic Aims and Objectives. The amendments are explained below, but predominantly they have been linked to the Estyn Common Inspection Framework and its Key Questions, for consistency, clarity and to focus the College on its goal for Grade 1 in all areas of work by 2010.

### **Distance Travelled Towards Achievement of Aims and Objectives of Strategic Plan**

The Strategic Aims and Objectives take account of the medium and long term aspirations with regard to the management of the institution, breadth of provision, quality of provision, support and response for Government strategies and initiatives, partnership and collaboration, financial management etc.

All Strategic Aims and Objectives are progressing in line with the Institutional Plan 2006-9.

In response to the review of the Strategic Aims and Objectives we confirm they are clear, realistic and are achievable over timescale of the Plan.

## **ESTYN COMMON INSPECTION CRITERIA**

### **Key Question 1**

How well do learners achieve?

### **Key Question 2**

How effective are teaching, training and assessment?

### **Key Question 3**

How well do learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?

### **Key Question 4**

How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?

### **Key Question 5**

How effective are leadership and strategic management?

### **Key Question 6**

How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?

### **Key Question 7**

How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?

## MODIFICATIONS TO STRATEGIC AIMS AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2007-2010

New Strategic Aim	New Strategic Objective	Changes to 2006-9 Strategic Aims and Link to Key Question	Executive Lead Person
<p><b>SA1</b> To ensure that learners achieve the highest standards within a continuous culture of quality improvement</p>	<p><b>SO1.1</b> To monitor learner progress against individual targets</p> <p><b>SO1.2</b> To benchmark learning against national and international standards</p>	<p>Slight modification from previous SA2 and relates to Key Question 1</p>	<p>Jo Fowler</p> <p>Sandra Hickman</p>
<p><b>SA2</b> To provide the highest standards of teaching, learning and assessment for all our learners</p>	<p><b>SO2.1</b> To improve the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment by adopting a range of strategies to ensure that all our learners have high aspirations and achieve their learning goals</p> <p><b>SO2.2</b> To continue to develop and integrate information learning technology, to enhance learning, to facilitate support for learners and to respond to Government targets</p>	<p>Slight modification from SA1 and relates to Key Question 2</p>	<p>Jo Fowler</p>
<p><b>SA3</b> To collaborate with local, regional, national and international partners in strategic alliances to ensure a provision which widens participation and responds to the needs of social and economic communities</p>	<p><b>SO3.1</b> To work with the LEA and schools in Swansea on the 14-19 agenda, to facilitate the smooth progression from schools to College in line with Government strategies and initiatives</p> <p><b>SO3.2</b> To expand HE provision in the College in partnerships with local HEIs</p> <p><b>SO3.3</b> To expand strategic networks and partnerships with public and private organisations to ensure provision is based on the needs of individuals and the local economy</p>	<p>Merging previous SA4,5 &amp; 6 and relates to Key Question 3 &amp; 5</p>	<p>Sian O'Neill</p> <p>Sandra Hickman</p>

	<p><b>SO3.4</b> To embed a Community Strategy in partnership with local stakeholders to widen participation and to address the Lifelong Learning agenda</p> <p><b>SO3.5</b> To build on our current provision and expand into new markets, with the aim of increasing income generated through international student recruitment whilst internationalising both the experience of all our learners and our provision</p> <p><b>SO3.6</b> To work in a third party arrangement with SCVS to maintain and develop a strategic alliance and to support and assure the quality of designated provision</p>		
<p><b>SA4</b> To provide support and guidance to ensure all our learners realise their full potential in terms of their personal, social, moral and wider development</p>	<p><b>SO4.1</b> To ensure all our learners receive effective and relevant pastoral and academic support and guidance</p> <p><b>SO4.2</b> To improve access to a variety of lifelong learning opportunities for all types of learners from different levels, ages and cultures especially Black and minority ethnic groups</p> <p><b>SO4.3</b> To provide impartial advice and guidance to ensure that all learners enrol on a course appropriate to their ability and aspirations</p> <p><b>SO4.4</b> To provide specialist support for all learners to enable them to stay on programme, attain and develop life skills and progress to employment or further study</p> <p><b>SO4.5</b> To value and promote the Welsh culture and language</p>	<p>Slight modification from previous SA 3 &amp; 5 and relates to Key Question 4</p>	<p>Sandra Hickman</p>

<p><b>SA5</b> To establish clear strategic direction to deliver the knowledge and skills needed for the future prosperity of Swansea</p>	<p><b>SO5.1</b> To ensure that the College is in receipt of all the external information and drivers on which to make strategic decisions and plans linked to knowledge and skills</p> <p><b>SO5.2</b> To work in partnership and collaboration with key stakeholders to progress the City and County of Swansea Learning Policy and Strategy for Children, Young People and Adults</p> <p><b>SO5.3</b> Develop Project Swan as an exceptional opportunity to develop a learning quarter/campus for the City and County of Swansea</p>	<p>Slight modification to previous SA3 &amp; 4 and relates to Key Question 5</p>	<p>Principal</p>
<p><b>SA6</b> To evaluate the College's performance and continuous improvement in all aspects of our work</p>	<p><b>SO6.1</b> Improve the quality of student performance by setting and monitoring annual recruitment, attendance, completion and attainment targets, which exceed national comparators and other relevant benchmarks</p> <p><b>SO6.2</b> Identify and benchmark standards for functional areas to ensure that they provide consistent and excellent support</p>	<p>Slight modification to previous SA7 and relates to Key Question 6</p>	<p>Jo Fowler</p>
<p><b>SA7</b> To invest in human, physical and financial resources effectively and efficiently</p>	<p><b>SO7.1</b> To effectively manage the College budget and devolved resources</p> <p><b>SO7.2</b> To continue to develop and implement an effective Estate Strategy and Capital Investment Programme to improve the quality of the student and staff experience</p> <p><b>SO7.3</b> To maintain a safe and sustainable environment for the continued delivery of education</p> <p><b>SO7.4</b> To invest in all staff to ensure they have the knowledge, skills and qualities to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the future</p>	<p>Slight modification to previous SA3 and relates to Key Question 7</p>	<p>Anthony Robertson</p> <p>Jo Fowler</p>

All aims and objectives will be reviewed each term and a report produced for governors and college managers detailing distance travelled against each Strategic Aim.



## **6 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **6.1 Equal Opportunities**

Swansea College is committed to mainstreaming equality of opportunity and valuing diversity. The College works in partnership and close consultation with various community groups and organisations representing minority groups. This work informs our curriculum planning and service delivery, helping to ensure that we meet the needs of the diverse communities we serve.

Progress with implementing our Race Equality Action Plan and mainstreaming equality and diversity is regularly monitored and reported on through our Equality and Diversity Group.

The College has developed our Disability Equality Scheme and are in the process of implementing our Action Plan. Learners and staff with disabilities, as well as other stakeholders, have been actively involved in the development of our Scheme and will play a key role in reviewing our progress in relation to promoting disability equality. As part of this process, we have been reviewing accessibility of provision, services and facilities. The College has reviewed the accessibility of our curriculum offer to ensure that new developments meet the needs of other specific groups.

The College has been continuing to actively promote gender equality in the workplace, tackle gender stereotyping in career and subject choice through partnership work with JIVE (Joint Intervention Wales' Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology). Promotional events have been held in College involving both local schools and employers. The College is currently consulting with staff and students to review our progress with implementing our Gender Equality Action Plan and will be updating this in line with feedback and legal requirements under the Gender Equality Duty legislation.

Our future priorities in line with both Government Legislation and College plans will be to:

- continue to impact assess policies and procedures
- monitor retention, achievement and satisfaction with services in relation to specific groups
- embed equality and diversity into existing quality frameworks and systems
- disseminate good practice more effectively
- develop further strategies to promote age equality and equality in relation to sexual orientation and religion and beliefs

### **6.2 Marketing**

The College's Strategic direction with regard to Marketing its portfolio of courses will be informed by demographic changes, Government initiatives, institutional priorities and the needs of our partners in attracting and maintaining career pathways to education, training and employment.

In addition to targeting traditional groups - the 16-19 cohort, adult learners, employers and developing local partnerships to attract 14-16 groups - our strategy will aim to attract individuals who may not previously have been involved in education and training or who have not considered a further education institution as an option for up-skilling or re-skilling.

We will also focus on working with partners, relevant agencies and stakeholders, to maximise the effectiveness of our marketing strategy and our marketing budget. The

College's Marketing Plan will be produced with consideration for DELLS strategic marketing objectives.

### **6.3 Welsh Medium and Bilingualism**

Welsh medium and bilingual provision is an important element of College planning as is evidenced by the College's Welsh Language Scheme which focuses on our commitment to mainstreaming the Welsh Language and treat it equally to the English Language.

The College is on target to meet the objectives of our Action Plan and have successfully developed strategies to ensure the Welsh language is promoted in all marketing activities, job advertisements, signage, College administrative documents as well as offering bilingual support for customers.

The College offers a range of Welsh Language courses across Swansea and offer a range of courses offered bi-lingually. However, the College is experiencing difficulty in attracting subject specialists who are able to teach through the medium of Welsh. The College has a minimum number of students who wish to be taught via the Welsh Medium, even those who come from Welsh Medium secondary schools. The College is addressing these issues by arranging staff development programmes to support both non Welsh speakers and those not confident in using the Welsh language in delivery of education and training.

A partnership application made by Ysgol Gufun Gwyr, Swansea and Gorseinon Colleges for DELLS funding to support bilingual provision for Care programmes has been successful. This partnership approach to supporting the Welsh medium and bilingual provision is one we wish to mirror in other curricular areas.

The College is working towards the 14-19 Agenda and Iaith Pawb targets. We will be teaching Hairdressing to a large group of Welsh pupils from Gwyr and Bryn Tawe Welsh Comprehensive Schools from September 2007.

The College is a major partner of Swansea University in respect of the Welsh for Adults Language Centre targets. We will be working on Projects such as Mis Cŵl Cymru next March.

The College has developed a Welsh translation of LAMS, (Learning Activity Management System) a revolutionary new tool for designing, managing and delivering on line collaborative learning activities. We have completed all the translation work and have successfully run several bilingual sessions.

### **6.4 14-19 Learning Pathways Agenda**

The College plays a significant partnership role and is fully committed to the Government's 14-19 Learning Pathways agenda and can demonstrate this through our focus on:

- partnerships and collaborative planning and delivery
- ensuring that we offer impartial advice and guidance to all potential students
- promoting parity of esteem between vocational and academic routes; Work Based or College routes
- offering all our learners tutorial support, enrichment and work related opportunities and support through our Student Learning Services area
- extending our range of levels of qualifications from Entry to Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and higher level qualifications
- clearly signposting progression routes to Higher Education and Employment

- raising aspirations
- entrepreneurship
- working with Careers Wales West to offer ongoing advice and guidance
- extending the Welsh Baccalaureate to additional vocational routes
- working with the local 14-19 Learning Network to provide an extensive 14-19 options in partnership with local schools

## **ANNEX 1 KEY CHALLENGES FACED BY THE COLLEGE**

The College often feels that we are the sole driver of a strategic direction for putting the learner at the heart of strategies in relation to education and training in Swansea. A clear central strategic steer and a strategic Governance/Management Board Structure would improve the situation in Swansea.

Barriers to change and coherent planning remain at both local and national level:

- lack of key clear strategic direction that can be translated into action
- some providers demonstrate no obligation to contribute to the wider strategic vision for learning
- too much parochialism
- structures that hinder rather than support progress e.g. the workings of LA's, LEA's and the autonomy of schools
- too many groups/meetings with little action, or real engagement and will to contribute to the coherent direction
- no clear frameworks to work to and a lack of understanding of the 'fit' with each of the constituent partnerships and their strategies
- understanding the 'fit' between different organisational strategies and an understanding of who co-ordinates these
- no opportunity/benefit to divest provision
- a mistrust of the impartiality of advice and guidance given to learners
- lack of opportunity for growth

With regards to the above, the College continues to contribute to a variety of activities to support strategic working e.g.

- contributing to consultative documents
- facilitate partnership working activities
- lobbying WAG and relevant organisations
- allocating senior management time to work on a variety of cross organisational working with LEA/HEIs/community groups/economic development groups
- the Principal works on a number of groups such as the Ministerial Advisory Group for Lifelong Learning and Skills (Wales), the Public Sector Management Board, the Children's and Young People's Partnership, the local CCET

The College continues to be faced with increased financial pressures as a result of:-

- not being recognised for actual delivery under the NPFS (perceived to be delivering at above harmonised rate when actually delivering at, or even below, harmonised rate)
- no inflationary funding
- funding focused on 16-18 year olds
- no growth (recurrent funding & Work Based Learning)
- increased costs for pensions and increments – not funded
- annual funding allocations

In response the College is:-

- continually lobbying DELLS to be recognised for actual delivery
- lobbying DELLS for inflationary funding
- re-directing resources from 19+ to 16-18 year old delivery activity
- evaluating affordability of making pay award
- developing a financial strategy towards staffing efficiencies
- lobbying DELLS for at least 2 year indicative funding allocations in addition to actual annual allocation

- providing high quality education to Work Based Learners beyond contracted volumes with the anticipation of retrospective funding