

Petroc College Annual Accountability Statement 2025-2026

At Petroc College, our primary objective is to deliver high-quality, career-oriented education that meets the evolving skills needs of our local and regional communities. Aligned with our strategic plan for 2024-2026, this statement reflects our commitment to creating opportunities for our learners, developing industry-aligned curricula, and contributing to local economic growth. We are committed to ensuring every student achieves their fullest potential, equipping them with the skills required to succeed in the future workforce.

We prioritise inclusivity, employability, and career progression, ensuring that our education is not just about learning but about transforming communities and individuals for a prosperous future.

The College prepared a new Strategic Plan and Curriculum Strategy in February 2025 with a new focus vision, mission and new set of priorities aligned to local needs.

The Petroc Governing Body carried out an options appraisal in the 2024/25 academic year with the decision in April 2025 to pursue a merger in principle with Exeter College. The due diligence and consultation process is underway with each of the final governing body decisions to merge planned for November 2025.



Our Vision and Mission

Our Vision

Our vision drives us forward and sets our aspirations for the future:

Inspiring ambition through inclusive education, enabling every learner to reach their fullest potential.

This vision is at the heart of everything we do. We strive to create an inclusive, ambitious, and dynamic learning environment where students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to grow, achieve, and make a lasting impact in their chosen fields.

Our Mission

Our mission defines our purpose and the transformative power of education at Petroc:

Education at Petroc is more than learning – it's about transformation. We believe in the power of knowledge, skills, and ambition to shape lives and communities.

We are committed to delivering high quality education and training, equipping our learners with the skills, confidence, and opportunities to make a difference—not just in their own lives, but in the communities they serve.



Strategic Objectives 2024-2026



Our Learners

Deliver high-quality education and training consistently across all programmes.



Our College

Secure Petroc's financial stability to ensure continued investment in its mission.



Our People

Empower a unified and engaged workforce committed to achieving Petroc's goals.



Our Community

Build a responsive curriculum to meet local and national economic priorities.

Context and Place

Petroc College is located in North Devon and serves a wide geographic area that includes North Devon, Torridge, Mid Devon, and East Devon. These areas present unique socio-economic challenges such as rural isolation, socio-economic disadvantage, and lower-than-average educational attainment. Despite these challenges, the local economy presents significant opportunities in industries such as healthcare, green energy, agriculture, creative industries, and digital technologies.

With two campuses and a University Centre, we are strategically positioned to address the skills gaps in these sectors. We offer a broad range of education programs, including vocational courses, apprenticeships, higher education, and specialised training, all designed to respond to the growing needs of employers in the region.

By providing flexible learning options and embedding transferable skills across all programmes, we prepare learners not only for their next career steps but for a lifetime of adaptability in an ever-evolving employment market. Recognising the value of lifelong learning and personal development, Petroc fosters a passion for ongoing education and training, creating holistic opportunities for learners, employers, and community groups alike.



Learner Numbers and Provision

Learner numbers in 2024/25, as of March 2025:

16-19 Year Old Learners

Approximately 52% of 16- to 19-year-old learners are enrolled in Level 3 academic or vocational programmes, while 23% study at Level 2, and 25% at Level 1 or below. 20% of learners in this age group have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP).

Apprenticeships

Our Apprenticeship provision spans a diverse range of sectors, with the highest enrolments in construction, engineering & motor vehicle, health & care, business, hospitality & catering, and education.

Adult Skills & Higher Education

Similarly, our Adult Skills curriculum is broad, with the largest participation in English & maths, counselling, ESOL, and accounting.

For Higher Education, the most popular programmes focus on professional development, psychology, and teaching & learning qualifications.

The devolution process is underway, with several local authorities actively engaging in the opportunities it presents. As a result, Adult Skills are becoming a greater priority, creating potential for increased funding and new opportunities. This shift positions Petroc to expand and enhance its Adult Skills provision, ensuring we continue to meet the evolving needs of our communities.

Petroc collaborates with seven Employer Advisory Groups, which meet throughout the year to support curriculum design and delivery. These groups ensure our programmes align with industry needs and emerging trends. The advisory groups cover key sectors, including Animal Care & Management, Business & Management, Early Years & Childcare, Construction, Creative Industries, Automotive, and Hospitality & Tourism.

Petroc offers a number of academies, including the newly launched Aim Higher Academy, developed in partnership with Exeter University. This exclusive programme is designed for high-achieving students seeking to excel academically while building strong career foundations. Open to students with an average GCSE grade of 6 or higher, the academy combines rigorous academic study with practical industry engagement, equipping learners for university success and future career opportunities.

Our Campuses and Facilities

North Devon Campus

Offers a diverse range of programmes, including A Levels, T Levels, Apprenticeships, Adult Part-Time Courses, and Higher Education. In 2023/24, this campus held 69% of the 16-19, and 75% of the A Level market share. The campus is home to a specialist Centre for Excellence in Construction, and boasts award-winning Construction students and an ambitious Construction programme which reflects the region's skills needs.

A leader in T Level implementation and delivery, our North Devon Campus recently expanded its provision with a brand-new Animal Care Centre, accommodating increased demand in this area. Our Apprenticeship team was rated 'Good' in the most recent Ofsted inspection, and our commitment to high aspirations and achievement is reflected in our new curriculum, academies and student success.

Tiverton Campus

Provides a safe, friendly, and inclusive learning environment, specialising in SEND and NEET reengagement programmes at Entry Level and Level 1. In 2023/24 this campus held 10% of the 16-19 market share, with 47% at Entry Level and 52% at Level 1.

As a Centre for Excellence in SEND provision, the campus is dedicated to preparing students for independent living, meaningful employment and progression to further education, ensuring they gain the skills and confidence needed for their future.

Both campuses have strong relationships with local employers and authorities, ensuring our students benefit from our brand-new programme of meaningful work experience and career-focused opportunities.



University Centre and Innovation Hubs

University Centre for Northern Devon

Offers Level 4+ courses developed in collaboration with industry experts and employers, ensuring students gain the practical skills and knowledge needed to succeed in today's workforce. Through immersive, hands-on learning experiences, our students acquire authentic industry insights that enhance their career prospects.

Our regional positioning presents unique opportunities in Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW), as well as the maritime, agriculture, and engineering sectors. We work closely with local employers, North Devon Futures, and North Devon & Torridge Councils to identify and support growth and investment in skills, ensuring our students are prepared for emerging industries and future career opportunities.

Centre of Technology & Innovation Excellence (Cotie)

The Centre of Technology & Innovation Excellence (Cotie) is more than just a business hub - it is a collaborative space designed to support innovation, skills development, and industry partnerships.

With two centres in Barnstaple and Tiverton, Cotie offers a diverse range of business spaces, including hotdesks, workbenches, meeting pods, seminar rooms, and fully equipped conference facilities. Our expert team guides how to harness these technologies to drive business growth and innovation.

Cotie also serves as a key hub for the University Centre for Northern Devon's Higher Education students, acting as a conduit between student innovation and industry collaboration.

South West Institute of Technology (SWIoT)

The South West Institute of Technology (SWIoT) is a collaborative partnership dedicated to advanced technical training, specialising in developing highly skilled technicians and engineers for the region.

SWIoT features two state-of-the-art facilities:

- Engineering: Cleanroom fabrication, electronics design and testing, additive technologies (3D printing), and production robotics.
- Digital Science: Virtual environment development, drone experimentation space, and cutting-edge networking, software, and data engineering facilities.

Regional Socio-Economic Context

The North Devon, Tiverton, Torridge, and Bude districts present a diverse socio-economic landscape, characterised by a mix of affluent rural areas, vibrant market towns, and significant pockets of deprivation. While North Devon and Tiverton benefit from strong tourism, agriculture, and small business sectors, Torridge and Bude experience higher-than-average economic deprivation, with limited access to higher-wage employment and further education opportunities.

All three districts have over 50% of their population in the bottom five bands of social deprivation, highlighting the widespread challenges related to low household incomes, limited social mobility, and economic inequality.

These areas also have an ageing population, lower-than-average educational attainment, and a reliance on seasonal and low-wage employment, creating skills gaps and barriers to economic progression.

Compared to national averages, the region has fewer high-income households and reduced access to further education and training opportunities. However, the tight-knit communities, growing investment in renewable energy and digital industries, and strong local business networks provide opportunities for economic regeneration and workforce development.



Approach to Developing the Annual Accountability Statement

In developing this statement, we consulted extensively with local employers, industry experts, and regional stakeholders. We have worked closely with Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs), Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), and other education providers to ensure that our curriculum aligns with local, regional, and national skills needs. Our Employer Advisory Boards, which cover key sectors such as construction, health, and digital technologies, have provided invaluable input into shaping our curriculum and ensuring that our programs remain relevant and responsive to employer demands.

We have used various data sources, including labour market intelligence and feedback from previous years, to inform our priorities and set clear, measurable targets for the coming academic year.



The College is coordinating the Devon Colleges **Local Skills Improvement Fund** partnership with Exeter College, South Devon College, Cornwall Colleges Group (Bicton Campus), Devon and Cornwall Training Provider Network and City College Plymouth. The particular focus has been shaped by employers and is an emerging priority for the **Local Skills Improvement Plan** and future Local Skills Improvement Forum. We have funded and co-designed a **LSIP/LSIF** collaboration workshop for the Heart of the South West LEP region to ensure that there is direct line of sight from the LSIP to the colleges priorities.



As an active member and co-ordinating **Northern Devon Futures** (A partnership of Local Authorities, Health, Employers, Biosphere, Voluntary bodies, Employer Representative bodies and other systems leaders); the college is looking to support the development of a cohesive vision for Northern Devon to 2050.



We are part of the **South West Institute of Technology** (SWIOT); have degree provision validated by the **University of Plymouth**; have Excellent working relationships with Exeter University and **Set Squared**; host the **University of Bolton** nursing satellite and are developing relationships with other University Partners. SWIOT brings together Employers with Colleges and **TDK** in Ilfracombe currently chair the partnership. This Partnership covers the Heart of the Southwest LEP and Cornwall, Isles of Scilly LEP and includes **Truro & Penwith College**, Petroc, **Exeter College**, **South Devon College**, **City College Plymouth**, **Bridgwater & Taunton College**, and the **Met Office** and **EDF Energy**; alongside **Exeter** and **Plymouth Universities**.



We sit at the heart of the **North Devon Unesco Biosphere** and have developed, with the **Satellite Applications Catapult** (and **Bicton and Bridgwater & Taunton Colleges**) an **Environmental Space Living Laboratory (ESLL)** to support the development of Agritech and Aquatech in future farming. This builds on to our **Centre of Technology and Innovation Excellence (Cotie)** which provides innovation space for entrepreneurs and small businesses. This has been further enhanced by the provision of an immersive space alongside the ESLL. An equivalent to Cotie has also been developed with **Mid Devon Council** in Tiverton to support the Mid Devon community in a similar way.



We are active members of the **Devon and Cornwall Training Provider Network**, the **Green Construction Advisory Panel (GCAP)**, **Biosphere Foundation**, **North Devon Manufacturers Association (NDMA)** and our Vice Principal is currently President of the **Barnstaple Chamber of Commerce**. We work actively with **Landmark Theatres** as the local theatre operators and are active in the **Northern Devon Cultural Strategy**.



Our Head of Inclusion & High Needs represents colleges on the Devon County Council **SEND Transformation Board**, and in response to local need the College has developed new provision to support enhanced transition for disengaged school and post-16 learners.



We also stand to be at the heart of the developing **floating offshore wind** developments in the **Celtic Sea**, in **Aquaculture** and **Carbon Sequestration** with the Biosphere, and with **low carbon marine** with the Universities of Plymouth and Exeter and Torridge District Council through the Levelling Up project at Appledore.



We are active members of the **Education Futures North Devon Partnership** (EFNDP) which comprises all the Northern Devon Secondary Schools and Petroc, looking to improve Social Mobility, support school improvement and learner achievement, and drive skills development across the sub-region.



We are part of the **Devon Colleges Group** with all the members (City College Plymouth, South Devon College, Exeter College and ourselves) who have mapped out their adult and apprenticeship offer to reduce overlap whilst ensuring there is genuine regional coverage for skills gaps. We worked together on **Hinkley Point C**, a new nuclear power plant on the Bristol Channel, are Partnering with City and Guilds to develop a **Retrofit Academy** at all four colleges, and with **Plymouth Freeport** to match skills provision and needs.



We are members of the **Tertiary Colleges Group**, which includes colleges such as **Nelson & Colne, Barnsley, Cirencester, Exeter, and Stafford Colleges Group**. This group shares practice and meets biannually for a conference focused on implementation of latest government policies. We are also working closely with **Nelson and Colne, Gloucester College and Mid Kent College** on a decarbonisation scheme for the college part funded by **Salix** with ambitious targets to meet our **Net Zero** commitment.



The College is working with Devon County Council on **Devolution** as members of the employment and skills board which is overseeing the implementation of the devolution of the adult skills fund in Devon, seeking to ensure it adequately reflects the needs of Northern and Mid Devon communities and our employers.

One of the key aspects of working together is ensuring the colleges have all the curriculum provision required by the region we collectively serve. To ensure this need is met we have mapped all our apprenticeships in the Devon College Group. An example is shown here. This information is then triangulated with LMI to assess the need in the area.



The College is delivering all the new government qualifications and mechanisms including T levels, apprenticeships, Free Courses for Jobs, Skills Bootcamps, HTQs and Tailored Learning as part of our offer to meet the needs of the regional economy. This means we are delivering or developing new provision in a number of areas with the support of local employers.

We have also embraced opportunities for sector-specific initiatives to stimulate interest in the first steps in learning to get them on pathways that will meet significant workforce skills shortage, such as in health and social care.

Mathematics, English and digital skills remain an important part of our provision for adults and 16–18-year-olds and we are adding to our maths provision at level 3 in response to anticipated future needs of the local economy.

The development and recognition of personal transferable skills, captured through our extant Personal Development Awards scheme similarly remains a priority with annual monitoring of Key Performance Targets in this area.

Contribution to National, Regional, and Local Priorities

Our curriculum strategy is built around meeting national and regional skills priorities and supporting the growth of industries in high-demand sectors such as digital technologies, green energy, health, and construction. In the 2025-2026 academic year, we aim to prioritise delivery of the following national skills priorities:

- **Digital and Technology Skills:** Enhancing digital literacy and AI readiness across all sectors.
- **Green Skills:** Developing workforce capabilities in renewable energy, sustainable practices, and green technologies.
- **Health and Social Care:** Addressing workforce shortages through targeted training in health, social care, and mental health services.
- **Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering:** Supporting local industries with a highly skilled workforce in sectors like construction and manufacturing.



As part of our commitment to these priorities, we have set the following objectives for the upcoming 2025/26 academic year:

1. Digital Enablement and AI Integration:

- 100% of our courses will integrate digital and AI-related technologies relevant to their respective industries, ensuring learners are prepared for digital transformation. Fewer than half of our courses currently meet this ambition.
- Introduction of at least three new courses focused on AI and emerging technologies. There was one new course in AI introduced in the 24/25 academic year.

2. Health and Social Care Workforce Development:

- Establish formal partnerships with at least 10 local health and social care providers to create clear education-to-employment pipelines. Fewer than 5 formal partnerships are currently in place.
- Achieve a 75% direct progression rate from education into employment or apprenticeships within the health and social care sectors. Fewer than half of learners currently progress into employment or an apprenticeship within the sector.

3. Green Skills and Sustainability:

- Launch at least five new interdisciplinary green and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) programs, co-designed with employers. Five new STEAM courses were introduced in 2024/25 academic year.
- Develop a "Green Skills Hub" to support learners in preparing for jobs in renewable energy, construction, and sustainability-driven industries.

4. Apprenticeships and Work Experience:

- Ensure that 90% of full-time learners complete substantial work-related learning placements that align with their career goals. Less than 50% of learners currently complete work experience.
- Launch five new apprenticeship programmes across high-demand sectors such as green energy, digital innovation, and advanced manufacturing. This with double the current offer within these sectors.

These objectives will ensure that Petroc College continues to meet the evolving skills needs of our region, helping to close critical skills gaps and creating pathways to employment for our learners.

Local Needs Duty

In line with the Local Needs Duty, we have conducted a thorough review of how our provision meets local skills needs and have identified key areas for improvement and growth. This review highlighted the need to expand our offerings in the green energy sector, enhance our digital skills curriculum, and increase apprenticeship opportunities in emerging industries. The result of this review was a new Curriculum Strategy for the College.

The most recent Ofsted inspection in October 2024 judged the College as making a reasonable contribution to skills needs in the region.

“Leaders collaborate with civic, economic and development bodies, community partners, schools, universities and employers well. They are well represented on those bodies that influence and invest in skills development. Leaders work closely with the Devon chamber, Devon Council, North Devon Council and Torridge District Council to plan curriculums that provide the skills most employers need. Leaders ensure that the college contributes to social and environmental priorities such as the North Devon Biosphere to protect habitats in the area for people and nature. College leaders work well with community partners in north and mid-Devon to reduce social inequality. They work closely with local charities to swiftly establish education and training courses that support refugees to gain new skills, helping their integration and resettlement. Additionally, leaders collaborate effectively with Devon Council to enhance education and training opportunities for young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities and high needs at the Tiverton campus.” source Ofsted report October 2024.



This mapping provides a summary overview of National, Local and regional priorities along with the College offer.

Number	Priority Sectors	National	Local Regional LSIPs (Devon and Somerset)	College Strategic Plan & Accountability Statement Priorities
1	Construction	X	X	X
2	Digital & Technology	X	X	X
3	Health & Social Care; Includes; • Life Sciences	X	X	X
4	Creative	X		X
5	Logistics & Haulage	X		
6	Engineering & manufacturing includes; • Nuclear, Marine & Defence	X	X	X
7	Science & Mathematics	X		X
8	Green Skills	X	X	X

Number	Priority Sectors	National	Local Regional LSIPs (Devon and Somerset)	College Strategic Plan & Accountability Statement Priorities
9	Hospitality & Tourism			X
11	Labour Market Inclusion; Including; • Employability • ESOL		X	X
13	Sport & Physical Activity		X	X
14	Technical Education & Apprenticeships • T-levels • Bootcamps	X	X	X
15	Higher Tech Education • Micro-credentials • HTQs	X	X	X
16	Transferable Skills • Including E&M • PDBA • Digital	X	X	X

Corporation/Governing Body Statement

This annual accountability statement has been reviewed and approved by Petroc College's governing body. We confirm that it meets the statutory requirements set out in the Local Needs Duty, and we are committed to delivering on the targets outlined in this document to support our local community, regional economy, and the national skills agenda.

Supporting Documentation

- [Petroc College 2024-2026 Strategic Plan](#)
- [Petroc College Curriculum Strategy 2025](#)
- [North Devon and Torridge Economic Strategy](#)
- [Local Skills Improvement Plan \(LSIP\) for North Devon and surrounding regions](#)
- [Ofsted Inspection Report - Petroc College \(October 2024\)](#)
- [Access and Participation Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29](#)

This statement was published on our website for public access and review on the 1st of June 2025.

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