



Strategic Plan 2024 – 2028

Purpose

Trent Education Centre (TEC) has been providing functional skills and vocational training courses to adults in Nottingham, Leicester and Birmingham since 2012. Many of the people we support believe that they have missed their chance for an education. They may have left school recently or many years ago and lack the academic skills or confidence to study at a university. TEC exists to support such people. We help them build their self-esteem and competencies including English language skills, so they can succeed in education at university level and go on to career success.

Aim

Empowering futures and nurturing talent by providing the complete education journey.

In its recent Higher Education Statement and Reform consultation response (2023), the UK Government recognises that the skills and education of all its citizens need to be improved in order to meet the challenges of the future, by providing “good quality qualifications, which equip students with the skills they need to achieve their potential.” (Department for Education, 2023, p. 3).

TEC aims to assist the UK Government in achieving its goal by providing high quality qualifications, up to and including higher education, which supports students into gainful employment and contributes to the growth of the local and national economy. This strategy is fully aligned with the following UK Government statement of belief:

“all students should expect their higher education studies to advance them on the ladder of opportunity and lead them into gainful employment. Higher education qualifications should be of a high quality, give students the skills they need to improve their outcomes in life, and support the growth of our economy by embedding careers-based learning throughout the course of their studies.” (Department for Education, 2023, p. 5).

Mission

To provide students within local and international communities with the holistic education they need to improve their life chances.

Vision

To become a foremost provider of the complete education journey, supporting adults from basic skills courses up to university degrees and career success.

Values

Trent Education Centre prioritises the well-being and growth of the people we exist to serve, underpinned by our core values:

- **Respect:** commending courage and commitment for those returning to education
- **Integrity:** authenticity and credibility in academic and working practices
- **Inclusion:** widening participation so that no-one gets left behind
- **Creativity:** experimenting with new approaches to learning, teaching and assessment
- **Aspiration:** striving to reach beyond expectations
- **Sustainability:** securing a future for individuals, their families and communities
- **Professionalism:** working to high academic and service standards and sharing expertise

Our Holistic Approach to Education

We believe that the well-being and personal growth of our students is essential to their academic achievement and career success. We focus, therefore, on integrating personal, social and emotional development, with the knowledge and skills required for university level qualifications, and the modern workplace.

Future Plans (2024-2026)

We have many students graduating from NCFE Functional Skills Level 2 English and vocational training courses who are looking for progression into university-level higher education. We have therefore begun to deliver our own higher education programmes so that students can complete their full education journey with us. Our first cohort of the ATHE Level 5 Extended Diploma in Business and Management will complete in 2026, and we have registered with the Pearson awarding body to deliver the BTEC HND in Business. We have also applied to register with the Office for Students (OfS). Alignment with the UK higher education regulatory framework will enhance the quality of our provision and enable eligible students to apply for student loan funding.

In 2025, we established an English Language Study Centre at our Castle Boulevard site in Nottingham and registered with the Ascentis awarding body to deliver ESOL courses from Entry 1 to Level 2. We also became a British Council IELTS Registration Centre and attained ASIC accreditation. We are currently running NCFE Functional Skills English courses (Levels 1 and 2) and Ascentis ESOL Entry 2 courses at the Study Centre.

We have applied for British Council Accreditation UK to enhance the quality of our English language provision and to enable us to recruit international students to study in Nottingham. Following the British Council inspection in March 2026, we expect an accreditation decision in May 2026.

From 2026 to 2028, we aim to recruit international students and expand our English language offer. By 2027, we plan to run IELTS Preparation courses and English for Academic Purposes courses alongside our Functional Skills English and ESOL provision, supporting progression into higher education and improving local and international student outcomes.

Strategic Priorities (2024-2028)

Our priorities meet the needs of the communities we serve:

1. Deliver high quality learning, teaching and assessment from basic skills up to and including university level education
2. Widen university level access to people from under-represented and disadvantaged communities
3. Give people the opportunity to develop the employability skills they need for gainful employment and career success
4. Enhance learning through the ongoing development and improvement of the TEC holistic approach to education
5. Develop the quality and international recognition of our English language courses to meet the needs of local and international students aiming to improve their life chances

Strategic Objectives (2024-2028)

No	Strategic Priorities	Strategic Objectives	Target start date	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Update
1.	Deliver high quality learning, teaching and assessment from basic skills up to and including university level education	1.1. Develop an annualised CPD for all further and higher education faculty	Mar 2024	1.1.1. 20 hours CPD per annum, or 1 CPD session @ 1-2 hrs per month for all staff	20 hours CPD completed in Year 1 (Mar 2025 and Year 2 (Mar 2026)
		1.2. Carry out lesson observations for a minimum of once per annum on all further and higher education faculty	Dec 2024	1.2.1. One Lesson Observation for all faculty conducted by senior academic staff by Dec 2024 1.2.2. One peer observation conducted by all faculty by Dec 2024.	One Lesson Observation completed for the two HE lecturers (Dec 2025 and three English language teachers (Feb 2026).
		1.3. Student performance metrics to exceed benchmark thresholds	Dec 2024	1.3.1. Excellent External Quality Assurance (EQA) Reports and Annual (Academic) Monitoring Reviews (AMR) received from all awarding organisations TEC works with 1.3.2. A minimum of 85% retention and continuation rate in the first academic year 1.3.3. A minimum of 30% higher grades (Merits and Distinctions) in the first academic year (2023-24)	Good EQA reports from NCFE and ATHE and attained ASIC Accreditation. ATHE Level 4 attained 100% completion and progression.

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2.	Widen university level access to people from under-represented and disadvantaged communities	2.1. In addition to OfS registration, establish a franchise or service level agreement with at least one university or college partner for the delivery of undergraduate degree programmes in Business, or BTEC Pearson HNDs in Business.	Sep 2024	<p>2.1.1. Attain Pearson approval to deliver HND in Business by April 2024</p> <p>2.1.2. Establish a university partner to deliver BA (Hons) degree in Business by Sep 2024</p> <p>2.1.3. Recruit students from underrepresented groups including people living in areas of high deprivation (IMD Deciles 1 & 2) and in areas of low participation (POLAR4, TUNRA MSOA/LSOA and Adult HE 2011)</p>	<p>Approval attained (2024) for Pearson HND in Business (Entrepreneurship Small Business Management).</p> <p>Attain university partner once TEC attains OfS registration.</p> <p>By Sep 2027, increase recruitment for the following groups:¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IMD Deciles 1 & 2 from 51% to 55% - TUNDRA MSOA Quintiles 1 & 2 from 36% to 40% and from TUNDRA LSOA Quintiles 1 & 2 from 29% to 35% - Adults HE 2011 from 61% to 65%. - White-British from 14% to 20%, Black from 1% to 5%, Asian from 6% to 10%, Arab from 3% to 10% - Females from 41% to 45% - Ages 18-21 from 31% to 35%

¹ See the Access and Participation Statement 2024-2028-(March 2026) for the benchmarks on students from areas of participation and demographics.

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2	Widen university level access to people from under-represented and disadvantaged communities	<p>2.2. Between 2024 and 2028, TEC will recruit 2,325 students to Entry Level and Further Education courses and 3,701 students to Higher Education courses. Recruitment for all programmes will take place across all TEC Study Centres.</p> <p>Based on the current profile of students enrolled on TEC’s English and Further Education courses, a large proportion of students progressing into Higher Education are expected to come from under-represented groups in low-participation areas. These groups include students from Black and Asian communities, White students who have missed out on further or higher education, unemployed adults, and mature students on low incomes.</p>	Sep 2027	<p>2.2.1. Hold one open day in each Study Centre prior to every intake, to promote courses and widen participation.</p> <p>2.2.2. Provide qualified support and some reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities and learning needs, such as dyslexia and dyspraxia</p> <p>2.2.3. Recruitment of people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties to a minimum 5% of the overall student population.</p>	677 English Functional Skills students recruited (2025) 16 ATHE L4 and 11 ATHE L5 students recruited. 7% of students declared disabilities.

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3.	Give people the opportunity to develop the employability skills they need for gainful employment and career success	3.1. Provide employability workshops for students, continue to develop the thriving Employer's Forum (TEC has been running these for the past four years). and set up a micro-business and SME business incubation hub.	Sep 2025	3.1.1. One employability workshop per month 3.1.2. One Employer's Forum per term or 3 per annum 3.1.3. Attendance at workshops at minimum 60% of targeted student population. 3.1.4. SME business incubation hub supports three new SMEs by Sep 2027.	Monthly employability workshops provided for ATEH Level 4/5 students with average attendance of 85% (2025).
		3.2. Run conferences where local employers can provide students with opportunities for work placements.	Sep 2026	3.2.1. Hold a minimum of one conference or other public event per annum.	Until OfS registration TEC cannot recruit enough HE students to run an effective Employer's Forum (2027)

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4.	Enhance learning through the ongoing development and improvement of the TEC holistic approach to education	4.1. Develop a holistic work-based approach to learning, teaching and assessment that incorporates a vibrant Social Programme, as well as individually tutored Personal and Professional Development Plans (PPDs) that integrate personal, social and emotional development alongside academic achievement.	Sep 2024	4.1.1. CPD training to include the TEC approach to differentiated holistic work-based learning and teaching 4.1.2. All students to have a Personal Tutor 4.1.3. All students to complete a Personal and Professional Development Plan (PPD) 4.1.4. tracking individual student progress	Workshop on TEC's holistic teaching approach provided to all teachers (30-01-2026) and monitored through 8 hours of lesson observations
		4.2. Membership of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) for TEC and its faculty, including Advance Higher Education Fellowship and The Matrix Standard for high-quality IAG, 4.3. which enables "people to reach their full potential" (Matrix, 2023).	Sep 2025	4.1.5. Apply for Matrix standard for IAG by April 2024. 4.1.6. Most staff (70%) to have an NCFE IAG qualification 4.1.7. Most Lecturers (70%) to apply for Advance High Education Fellowship by Sep 2025	Matrix standard application postponed until we hope to have OfS registration (Sep 2026) NCFE IAG qualification pending (May 2026) Advance HE Fellowship training for three lecturers (11-12-2025)

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4.	Enhance learning through the ongoing development and improvement of the TEC holistic approach to education	4.4. Ensure an appropriate number of academic staff are recruited and retained to ensure students receive adequate individual academic support at all times.	Dec 2024	4.4.1. An overall ratio of 30:1 student to academic staff (SSR) includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 90:1 Students to Student Support Officers (Academic) - 30:1 Students to Lecturers and Academic Support Staff 	Academic staff SSR 16:1 (2024- 2026)

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5.	Develop the quality and international recognition of our English language courses to meet the needs of local and international students aiming to improve their life chances	5.1. Enhance the quality of English language provision and resources and attain British Council Accreditation	June 2026	<p>5.1.1. Complete British Council Accreditation UK inspection in March 2026 and receive accreditation decision in May 2026</p> <p>5.1.2. Conduct annual internal ELT audits to ensure continuous improvement and enhancement of English language courses</p> <p>5.1.3. Ensure three English language teachers have TEFLQ by May 2026 and the Programme Leaders starts a DELTA course funded by TEC by July 2026</p>	<p>British Council Accreditation Stage Three completed with outcome report expected on 13-05-2026.</p> <p>One DoS has TEFLQ, Programme Leader has applied for DELTA, and two English language teachers have TEFLQ. One more teacher to receive 4 hours of lesson observations for TEFLQ status (30-04-26)</p>

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5.	Develop the quality and international recognition of our English language courses to meet the needs of local and international students aiming to improve their life chances	5.2. Expand and enhance English language pathways to support progression	June 2026	5.2.1. Deliver ESOL Entry 1–Level 2 and Functional Skills English Level 1–2 across additional locations in Nottingham and London. 5.2.2. Deliver IELTS Preparation courses and English for Academic Purposes courses to 300 local and 100 international students 5.2.3. Minimum 85% retention and 75% achievement across English language courses with clear progression into higher education or employment	All pending

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5.	Develop the quality and international recognition of our English language courses to meet the needs of local and international students aiming to improve their life chances	5.3. Recruit and provide full service and experience for international students aiming to come and study English in the UK	Aug 2026	<p>5.3.1. Produce materials and information for international students, including an International Student Handbook in English and translated versions, by August 2026</p> <p>5.3.2. Establish an international student support team by Dec 2026</p> <p>5.3.3. Establish and publicise a range of accommodation options in Nottingham that meet all British Council requirements by August 2026</p> <p>5.3.4. Develop a comprehensive student leisure programme run by a dedicated Student Social Programme Coordinator for local and international students</p> <p>5.3.5. Recruit international students particularly from Middle Eastern countries: minimum 50 in 2026, 100 in 2027 and 150 in 2028</p> <p>5.3.6. Minimum 90% satisfaction in international student feedback</p>	Draft materials for international students prepared and ready for Academic Board approval (Apr 2026).

References

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