



>lsc

Leading learning and skills

**Invitation for  
Applications  
to deliver  
Further  
Education In  
the town of  
Reading**

**Statement of Need,  
application process  
and criteria**

## INVITATION FOR APPLICATIONS TO DELIVER FURTHER EDUCATION PROVISION IN THE TOWN OF READING

### 1. Foreword from Bob Walding

We are inviting applications to take over significant delivery of Further Education (FE) provision in Reading. Thames Valley University (TVU), who currently provides a wide range of FE courses in the town, is looking to divest it's FE provision to focus on Higher Education from August 2010, it is therefore working with the LSC to hand over the FE element and the supporting estate to another provider.

Reading is a vibrant and economically important town, recognised as one of nine Diamonds for Investment and Growth areas within the South East region with potential for significant contribution to economic growth. This invitation provides a unique opportunity for an innovative and forward looking provider to take on the development of FE for the community of Reading and beyond. In doing so the successful applicant will need to demonstrate a range of characteristics as set out in the selection criteria.

We look forward the receiving your application.



**Bob Walding**

Area Director – Learning and Skills Council Thames Valley

October 2009

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## **1.1 Background**

Following the inspection of Thames Valley University's (TVU) Further Education (FE) provision in November 2008, and in consultation with TVU, the Learning and Skills Council (the LSC) commissioned KPMG to carry out a Strategic Options review of the FE learning and skills provision delivered by TVU. The aim was to work with TVU to identify the best model for the future delivery of FE provision in Reading. The Board of TVU have since taken an in principle decision to divest itself of FE provision in Reading from the start of the 2010/11 academic year.

The LSC is inviting applications from provider(s) to deliver the FE provision currently provided by TVU.

This document outlines:

- **The LSC vision**
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## 1.2 The LSC Vision

The LSC wishes to ensure the continuity of the post-16 FE provision in Reading in order to give all learners and employers access to a wide range of high quality local learning opportunities. The provision must deliver high quality provision within ever tightening budgets and represent good value for money.

The successful applicant will need to demonstrate how the provision will become an integral part of the education and skills infrastructure in the Reading area, offering a wide choice of innovative, high quality, and sustainable provision for learners, employers and the local community.

The proposal must demonstrate how the provider will:

1. Be responsiveness to the local business community and be prepared to expand into other occupational areas as new needs emerge
2. Offer a balance between general and vocational learning
3. Develop and sustain effective collaborative provision with schools, colleges other training providers in the area
4. Raise learner achievement and attainment levels
5. Engage with young people that are not in education, employment or training, (NEET) and deliver innovative learning, particularly engaging teenage parents, young offenders, young people leaving care and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
6. Develop progression pathways into FE and from FE to further learning opportunities, including Higher Education
7. Meet the needs of employers for flexible delivery
8. Deliver immediate and continuous improvement in the quality of provision.

## 2. LSC Targets and Ambitions

The LSC nationally is responsible for meeting the targets outlined in the LSC Statement of Priorities, November 2008.

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/aboutus/lscstrategy/statementofpriorities/>

For young people the targets are:

- By 2010/11
  - 82% of young people achieve level 2 by the age of 19
  - 54% of young people achieve level 3 by the age of 19
- To narrow the gap in educational achievement between children from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers
- Increase participation by young people (17 year olds) to 86% by 2010/11
- Reduce the inequality gap in attainment at levels 2 and 3
- Reduce the proportion of young people NEET by two percentage points by 2010

For adults the targets are:

- 597,000 people of working age to achieve a first level 1 or above literacy qualification and 390,000 to achieve a first entry level 3 or above numeracy qualification.
- 79% of working age adults are qualified to at least full level 2 qualification and 56% to at least full level 3
- 130,000 apprentices to complete the full apprenticeship framework in 2010/11

Against these national targets, the Reading Local Strategic Partnership has set its own targets for young people and adults which include:

- NEET target
  - 2009/10      6.7%
  - 2010/11      5.8%
- Level 2 achievement by age 19
  - 2009/10      78%
  - 2010/11      80%
- Working age population qualified to at least level 2
  - 2009/10      74.2%
  - 2010/11      76.2%
- Working age population qualified to level 4 or higher
  - 2009/10      78%
  - 2010/11      80%
- Skills gap in current workforce reported by employers
  - 2009/10      14%
  - 2010/11      13%

### **3. Reading in Context**

#### **3.1 Demographic Summary**

Situated 41 miles due west of London, the town of Reading is central within the Royal County of Berkshire (the six unitary authority areas of Bracknell Forest Borough, Reading Borough, Slough Borough, West Berkshire District, Wokingham District and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead). The authority is strategically well placed, with both good transport links and within good proximity to London and Heathrow.

Reading covers a mostly urban area of 15.6 square miles and has a population of just fewer than 150,000 across 15 wards. The town has changed rapidly over the last 10 years, as the previous manufacturing base has increasingly been replaced by financial services and a broader service economy.

Social disadvantage and poverty are broadly average. The borough was ranked 151<sup>st</sup> out of 354 authorities on the Government's 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation. Additionally, 6 of the 10 most deprived wards in Berkshire are found in Reading.

ONS sub-national projections indicate that the population will remain stable to 2015. However, the population of children is forecast to reduce by 2015, with a fall in the 16 to 18 age group also projected by 2015.

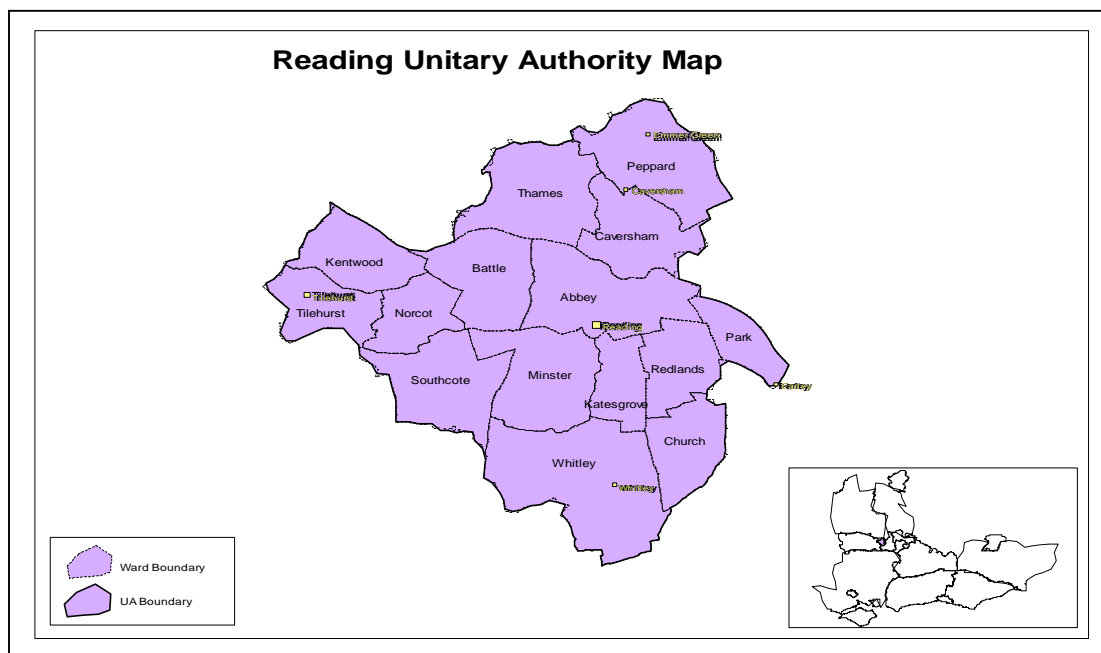
The proportion of the population with Black and minority ethnic backgrounds is above average (13% compared to 10% nationally). The Pakistani community (3%) is the largest group. Around 18% of the population is aged under-16, in line with the national average. Over the last three years, an influx of families from Eastern Europe, particularly from Poland, has contributed to a 30% increase in learners with a non-British background.

67.5% of the population are of working age, above both the South East and national averages and the qualifications of the working age population are also above at levels 3 and 4, but below at level 2. Although it ranks 12<sup>th</sup> in the South East for the proportion of people educated to degree level, an above regional average percentage of Reading residents has few or no qualifications.

The South East Regional Economic Strategy 2006–2016 (SEEDA October 2006) identifies Reading as one of eight 'Diamond' areas which are the major concentrations with growth potential in the South East.

Reading has had significant investment in housing and business with re-development of the town centre and rail services planned for the near future.

Reading UK Community Interest Company's Local Economy Group (LEG) is charged with overseeing the delivery of Reading's economic Local Area Agreement targets and has identified skills at level 2 and level 4 as the key priorities in maintaining the success of the local economy. Recent research identified poor take-up of LSC funded training provision and thus a step change in the way skills activity is co-ordinated and delivered is needed.



### 3.2 Education

At 71%, attainment of level 2 by 19 for Reading residents is below the England average of 76.7% (South East average 79.6%). At 53%, attainment of level 3 by 19 is above the England average of 49.8% (South East average 56.9%)

2009 School Sixth Form Level 3 QCA point scores per student (817.6) and examination entry (279.8) are considerably above 2008 England averages of 740 and 209.4 respectively, however, performance of individual sixth forms vary significantly.

On average, 54% of Reading learners achieve 5 GCSEs A\*-C including English and Maths at Key Stage 4 (2009) against a 2008 England average of 47.6%.

The proportion of 16-18 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) has increased in the last year and at 8.6% (November 2008 – January 2009) is above both the South East average of 5.7% and the England average of 6.8%. This represents over 350 available NEET young people resident in Reading.

Between November 2008 and January 2009 there were on average 118 young women aged between 16 and 19 who were teenage parents. Of these, 67 were NEET. In the same three months 61 Reading residents of post compulsory education age were in care and a further 35 leaving care. Of these 96 young people, 23 were NEET.

A survey carried out in March 2009 of Reading residents aged between 12 and 16 showed that there was an average of 88 young people per year with statements of special educational need. Of these, 23% have moderate learning difficulties, 23% have Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties, 17% have

autistic spectrum disorder, 10% have speech and language communication difficulties, 9% have specific learning difficulties, 7% have physical disabilities, 6% have severe learning difficulties, 4% visual impairment, 1% profound and multiple learning difficulties and 1% have a hearing impairment. We have estimated there is a need for additional LLDD places for students on the autistic spectrum, students with severe learning difficulties and students with profound and multiple learning difficulties of 12 places per year rising to 15 places per year in 5 years time.

### **3.3 Pre-16**

Pre-16 education in Reading is provided at 56 early years settings (five nursery schools, 31 day-care centres and 20 pre-schools); six children's centres; 37 primary schools; seven secondary schools (including one academy); three special schools; and one pupil referral unit.

There are an additional six independent schools (of which five offer post-16 provision).

### **3.4 16-18 School Sixth Forms**

There are seven schools with sixth forms in Reading, including two selective grammar schools and an Academy. In 2008/09 there were 1,035 school sixth form learners, a 2.2% increase on the previous year.

The provision within schools sixth forms in Reading is dominated by A level courses, accounting for 83% of all delivery.

Cross borough travel to learn is common with almost 500 16-18 Reading residents attending a school sixth form in a neighbouring Berkshire authority.

Of school sixth form pupils, the 53% of the learners are female and 47% male. 5% of learners have self declared learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### **3.5 16-18 Further Education**

In 2007/08 there were 1,413 LSC funded 16-18 FE learners resident in Reading, an increase of 1.4% on the previous year. Of these, 947 (67%) were enrolled at Thames Valley University. The second largest provider of FE to Reading residents was The Henley College in South Oxfordshire with 270 learners (19.1%). The remainder were dispersed amongst eight other providers across Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Hampshire.

Of these learners 51% were female and 49% male. 17% had self declared learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

50% of Reading FE learners have prior attainment at level 2 or above with 25% below level 2.

### **3.6 16-18 Apprenticeships**

In 2007/08 209 Reading residents started an Apprenticeship programme, a decrease of 8.7% on the previous year.

62% of delivery was at level 2. Overall Framework success was at 70%

A third of this provision was delivered by TVU and Chiltern Training (Childcare specialist) based in Reading, with the rest taking place across national or regional providers operating in the Thames Valley area.

The local authority 14-19 plan states that increasing Apprenticeship opportunities and take up is a high priority.

### **3.7 19-24 Apprenticeships**

In 2007/08 230 Reading residents started an Apprenticeship programme, equally split across level 2 and 3. Overall Framework success was at 74%.

### **3.8 25+ Apprenticeships**

In 2007/08 89 Reading residents started an Apprenticeship programme, equally split across level 2 and 3. Framework success data is currently unavailable.

### **3.9 16-18 e2e**

In 2007/08 139 Reading residents were engaged in e2e programmes. 50% of leavers progressed into a positive destination.

Following additional commissioning in 2008/09 there are currently five e2e providers delivering within Reading, working collaboratively to engage 220 NEET young people.

In addition, Reading based e2e providers attract learners from Oxfordshire, West Berkshire, Bracknell Forest, Slough and Wokingham.

### **3.10 Adult Further Education**

Over 4,000 adult Reading residents were engaged in FE programmes in 2006/07. In addition, 5,000 learners were engaged in Personal, Community Development Learning and ESF programmes. In line with funding changes, these figures would have reduced by around 35% for 2009/10.

Approximately 70% of adult FE was delivered by Reading based providers with TVU delivering 54% and New Directions (Reading Borough Council) delivering 16%, covering literacy, numeracy, Level 1, ESOL and IT.

### **3.11 Train to Gain**

In 2008/09, 1,224 employed Reading residents started on Train to Gain learning aims across 82 providers. 11% of these were provided by Thames Valley University. 66% of delivery was funded through the Thames Valley LSC.

34% of overall delivery was first level 2, 19% first level 3, 16% Basic Skills and 16% repeat level 2.

In addition, 1,453 learners with employers *based* in Reading were engaged on Train to Gain learning aims. Reading based providers delivered only 15% of these.

## **4. Thames Valley University**

### **4.1 Summary**

Thames Valley University (TVU) became a university in 1992 after Ealing College of Higher Education merged with Slough Technical College, Queen Charlotte's College of Health Care Studies and the London College of Music. TVU further merged with Reading College and School of Arts & Design in 2004.

TVU operates across sites in the boroughs of Ealing and Brentford and the unitary authority areas of Slough and Reading currently delivering to around 10,000 LSC funded learners. The main locus of FE delivery is in Reading. The Slough campus is scheduled for closure in 2010. A small amount of FE is delivered in Ealing and this will continue to be operated through TVU.

TVU's sites in Reading are located to the east side of the town in a prime location on major bus routes with good rail and road access. TVU's Reading campus is accessed by learners from Reading, Wokingham, West Berkshire, South Oxfordshire and surrounding areas.

The Reading Kings Road site predominantly delivers 14-19 FE provision and Arts and Technology courses with the Crescent Road site delivering adult FE, Higher Education and professional provision. The intention is to concentrate FE delivery upon the Kings Road site. All Higher Education will continue to be owned and managed by TVU and mainly delivered on the Crescent Road site.

TVU currently comprises three HE Faculties:

- the Faculty of the Arts
- the Faculty of Professional Studies
- the Faculty of Health and Human Sciences

HE in Reading is operated as a separate business unit.

FE in Reading is run as a separate business unit, comprising the departments of:

- 14-19 Academy;
- Business Leisure and Commercial Services;
- Creative Arts and Technology;
- Learning Skills

The Academy offers a wide range of subjects at GCSE and AS/A2 levels, plus a range of alternative qualifications not offered in local school sixth forms. The Academy also delivers a successful 14-16 foundation programme, e2e and post-16 delivery of all the first five diploma lines.

The LLDD (Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities) department was recognised in 2009 with a highly commended Beacon Award.

The FE operation is supported by locally based staff who provide Estates; Learning and Information Services; Student Services; Marketing; Registry; Quality and Performance Services. There is a locally based senior management team, recently enhanced by an Acting Principal who is one of the Deputy Vice chancellors at TVU. His role is to oversee the divestment process for the University but will not be part of the transferred undertaking. Finance, HR, Legal and other specialist management support services are provided centrally from TVU's main site in Ealing.

## **4.2 HE Delivered by TVU in Reading**

The divestment plan does not include the HE courses delivered by TVU in Reading. These will continue to be operated by TVU and are focussed predominantly on the needs of local learners, with planned progression routes from FE. The range of provision encompasses Health (mainly a large NHS contract); Technology (Construction and Engineering programmes); Art (Photography and a range of Fine Art and Design programmes) Business (Foundation degree and professional courses) and Education (PGCE PCET).

A number of courses, particularly those in Art and in Technology, share use of specialist laboratory and studio facilities with FE on the Kings Road site. There will need to be a time- limited agreement with the successful partner over the continued access to these specialist facilities. Other HE programmes are delivered from the Crescent Road site, which TVU intends to maintain as its main HE base in Reading.

TVU will also wish to discuss with the successful organisation potential arrangements for the provision of a range of non- academic support services, in a mutually beneficial and cost effective manner. It will also be prepared to discuss potential sharing of accommodation facilities, and to forge a strong progression alliance to facilitate progression from FE (Level 3) to HE programmes.

## **4.3 TVU Estate in Reading**

TVU delivers FE provision from two main sites in Reading.

### **4.3.1 Kings Road Campus (Freehold – to be transferred)**

The Kings Road campus consists of a main building (built 1955) which subsequently was added to over the ensuing years, the latest development being a new link block reception and art facilities constructed in 2001. In addition, on the site there are two stand-alone art blocks, one constructed in 1900 and the second in 1977. The total Kings Road estate occupies an area of nearly 26,000 square metres, on a three and half hectare site, which also facilitates 250 parking spaces. There is considerable potential for property development on part of the car park that could realise significant capital receipts.

### **4.3.2 Hanover House 4<sup>th</sup> Floor (Leasehold (until 2012) - to be transferred)**

This building was constructed in Kings Road in the 1980s with the fourth floor occupied by TVU. The University leases a total 650 (gross) square metres and the lease also includes the use of 10 parking spaces.

#### **4.3.3 Wokingham Gas Centre (Leasehold (until 2012) - to be transferred)**

This is located on a business park in Wokingham where the University undertakes specialist gas and energy training. The building was constructed in 1990 and was originally occupied by Reading College as a Digital Media Centre before the University's decision in 2007 to change the building usage to accommodate a Gas and Energy Centre. This is a typical warehouse unit with a mezzanine first floor office accommodation to the front of the building and offers a total area of 270 square metres in addition to parking for 12 cars.

#### **4.3.4 Reading Warehouse (Leasehold (flexible) - to be transferred)**

This building is located in Britten Road, Reading and was constructed in the 1980s as a typical warehouse unit on a small business park. The College occupied the building from 2004. It is used for the storage of equipment, furniture, marketing materials and archives. The building offers a total area of 279 square metres and provides parking for five vehicles.

#### **4.3.5 Hamilton Road (Leasehold (until 2011) - to be transferred)**

This building is owned by Reading Borough Council. The University leases (short term lease) six rooms on the first floor, with a total area of 320 square metres, to train e2e students. The building is located to the north of the University's Crescent Road site and abuts a playing field which is jointly owned between Reading Borough Council and the University.

#### **4.3.6 Crescent Road Campus (Freehold – *not* to be transferred)**

The Crescent Road campus was constructed in the late 1950s as a boys' school before being occupied by the then Reading College in 1970. The main building is of a single storey construction and includes a number of specialist teaching areas including a Sports Hall. There are two further elements of the building one which has a first floor and the other two floor levels. In addition, there is a stand-alone Victorian Youth Theatre on the site although this building is in a particularly poor state of repair. The total Crescent Road estate occupies an area of nearly 8,000 square metres on a substantial site and a jointly owned playing field with Reading Borough Council and site parking for over 300 vehicles.

#### **4.3.7 HE Hall of Residence Kings Road (Freehold – *not* to be transferred)**

There is a small hall of residence adjacent to the Kings Road campus which is used primarily by HE students. This property will not be part of the transfer.

**4.4** *It is intended that TVU will retain Crescent Road, for its HE provision, and the student residential accommodation block. Transitional arrangements will be made to assure continued access (for an agreed period of time) to provision of*

*specialist FE Hair, Catering and Sport facilities which are currently located in one wing of the Crescent Road site, through an agreement with the successful organisation for the sharing of running costs.*

*Reading Borough Council is willing to consider an investment of capital funding into the FE provision in Reading that it has reserved for the development of vocational provision. This would be invested on the basis that the provider was able through the investment to extend the reach of vocational provision at 16-19 to raise participation levels of Reading students who are currently or potentially NEET. It cannot be used to replace or refurbish existing provision.*

## **4.5 Specialist resources at the two sites**

### **4.5.1 Art, Design and Performing Arts Studios and Workshops**

The Kings Road site offers specialist art and design studios as well as purpose-built workshops for jewellery, metal and woodwork, ceramics, sculpture, three dimensional modelling and silkscreen and textile printing.

The performing arts workshops feature facilities for acting and theatre production and include a professional dance studio and performance space.

Within the fashion studios there are specialist areas for knitting, sewing and pattern cutting which are fitted out to industry standards.

### **4.5.2 Blast 1386 Radio Station**

The Reading campus has its own radio station. Open studio sessions allow students the opportunity to look round the studio, find out about radio broadcasting, ask questions and display their talents for the chance of their own show.

### **4.5.3 Digital Media Centre**

The long-established facilities for Media programmes on the Reading campus provide large photographic and moving image studios, Apple Mac digital manipulation computer suites together with traditional darkroom facilities, and an extensive equipment store offering a broad range of professional camera and lighting equipment supporting both specialist and general Arts-related programmes.

Media programmes are recognised by the industry for the quality of provision. Industry representatives work with the University to ensure the curriculum content is relevant as well as offering technical support and advice.

### **4.5.4 Food Court**

Hot and cold food is available during the day and early evening from the food courts at both Kings Road and Crescent Road and vending machines are sited around both campuses.

### **4.5.5 Information Technology Resources (IT)**

Internet and e-mail facilities are available and free to all enrolled students with over 500 PCs across the IT Suites at Kings Road and Crescent Road. Informal on-campus cyber cafés also provide open access to computers. Every classroom has a dedicated PC and ceiling-mounted digital projector. There are also specialist IT laboratories to support the technical computer science curriculum.

#### **4.5.6 Libraries**

There are libraries at both Kings Road and Crescent Road in Reading. These provide access to the services, facilities and information resources needed for learning. In addition to books, newspapers, magazines and CDs, videos and DVDs, the libraries offer study space for individual or small group work and access to computer facilities including e-mail, online databases and other electronic resources. A computer booking system enables learners to reserve a computer in the library up to seven days in advance. Scanning, printing and photocopying facilities are also available.

Library Services staff assist with information search – whether it is on the internet, in journals, or in one of the 64,000 books in stock. They offer support and training in the use of databases and electronic resources, as well as help with referencing and avoiding plagiarism. All registered students are entitled to borrow and there is usually at least one copy of each recommended course text in stock, often more. Literacy, Numeracy and Study Support is also on hand at the libraries.

#### **4.5.7 Little Owl and Tawny Nurseries**

Students on childcare courses get hands-on experience through work placements in either the Little Owl Nursery at Kings Road or the Tawny Nursery at Crescent Road. Both nurseries have an extensive range of facilities and equipment and have recently achieved high accolades including the Reading Quality Kite Mark and a good Ofsted report. For more information visit [www.tvu.ac.uk/nurseries](http://www.tvu.ac.uk/nurseries)

#### **4.5.8 Music Technology Centre and Studios**

At Kings Road there is a wide variety of specialist Music Technology facilities, including three ProTools IE-equipped recording studios, over 40 computer music workstations and a suite of Mac-based ProTools editing stations. In addition to this, the site also has two larger recording studios with full ProTools HD recording systems. Studio 1 features a large-format analogue console and an array of outboard processors whilst Studio 3 has a Sony production console and full surround-sound mixing capabilities. There are also a number of soundproof practice booths and a live performance space with a full PA system.

#### **4.5.9 Sixth Form Academy**

The Sixth Form Academy is a dedicated learning centre for AS, A Level and GCSE study based at the Kings Road site. All staff teaching in the Sixth Form Academy are subject specialists, many of whom have examining experience as well. The team supports students with coursework and prepares them for public

examinations. All students applying to university within the Academy benefit from UCAS support from their Specialist Personal Tutor. Many of the subjects are taught in subject-specific based rooms or science laboratories. Students studying Fine Art, Graphics, Textiles or Photography benefit from the use of specialist art-related facilities.

#### **4.5.10 Technology Centre and Construction Training**

The Technology Centre at Kings Road offers students a thorough hands-on experience in professional working environments. Fully-equipped facilities and laboratories exist for electrical, electronic, mechanical and telecommunications engineering.

There are several well-equipped construction workshops which offer specialist facilities in bricklaying and building services, plastering, plumbing, gas installation, heating and ventilation, painting and decorating, wall and floor tiling and wood trades. There are also four motor vehicle workshops – two mechanical, one motorcycle and one body shop.

The Gas & Energy Centre in Wokingham offers specialist gas, water, electrical and energy training courses and assessments for industry practitioners. The Centre is BPEC approved and is staffed by fully-qualified training and assessment professionals offering advice and support. For further information visit [www.tvu.ac.uk/gas](http://www.tvu.ac.uk/gas)

#### **4.5.11 Sports Facilities**

Students have the use of a large sports hall at the Crescent Road site with a recently refurbished sprung floor and containing a full sized basketball court, cricket nets and facilities for volleyball, badminton, table tennis and indoor football

In addition, there is a fitness testing suite with several large pieces of fitness testing equipment including two treadmills, exercise bikes and rowing machines and a computer with specialised fitness testing software.

The sports field at the rear of the building includes a full-sized football pitch and additional space for other outdoor sports and activities

#### **4.5.12 Crescent Road -Reflections Hair and Therapy Salons**

Well-equipped hairdressing and therapy salons at Crescent Road offer a wide range of professional hair, beauty and therapy services to the general public and act as training salons for hairdressing and therapy students. The salons and treatment areas are fully fitted with the latest equipment; students use professional products and are supervised by qualified, specialist staff.

#### **4.5.13 Crescent Road- Training Restaurant, Bar and Training Kitchens**

Catering and Hospitality students work in fully functional training kitchens and get hands-on experience in a recently refurbished Crescent Restaurant, Bar and Conference Rooms. The restaurant offers a selection of light snacks, main meals, 'chef's specials' and dishes from around the world.

The bar and restaurant are open to the public at lunchtimes (Monday to Friday) during term time.

#### **4.6 Staffing**

Currently 491 FTE staff are employed by TVU to deliver FE provision. This comprises (Management, Academic and Support categories):

- 14-19 Academy: 7.5 Management ; 68.4 FTE Academic; 10.85 FTE Support
- Business, Leisure and Commercial: 4 FTE Management; 55.52 FTE Academic; 22.2 FTE Support
- FE Creative Arts: 3 FTE Management; 35.4 Academic; 11.6 FTE Support
- FE Technology: 3 FTE Management; 43.4 FTE Academic; 13.5 FTE Support
- FE Directorate: 12 FTE Management; 24.8 FTE Support
- Learning Skills: 3 FTE Management; 22.3 Academic; 11.68 Support
- Nurseries: 13.2 FTE Support
- Estates: 24 FTE Support
- Finance: 2 FTE
- Health & Safety: 1 FTE
- Learning & Information Services: 25 FTE
- Marketing: 2 FTE
- Student Services: 3.3 FTE

In addition to the above there are around 180 hourly paid lecturers currently employed by TVU to deliver FE.

It is envisaged that all staff will transfer under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) to the organisation successful in the application to deliver the FE provision divested by TVU.

#### **4.7 Curriculum**

In 2008/09 TVU is offering a range of NVQs, AS and A2s, GCSEs, BTECs, National Diplomas and Diplomas in:

- art and design
- building studies
- care and childcare
- computing and IT
- construction
- engineering
- hairdressing and beauty
- health and safety
- holistic therapies
- languages

- music and media
- motor vehicle
- professional qualifications
- teaching
- tourism, catering and leisure
- law
- psychology
- science
- sports

#### **4.8 Inspection**

Reading College and School of Arts and Design had a poor inspection in 2003, with Leadership and Management as well as six curriculum areas graded unsatisfactory. Thames Valley University was inspected in 2004 following the merger. This inspection dealt solely with the FE provision which was offered by the University prior to the merger, and did not include the provision offered by the former Reading College. At this inspection, no areas were graded unsatisfactory.

A re-inspection of the unsatisfactory provision identified in the 2003 Reading College inspection took place in 2005. All curriculum areas re-inspected were graded satisfactory.

The FE provision at TVU was most recently inspected in November 2008. At the time of the 2008 inspection, Thames Valley University was under a Notice to Improve (NTI) based on 2006/07 success rate data (19.2% for long provision and 42.3% for short provision). The NTI was lifted in April 2009 following significant improvements in 2007/08 success rates.

The 2008 inspection resulted in an overall effectiveness judgement of inadequate. Achievement and standards, and management and leadership were graded inadequate and capacity to improve and the quality of education and training were judged satisfactory. Of the eight curriculum areas inspected, one was good, five were satisfactory and two were inadequate (visual arts and business administration and law).

#### **Key strengths**

- very productive employer, community and school links
- wide range of provision, offering choice and progression
- highly inclusive environment.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- low success rates on many courses
- too much mediocre teaching that fails to motivate and engage students

- slow pace of improvement, exacerbated by complex line management arrangements.

Prior to inspection, discussions had been held between the local LSC and the University about the NTI and the educational standards. The root problem was seen to be the delivery of FE through four University faculties plus a 14-19 academy. Commitment to change these management arrangements underpinned Ofsted's capacity to improve judgement.

In January 2009, following approval by the Universities board of governors, the University implemented a 'new FE settlement' in order to create a single FE entity within the University with a single senior management team, quality assurance arrangements and a ring-fenced budget.

Following inspection and the subsequent notification of an NTI, a programme of support was implemented by the LSC and LSIS. The support focussed on:

- Arts Media and Publishing
- Performing Arts
- Business, Management and Finance
- ICT
- Hairdressing
- Sixth Form Academy.

The recent (July 2009) LSC led case conference concluded that progress has been satisfactory and in some cases better than anticipated against the improvement plan.

Ofsted undertook a monitoring visit in June 2009. The visit focussed on four themes:

- Academic structure (Leadership and Management)
- Lesson observations
- Sixth Form Academy standards
- Visual Arts and Business

Whilst it was not possible to make further judgements on achievements and standards, it was judged by LSIS that the University had made reasonable progress and that strenuous effort to improve had been made to achieve this

The latest prognosis from the Reading FE Senior Management Team is that the 2008/09 outturn for improvements made in the year following the November inspection is an improvement in the percentage of good and outstanding lesson grades from 61% to 67% (on 306 moderated observations) and to raise success rates from 70% in 2007/08 to 76%.

In-year there has been a substantial curriculum review of intractable and persistently underperforming provision which has been discontinued and is not being offered in 2009/10. This discontinued provision amounts to a financial

value of approximately £600k and includes a range of A Levels, GCSEs, childcare, performing arts diploma, interior design qualifications, a range of professional qualifications and a range of finance qualifications.

The main targets for 2009/10 are to raise the percentage of good and outstanding lessons to 75% and to raise success rates to 83% and focus on higher targets for high grades. If the targets for 2008/09 and 2009/10 are secured TVU's success rates will be within 5% of the expected national average in 2008/09 and at or slightly above the expected national average by 2009/10. In the following two years the aim of the campus is to be excellent by 2011/12.

#### **4.9 Funding and SLNs**

LSC revenue funding for TVU for 2008/09 was £19.4 Million. The Reading FE provision comprised:

- **16-18 Learner Responsive** (excl Apprenticeships) £11,082,743
  - 3,453.73 SLN
  - 2,791 Learners
- **16-18 Apprenticeships** £680,864
  - 171.64 SLN
  - 182 Learners
- **Adult Learner Responsive** £5,367,141
  - 2,220.49 SLN
  - 5,036 Learners
- **Employer responsive** £1,161,548
  - 610.22 SLN (40.68 Fully Funded/569.54 Co-funded\*)
- **Adult Safeguarded Learning** £98,000
- **Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities** £263,210
  - 3,000 Learners (TVU lead body in Berkshire unitary authority partnership – where each unitary provides adult learning for these learners)
- **Additional Learning Support** £1,010,086
  - 16-18 (excl Apprenticeships) £353,120
  - 16-18 Apprenticeship £38,200
  - Adult Learner Responsive £604,533
  - Employer Responsive £14,233
- **Learner Support** £601,574

\*Co-funded Fee Income £1,187,648

#### **4.10 Partnership and collaboration**

The TVU FE team in Reading has developed strong relationships and collaborative partnerships with schools and other providers.

The University was lead partner in one of only 10 partnerships in the country to gain approval to deliver all five of the new diploma lines from 2008. Out of 566 post-16 applications, 243 started a diploma in September 2008.

The partnership consists of TVU, Reading, West Berkshire, Bracknell Forest and Wokingham local authorities and additional stakeholders such as the local Education Business Partnership.

The partnership also started delivery of two additional lines from September 2009 with an additional line planned from 2010.

TVU has also worked with two girls' schools in Reading, Kendrick Grammar and Reading Girls' School to develop their federation and to introduce vocational provision at Reading Girls' School (which is located in one of the most deprived areas in Reading). The partnership was successful in securing £5 million capital funding to support the development of a new vocational centre on the Reading Girls' School site, to open September 2009.

TVU is also active in Slough working with the local authority in the working groups under the Local Strategic Partnership. It also had a strong role to play in the Integrated Employment and Skills (IES) developments in Slough.

#### **4.11 Performance**

16-18 Long course success rates increased by 7% from 62% in 2005/06 to 69% in 2007/08. Short course success rates increased 4% from 82% to 86% in the same time frame.

19+ Long course success rates increased by 7% from 58% in 2005/06 to 65% in 2007/08. Short course success rates increased by 2% from 79% to 81%.

Success rates were, overall, 6% below national benchmarks. Equally, Long provision was also 6% below national benchmarks. However, success rates for all notional levels for both youth and adult increased on 2006/07, particularly for adult Level 1 and 2 delivery.

16-18 Apprentice Framework success rates in 2007/08 were 63.2% and 19+ were 72.7%.

The University has had 590 Train to Gain achievements in 2008/09.

The current University Minimum Levels of Performance (MLP) reports show that 13.9% of Long provision and 12.5% of Short provision were below the appropriate success rate threshold in 2007/08.

## 5. The Application Process

Applications should be in the form of a three year business plan and must address all of the following key points as a minimum:

- clarification of name/status of the organisation making the application OR the name/status of the lead organisation and any partners to the application, whether through formal/informal collaboration, federation or other innovative models
- a clear demonstration of understanding of the FE environment, detailing any experience and knowledge relevant to the proposal
- pen portraits of the organisation(s) making the application – to include details of relevant inspections, quality marks, success rates and other evidence to demonstrate quality, success and achievements
- clear aims and objectives for provision in Reading, including specific coverage and timed plans for:
  - targets for learner engagement
  - financial viability and sustainability
  - quality improvement plans, including learner outcomes/success
  - curriculum planning for the youth and adult market
  - meeting the needs of employers and communities
  - collaborative planning – building and developing on existing collaborative agreements e.g. Diploma provision and adult partnerships
  - estates planning
  - staffing – transfers, restructuring
  - stakeholder engagement – including local authority, other providers etc
- how the proposal will be delivered, key personnel, engagement with stakeholders
- outline financial forecasts for the newly managed provision
- identification of key risks and proposed mitigation
- evidence of track record of delivery and of financial stability.

### 5.1 Process

The process of receiving and considering applications will follow the timetable as set out below:

1. All applicants intending to submit a proposal must have registered their interest, in response to the advertisement, via e-mail to [hannah.wright@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:hannah.wright@lsc.gov.uk) prior to close of play on **Friday 30 October 2009**. This specification and access to the application webpage accompanies the acknowledgement of receipt of an expression of interest.
2. The LSC, supported by senior TVU staff, will hold an event in November to provide applicants with the opportunity to clarify any issues prior to application. All information presented will be published on the application webpage immediately following the event.

3. Interested parties must submit full application proposals by **Friday 27 November 2009**.
4. The LSC will establish a selection panel which includes representatives from the LSC and the local authority. They will review all applications and agree a shortlist.
5. Shortlisted applicants will then be invited to make a presentation to the key stakeholder panel in **December 2009**.
6. Further information will be made available to all shortlisted applicants on acceptance of the invitation to present to the key stakeholder panel as above.
7. The final decision will be made by the LSC at the end of **December 2009**. All applicants will be informed of the decision.
8. The decision will be subject to further negotiations with the successful applicant.

## **5.2 Criteria for review**

The selection and evaluation criteria are detailed in Annex 1, taken from *FE Colleges: Models for Success (DIUS August 2008)*.

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/furthereducation/uploads/documents/2008-08-08-OrgaisationalStructurePolicyFramework-distributionversion-v26-web-version.doc>

All applications will be reviewed against the key criteria outlined in the above publication. In addition, applicants should meet at least the following characteristics:

- Leadership and Management graded good or better (where applicable)
- Financial Health graded satisfactory or better (where applicable)
- Must not be subject to a Notice to Improve issued by the LSC.

## Annex 1 – Selection Criteria

Criterion	Coverage of assessment for criteria from DIUS publication	Evaluation – what are we looking for in your bid?
<p>1. The proposal is likely to address <b>the needs of learners and employers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of learner and employer need in the locality</li> <li>• Consideration of needs identified in local authority 14-19 plan overall and specifically</li> <li>• Diploma developments</li> <li>• School partnerships/vocational pathway developments</li> <li>• Consideration of relevant employer research/presence</li> <li>• Development of employer engagement</li> <li>• Site expansion</li> <li>• Programme development at different locations and different levels</li> <li>• HE strategy</li> <li>• OLASS</li> <li>• Relevant research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the proposal likely to align with the 14-19 plan for Reading, including collaboration to deliver e.g., Diplomas, provision to prevent/reduce young people from becoming NEET?</li> <li>• Does the proposal demonstrate understanding of the education and training levels required by employers in the Reading area</li> <li>• Does the proposal include any outline plans for future site development or new sites – would this reach new communities and with what programmes?</li> <li>• What are the outline plans for engagement, collaboration, development of HE provision – either with TVU and/or other HEIs</li> <li>• What is proposed for engagement with relevant local third sector organisations?</li> </ul>
<p>2. The proposal is likely to <b>increase opportunity for the learner to exercise choice</b> and encourage diversity in the education and training available</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear mapping of existing provision,</li> <li>• Evidence of impact of proposed changes elsewhere within FE or schools sector</li> <li>• Curriculum plans</li> <li>• Capital plans</li> <li>• Transport plans – Travel to Learn analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would the proposal complement and/or duplicate provision available in the locality?</li> <li>• Does the proposal offer a different style of delivery (in comparison to existing offer, for example within school sixth form/sixth form centre/GFE environment)</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the proposal offer a</li> <li>• Choice of attendance pattern? (full time/part-time/distance learning)</li> <li>• Does the proposal offer different programmes within similar subject areas? (academic and vocationally based options within programme areas)</li> <li>• Are there any identified issues with existing transport infrastructure/travel to learn? Would the proposal have any beneficial or detrimental impact on learner access and how would these be addressed?</li> </ul>
<p>3. The proposal is likely to <b>increase local participation rates and result in improved quality and success</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans to engage new and existing learners:</li> <li>• 16-18</li> <li>• Adults</li> <li>• Employers/T2G</li> <li>• Current inspection profiles</li> <li>• Any relevant area, local authority or themed inspection reports</li> <li>• Quality strategy post-merger (enrolments, quality of delivery, performance against minimum levels of performance, framework for excellence, success rates, progression routes, outcomes etc)</li> <li>• Achievement of standards:</li> <li>• Training Quality Standard</li> <li>• Beacons</li> <li>• Others</li> <li>• Major capital rebuild/relocation providing better quality facilities</li> <li>• Engagement/joint planning with Connexions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will the proposal bring new learners into the system?</li> <li>• What priority groups have been identified for the future development of the provision – how will their needs be met (curriculum plans, location of delivery plans etc)?</li> <li>• How does the proposal address weaknesses identified in the current TVU FE inspection report?</li> <li>• What is the outline quality strategy for this provision? What are the aims and ambitions for the provision?</li> <li>• How will you work with local community groups to support the engagement of new learners?</li> </ul>
<p>4. The proposal is likely to <b>develop innovation and improve access to</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group response separately in terms of 14-19, adults and employers</li> <li>• current offer – programme areas, levels, mode of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a clear definition of the community the provision will serve – and how does it relate to the</li> </ul>

<p><b>learning for the community</b></p>	<p>delivery etc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• changes post-merger</li> <li>• New and discontinued programme areas</li> <li>• New and discontinued locations of delivery</li> <li>• New and discontinued delivery partnerships</li> <li>• reshaping style of provision offer – creation or removal of sixth form centres or adult/community centres</li> <li>• capital developments supporting innovation</li> <li>• impact assessment of changes on other post-16 providers in the locality in terms of reduction/increase in choice, impact on recruitment, collaborative planning etc</li> </ul>	<p>community you currently serve?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a clear identification of areas within the community where participation is low, and an analysis of what is needed to upskill?</li> <li>• How will innovation be used in developing the provision?</li> <li>• Does the proposal consider the community impact for proposed changes to the provision?</li> <li>• Are there any plans for collaborative working, with other providers or voluntary/community groups, to support access to new provision?</li> <li>• What is the capital plan for the provision? Is this based on realistic assumptions?</li> <li>• Plans should not be detrimental to other post-16 providers. How will you link in with existing Reading/Berkshire collaborative networks and are any new opportunities identified?</li> </ul>
<p>5. The proposal ensures <b>the embedding of all aspects of equality and diversity</b></p>	<p>Full E&amp;D impact assessment (if identified by initial screening)</p> <p>Targets for priority groups demonstrating improved access to provision for under-represented or under-achieving groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities</li> <li>• young people (Raising of Participation Age/NEET)</li> <li>• adults without I2 or I3</li> <li>• Skills for Life</li> <li>• specific local issues?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you undertaken an equality and diversity impact assessment? Does it identify any differential or adverse impact on different groups of existing and potential learners? And on areas of the community?</li> <li>• What is the proposed impact on specific local issues?</li> <li>• What are your outline plans for engaging with the learner voice in planning the future of the provision?</li> <li>• Do you have any outline plans for</li> </ul>

		<p>programme delivery, which would increase accessibility of programmes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you identified any areas where the current programme offer could be improved in terms of equality and diversity?</li> </ul>
<p>6. The proposal is likely to <b>promote effective community cohesion</b> through community presence and representation within governance structures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access for deprived communities to improve participation</li> <li>• Local branding</li> <li>• Capital development</li> <li>• Provision targeting</li> <li>• Model B – how the governance structure will be amended to effectively represent the new communities it will serve</li> <li>• Model A – details of recruitment (appropriate search committee, criteria for selection, processes etc) to ensure appropriate representation of the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you consider your proposal targets under-represented groups?</li> <li>• Have you identified any immediate capital development needs – how might you address those?</li> <li>• What are your governance plans for the provision?</li> <li>• How would the voice of the community be effectively represented on both the governing body, and within governance structures?</li> <li>• What principles would underpin any marketing strategy?</li> </ul>
<p>7. The proposal is likely to <b>provide better value for money</b></p>	<p>Evaluation of affordability, cost effectiveness and viability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• economies/efficiencies of scale</li> <li>• current and forecasted financial health</li> <li>• capital developments bringing higher levels of cost-effectiveness</li> <li>• reduction of duplication</li> <li>• exceptional funding required to support the merger proposal</li> <li>• evaluation of financial Due Diligence report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will your proposal both improve and subsequently sustain good financial health?</li> <li>• What key issues have you identified for further investigation as you develop your proposal?</li> <li>• Are any key cost savings identified– are they realistic? Do they have any side-effects?</li> </ul>