



# FORWARD COLLEGE

Progress Report 2021—2024

December 2024

AWARDING BODY



ACADEMIC DIRECTION



# FOREWORDS

**Boris Walbaum**

*Founder & President*

This is the first progress report of Forward College. It accounts for our founding years, which have been a transformative journey for our team. Since our founding in 2020, we have secured recognition by the University of London, established three campuses across Europe, implemented innovative teaching approaches and leadership programmes, and built a thriving community of students and staff from over 30 countries. These milestones are a testament to the collective vision and dedication of our team.

However, success brings responsibility. As we continue to grow, we are committed to holding ourselves accountable to the highest standards of quality, transparency, and impact. Forward College was founded with the belief that higher education must evolve to meet the challenges of the 21st century—by fostering human intelligences, promoting interdisciplinary learning, and preparing students for a rapidly changing world.

This report highlights our progress, but it also reminds us of the work ahead. Our mission remains clear: to create an education that is not only excellent but also meaningful and transformative for our students and society. It is both a privilege and a responsibility to lead Forward College in this endeavor.

**Paul Leblanc,**

*Chairman of the Academic Council*

Dear Readers,

The Forward College Progress Report for 2021 to 2023 provides a detailed analysis of Forward College's first two years. It is matter-of-fact tone and use of data, professional and clear, almost masks that this is a remarkable document telling a remarkable story. Remarkable in what way?

Consider the audacity of starting a new post-secondary institution in the tumult of the early 21<sup>st</sup>-Century, when traditional higher education is facing unparalleled challenges in business models, a world changing far faster than institutions, questions of relevancy, and a new generation of learners who want something different for themselves and thus from their universities. While most would be cowed from the task, Forward College's leadership team saw opportunity amidst the chaos, possessed clarity of vision, and with courage and confidence, created one of the most exciting new providers in the post-secondary landscape.

Reading how much they then accomplished in just two years takes one's breath away. Three campuses in three countries, hiring a world class faculty and staff, developing curriculum, recruiting students, and getting to its first graduating class earlier this year.....well, as I said, remarkable.

What is also remarkable is the leadership team's unwavering commitment to accountability, transparency, and outcomes. This is a report that does not shy away from the mirror, that essentially says "This is what we said we would do," and then asks, "How did we do against our goals?" Most – almost all – of higher education resists this kind of accountability, often substituting lofty platitudes for actual goals and outcomes, and obscuring any shortcomings. If they measure at all. With its Progress Report, Forward College sets an industry standard for accountability and transparency, one that more venerable and established institutions come nowhere near. It offers the kind of rigor and integrity that will be necessary for rebuilding the trust of students, families, employers, and policy makers increasingly skeptical of higher education.

So dive in. The data are abundant and the analysis clear. But I urge you to also stand back and consider the audacity and remarkable achievement that is the Forward College story.

**Andrée Sursock,**

*Senior advisor, Sustainability and quality enhancement*

Forward College embedded internal quality mechanisms from the moment it was launched. A Quality Enhancement Committee was installed in the first year. The committee is responsible for developing tools to measure quality, to consider the results and propose a follow-up action plan, thus accompanying the development of Forward College. The first two mechanisms used included surveying the students twice a year and carrying out visits to the campus by the Senior Advisor, Sustainability and Quality Enhancement. These formal activities were associated with more informal ones such as frequent discussions with students or their representatives and an open-door policy that allowed students to speak to any staff member, including the most senior ones. This report reflects the outcome of these feedback mechanisms. Importantly, the results of these activities were considered by the staff and the Academic Council with the utmost attention. Recommendations were acted upon and implemented immediately, thus demonstrating the commitment of Forward College to enhancing quality and to managing in an agile and responsive manner.

# Members of the Academic Council



Paul is a transformative leader in Higher Education. Under his tenure, Southern New Hampshire University has scaled from 5,000 to 180,000 students to become the #1 university in the US. Forbes Magazine has listed him as one of the “most influential people in higher education.” He has chaired the American Council of Education. In 2018, Paul won the prestigious TIAA Institute Hesburgh Award for Leadership Excellence in Higher Education, joining some of the most respected university and college presidents in American higher education.



Yann has recently joined HEC Paris as the Associate Dean of Pre-experience Programs and Professor of Economics, following six years as the Dean of the School of Public Affairs at Sciences Po. He is a member of the French Council for Economic Analysis and the Scientific Council for National Education and a two times awardee of the European Research Council.



Nieves is President of SEK Education Group, comprising of Universidad Camilo José Cela and SEK International Schools (15,000 students). Recognized among the most influential women in education, she has received the UNICEF Prize for Education in Values. Nieves sits on the Advisory Board of the Spanish Ministry of Education and is also Vice-Chair of the Global Sports Innovation Center and the Edutech Cluster Spain.



Alenoush is Professor Emerita of Educational Psychology at McGill University in Montréal, Canada, and the current Director of the McGill International Institute of Education. She has served as a consultant to various international organizations including the World Bank, the OECD-OCDE, and UNESCO, contributing to higher education reform projects and initiatives.



Ian is the current Provost of Coventry University and one of the leading experts in EdTEch in Europe. In 2016 he was awarded “Inspiring Leader” of the year in the Guardian Higher Education Awards. Ian led development of the University’s colleges in Coventry and Scarborough. He is also a board member of the Midlands Academies Trust and a Justice of the Peace in Coventry and Warwickshire.



Co-founder and Director General of CENTRO diseño | cine | televisión since its start in 2004, Kerstin has led the creation and development of one of the most inspiring Higher Education Institutions in the field of creativity and design. Originally trained in the arts at Universität Wien and University of St Andrews and business at INSEAD, Kerstin started her career at Sotheby’s before becoming Managing Director of The Vienna Secession.

## Three years of Forward College in images

# State of Forward College in 2023-2024



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# 1. Setting up a College

Founded in April 2020, Forward College has been through a series of major milestones detailed in this section

## Summary of the 2021-2022 Evaluation Report for Forward College

- **Successful Launch of Forward College:** The institution was officially recognised as a teaching center by the University of London (UoL) despite having no prior track record. Five accredited degrees, designed in collaboration with the London School of Economics (LSE) and King's College London, were offered to prospective students.
- **Campus Development:** Opened the first Forward College campus in Lisbon.
- **Faculty Recruitment:** Achieved 100% recruitment of PhD graduates with previous affiliations to top European universities. Additionally, 88% of courses were delivered by full-time fellows. The faculty was vetted by the LSE and KCL for their respective programmes.
- **High Admission Interest:** The inaugural cohort received hundreds of applications from 42 countries. Twenty-five students from 13 countries were selected, with 52% receiving scholarships or interest-free trust loans.
- **Innovative Educational Model:** Successfully implemented the Forward teaching model as outlined in the White Paper and in accordance with UoL regulations and guidelines, including:
  - Small class sizes (averaging 7 students) and a flipped classroom approach.
  - One-on-one tutoring.
  - Group work with learning cells and team projects.
  - A combination of academic degrees with an extensive leadership program focused on personal development and impact-oriented entrepreneurship.
- **Teaching Quality Recognition:** Achieved a 93% progression rate to the second year, reflecting strong student recognition of teaching quality.
- **Supportive Lisbon Campus Environment:** Provided a welcoming atmosphere with professional staff offering proactive assistance and wellbeing support in real time.
- **Strategic Staff Recruitment:** Hired a Chief Talent Officer with extensive global experience, enhancing leadership curriculum development and teaching capacity.
- **Quality Enhancement Initiatives:** Introduced quality enhancement measures in the first year under the guidance of an international expert, providing an external perspective on operations and fostering high-quality dialogue between students and staff.

## Summary of the 2022-2023 Quality Enhancement Report for Forward College

- **Expansion of Academic Offerings:** Expanded the academic portfolio to include six degrees from LSE and King's College, complemented by leadership and personal development programs.
- **Increased Student Intake:** Doubled the size of the intake, allowing for a significant increase in the selection rate compared to 2021.
- **Campus Expansion:**
  - Opened a new campus in Paris at the Cité Universitaire Internationale de Paris for second-year students, offering world-class facilities and a highly international environment.
  - Attracted hundreds of applications for new faculty positions in Paris, enabling the recruitment of high-quality full-time teaching fellows.
  - Expanded the Lisbon campus by establishing a co-working space dedicated to Forward students in the student house.
- **Leadership Program Enhancement:** Made significant improvements to the entrepreneurship component in Year 1 and adjusted the Personal Development curriculum to prioritise modules addressing stress management, group dynamics, and intercultural sensitivity.
- **Successful Tutoring and Learning Models:**
  - Maintained high engagement in Lisbon, with students highlighting small class sizes, personalised feedback, a supportive culture, and international exposure as strengths.
  - Achieved strong results in UoL exams, with a 98% progression rate, an 18% year-over-year increase in average grades, and 13% of students receiving awards from the LSE.
- **Commitment to Quality Improvement:**
  - Established a world-class academic council to review Forward curricula, teaching models, and the overall quality of the student experience.
  - Developed a quality enhancement manual and formed a Quality Committee to systematically oversee internal and external quality assurance.

## Summary of the 2023-2024 Quality Enhancement Report for Forward College

- **New Campus in Berlin:** Successfully opened a new campus in Berlin, located in the #1 coworking space in the city. This facility provides third-year students with full access to premium amenities, Berlin's top professional community, together with accessible housing options.



- **Faculty Recruitment:** Continued to hire high-quality full-time teaching fellows, maintaining an attractive recruitment process for candidates.
- **Student Growth and Diversity:** Increased intake by 65%, resulting in the largest and most diverse cohort to date, representing 31 countries. Invested 18% of revenue in financial aid to support significant social diversity.
- **Enhanced Curriculum and Teaching Support:**
  - Maintained high overall student satisfaction, with strong appreciation for teaching fellows' commitment to personalisation and student success.
  - Made substantial improvements to the Personal Development and entrepreneurship curricula based on student feedback, ensuring clearer progression and better alignment between personal development, entrepreneurship, and academic degrees.
  - Designed a new bachelor's program, the Open Bachelor's, set to launch for future cohorts in September 2025.
  - Launched a peer mentoring program to support first-year students facing challenges in adapting to high academic expectations.
- **Strong Academic Performance:** Forward students outperformed University of London exam averages, with 25% graduating with First-Class Honours and 16% receiving LSE awards for individual achievements.
- **AI Integration:** Introduced generative AI applications to both staff and students. Students co-designed an AI-powered learning assistant and benefited from full access to ChatGPT-4 during revision periods.
- **Strengthened Senior Team and Steering:** Recruited a Chief Academic Officer, a Chief Financial Officer, and a Registrar to enhance leadership and governance.
- **Graduation Outcomes:**
  - Graduated the first cohort, with 60% pursuing master's programs, including 70% admitted in top 10 universities or business schools in Europe.
  - 40% of graduates secured internships or employment prior to further studies.



## 2. Comparing current achievements with the initial plan<sup>1</sup>

Forward College issued a White Paper in December 2020 detailing its pedagogical model and intended impact. The implementation has been highly consistent with the initial plan with the following objectives fully met:

### The Human intelligences as a compass

Keeping the Human Intelligences as the College's compass to develop and evaluate its students.

- The framework has been enhanced each year following annual feedback discussions within the personal development team.
- All interested students go through the 360 assessment each year (91% of students completed the process in 23/24)
- Coaching sessions (500h in total) have been progressively better formalised with an individual development plan now filled in for the 2nd coaching session where students state the skills they wish to prioritise for the upcoming year.

### The 3 pillars of Forward College: academic, leadership and international mobility

The "3 pillars" of Forward College's offer combine an academic bachelor, a leadership programme and an international mobility have been put in place from the 1st year of operations. This full programme fully covers the development of all human intelligences. Nevertheless, Forward College decided in 2021 to make its offer more flexible; indeed a significant proportion of students struggled to cope with the workload of the double bachelor's. A lighter version of the academic programme was put in place for the 2nd cohort in the form of a Bachelor's plus combining a UoL bachelor's and a certificate of 40 ECTS with entrepreneurship and personal development. The following year, Forward College decided to offer the single academic Bachelor's.

### The commitment to experiential learning

Forward College has applied the same learning cycle to both academic and leadership programmes with a flipped classroom approach that favours active engagement in the classroom and continuous feedback loops.

- Adopting and consistently applying the flipped classroom model has made classes truly experiential with highly interactive discussions and activities. Forward College has progressively adjusted its approach to Y1 students who complained about the challenge adjusting both to highly demanding curricula and a new form of learning. Additional

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<sup>1</sup> Forward College White Paper available on our website

sessions organised by Fellows and Peer mentors<sup>2</sup> from 2023 have improved the transition, although it remains challenging for students. Student surveys show that Y2 and Y3 students become attached to this form of teaching and will complain if a fellow practices more traditional lecturing.

- The continuous assessment has been implemented taking various forms depending on the programme.
  - For the academic programme, it has taken the form of almost weekly formative assessments (16 formative assessments over 22 teaching weeks) and as many individual tutoring sessions where the fellow and the student exchange on the performance and how the student could improve. The psychology programme follows a different approach as UoL requires more coursework and termly exams which leaves less opportunities for formative assessments and tutorials as coursework needs to be achieved independently by students without fellows' direct support.
  - For PBL, 30 min weekly sessions (or 60 min bi-monthly sessions) allow each team and the fellow to analyse their progress over the past period.
  - For PD, monthly reflective pieces and open discussions during pivot sessions concluding monthly modules allow for an open exchange and individual progress reviews.
- Group work has also been consistently promoted by Forward College:
  - Learning cells (or study groups) have been implemented although with different guidance depending on the fellows. In some courses, students get precise group assignments while they don't in others. This ensures mutual support in grasping the learning material and getting prepared for class - which was the original purpose of the learning cell. Implementation by students is also variable as some groups work much better than others.
  - In PBL, teams are at the core of the pedagogy as projects are always in teams. Usual challenges on how to account for inconsistent engagement among team members has been a recurring attention point. The grading system strikes a balance between solidarity among the team and individual grades. Peer assessment also allows for a healthy dialogue among the teams.
  - In personal development, the experience of "pods" that gather small groups of students to practise together is being examined carefully to optimise the experience..
- The experience portfolio intended to account for students' overall experience has taken the form of monthly reflection pieces done by students in personal development.

## The Leadership Programme combining Entrepreneurship and Personal Development

Although Forward College has implemented the planned structure of its leadership programme, its development has been the opportunity for continuous improvement. There has been a

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<sup>2</sup> Y2 and Y3 students vetted by fellows are paid to support their younger peers through drop in sessions and 1 on 1 mentoring sessions along the year.

mutual adjustment process where Forward had to refine its offer depending on the students' perceptions and expectations. As this kind of training is innovative, students have often struggled to adjust to different expectations and different ways of working in order to develop different skills.

- Personal development has become more structured throughout the 3 year programme, clearly distinguishing between social intelligence covered in year 1, emotional intelligence in year 2 and practical intelligence covered in year 3. Student ratings have constantly improved year over year.
- Entrepreneurship has strongly improved over the years and has put in place a strong team with a clear vision, solid course plans and student ratings that have improved year on year until reaching high scores.

## Community life

Forward College has heavily invested in nurturing a collegial culture among its students thanks to:

- Dedicated housing in prime accommodations in Lisbon, Paris and Berlin.
- Orientation programmes at the start of each year including a full two-week programme at the start of Y1 in Lisbon combining social activities, practical group work, academic preparation and discovery of the city.
- A strong student representation with 6 student representatives per cohort.
- Collegiate spaces where students can mix and mingle together.
- Support for student clubs.

All students currently at Forward College express a high level of satisfaction with their environment highlighting a tight web of friendships and mutual support that transcend nationalities. This positive feedback collected by the student survey appears closely linked to the supportive community atmosphere, which has been instrumental in helping students settle in. As one first-year student noted, "Living together with everyone from Forward was incredibly helpful because we all arrived here alone. I probably would have felt quite lonely otherwise and would have struggled to connect with people on the same level." This sentiment resonates with second-year students as well. When asked about their overall experience, one second-year student shared, "There are many positives about the experience at Forward, especially the close-knit, international student community."

Nevertheless, the still relatively small size of Forward College's cohorts and the geographic rotation does not allow for the typical build up of clubs between junior students and more senior students and clubs start later in the year as a result.



# 3. Investment, engagement and impact on student's Leadership

## Investment and engagement in leadership development

Forward College allocated significant resources to leadership development. On top of the programmes in entrepreneurship and personal development across the 3 years, all students are invited to participate in an annual 360° assessment exercise. A total of 167 students took part in the 360 process assessment in 2023-2024

- 1320 raters provided feedback
- 7.9 rater's assessment per student on average
- More than 500 hours were allocated to coaching and preparation by 360° coaches.

Overall, the Leadership programme has accounted for 28% of the teaching cost of the College which shows the extent of the investment.

## Impact on students' leadership

Forward's impact on students' leadership requires a long term approach and a multifactorial approach. At this stage of our development, impact is mainly measured through our last year survey and data analytics coming from our curricula.

## Student self reported progress

The third-year students' survey aimed at evaluating the extent to which students felt that they developed their four types of intelligence: cognitive, social, emotional and practical. The average ratings (from 1 to 4, 0 being the lowest progress) are presented below. Within the students surveyed, only 50% of the students followed a full double Bachelor's programme.

<b>On a scale of 1 to 4, How much did Forward College help me improve my [...] intelligence ?</b>	<b>Cognitive</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Emotional</b>	<b>Practical</b>
<b>Average</b>	3.32	2.79	2.89	2.93

## Cognitive intelligence

The students' responses on cognitive intelligence averaged 3.3 on a four-point scale. Critical thinking received the highest rating (3.60) and the "capacity to retain information", the lowest (2.79). As graph 1 shows the rating of the other six items was very close.

**Graph 1: Cognitive intelligence**



This self perception needs to be completed by students' achievements. The table below shows the progress of the first cohort of students in their UoL exams.

*Table 1<sup>3</sup>: Relative performance of students in UoL exams with Year 1 (=100)*

Cohort	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
	EMFSS	Psych	Overall	EMFSS	Psych	Overall	EMFSS	Psych	Overall
<b>Class of 2024</b>	100.0		100.0	110.4	100.0	105.8	109.5	102.8	106.0

<sup>3</sup> Table 1 showing the average results per cohort of students in UoL exams over time, indexed to their first year performance. The results are broken down by field of degree. EMFSS refers to the Economics, Management, Finance and Social Sciences degrees designed by LSE, while Psychology is a degree designed by KCL. Psychology Year 1 for the class of 2024 was not used as a baseline, as the exam was open-book that year. Instead, the Year 2 results for that cohort was used when exams had shifted back to closed-book exams. Note that the Psychology cohorts in Class of 2024 and Class of 2025 have a small sample size, such that averages can be somewhat spurious.



Overall, the Class of 2024's results grew by 5.8% in the second year and 6.0% relative to the first year. Psychology results were indexed to the second year results, showing a growth of 2.8%. This is to account for a bias due to the change in exam modality from open-book exams to closed book exams in the second term of the second year for the class of 2024.

Table 2 below shows that the growth in cohorts' size has not led to a decrease in students' achievements. On the contrary, the second and third cohorts achieved stronger results than the first one. This has also been reflected in the growing proportion of students receiving LSE awards from 5% in 2022 to 13% in 2023 to 16% in 2024.

*Table 2<sup>4</sup>: Relative performance of students in UoL exams with Year 1 Performance of the 2024 Cohort as a baseline*

Cohort	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
	EMFSS	Psych	Overall	EMFSS	Psych	Overall	EMFSS	Psych	Overall
<b>Class of 2024</b>	100.0		100.0	110.4	100.0	105.8	109.5	102.8	106.0
<b>Class of 2025</b>	114.2	95.7	106.3	114.2	92.3	105.2			
<b>Class of 2026</b>	104.4	99.3	103.4						

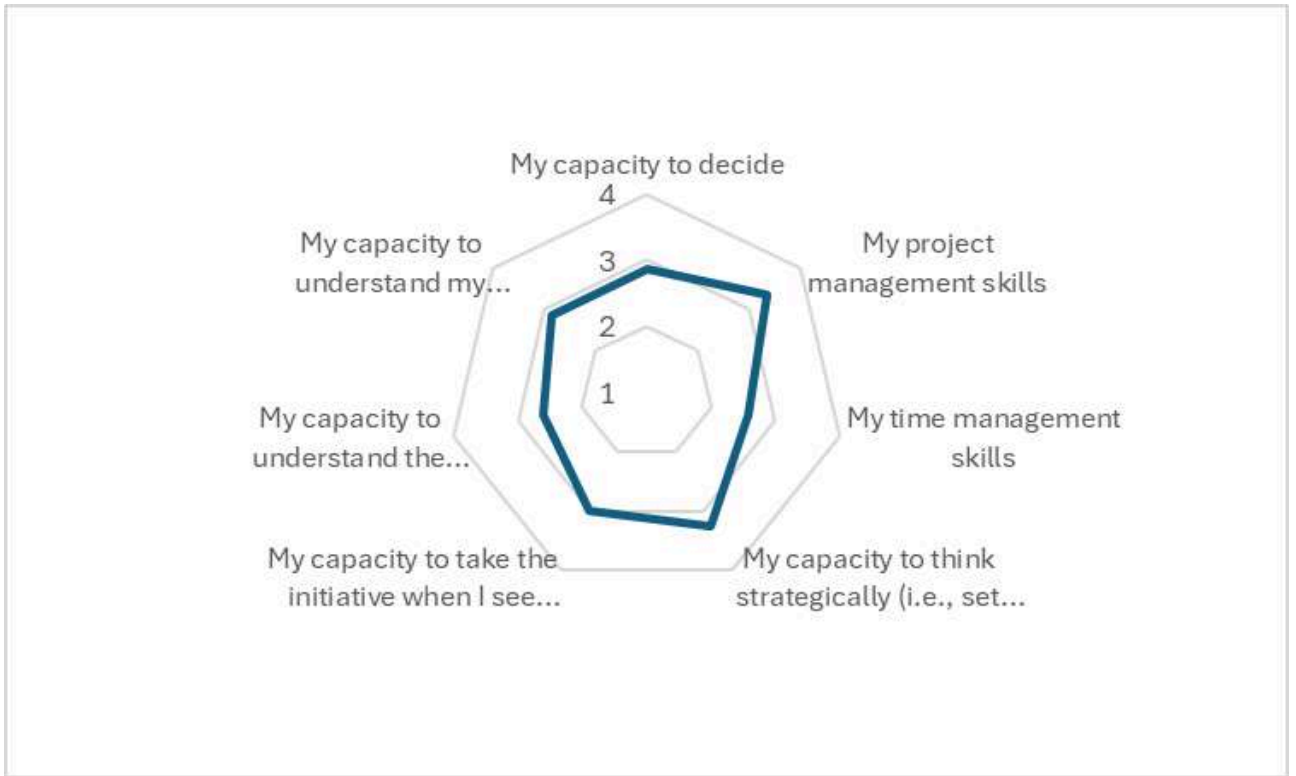
## Practical intelligence

The students' response on practical intelligence averaged 2.9 on a four-point scale, with project management skills and the capacity to think strategically receiving the highest ratings (respectively, 3.35 and 3.26). The students recognised that these skills were mostly developed in PBL and that the third year was particularly positive in this regard.

### Graph 2: Practical intelligence

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<sup>4</sup> Table 2 shows the average results per cohort of students in UoL exams over time, indexed to the first year performance of the Class of 2024, except for Psychology where it's indexed to Year 2 performance of the same cohort. The results are broken down by field of degree. EMFSS refers to the Economics, Management, Finance and Social Sciences degrees designed by LSE, while Psychology is a degree designed by KCL. Note that the Psychology cohorts in Class of 2024 and Class of 2025 have a small sample size, such that averages can be somewhat spurious



## Emotional intelligence

The students' response on emotional intelligence averaged 2.89 on a four-point scale, with the "capacity to adapt to change" receiving the highest rating (3.74) and "my curiosity" the lowest (2.40). The answers to the open questions revealed that the mobility across three campuses and the residential life contributed to developing emotional intelligence but that students wished for more structured guidance and support in this area.

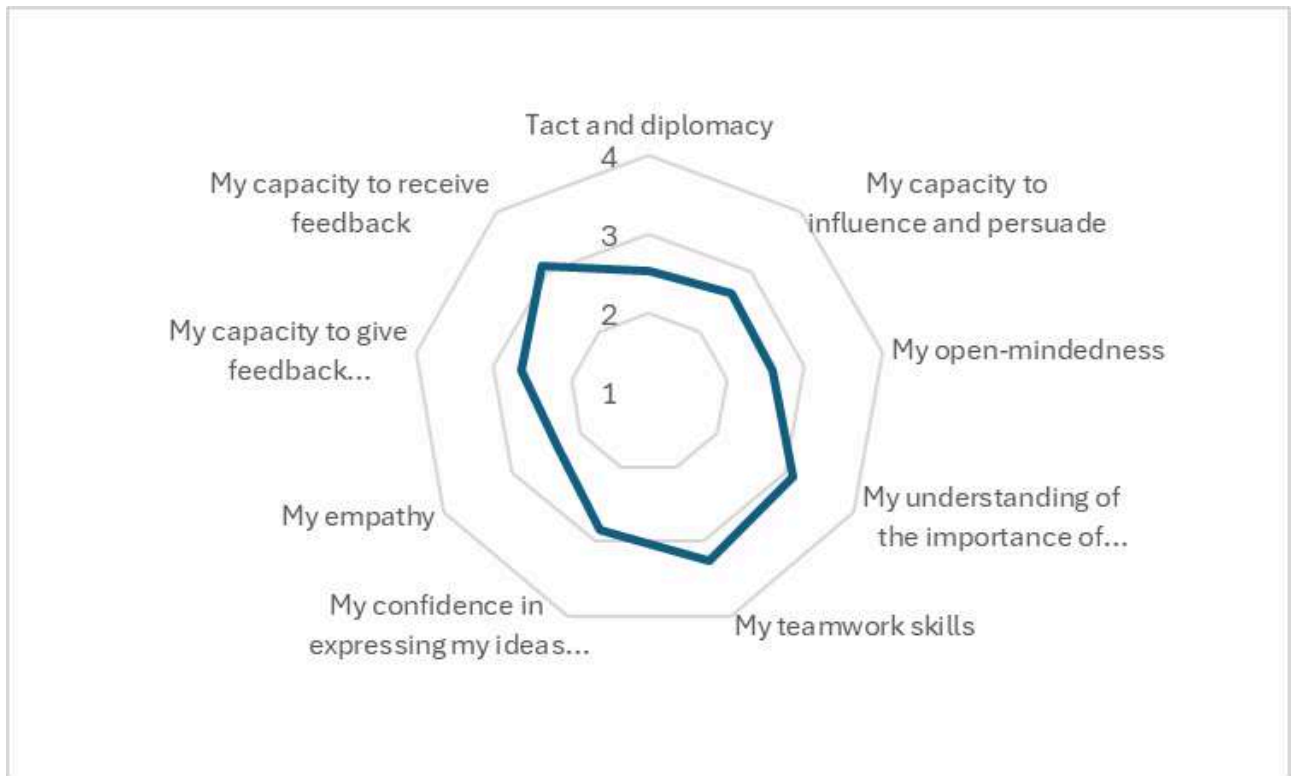
### Graph 3: Emotional intelligence



## Social intelligence

The students' responses to social intelligence averaged 2.1 on a 4-point scale. Teamwork skills received the highest rating (3.25) whilst empathy received the lowest (2.35). The pattern of answers captured in the following graph raises questions as to the extent to which certain skills can be taught in the classroom. Students recognised this when they raised the issue of being provided with role models to develop those skills more fully.

**Graph 4: Social intelligence**



## Technological intelligence

Progresses in technological intelligence were not assessed using a quantitative method. Rather, students answered the following question: "Technological intelligence refers to the ability to understand and harness the extraordinary potential of technology. Thinking back on the last three years, is there an important moment you can identify that helped you develop technological intelligence? Please give details."

Students mentioned positively the transition from paper-based to digital work, the digital literacy program in the second year and the use of specific tools and software (e.g., Figma) in PBL. Others wished for a greater focus on AI (which emerged as a hot issue during their third year, see below) or noted their lack of significant technological experience.

## **ACTION RESEARCH IN AI AND LEARNING @FORWARD COLLEGE**

Forward College has initiated an Action Research program to explore the implementation and impacts of AI within its community, focusing on engagement, performance, and learning outcomes. The program incorporates generative AI-powered chatbots, aiming to enhance the educational experience by tailoring it to individual student needs and supporting autonomous learning. Workshops have introduced students to AI and prompt engineering, leading to the creation and development of AI assistant prototypes. These prototypes are evaluated for their effectiveness in improving academic engagement and reducing exam anxiety during controlled trials.

Staff and teachers are also being introduced to AI through seminars that blend theoretical knowledge with practical applications, enhancing their readiness to integrate AI tools into their teaching practices. The initiative is structured around three research axes: personalised AI study assistants for students, faculty development in AI literacy, and AI-driven curriculum design, each aiming to address specific challenges and opportunities in higher education.



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## 4. Contribution to Forward's Social Objectives

### Admission and Financial Aid

The student cohort starting in 2023/2024 was larger and more diverse than its counterpart of 2022/23. It included 88 students from 33 different countries (vs. 56 students from 25 countries in the first year). The growth in class size was the result of FC's increased visibility, which in turn allowed for a more selective admission process. Furthermore, roughly two thirds of students scored the equivalent of AAA in A-Levels or higher, not to mention being actively engaged in extracurricular activities. This is an increase in the academic level of students, as their counterparts of 2022/23 had 50% of students at the same level.

By offering financial aid to disadvantaged students, Forward College contributes to levelling the playing field. The financial aid scheme has contributed to increasing diversity by allowing students, who would not otherwise afford the tuition fees, to pursue their undergraduate studies at Forward College without putting them under excessive financial pressure when they graduate.

Overall, Forward College allocated 20% of its revenue to financial aid to support to students:

- The number of students receiving financial aid increased to 37 (42% of the cohort) compared to 26 (50% of the cohort) in the year before:
- Scholarship awards increased to €45K (2.7% of gross revenue) compared to €41K (4.9% of gross revenue).
- Trust Loans awarded to students increased to €267K (16.2% of gross revenue) compared to €149K (17.6% of gross revenue).
- Approximately 13% of our students are granted student jobs to help them cover their life costs

### Contribution from Students' Projects

Nineteen year-long projects have been carried out by students within the Forward's entrepreneurship programme. Among these projects:

- 5 social projects addressing mental health, women safety, job readiness of underprivileged youth
- 10 environmental projects addressing the circular economy, the sustainable use of water, plastic waste, carbon offsetting

Although we do not expect major impact from these student projects we will monitor how students' earlier engagement in such projects affect their future career and long-term contribution to social and environmental welfare.

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# 5. Contribution to Forward's Economic objectives

## Support and engagement in career support

Career support at Forward College is structured along two lines:

1. It is fully integrated within the personal development programme for all Double Bachelors and Bachelor's + students.
2. It is reinforced by individual coaching sessions alongside other resources, including a dedicated section on the intranet, webinars, workshops as well as an access to Handshake, a university career management platform providing job opportunities.

Single Bachelor students who do not attend the personal development programme benefit from all the resources listed in point 2 as well as individual coaching.

All students benefit from 1 individual coaching session in Year 1, 2 in Year 2, and up to 4 in Year 3. There, students receive guidance on potential paths post Forward and feedback on their CV and motivation letter.

Career readiness skills are developed across the three years in personal development, with a more practical focus in Year 3 through a dedicated module that equips students with the skills needed at the time they are applying to graduate schools, early-career programmes, or jobs.

All Year 3 students from the 2024 cohort engaged in at least one coaching session: 21% attended four sessions, 21% three sessions, 46% two sessions, and 12% attended one session.

Informal career discussions are also frequent due to the small cohort size and the fact that the personal development fellow is also the career coach.

## Impact of Career support and Students' achievement

### Internships

By the end of August 2024, Forward college validated 29 internships which does not reflect the dynamism of the students who often find valuable work experience during their summers, outside the formal requirements of the internship scheme at Forward.

Many students showcase other work experiences on their CVs that have been contracted outside of the formal internship agreement. Therefore, the number of valuable work experiences / internships per year 3 students over the programme is not available for the reasons mentioned above.

Feedback from internship supervisors is unanimously positive, with 100% indicating their willingness to offer a permanent role to the intern and to welcome future interns from Forward College. In their qualitative feedback, supervisors frequently highlight the students' eagerness to learn, especially in response to constructive feedback. Many also commend the students for their strong work ethic and effective communication skills.

## Academic placement in post graduate programmes

- 43 % admitted in top 10 European universities (QS ranking)
- 29 % admitted in top 10 European business schools (FT ranking)

## Work placement

To be completed from 2026 when a significant number of Forward graduates will enter the job market.



## 6. Contribution to Forward's Education objectives

Forward College aims at making a contribution to innovation in the field of higher education. As such, we closely monitor the elements that gradually establish the value of our original approach aiming at redefining well-rounded education in the 21st century. This section covers:

- How we invest our teaching resources
- How our students perceive the quality of our teaching approach
- The impact of this approach in terms of results and outcomes (See also our section on our economic impact)
- The dissemination of our results.

### Teaching & campus resources

As already discussed in section 2, Forward College follows an active learning pedagogy that mainly relies on experiential learning and a relational pedagogy.

The quality of our fellows and the ratio of students per full time fellows (teachers) are therefore crucial.

Our target is to reach on average 11 students per full time fellow. This ratio means concretely that

- Each class has an average of 15 students (and no more than 18).
- Each fellow would teach a range of 40 to 70 students over a year allowing for a close connection between them.

The table shows how the increase of our intake progressively decreased our teacher to student ratio.

	<b>2021/2022</b>	<b>2022/2023</b>	<b>2023/2024</b>
Staff FTE : Student	1:2	1:2.3	1:3.3
Teaching FTE : student	1:3	1:4.2	1:6
Average class size	5.4	7.6	10.8

In terms of quality, our application process for full time positions is highly competitive with an average of over 40 applications by job post. 75% of our full time fellows have been affiliated to one of the top 50 European universities before joining Forward College (or to one of the top 50 worldwide, outside of Europe). 73% of our job offerings have been accepted by the candidates meaning that Forward College is most often a top choice for our applicants.

## Impact of our education approach

The impact of our education approach is presented in section 4.

### Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Embedding an internal quality culture and seeking external accreditation have been two important priorities. Andrée Sursock, who has deep expertise in quality assurance, was hired to steer this area in coordination with the senior team.

#### Internal quality enhancement

The following are the highlights of the formal activities that took place in the past three years:

- In 2021-22, a manual detailing internal quality mechanisms was produced and a committee gathering students and staff was assembled. The internal quality mechanisms that were put in place that first year included a student survey administered at the end of the two semesters and two site visits to Lisbon (March and June) to meet students and staff. Based on the site visit report, several recommendations were addressed.
- In 2022-23, two new survey instruments were developed: a short one four weeks after the start of the semester (Pulse Survey) and a (revised) longer one to be administered at the end of each semester. The objective of the Pulse Survey was to enable teaching fellows and the senior team to identify issues that needed to be addressed urgently and to take corrective action. As in the previous year, site visits were organised in Lisbon and Paris.
- In 2023-2024, the same surveys as in the preceding year were administered and site visits to the three campuses were conducted. A new survey for graduating students was developed to evaluate the extent to which the objective of Forward College in developing the four types of human intelligence had been met (for the results, see section 4 above).

The results of the formal internal quality evaluations were discussed with the senior team who monitored the implementation of the recommendations. These results and the monitoring of these recommendations were also presented to and discussed with the Academic Council from the academic year 2022/2023 with a first series of meetings in May 2023. The Academic Council is part of Forward Governance. It is composed of independent prominent personalities from Higher Education<sup>5</sup>. It is chaired by Pres. Paul Leblanc, former President of SNHU and former chair of the American Education Board.

From the academic year 2023/2024 onward, the Academic Council not only reviews the report but also decides on the final version to be published on Forward College's website. This is a key element of a checks and balances system designed to ensure that financial sustainability monitored by Forward's Board of Trustees and quality enhancement of the student experience supervised by the Academic Council go hand in hand with a long term perspective.

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<sup>5</sup> See the Council composition [here](#)

Furthermore, an important part of any internal quality assurance happened informally. The senior team and the staff have all been involved in seeking feedback from the students during campus committee meetings with student representatives and “Ask me anything” sessions open to all students. This has been so successful that the site visits conducted by the external quality expert validated what was already known. This is a good sign that feedback mechanisms are numerous and effective.

### External quality assurance

Seeking accreditation was a concern from the launch of Forward College. Discussions with the French authorities started very early on and should yield results in early 2025. Now that Forward College has graduated its first cohort, seeking an international accreditation is a realistic option. This is being currently explored.

## Research and dissemination

Forward College’s research efforts focus on exploring innovative applications of technology and holistic educational frameworks to address the evolving needs of higher education. These initiatives aim to provide practical solutions to challenges in personalised learning, curriculum adaptability, and comprehensive student development while fostering collaboration among educators and researchers.

Generative AI is a central area of focus, with work structured across three main axes. First, we are piloting discipline-specific AI study assistants designed to enhance autonomous learning and critical thinking. These tools, co-designed with students, are being tested for their effectiveness in supporting academic engagement and addressing skill gaps, particularly in areas like academic writing and quantitative reasoning. Second, we are supporting teacher preparedness for AI integration through workshops, monthly exploration meetings, and collaborative research efforts. These initiatives aim to enhance the pedagogical use of AI while aligning with educational standards. Finally, we are integrating AI into curriculum design, with a focus on adaptive learning and assessment pathways in the Bachelor of Social Science and Technologies. This research explores AI-driven course design, personalised assessments, and feedback systems to better meet individual student needs.

Our 360° Human Intelligence research focuses on a holistic assessment framework that evaluates cognitive, practical, social, and emotional intelligences. This project includes advanced analysis to ensure the validity and reliability of skill assessments, addressing factors like rater bias and consistency. By developing tools for longitudinal tracking, we aim to better understand patterns in student development over time and refine our framework to align with the institution’s broader educational objectives.

Dissemination of research outcomes is an essential part of our strategy. One example is the establishment of an AI research group, which will meet monthly to share best practices, foster

research and development, and provide training opportunities. This group also aims to develop a strategic view of how AI can be used to enhance teaching and learning across the institution. Findings from the generative AI projects are being shared through workshops and forums, promoting adoption by educators and students. Insights from the 360° Human Intelligence research are integrated into institutional practices, informing curriculum design and assessment strategies.





# Appendix 1: Legal context of this report

## Forward's Mission

Forward's bylaws define its institutional mission in the following terms:

The Forward's mission is, through its training activities, to help leadership evolve from the current 'institutional' model, in which leadership is closely linked to the exercise of power in hierarchical organisations, to a engagement model in which leadership is based on the ability to create collective action, by mobilising individuals beyond their diversity of expertise, social and cultural origins and organisations.

The Forward's objectives are to respond to the following major economic and social challenges through initial or continuing training :

- Social and environmental: to develop in students a sense of civic commitment and the assumption of collective responsibilities, particularly with regard to the environment, promoting democracy, fundamental freedoms, equal opportunities, respect for diverse identities and social equity identities and social equity;
- Economic: training professionals to meet the economic challenges of tomorrow, supporting students in their career choices so that they are consistent with their aspirations, potential and skills, stimulating in them an entrepreneurial spirit, the ability to cooperate in complex ecosystems, to better understand and exploit the potential of technologies, and to strengthen the agility of organisations faced with chronic technological change.
- Education: foster the transformation of higher education by promoting a holistic approach to education based on multiple intelligences and by demonstrating its effects in the short, medium and long term.

Forward College is a social enterprise (Société à Mission). As such the Academic Council's annual report to the general assembly should include:

- **Progress on the mission objectives:** A detailed review of the actions and initiatives taken to achieve the organisation's mission, including key performance indicators (KPIs) or metrics that measure success.
- **Challenges and risks:** Identification of any difficulties encountered in fulfilling the mission and potential risks to future progress.
- **Recommendations:** Suggestions for improvements or adjustments to the mission strategy.
- **Stakeholder involvement:** A summary of how various stakeholders (employees, customers, partners) have been involved in supporting the mission.

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<sup>6</sup> Forward Academic Council serves as the Comité de mission as defined in the Loi Pacte from 22 May 2019

This report helps ensure transparency and accountability to shareholders and stakeholders. It is publicly available on Forward College's website.

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**FORWARD**  
COLLEGE

AWARDING BODY



**UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON**

ACADEMIC DIRECTION



**THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE**