



ETC International College

Business Development Plan

February 2024

Business Development Plan (Including Summary Funding, Teaching and Contingency Plan)

The People

The personnel are vital to the business, as they are responsible not only for the development of future business for the company, but also for effective delivery of the company's services.

ETC currently has, arguably, its best ever team of individuals, with a broad range of skills, qualifications and experience on offer.

There is strength in depth: we aim to ensure that in each role, there are not just one but several people available who can perform the role well, although the effective continuous professional development of the entire team will remain an important goal for the company.

The academic team has performed very well again over the last year, under the solid leadership of Hazel Valvona (DoS) and Sarah Vivian (ADoS and DSL) in the ELT department and Chris Parker (Head of FE / HE) in the FE HE department. Hazel retired at the end of 2023, but succession is assured in the appointment of Sarah Vivian as Director of Studies from 8th January 2024.

A new Assistant Director of Studies will be selected and at the time of writing, we believe we have identified a suitable candidate. This new appointee will hopefully provide excellent academic and safeguarding support, though we have identified a different person to take over the role of Designated Safeguarding and Prevent Lead (DSL) from Sarah in due course.

The FE HE department has performed well through difficult times and managed to maintain a very good standard of course delivery. All of its HE programmes are now recognised by external organisations and its UFP courses are recognised / accepted by several UK universities, including Bournemouth University.

Former Director of Studies Tina Musson has provided excellent support to the management team and various departments within her role of Part-time HR and Compliance Officer. Another former Director of Studies, Helen Rouse, has recently joined her in a complementary role (with the same job title).

Our Business Manager, Hannah Wright, has provided highly-valued leadership in many operational and business-development-related areas.

(Please refer to the ETC Organogram and the section on Staff Training and Development below).

The Service: Academic Programmes / Teaching and Managing Learning

Given the ever-evolving nature of the business sector in which the company operates, with new competitors, different responsibilities and unexpected threats emerging all the time, it is essential that ETC should continue to develop the services that it offers, in particular, the range of courses and the nature of their delivery.

Please refer to the latest ETC brochure and to our continuously updated website for a view of the full range of courses available.

Please also refer to the latest British Council inspection report (December 2019) and our post-inspection Action Plan and the ISI inspection report (November 2021). ETC is due to be re-inspected by both the ISI and the British Council again in 2024.

Over the past year, ETC has consolidated the introduction of several new courses, as a result of client demand:

University Foundation Programmes (Business pathway, Computing pathway and Engineering pathway).

Each of these courses prepares students for entry to a Business-related or Technology-related undergraduate course at a British university. Each is internally-verified by ETC staff and the Business course is accepted by Bournemouth University.

We are in discussion with several other universities with regard to acceptance of these courses for entry into year one of their undergraduate programmes in relevant subjects. These universities include Southampton Solent University, the University of South Wales, Middlesex University, Derby University and Coventry University.

We have agreed on the re-titling of the Technology pathway as “Engineering”, since this more closely reflects client requirements and the current modular composition of the course.

English for Academic Purposes (AKA Pre-Sessional English) courses.

These courses prepare students for entry to the ETC University Foundation Programme and / or HNC / HND courses, if students do not have sufficient English language skills for immediate entry to the programme (but do have sufficient background content qualifications, such as A levels or High School Diploma). Each such programme is adapted to the needs of the students enrolled onto it.

ESP courses following a Combination Structure

(Structure = 20 lessons of General English + 10 lessons of specialist English per week), with the specialisation including areas such as Medical English, Legal English, Military English, etc – requested by several agencies and overseas embassies based in the U.K., these courses are also of interest to a growing number of direct enquirers.

New ESP courses

Several more have been added to our portfolio, although they have not yet been promoted effectively and we have therefore not received any related bookings so far. These now include:

- English for Cyber Security.

- English for International Relations.
- English for Aviation (Drone Technology).

There are now 25 of these specialist English programmes (up from 22 last year). These courses are not available at many institutions and the fact that we offer them sets us apart from other providers and helps to fix the ETC brand in the memory of our target agents.

A skills audit has been conducted by the academic department to identify teaching staff who would be able to deliver these courses. At the moment, there is a limited number of staff members with experience in the various options, but we hope to broaden the skills base where possible via INSET training programmes and careful staff recruitment of new staff members.

Course descriptions have been produced. New marketing collateral and web pages describing these courses and explaining the new structures (ie. intensities and combinations with General English) are being produced to help promote them.

IELTS Exam Preparation / Trinity College GESE Exam Preparation

Each of these courses has become very popular, introduced after demand from students, agents and sponsors alike.

Recognised internationally and especially in France, Spain, Japan and Korea, IELTS is particularly suited to clients who plan to apply to colleges or universities in the UK. This accounts for approximately 8% of our annual student number.

ETC is still one of only a small number of schools in Bournemouth able to offer the Trinity College exams on site. Students' results have been excellent. (Please refer to the dedicated exam results page on the ETC website for the latest statistics).

The plan is to run an exam at ETC as often as possible – once conditions normalise, post-pandemic - and to offer additional afternoon courses (on a bolt-on basis) to those students taking standard courses in the mornings. So far, we have had relatively little take-up of these programmes, however with sustained marketing efforts, we believe that students will see the benefit of preparing for an external exam alongside their standard course(s).

Hence, this should help us to boost revenue streams from amongst our existing students as well as to provide new clients with an extra option at ETC.

As with our other exam preparation courses, we aim to ensure that students achieve excellent exam results so that they will be able to show off their (and our) achievements.

The newest of our courses are these, again developed in response to specific demand from clients:

University Foundation Programme in Computing
University Foundation Programme in Engineering

HNC (Higher National Certificate) in Business and Management
HND in Business (Higher National Diploma) in Business and Management
These HNC / HND programmes have been accredited by BTEC.

HNC / HND in Mechanical Engineering
HNC / HND in Electrical and Electronic Engineering

Given that one of the main embassy sponsors we work with does not recognise the OTHM qualifications, we have decided to suspend promotion and future delivery of these programmes.

Since their introduction and initial promotion, our FE and HE courses have attracted very good levels of interest and a small number of concrete bookings, although we recognise that there is currently a bias towards (male) students from the Middle East in terms of the take up of these courses.

We intend to promote these courses more widely in GCC countries but also in countries such as China, Taiwan, South Korea, Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, etc, and explore the possibility of promoting them in newer markets for us, such as Vietnam, Indonesia and potentially Southern India.

Professional Courses

We have also been commissioned to deliver a variety of soft skills courses and more focused professional courses for several sponsors, including the following:

- EC Council Accredited Cyber Security
- EC Council Accredited Cyber Warfare
- Leadership / Management
- Financial Management and Accounting
- Crisis and Risk Management
- Logistics and Supply Chain Management
- Human Resources Management.

We see great potential in these programmes and we have barely started to promote them.....

The marketing team is currently revising the FE / HE brochure with the aim of promoting these more specialised FE / HE programmes.

ETC has registered with the Office for Students / QAA and has undergone an initial full inspection. Each of our Pearson BTEC accredited courses has also been externally checked.

Our full list of courses currently includes the following:

General English:

- General English Standard – 20 lessons
- General English Intensive – 24 lessons
- General English Super Intensive – 28 lessons

Exam Preparation:

- IELTS Preparation Standard – 20 lessons
- IELTS Preparation Intensive – 24 lessons
- IELTS Preparation Super Intensive – 28 lessons

- Cambridge Preparation Standard – 20 lessons
- Cambridge Preparation Intensive – 24 lessons
- Cambridge Preparation Super Intensive – 28 lessons

English for Special Purposes:

- English for Agriculture
- English for Automotive
- English for Aviation
- Aviation English + Drone Flight
- English for Accounting B+F
- English for Computing / IT
- English for Cyber Security
- English for the Energy Industry
- English for Engineering
- English for the Fashion Industry
- English for Hospitality
- English for HR
- English for International Affairs
- English for Journalism / Media
- Legal English
- Military English
- Medical English
- Medical English + Work Programme
- Nursing English
- English for Public Admin
- English for Security
- English for Taxi Drivers
- Technical English
- Tourism and Hotel Management English

Teacher Training

- Trinity Cert TESOL Teacher Training (new teachers)
- Trinity DipTESOL Teacher Training
- CDC courses for existing teachers of English

Professional Courses:

- EC Council Accredited Cyber Security
- EC Council Accredited Cyber Warfare
- Leadership / Management
- Financial Management and Accounting
- Crisis and Risk Management
- Logistics and Supply Chain Management
- Human Resources Management

University pathways

- University Foundation Programme – Business
- University Foundation Programme – Computing

- University Foundation Programme – Engineering

Higher Education

Business

- Pearson BTEC Level 5 HND Business
- Pearson BTEC Level 5 HND Business (Accounting and Finance)
- Pearson BTEC Level 5 HND Business (Human Resource Management)
- Pearson BTEC Level 5 HND Business (Management)
- Pearson BTEC Level 5 HND Business (Marketing)
- Pearson BTEC Level 5 HND Business (Procurement and Supply Management)

Engineering

- Pearson BTEC Level 5 HND Electrical and Electronic Engineering
- Pearson BTEC Level 5 HND Mechanical Engineering

Computing

- Pearson BTEC Level 5 HND Computing
- Pearson BTEC Level 5 HND Software Engineering
- Pearson BTEC Level 5 HND Network Engineering
- Pearson BTEC Level 5 HND Cyber Security.

FE / HE Department Review

It has been another turbulent year for the FE HE department, with the coronavirus response taking up a lot of time and energy. In spite of this, we achieved our BTEC approvals and our electronics and engineering workshop / lab is now operational.

The Head of FE HE, Chris Parker, is planning for the coming academic year (2024).

Several necessary processes have been put in place (Turnitin, FE/HE induction, more resilient admissions policy) and others are in progress (HND timetable, development of BTEC assignments, IV process).

The key actions were successfully addressed:

- Management of attendance & assessment
- Equipping the workshop / lab further - in line with curriculum development

A number of procedures will need to be maintained in departmental practice, such as rigorous assessment & progress monitoring, IV process and the integration of laboratory-based activities into the timetable and curriculum.

The FE/HE department is developing and in 2024 the aim will be for it to consolidate working procedures, timetables, accommodation and staff that meet business needs and quality standards.

We have launched a new website (spring 2023) to promote the FE HE courses:

www.etccollege.co.uk

This is almost complete, with some refinements and several additional landing pages to be created.

The same applies to another new website (work commenced on this in autumn 2023) www.executivecourses.org which focuses on our Professional Courses offering. This is still under construction.

FE / HE Department Report 2022-2023 (by Chris Parker)

Student enrolments have remained low, meaning a number of cohorts with small class sizes.

Future bookings look set to rise for the University Foundation Programmes (UFPs) in particular, with Business UFP having the highest number of applications, due to the Saudi Arabian national drive for tourism.

Professional courses have steadily grown throughout the year primarily due to Omani bookings.

Overall reduction in student numbers has not allowed for changes in staff contracts due to the need to remain flexible on overall hours required & until future bookings are confirmed. The department is still operating without Computing and Engineering Coordinators, which places an administrative / Quality Control burden on the managerial function. This needs to be addressed once the financial resources are available.

Staff coverage of courses and units has remained stable due to low staff turnover. Over the 2023-24 academic year, it is anticipated that Aviation Management & Aeronautical Engineering will cease to be offered as courses, as existing students graduate and to avoid the risk of uneconomical cohorts next year (2024-2025).

The department has passed all External Examiner inspections & audits, including BTEC Higher Nationals, Pearson Annual Quality Review and JCQ Exams inspection. All external certification is currently set for release, with only a final Business / Computing secondary review currently in progress.

Internal quality measures have steadily improved, including the IV process which was a concern at the start of the 2022-2023 academic year. Targeted CPD has been delivered to teaching staff to address developmental targets and recommendations from inspections.

Out of a total of 46 students studying curriculum courses, we are expecting 5 students to fail or re-take their course (11%), 2 students removed themselves from their course (2%) and the remaining 39 (87%) are on target to pass.

Additionally, we are set to complete 28 students from professional courses on short courses, with further bookings from September 2023.

ELT Department Report 2022-2023 (by Hazel Valvona)

The past 12 months have seen promising recovery from the effects of the pandemic. Summer 2022 saw us welcome over 500 students in July, and summer 2023 had slightly higher numbers.

Despite the shortage of teachers post Brexit, we did manage to recruit sufficient quality teachers for all of our courses, and this is the case currently, too.

Classes were run for adults / young adults (aged 16+) all year round, and including IELTS and Cambridge exam preparation as well as 1:1 classes, and with ESP Medical, Legal and Business being the most popular specialist English courses. This year, our ESP Medical teacher completed the necessary steps to deliver OET preparation courses.

Both summers, we ran lessons for 13-15-year olds, and this season, we have separate lessons for 16-17-year olds too. Thus, the campus is run as a junior-only site in the mornings, and adult-only in the afternoons which is beneficial to all, both pedagogically, safeguarding-wise and socially.

All levels, from A1 to C2 used our in-house Individual Learning portfolios with the can-do statements forming the basis of the curriculum with the vast majority of the students moving through the levels at the expected rate of one level progression for 12 weeks.

Thanks to our University Counsellor, not to mention the efforts of our dedicated IELTS teachers, several students have been accepted at the university of their choice.

Focus on Individual Learners / the Portfolio / Individual Learning Plan

Underpinning the delivery of all of our English courses, there is a more individualised approach to teaching and each student's learning.

Over the course of the last year, ETC has consolidated the use of its Individual Learning Plan which is underpinned by the Student Learner Portfolio which is intended to help focus each student's studies.

The Learner Portfolio demonstrates what students have been able to achieve in the language and sets achievement targets mapped against the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference).

Summary of enhancements planned in relation to Teaching and learning:

Review the integration of the CEFR and the portfolio into everyday teaching and learning.

Introduce more study skills, learner strategies and career-related skills into every course.

Make the portfolio an online document (and process).

Ensure teachers, academic managers, academic / careers advisers and support staff are accessible (if necessary by making appointments) and that they demonstrate good customer service when they handle enquiries, requests (eg. for level moves / attendance reports / tests / end of course reports, etc), complaints, etc. Polite, friendly, helpful and efficient. Provide CPD on this where needed.

Safeguarding

This is generally very well-managed, though we need to continue to ensure that all staff

members understand the rules and what good safeguarding involves. More training / CPD required – ideally delivered by someone from outside the college.

Accommodation / Host family provision

This has always been a problematic area, with such variance in the quality of the host family accommodation provision.

ETC has over 200 vetted host family providers (with approximately 400 beds available) in the Bournemouth area, but given the demand for accommodation in the area (including amongst our competitors), we always suffer from a shortfall throughout the summer. The pandemic and the rise of AirBnB have resulted in many homestay hosts withdrawing their accommodation from use for international students. This is of great concern because the availability of accommodation has an impact on ETC's ability to accept course bookings.

We are hoping to be able to recruit more families by increasing the amount paid to them for accommodating our students and by providing them with a level of service they need to fulfil their responsibilities. However, this remains a significant challenge.

Close personal attention and the development of good relations with our families helps us overcome any problems that do arise from time to time. This should also result in families migrating to us having heard of the service we provide.

By providing a door-to-door and / or taxi service for our Young Juniors we have also provided a greater level of security for our students which alleviates the pressure on our families to ensure students arrive home safely at the end of each day. This may or may not be possible in the future and this is one factor to consider in reviewing the viability (and future safety) of our Junior programmes.

By providing a full programme to our junior students, families also feel reassured that they will have time to conduct their personal affairs and not be required to look after the students every weekend. During the pandemic, however, it has been impossible to run our normal activities and excursions programme, meaning that we are not currently accepting junior groups or any students under the age of 16 (students aged 16 and 17 can join adult programmes with the authorisation of their parents / guardians) and having to point adult students towards leisure and excursion providers that they can use to book their own activities / trips.

The use of the Residence next door for accommodation and training purposes has given the college another string to its bow and again has helped to make ETC stand out from the rest of the schools and colleges in Bournemouth. It has been particularly valuable during the lockdown and has enabled us to host and supervise self-isolating students at the start of their stays.

The location of the residence, next door to the college is ideal and much appreciated by our students.

Students can sometimes lose their bearings or arrive at times when the college is closed but as the residence is always open, a member of staff would be available to assist.

The residence has also been useful in providing emergency accommodation for students

who have failed to notify us of the exact arrival date or for students who may have experienced problems in their host family and needed accommodation until another suitable host family could be found.

The residence was used exclusively for junior students during the summer of 2019, which resulted in greater security for those students as they were living closer to the college than would otherwise be the case. However, we used it for adult students in 2020, 2021 and again this year. It was invaluable during the pandemic as we were able to use it for those unable to return to their home countries.

To cope with the higher seasonal numbers of students booking courses, ETC also took on a large number of self-catering rooms for adult clients in a managed student residence (Dorchester House), close to the Bournemouth Travel Interchange in 2019. However, we secured the use of one building at the Laguna Hotel ("The Park Residence") and the Croham / Durley Chine Hotel ("The Beach Residence") for summer 2022, with the necessary health and safety / safeguarding provisions in place. For 2023, we secured the use of a certain number of rooms in Home Park residence (near St Paul's roundabout / the railway station), the Laguna Hotel and in Dorchester House, to supplement the homestay accommodation available. For 2024, we have so far secured rooms in the Cranborne House residence.

Questionnaires returned showed good levels of student satisfaction with these new offerings, so ETC is likely to use this type of accommodation for the summer of 2023 and 2024 – potentially beyond.

(Luckily, we did not commit to this type of accommodation in 2020 and 2021, as it turned out that due to the pandemic, it was not required).

Sports and social activities provision

This has always been one of ETC's strongest points and we have been able to impress students, agents and the British Council with our lively programme of activities and excursion.

The former Business (and Activities) Manager and his team should be commended for setting up and maintaining a safe but engaging programme of sports, social and cultural activities even through the busiest period of the year in 2019. We enjoyed a sustained, high-standard delivery of our sports, social and cultural activities programme due to the solid management of the team by the then Business Manager Ross Elliott. However, due to the coronavirus, it was not possible to maintain this service once the lockdown had started in 2020, though teachers made an effort to suggest engaging virtual social events and home-based activities for online students.

Early in 2022, we employed Iracema Almarcha to take on the management of the sports, social and cultural activities in place of the departing Ross Elliott. Following induction / training, she has stage-managed a series of lively and popular activities and excursions for the longer-term adult students in the college. Early in 2023, we also re-deployed Paul Russell and Santi Hurtado Calero to activities and excursions management roles, with good results and solid feedback from students, agents and fellow staff.

For summer 2022 and 2023, we once again hired, vetted and trained a small number of

additional activities organisers to ensure that students (adults and juniors – including those on group programmes) were kept safe and busy. In 2022, Roxy returned from Spain to help lead these activities, with additional input from Iracema and oversight by Kikumi. In 2023, this element of our provision was steered by Santi, with support from Paul and oversight by Hannah Wright, who has taken on the Business Manager role.

Key objectives for the Activities Programme in 2024:

We need to build a more engaged student community, promote the activities more actively and develop more memorable experiences for the students.

We aim to use social media more effectively to promote our leisure programme and also demonstrate what we do here.

We aim to integrate the leisure programme more effectively into the academic programme.

Student Feedback

Overall we have had very positive feedback regarding the level of service provided over the year. There are still certain areas that require attention.

Satisfaction with teaching has been very good generally, although there have been a small number of issues that have needed to be addressed through the ETC Performance Management Procedure or via the INSETs programme.

The balance of nationalities in the college is an important issue and one which must be addressed through targeted recruitment – particularly in markets other than Arabic-speaking ones.

In particular, it is important that the marketing department works on recruiting students from the Far East (eg. PRC, South Korea, Japan, Thailand), South America (eg. Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, etc) and Europe (eg. Germany, France, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Russia, etc), to make sure that the currently high numbers of Arabic speakers are balanced out with speakers of other languages.

This is particularly important at the lower levels in the college, where classes can be dominated by speakers of one or two languages – particularly Arabic speakers at the moment. It seems that Arabic students are the most confident in terms of travelling to the UK for their students in the post-pandemic world.

We have identified the need to redress the imbalance at the lower levels: hence the recent marketing efforts by certain team members to recruit students from China, Thailand, Vietnam and Kazakhstan in particular, where a slightly higher than average number of lower level students could be recruited. However, the pandemic has seriously affected our ability to recruit students from these markets.

Communication of social and sporting activities to our adult students is also an issue which must be addressed on an ongoing basis to ensure full participation and an enjoyable experience for all.

The main area that we have identified that needs further work is in facilities. In particular,

we need to ensure that there is a resilient WiFi connection across the mini campus and that more effective IT support is provided.

Investment in technology and materials is also something we must continue to implement as our students expect more use of technology. One area that ETC has targeted is the development of online learning materials for our e-learning facility.

IT support is currently overseen by Diyaa Maksousa (Operations and Facilities Manager / co-Director of ETC), Alessandro Khattib (IT Trainer and Support Officer) and Mike White (Technical Support Manager).

The Market / Objective

In recent years, the market (and ETC's place in it) has been affected adversely by such factors as poorly-focused government intervention, excessive bureaucracy, economic factors and increased competition.

As a result, given the wide range of potential threats, it is important that all staff remain focused on the over-arching aim of the college:

We aim to offer great value, high quality courses in an ethical manner and in line with the British Council and ISI Accreditation schemes.

The English department's academic Mission Statement remains:

We aim to provide the learner with the opportunity to practise their English in a constructive and supportive environment. We want them to enjoy a balance of receptive and productive skills, suitably scaffolded by the necessary grammar and lexis. We will actively encourage learners to develop their thinking skills through context and co-text and continue their development outside the classroom.

However, a college-wide Mission Statement has been developed by the Principal, following consultation with the ELT, FE HE, Marketing departments and Management, which will be signed off by the Board of Governors if / when agreed upon.

The Directors believe that ETC needs to continue to diversify and focus on the quality of its provision in order to meet the challenges of the wider business setting, remain profitable and maintain its market share.

- We have achieved a greater number of 'Strengths' than in any previous inspection in the most recent report published by the British Council. We would like to extend that to all areas of the college. It was unfortunate that the inspection once more took place in the busiest period (summer 2019), even though the Principal had specifically asked for a different date.
- We have achieved "Outstanding / Exceeds Expectations" in all categories in the most recent report on the college published by the ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate). This is the highest possible ranking. The college has just undergone two further inspections: one conducted by the QAA on behalf of the Office for Students and another, 3 weeks later, conducted by the ISI. We are awaiting feedback from each

of these bodies.

- There will need to be another full British Council / Accreditation UK inspection in 2024, at some date to be confirmed (the inspection board is running 1 year behind due to delays from the pandemic) and a Monitoring Visit by the ISI.

Target markets

Oman – visited in autumn 2022. Follow-up visit in autumn 2023 and another in January 2024. The potential opening of an Oman-based branch of ETC International College has been shelved temporarily, but the Omani licensing and documentation side has largely been completed now.

Non-Arabic markets to prioritise:

Far East / Eastern Europe (agents in Turkey / David to re-engage with his contacts)

Western Europe (eg. We need to find new representatives in Italy: Rome or Milan and consolidate existing agency arrangements in other key markets). Virginia, Kambiz, Ed and David to focus on these countries.

Latin America (Mexico, Chile, Argentina). Santi and Virginia will focus on these countries.

The Post-Pandemic Context

We have identified that there is room for development and expansion in the following areas:

- Adult English courses, EAP (English Pre-Sessional) courses, the UFP, HE courses and our Pre-Masters courses – promotion within certain under-served / untapped markets needed (eg. Western Europe, Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam).
- Executive English courses – particularly with the new ESP structures.
- Professional courses.
- Junior English courses – new promotional materials are required, along with slightly amended delivery methods / management systems (see below).

The Junior English courses that we have offered are under constant review, given the changes in legislation and the increased costs associated with running them.

In particular, ETC has adopted ever-more-stringent safeguarding measures for ensuring the safety and security of our students – especially juniors and vulnerable adults.

The ETC website has already been updated to reflect these changes.

We had hoped to be able to maintain the number of clients in 2020 compared with 2019, but the coronavirus pandemic undermined our business development.

2020 started normally but on March 23rd the college had to close and move to online tuition due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This was a complex and sudden operational switch, but over

the subsequent weeks and through sharing ideas and attending webinars etc., we were able to establish a more than satisfactory system of paperless tuition and academic admin. We used Zoom as our teaching medium and google docs for our shared admin. We were lucky to be able to depend on the hard work and support of Helen Rouse (previous DoS), Mike White (Marketing and IT) and Diyaa Maksousa (Operations and Facilities Manager), who in combination, ensured that the equipment and systems worked well – most of the time!

5 fixed-term teachers were furloughed and were eventually laid off when their contracts ended. The remaining 3 were laid off in September. A number of permanent staff were also furloughed. This was a sad period for the college.

In early summer 2022, our database was compromised, which required a great deal of work to mitigate the effects and set up a new temporary admin system, and it took until Autumn to be able to use it again. Luckily, however, we do not believe that any data was stolen.

On 13th July 2021 the college opened for onsite as well as online classes and for financial reasons due to a low number of students, we also began to offer hybrid classes comprising both onsite and online students in the same class. These were complex to manage initially and required adaptation of microphones and cameras in the classrooms, but after a few weeks, became the norm. ETC staffing was still at a basic level at this time, and a number of ETC managers were working from home or coming into ETC once or twice a week as required.

Visors were recommended for teachers to wear onsite until half way through the year when it became compulsory for everyone to wear masks at all times onsite. Happily, more normal working arrangements have resumed, with the vast majority of staff and students now back on-site. Notable exceptions are Mike White and Nadia Ghwedar, who officially both now work from home. (Mike White comes into the college once a month for an in-person catch-up meeting with the Principal. Nadia is currently on a sabbatical, with Kikumi Onishi taking over her role).

Our students were very understanding throughout the year and we received overall positive feedback from them regarding their lessons, and by the end of the year, we felt that we had learnt to offer them an effective service.

2022 – 2023 has shown good recovery, but not quite at the levels hoped for, largely due to the ongoing legacy of the pandemic, Brexit, lingering visa issuance problems in certain markets (eg. Turkey) and the war in Ukraine.

Bookings for 2024 are quite good, though we need to maintain the focus on recruiting students from non-Arabic countries to balance the nationalities better.

Summary of planned enhancements to Marketing / Publicity

Refocus course descriptions, brochures and other marketing materials: what are the key benefits (NOT just features) for students, agents, sponsors, parents?

Adjust the language we use: make students the subject. (Don't just talk about what ETC does).

Consider:

What makes ETC different (and better)?

What results will we deliver to students / sponsors?

What will students be able to do when they complete our courses?

How will sponsors benefit from their employees once they complete our courses?

Provide evidence (testimonials, case studies, etc) to back up these claims.

Follow up on our communications with agents regularly (phone and email – not just via the e-newsletter, which a lot of agents don't open).

Better use of social media (especially Instagram, Facebook and Tiktok). This needs a plan in its own right.

Publicity

Produce more video content – storyboard new programme of videos, focused on different courses, different services at ETC, different markets (Turkey, Japan, Korea, Germany, Italy, Spain, France, Brazil, etc), different people. Make certain students and staff the stars.

Produce a lightweight summary brochure for ELT programmes and another for FE HE programmes (with information that will not date). Again, these should be focused on key benefits and include student testimonials and case studies.

Marketing Plan:

Specific, measurable, achievable, time-bound objectives.

ETC will continue to carry out its advertising, promotional and marketing activities by means of:

- Direct mailings to educational establishments, language travel agencies and businesses overseas (and in some cases, in the UK).
- Leaflet distribution in the local market.
- Provision of postcards to current students to facilitate word-of-mouth recommendations.
- 24-hour, international presence via the ETC websites.
- Press advertising in carefully selected guidebooks and other international publications.
- Press releases to certain newspapers and appropriate business publications (eg. EL Gazette, Language Travel Magazine, the Business magazine, the Bournemouth Echo newspaper, etc). We have been able to gain some free publicity by this means.
- Attendance at overseas and UK language travel workshops, exhibitions and trade fairs.

- Attendance of industry fairs in London, Turkey, Dubai, Moscow and Berlin. Marketing trips to Oman, Korea, Japan, Colombia, Germany and Spain.
- Visits to carefully selected language travel agencies overseas.
- Participation in familiarization trips in 2024. These were impossible in 2020 / 2021 / 2022 / 2023.
- Maintenance of basic activity within social media platforms, including the college's Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn and Twitter accounts.
- Merchandise with ETC branding to be made available for sale at Reception / Library and via the Marketing office. The aim of this is to increase brand visibility and create a sense of loyalty amongst students and staff. Items currently available include baseball cap, T-shirt, polo shirt. Umbrella?
- Hosting of an Omani National Day event, a Qatari National Day event and a UAE National Day event in 2023 which should help to consolidate the college's relationship with the respective embassies and students. Subject to being able to run these events safely.

Priorities for effective development of the advertising, promotion and marketing of the company are as follows:

Upgrade our contact management database so that it can, for example, mailmerge documents (eg. mailshots) effectively with clients' addresses.

The marketing department sends out a regular e-shot to promote the college and specific courses / special offers, etc.

All staff are urged to contribute good news stories that could be used in these mailshots / in our marketing efforts.

We aim to carry out further development of our Social Media marketing activities – in line with our Social Media Policy.

Marketing Summary

Products / services (ie. courses to focus on):

- General English / IELTS exam preparation.
- ESP courses (which to prioritise?): Medical English and Aviation English, due to client demand.
- UFP courses: particularly the Business and Technology / Engineering variants. (The Media and Communications variant still needs to be developed).
- HNC / HND courses.
- OTHM level 4, 5 and 6 courses – these were new for 2021, but promotion of these courses is under review following feedback from student sponsors.

Methodology:**New Brochures produced (in pdf format only so far):**

- General Brochure.
- FE / HE Courses Brochure.
- Updated Adult Dates and Fees document.
- Updated Junior Dates and Fees document.

A new Professional Courses brochure is under development.

Junior programmes are once more operating – depending on availability of resources (staff, premises, accommodation, etc). As a result of the Covid pandemic, all junior programmes were suspended following a management review of the viability and safety of such, early in 2021. These were reinstated in 2022 and demand / delivery are now returning to normal levels.

Websites: a new main website structure and content has been installed (handled by Mike White) because the previous architecture was dated, unresponsive and contained too many textual anomalies inserted by the 3rd-party SEO company that was contracted by the marketing department. www.etc-inter.net This is now operating more effectively, alongside a second, linked website for FE HE courses, which is almost complete: www.etccollege.co.uk A third, linked website is under development for ETC's Professional Courses: www.executivecourses.org

Attendance at fairs (real and virtual) in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024:

We were only able to make physical market visits to Dubai and Oman before the lockdown.

However, these were effective in spreading the supply wider (as ETC has been over-dependent upon a very small number of agents in these markets).

ICEF Dubai 2020 – David attended.

Virtual ICEF Berlin 2020 – David attended.

Virtual English UK workshops – David attended (x3).

Virtual Latin America workshop – David attended.

David signed a new MoU with the VLU university in Vietnam, whose focus is on delivery of ELT, teacher training programmes both in the UK and online.

Our external consultant, Arnie Butt, also made marketing trips to Latin America, Ukraine and KSA and Kuwait.

Virtual StudyWorld Autumn 2021 – David attended. (40 meetings in 2 days).

David attended 2 further virtual StudyWorld workshops in January and March 2022.

David also attended the ICEF Berlin Workshop in November 2022.

In spring 2023, David attended StudyWorld Workshop in London, while Santi and Virginia

travelled to Bogota in Colombia to visit existing and potential agent / ETO contacts.

David attended StudyWorld London again in January 2024.

Social Media Marketing: need to consider appointing a new member of staff or an agency to handle this on a part-time basis, with consideration of a reasonable budget.

The Price / Funding / Contingency

ETC International College had performed very well over the last two years and even considering the coronavirus pandemic, is currently out-performing many of its local competitors in terms of student numbers and profitability. Many competitors are not even open yet.

As a result of the pressures from our competitors and other factors, such as the pandemic, downturn in the global economy, regional politics, etc, there has been great pressure to reduce course fees. Brexit still does not seem to have been a major factor so far, although it has had an impact in the recruitment of staff and the fact that European students cannot now travel to the UK without a passport has probably dampened demand for courses in the UK.

We have resisted doing this where possible (particularly with overseas bookings from the stronger markets, such as Western Europe and the Middle East).

Bookings are still down in certain other markets, such as Libya, Turkey, South Korea and Latin America generally. The war between Russia and Ukraine has also dented confidence and prevented students from those countries travelling here for courses – although ETC has offered a certain number of free places to Ukrainian refugees (currently 9 places).

Necessarily, we have to cover the costs involved in running the college, including:

- the cost of tuition (ie. teachers' salaries).
- administration costs (ie. staff salaries, software, equipment, etc).
- staff training and development.
- building maintenance costs.
- local taxes and business charges.
- utilities bills.

However, we have had to be more flexible with regard to the pricing of courses in the local market (eg. school switchers, over-the-counter bookings) and with current ETC students who are looking for a better deal when it comes time for them to extend their course.

Please refer to the printed Dates and Fees sheet or the dates and fees pages on the ETC website: www.etc-inter.net and www.etccollege.co.uk

Given the country's complicated visa processing system and the constant anti-Immigration rhetoric by MPs and in the media, our international agency partners have been sending fewer students and switching their bookings away from the UK.

We are hopeful that the current weak Pound will help us to grow enrolments from their current position, although our success in this may be hampered by Home Office-imposed visa restrictions and slow processing of visa applications.

We have also had to contend with the regular summer bottleneck created by late bookings plus the variable availability of student accommodation. A large element of this problem has been avoided this year via the use of more student residence-type accommodation for adult students. This has helped to cut processing time and is something that we therefore intend to extend in the future (ie. the summer of 2023 and beyond), although we do not expect to see very high numbers back for face-to-face tuition for some time, unfortunately.

To boost efficiency further, the management aims to switch over to a new database / management system (migrating away from Class, which has become slow and unwieldy). The migration will be managed by Diyaa Maksousa and Mike White, with support from Alessandro. Training will be provided for all database operators (academic teams, admin teams, marketing teams).

On the other hand, additional administrative staff members have been recruited so that staffing levels can be maintained. We have new staff in the Accommodation Department, Julie Hugo has continued to visit and inspect new / existing homestay providers.

To rationalise the Accommodation Department and to facilitate communication, we have moved the Residence Management into the Accommodation Office. This is functioning very effectively.

We aimed to ensure that there is earlier planning by the accommodation and welfare department / host family recruitment – this was ongoing through the winter of 2019 and recommenced in January 2020 to ensure that accommodation options were in greater supply ahead of summer 2020. In the end, there was no pressure at all, due to the fall off in demand (due to the pandemic).

We aim to reduce as many non-essential costs as possible and we raised accommodation fees slightly at the end of the summer (ie. with effect from September 2019) in order to match the local competition. Due to the pandemic, we did not adjust accommodation fees for 2021 and tuition fees were also unchanged, but we were forced to increase fees slightly for 2022 and again for 2023. Due to the competitive environment that we are now in, we will do our best to keep fees at their current levels for 2024.

Staff Training and Development

ETC aims to continuously improve the quality of the service provided to its clients by working in partnership with its staff to develop essential skills and practices that can enhance the learning experience for students and increase the level of job satisfaction derived by staff members.

ETC encourages staff to attend regular staff meetings, internal INSET sessions and external training courses whereby these skills and practices can be developed.

Teaching staff are observed teaching periodically and feedback from these observations as well as feedback from student questionnaires is handled in a sympathetic and constructive manner.

Staff training and development is one of the areas that should be discussed at each staff member's yearly appraisal meeting (ordinarily in September / October), though there should

be the opportunity to discuss this informally throughout the rest of the year.

We have maintained quality service provision by providing support and resources for teachers with an in-house trainer (John Kay, Training and Development Director) offering additional academic breadth and assistance in the continuous professional development of existing teachers.

Athena Teacher Training is now under direct ETC control / management, to provide teacher training courses so that ETC can recruit the best of the trainee teachers to teach here at ETC when qualified. Athena has provided ETC with highly motivated teachers who have successfully completed the Cert TESOL course, generally bringing a lot of enthusiasm and energy with them. We aim to run a Cert TESOL again in the autumn of 2023, if there is sufficient demand in order to help provide future teachers for ETC and other schools. This is quite urgent given how difficult it has been to recruit ELT staff in the summer of 2023 and because one of the other local providers, ITTC, has now stopped operating / delivering the Cambridge CELTA.

We have started promoting more actively the new ESP course structures, our EAP (English Pre-Sessional) courses, our University Foundation Programme and our FE HE and Professional courses – marketing and academic staff will require training so that they understand how these courses fit into the ETC portfolio and in the case of marketing staff, in particular, how students should be recruited onto them.

Appraisals were last conducted in the winter of 2019 for all staff members (with one or two exceptions for operational reasons). A majority of staff were furloughed throughout the pandemic, so it was not practical to conduct appraisals for everyone in 2020.

The latest round of full appraisals took place in the autumn / winter of 2023.

Staff training and development is seen as vital in order to ensure that staff have the skills that they need to offer a continuously-improving service, for the college to remain competitive, as well as to maintain staff morale.

As a result, there is an ongoing, very successful programme of INSET sessions run by the Director of Studies and other members of the academic team for the teaching staff.

The Training and Development Director (John Kay) was able to again manage a very popular and effective programme of INSET sessions for the academic team. We are confident that following his retirement, Debbie Wilson – who has worked alongside John, Hazel and Sarah – will be able to maintain this work to a high standard and help to maintain academic standards amongst the ELT / FE HE teaching staff. John has, however, agreed to continue to provide input into our CPD programme and help to coordinate our Teacher Training programmes on an ad-hoc basis.

In 2022 and 2023, there have again been many excellent presentations and workshops – latterly mainly delivered online - and judging by staff feedback: everyone who participated has indicated that they have benefited greatly.

The Management greatly appreciate the efforts of all those who have run the sessions and attended the sessions as a participant, because the enhanced skills and teaching techniques

gained through these sessions have resulted in generally excellent feedback from students (as evidenced in recent student questionnaires).

We hope that in 2024, teaching staff have will once more be able to participate in external training courses throughout the year, including attendance at English UK and / or RALSA training sessions and presentations.

ETC will continue to support staff training and development by retaining its own programme of INSET sessions and funding selected external training offered by recognised providers.

This programme has been very successful and the management very much appreciate teachers' enthusiasm for the series of INSETS that have been programmed.

In taking over from John Kay, Debbie Wilson has proven to be very effective in managing CPD for the academic team.

The Director of Studies, Senior Teachers and Debbie Wilson have each completed a set of teacher observations and drew the following conclusions about the academic team's strengths and also about areas requiring further development:

Strengths:

- Rapport
- Classroom management skills including good control and clear instructions
- Friendly encouraging classroom presence and manner
- Teachers' own use of language and appropriate language grading for level
- All the relevant paperwork completed and lesson plans supplied
- The use of pair and group work has greatly increased
- Clarity of explanations
- Highlighting pronunciation and stress, etc, on the board
- Focus on lesson aims
- Student engagement and interest
- Some really good attempts to use the course book more effectively

Areas that could still be improved by some teachers - in order of instances of occurrence:

- Dealing with new vocabulary
- Error Correction
- Checking meaning has been understood

- Making sure the learners can use the language before fluency work
- Using context to introduce new grammar
- Setting a task before asking the students to read or listen
- Getting the students to compare answers in pairs before whole class feedback
- Avoiding “flying with the fastest” in the class
- Not planning too ambitiously in terms of content and timing of lesson stages
- Not getting students to read whole reading texts aloud
- Trying to personalise the material and make it more relevant to the students
- Going beyond the coursebook.

Academic INSET sessions delivered in 2020:

Phonology

Portfolio

Various Language Awareness sessions

How to identify and plan for learning outcomes

Specific low level training

ME- specific teaching strats.

Workshop on tech for classes

How not to over prep.

How to deal with low level ielts and continuous enrolment

Drama in the classroom

Activity-linked ideas for lessons

Instruction-giving

Classroom management / how to motivate sts in small rooms with no room for movement.

Academic INSET sessions delivered in 2021:

Using Breakout Rooms.

Using Padlet (various sessions).

Dyslexia and Learner Difficulties.

Assessment / Testing.

MacMillan: Digital Games.

OUP: English File CPD.

Differentiation.

Assessment.

Teacher Training & CPD for the ELT & FE HE departments 2022 / 2023

We have maintained quality service provision by providing support and resources for teachers with an in-house trainer (John Kay, Training and Development Director) offering additional academic breadth and assistance in the continuous professional development of

existing teachers. When John retired in June 2023, Debbie Wilson took over his CPD responsibilities.

Athena Teacher Training is now under direct ETC control / management, to provide teacher training courses so that ETC can recruit the best of the trainee teachers to teach here at ETC when qualified. Athena has provided ETC with highly motivated teachers who have successfully completed the Cert TESOL course, generally bringing a lot of enthusiasm and energy with them. We aim to run a Cert TESOL again in the autumn of 2023, if there is sufficient demand in order to help provide future teachers for ETC and other schools. This is quite urgent given how difficult it has been to recruit ELT staff in the summers of 2022 and 2023 and because one of the other local providers, ITTC, has now stopped operating / delivering the Cambridge CELTA.

Regarding staff development, annual appraisals and teacher observations informed our choice of CPD sessions, and this will be the case ongoing resulting from observations of summer teachers, such as the rationale behind teaching reading and how to use same reading for differentiation /fast finishers for example lower levels can find capital letters, full stops , copy etc; higher levels can use critical thinking skills regarding the reader, the writer's intentions , make new endings of the text.

Also Listening-how to exploit for identification of blurred word boundaries, using tape script for lexis, identification of sense units including intonation to express emotion, key words. Finally, tips to help with differentiation /classroom management in junior classes (they need shorter tasks, lots of praise when using transactional phrases /classroom phrases -'I think its ..., I'm not sure 'etc)

Sessions for teachers over the past 12 months have in brief included : rapport, exploiting test tasks, language awareness, exploiting coursebooks, teaching juniors, propositions, phonemic script, language awareness, rhythm and back-chaining, accessing e-coursebook materials ,controlled oral practice, unpacking conditionals, google docs workshop, teaching writing, teaching listening, pre-summer term review.

These CPD sessions were led by John Kay, Training and Development Director in collaboration with Christine Le Poidevin and with input from Helen Rouse. Latterly, also by Debbie Wilson.

Several teachers attended the English UK online conference and fed back to the team.

In 2022 / 2023:

A significant development is that Tony Sullivan has undertaken a Train the Trainer programme in First Aid at Work, including the safe use of an AED (defibrillator). Once trained, he then delivered our first in-house First Aid at Work course for 3 members of staff, with more to follow.

He also helped in the purchase and installation of ETC's own defibrillator (fitted to the outside wall at the rear of the Reception building in an alarmed box - out of the weather but accessible).

FIRE TRAINING

Mooied Dayib Alayon 28/07/22
Tomasz Baran 01/01/22
Paola Espinoza 02/11/22
Santiago Hurtado 07/06/23
Diyaa Maksousa 21/02/23
Imed Khalifa 25/05/23
Martha Alexandra 21/05/23
Paul Russell 07/06/23
Izabel Scalabrin 21/02/23.

FIRST AID

Mohaned Alayan 07/07/22
Mooaied Alayon 15/07/22
Mohamed Alyan 15/07/22
Tomasz Baran 02/06/23 (including defibrillator)
Fella Benaziza 24/06/23
Ilham Benaziza 24/06/23
Helen Dendle 24/06/23
Santiago Hurtado 02/06/23 (including defibrillator)
Elouise James 09/06/22
Kirsten Marner Foley 24/06/23
Eneas Pereira 02/06/23 (incl defibrillator)
Denis Pickering 24/06/23
Paul Russell 02/06/23 (incl defibrillator)
Izabel Scalabrin 09/06/22
Hazel Valvona 11/03/22
Paul Woodland (online) 10/07/22.

Tony Sullivan 03/02/23 ('Train the trainer' course - 30/01/23-03/02/23).

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Santiago Hurtado
'Personal Resilience' 23/02/23
'Understanding Young Minds' 07/06/23.

Sarah Vivian - NCFE Level 2 13/05/22.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY and INCLUSION

Santiago Hurtado - LGBTQ+ Awareness 23/02/23
Tina Musson - EDI 19/01/22 (Sarah Vivian has LGBT Inclusion Level 2 12/04/22 + 06/01/23 - independently studied).

FOOD SAFETY

Maria Espinosa 26/05/23
Paola Espinoza Level 2 22/05/23

Santiago Hurtado 'Allergen Awareness' 06/12/22 Johnny Lucas 25/05/23.

COSHH

Maria Espinosa 17/03/23

Paola Espinoza 07/03/23

Johnny Lucas 01/03/23.

OTHER COURSES

Fabio Ceccolini: 'Keeping Children Safe Online' 30/09/22 & 'OnlineSafety' 09/11/22.

Chris Parker & Helen Rouse: 'Safeguarding for Governors' BCP Council Nov 2022.

Mike White: 'Consumer Rights for Retailers' 05/09/22-05/09/23

Sarah Vivian: 'Raising Awareness of LADO' (1:1) 10/11/21

Santiago Hurtado: English UK 'Social Programmes and Safeguarding in ELT'.

PREVENT:

Louise Brett 08/05/23

Rhiannon Martin 25/06/23

Alejandro Osorio 14/10/22.

Rob Pilbrow: 'Invigilator Training & Assessment' 2021/2022

Theresa Tinggal : BC IELTS Teacher Training Workshop.

EMERGENCY PHONE TRAINING 21/03/23:

Tomasz Baran

Santiago Hurtado

Adam Worsdale.

Also:

Hannah Wright: 'Principles of Business Administration' & (independently achieved) NCFE Level 2 'Understanding Behaviour that Challenges' 2022/3.

Sarah Vivian: independently achieved NCFE Level 2 'Environmental Awareness & Climate Change' 2022/3.

SAFEGUARDING LEVEL 2 (Advanced)

Iracema Almarcha 01/07/2022

Tomasz Baran 23/06/2023

Praveena Bhattiprolu 01/12/2022

Gaynor Cameron 13/05/2022

Maria Espinosa 02/12/2022

Simon Hayward 18/09/2022

Julie Hugo 02/12/2022

Elouise James 01/07/2022
Kuniko Kojima 02/12/2022
Johnny Lucas de Freitas 02/12/2022
Geetha Mariappan 02/12/2022
Kirsten Marner-Foley 01/07/2022
Steve Mott 01/03/2023
Sasi Priya 01/12/2022
Kikumi Onishi 02/12/2022
Agustin Piatti 23/06/2023
Rob Pilbrow 02/12/2022
Olivia Smith 23/06/2023
Simon Hayward 02/12/2022
Paul Woodland 01/07/2022
Njazi Zyberaj 02/12/2022.

SAFEGUARDING LEVEL 3 (Specialist)

David Jones 29/03/2023
Steve Mott 01/03/2023
Kikumi Onishi 19/05/2022
James Pond 04/05/2022.

A noticeboard in the photocopy room (off Reception) shows the latest status of Safeguarding, First Aid and other special duty training, with names of current staff on display.

HR and Compliance Officers Tina Musson and Helen Rouse maintain the Single Central Register for all key staff training and certification, including DBS check status, as appropriate to their roles. Check this register for the latest status of all training conducted and / or required.

Focused training has been arranged for certain staff members (as a result of individual needs identified via the ETC Appraisals system and / or lesson observations / staff and student feedback and with reference to college requirements).

Additional training has already been requested / booked for 2024 for certain staff members on a case-by-case basis – as appropriate to their roles.

Please also refer to the College's Training and Development Plan.

Summary of planned enhancements in Management

We aim to make the working environment more appealing – with greater support for staff, more focus on encouragement and team-working, where voices are heard.

There is a friendly atmosphere at ETC: we should show this and make the most of it, while also improving on efficiency.

Summary of enhancements desired in Staffing / HR

We have identified a need to review teachers' pay and conditions – and the way interviews

are held. Our approach needs to support staff recruitment and retention.

We need to address recruitment issues: one recent applicant didn't understand the summer bonus scheme and the huge disparity in pay led him to take a position at Kaplan.

We would like to find ways for people from different teams to meet and engage with people from other teams (eg. teachers and admin staff / FE HE staff and ELT staff, homestay hosts). For example: a barbecue, international food party, guest speaker event or similar could help with this – different events that bring staff and students together. This type of activity, if handled well, should lead to more of a community feel.

Premises / Equipment / Facilities

Although the premises are generally in good condition and the envy of some other language school operators, there is no room for complacency and we shall need to address certain cosmetic matters.

In particular, it will soon be necessary to refurbish external areas and re-paint exterior walls. The front of number 24 West Hill Road was re-painted during the first lockdown period in April / May 2020. Several external walls at the rear of the premises have also been re-painted.

Taking into consideration the recovery period post pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine, we have taken a somewhat cautious approach to expenditure. We have not looked to start any significant projects which would lead to a major capital outlay, rather focussing on ensuring our current activities and operations are running smoothly and repairing or replacing items as required. To this end, we have purchased five smart boards to replace overhead projectors for example and replaced old PC's with new models.

We have moved our college management system to the cloud to minimise disruption in the event of local server failure and a more resilient back up system.

We will be migrating to a new management system in the autumn which we believe will be a better fit for our organisation and provide the necessary support services for existing and new staff members.

We have rewired one of our buildings to provide better internet access and invested in additional access points and we are currently renewing and repairing the same building as part of our ongoing schedule of work.

Repairs have been made to the tarmac at the rear of the premises (May 2023).

Furniture has been reviewed and better use made of existing items (June 2023).

A new oven and a new cooker have been purchased to replace the older items in the ETC café (December 2023).

We have acquired a significant amount of teachers' resources materials. We have been able to purchase some of these new materials at significantly reduced rates due to the unfortunate closure of several local language schools.

With the demise of ITTC, the TESOL training centre, we purchased its coursebooks and other appropriate materials (summer 2023). We hope to be able to put these to good use when we next run our Cert TESOL programme or other teacher training courses.

We have installed two new boilers for the main cafe and 24 West Hill Road / reception, classrooms and offices.

In addition, we have repaired or replaced all electrical and electronic appliances, following an extensive programme of PAT testing.

A fire alarm system that covers the main central buildings has been installed and tested satisfactorily.

We have also completed a complete re-wiring of the college premises. The newest building (2 Durley Road) on our mini-campus has had its wiring replaced and tested.

New and improved lighting has been installed in the college corridors and in the classrooms.

Wired internet connections have been installed to all of the classrooms.

Additional CCTV was installed to cover all external entrances following a series of attempted break ins. This is operating effectively and happily there have been no further break-ins / break-in attempts recently.

Diyaa (Operations and Facilities Manager), supported by Izzie, is effectively managing the resources in the library / self-access room, although we are considering ways in which these resources could be better housed and accessed by students.

A new room numbering system is being designed – for greater clarity. All staff to be consulted on this.

Reception

With the assistance of several other members of staff, Office staff have tidied the Reception and adjoining offices (and managed to keep it tidy!) – particularly the visible wiring.

This has been very helpful as the Reception is the college's "shop window" and is very important in shaping visitors' perceptions of the company.

It would be much appreciated if everyone could please reflect on this and help the Reception staff to keep the whole college clean and tidy.

We aim to replace the flooring in the main Reception as soon as possible (and when our budget permits this).

All Classrooms

Have been equipped with new ETC-branded notices and numbering.

IPA and maps (as in all classrooms) have been posted if they were not already present.

Additional interactive whiteboards or computer-connected projectors are being installed in more classrooms in an ongoing process of upgrades – as finances permit. This is part of a rolling refurbishment programme.

Existing older computers in classrooms should be replaced with new computers in batches, when finances permit.

Vision panels have been placed in every classroom door.

Lock-down alarms and locks are to be fitted, tested and drills carried out once a system is decided upon. (We aim to observe a lockdown drill that our neighbouring state school St Michael's intends to run in order to identify procedures that work well for our own context).

It would be helpful if everyone could try to keep the classrooms as clean and tidy as possible. For instance, at the end of each lesson, returning furniture to the position in which it was originally laid out.

Students' Entrances and other general areas around the premises:

Staff members' photos have been updated.

Fire safety notices have been checked and re-positioned where necessary.

Room numbering will be revised for greater clarity (as soon as possible in 2024).

The larger Teachers' Room is now operating on the ground floor of the ETC Residence at No. 26 West Hill Road. This was further enlarged to provide 10 additional work stations.

At busy times (ie. particularly in the summer months, we also use Room 53 in the building at no. 2 Durley Road as an overspill teachers' room).

More efficient air conditioning units have been installed in some areas of the college buildings. We have reminded staff that opening windows in classrooms defeats the object of air conditioning.

We aim to replace the flooring in the main students' entrances when budget permits.

Summary of enhancements being considered relating to resources and environment:

Ensure that the campus is safe, clean and tidy: remove litter immediately, remove weeds immediately.

Redecorate certain areas – especially the entrances and common areas.

Make the campus more appealing and give it colour and character. Many of the common areas are either tired-looking and untidy (eg. entrance to No. 22 and No. 24) or very plain and lacking personality (eg. the café).

Use uniform branding throughout the college.

A remodelling of the ETC library is underway, managed by Izzy Barreto, with the computers

being moved to other rooms and comfortable seating being installed in place of the rows of desks.

Removal of scrappy signs / notices – this has started and new smarter, branded signage is being installed in their place.

Any motivational messages should be smartly-produced. Remove scraps of paper.

Use large scale artwork (eg. vinyls / framed images) to bring in colour and character.

Create some photo opportunities that students can use as the backdrop for their photos. These will help to promote the college.

Upgrade all IT facilities, when finances allow.

Review learning resources regularly (each academic department is responsible for this).

Administration

Invoices are being sent out on receipt of enrolment forms (ie. much more promptly), which has significantly improved the college's cash flow. New staff in the finance department have worked hard to streamline the processes there at a time of increased business following the pandemic.

There have been some difficulties over the course of the last year involving the request for credit terms by certain language travel agencies and there were several disputes in this area, since it is the company policy to request full payment in advance for all students' courses. (In fact, this is an unwritten law in the language school trade, although many of our competitors choose to ignore it!). In most cases, these disputes have now been resolved.

Please refer to the updated ETC Conditions of Enrolment, the ETO (agent) Agreement and the ETO / Agent Pack.

Systems have been continually upgraded to reflect changes to the legislation relating to visa issuance and junior supervision.

The Legalities

ETC continues to operate as a Limited Company.

Future Plans

An Equality and Diversity officer (Tina Musson) was appointed (in addition to her role as HR and Compliance Officer).

Training for Consumer Protection Law – Hannah and David, to disseminate to the marketing team to ensure all documentation includes necessary information.

ETO Training and webinar as an open forum discussion. Several such sessions have already taken place (2022 and 2023), with more to follow in 2024.

Implementation of new admissions policy and creation of admissions pack to provide clearer information for students pre-application.

Include data capture on the enrolment form for protected characteristics and record statistics.

Plan to break through to other markets. This is in our Board of Governor minutes, but Covid hindered this. We need to revive this as a matter of urgency. (At the time of writing this, Virginia Parandian and Santi Hurtado Calero had recently returned from a marketing trip to Colombia). They visited Colombia again and also aim to visit Mexico for the first time in 2024.

David Jones has attended the StudyWorld London fair in January 2024.

Review our accessibility plan.

David Jones joined the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) and the Anglo-Omani Society in order to stay abreast of developments and potential business opportunities (and to be able to update staff and attend training and networking events).

Implementing research – staff can get paid 10 hours a year to conduct research (this is a BTEC initiative, but needs to be encouraged).

Guest lecturers, cultural speakers programme and industry visits to resume. The first of these has taken place: a talk by published writer Sue Cheung was well attended by students and staff. A follow-up talk by a photographer and another by a local semi-professional boxer are being planned.

Put in place an admissions questionnaire and include students who don't take up a place.

An ETC anti-plagiarism working group has started, managed by the FE HE department.

Create a student representative pack for improved student engagement.

Produce an ETO pack for the FEHE department – with more in-depth information and guidance.

Some of our documents will be translated into Arabic: brochures, handbooks etc, and Kortext.

Promotion of our partnership with BU library for student use.

Budgets and strategy – add to Board of Governors agenda.

Conclusion

Overall, we enjoyed quite good results for 2019 - 2020, but unsurprisingly, the coronavirus had a major impact on the college's performance over the course of the last few years (2020

– 2022). 2023 was a much better year, with peak student numbers of around 500 students in July. Out-of-season groups have also helped us to bounce back. There is still great potential for further consolidation and growth in 2024 and beyond.

There have been some significant macro-level challenges and again, there has been a lot of expenditure on the fabric of the building and installations, particularly in terms of IT systems and the construction work and refurbishment of certain areas around the college, better use of storage space and further development of the new Engineering / Electronics Workshop.

The development and consolidation of several new higher education courses (especially the Professional courses and HND programmes) is an exciting new departure and although the students enrolled onto them to date have come from one or two sources only, we hope that these programmes will be taken up by clients in multiple markets as time goes on and once we have a dedicated new FE / HE courses brochure, with which we will be able to promote them internationally more effectively.

We hope that as in 2023, 2024 will prove to be a year of re-growth and re-development, with the launch of some new products and promotion in new markets, alongside the consolidation of others: we are hoping for a much more positive year of trading. We are confident that we can continue to develop and grow, with less dependence on the Middle East for student recruitment and a better nationality mix in the different departments.

Everyone has played a part in ETC's resilience in recent times and in particular for the excellent work that every put in over the course of the lockdown / pandemic – these have been exceptional times and yet ETC has seemingly weathered the storm very well. That is a testament to the determination of our staff and the quality of our systems and customer service – all of which encourages repeat business from students, agents and sponsors.

Updated February 2024 David Jones, Principal.
Next update due February 2027