

Open College Network NI

Strategic Plan

2019-2023

Recognising and
Rewarding Learning

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Welcome from our Chair



Being Chair of OCN NI is a great privilege, our organisation is at the forefront of developing qualifications tailored to meet the needs of learners within Northern Ireland. Our qualifications continue to help people prepare for employment, gain valuable work experience and ultimately secure a job. OCN NI is extremely proud of the contribution our qualifications and courses can make to building resilience, flexibility, enterprise, problem solving, team-working, leadership and lifelong learning skills.

Our new three year Strategic Plan is the culmination of OCN NI Directors and Staff working together to develop a plan that helps make our vision a reality, *'A successful, inclusive society where every learner matters'*.

In order to contribute to the development of this plan, the Board of Directors has engaged in a series of Continuing Personal Development (CPD) activities with OCN NI staff to gain a better understanding of the impact OCN NI qualifications have on our Centres and learners. As a leading Awarding Organisation OCN NI will continue to advance education by developing nationally accredited qualifications and recognising the achievements of adults and young people who live and work in Northern Ireland and beyond.

We trust you will find our Strategic Plan informative and that all our stakeholders continue to find innovative ways to help learners to become work-ready and life-ready.

Kate Fleck
Chair, OCN NI



Kate Fleck, Chair

Note from our Chief Executive



ocn
northern ireland

Welcome to the OCN NI Strategic Plan 2019-2023. OCN NI is a leading Awarding Organisation, working with Further Education Colleges, Schools, Training Organisations, Third Sector Organisations, Health Trusts, Prisons and other education and training organisations. Our offices are based in Belfast and we are regulated by statutory bodies to develop professional and technical qualifications from Entry Level up to and including Level 5 across all subject areas.

We are an independent, self-financing charitable organisation that has a proven track record of delivering and contributing to the NI skills agenda. As an indigenous Awarding Organisation based in Belfast, our priority is to develop and maintain qualifications tailored to the needs of people living and working in NI. Our flexibility and responsiveness to economic need ensures our qualifications are tailored to the needs of education and training providers, employers, learners and align to the outcomes of the draft NI Programme for Government.

Our mission is to *'develop and award qualifications which engage, enrich and equip learners for life.'* At OCN NI we recognise that our mission can only be delivered if we work in partnership and collaboration with other like-minded organisations. Through working in partnership with our recognised education and training providers, we are able to develop and award qualifications which help tackle educational underachievement and remove barriers to learning. Since OCN NI was established, we have developed economically relevant and learner engaging curricula, which have benefited the lives of over half a million people living in NI.

Over the coming years we will continue to support our local government, its departments and our education and training providers. We will tackle educational underachievement and help to create a skilled workforce to meet the needs of the NI economy and beyond.

Martin Flynn,
Chief Executive Officer
OCN NI



Martin Flynn, CEO

Our History



Over
500,000
learners enrolled
through OCN NI

2019 —
Launched new
Strategic Plan 2019-23

Held 1st Learner Awards
Ceremony and enrolled
500,000th learner

2018 —
Achieved Investors in
People Silver Status

2016 —
Received approval for
our 200th Qualification

2015 —
Recognised by
CCEA Regulation to
offer Professional &
Technical Qualifications

Registered by Charities
Commission for NI

2011 —
Recognised by
Ofqual as
an independent
Awarding Body

2001 —
Pioneered a unitised
credit framework

2000 —
Signed partnership
with NOCN

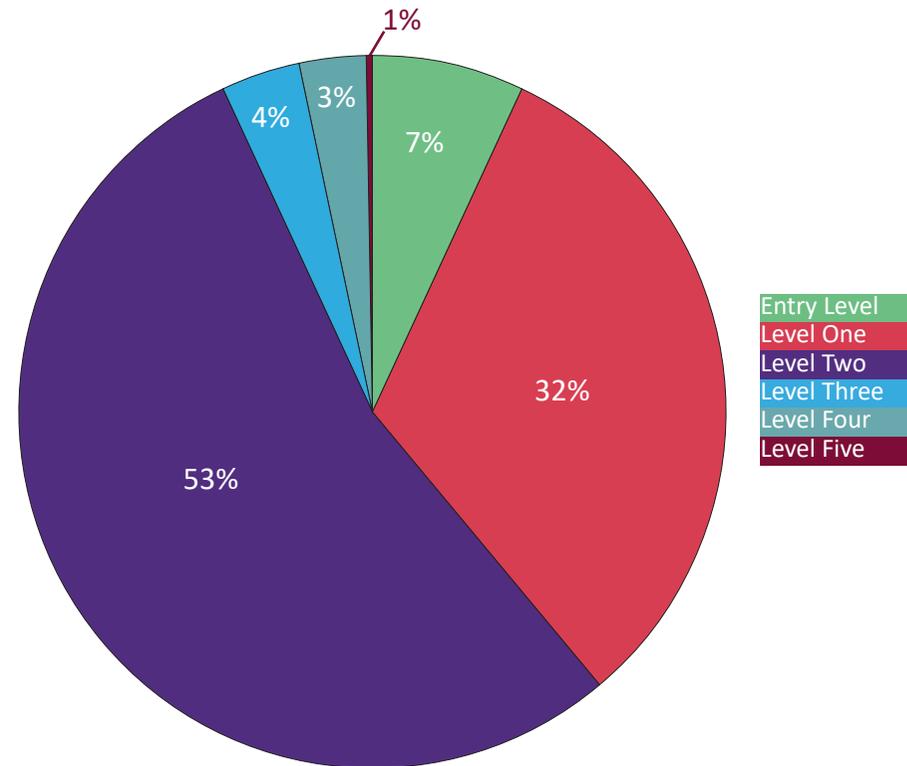
1995 —
Company founded,
funded by ELBs and DEL

Key Facts

**52,000 Learners Registered
throughout Northern Ireland
2018/19**

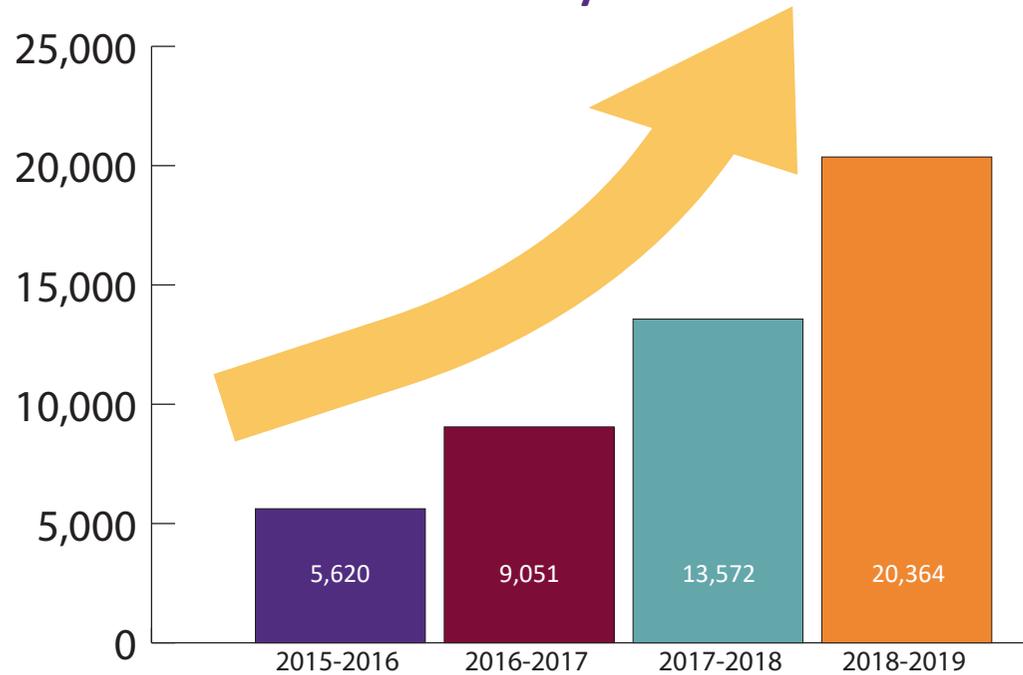


**Qualifications Awarded
by Level 2018/19**

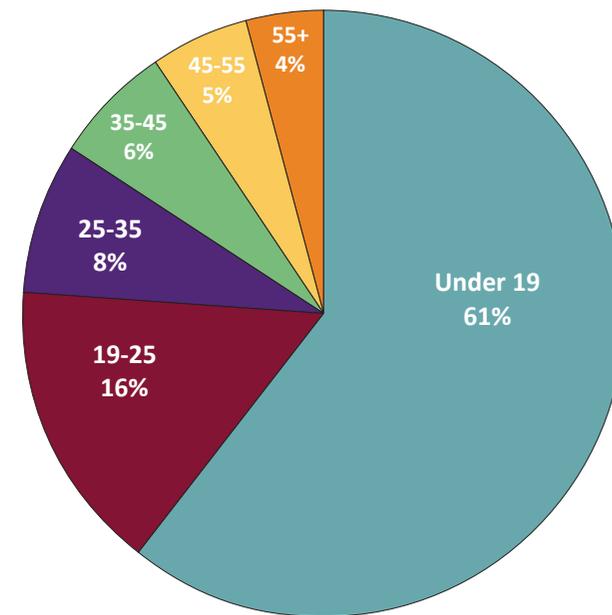


Key Facts

OCN NI Qualifications Awarded by Year



Breakdown of Learner Registrations by Age



Who We Work With



Our Top Sectors



N.B this data is accurate as of September 2019



**Mission
& Vision**

Our Journey To Success

Our Mission

To develop and award qualifications which engage, enrich and equip learners for life

Strategic Goal 2

To promote learning as a tool for transformation

Strategic Goal 1

To be the Awarding Organisation of choice





Strategic Goal 3

To be innovative, creative and continuously improve

Our Vision

A successful, inclusive society where every learner matters

Our Values



Learner Centred

Everyone has the right to learn and develop throughout their lives and have that learning recognised and valued. We will enable individuals to achieve their aspirations by encouraging learner achievement through developing and supporting appropriate qualifications.



Respect

Everyone is entitled to be valued equally and treated with dignity and respect. We will apply the highest standards of integrity in everything we do.



Excellence

Everyone has the right to high quality services which are accessible, valued and responsive to need. We will constantly strive for excellence through industry recognised standards e.g Investors in People accreditation, ISO 9001 accreditation and achieve the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) quality mark.



Collaboration

The needs of learners are more effectively met by working closely together with our Centres and other stakeholders to seek collaborative partnerships.

**Strategic
Goals**



Our Strategic Goals

1

Goal 1: To be the Awarding Organisation of Choice

Aim 1.1: To respond effectively to the needs and aspirations of our customers and other stakeholders in line with best practice

Aim 1.2: To ensure OCN NI's services and activities are delivered to the highest standards

Aim 1.3: To increase awareness of OCN NI and our work; effectively market our qualifications to relevant audiences; and ensure appropriate communication with our stakeholders

2

Goal 2: To promote learning as a tool for transformation

Aim 2.1: To work in partnership to advance learner education throughout life and effectively contribute to departmental policy

Aim 2.2: To demonstrate best practice in resource planning, management and reporting; and effectively demonstrate value for money

Aim 2.3: To ensure the governance of the organisation complies with the law and best practice

3

Goal 3: To be innovative, creative and continuously improve

Aim 3.1: To expand and develop qualifications and services to meet current and future learner needs and aspirations

Aim 3.2: To embed innovative use of technologies in all we do

Aim 3.3: To be an effective learning organisation and employer of choice

“

Excellent customer service is not an addition to our services, it is at the forefront of what we do.

”



Goal 1: To be the Awarding Organisation of choice

Customer Service

Aim 1.1: To respond effectively to the needs and aspirations of our customers and other stakeholders in line with best practice.

Priorities for 2019-2023:

- Regularly assess the needs, requirements and satisfaction of our Centres and other stakeholders
- Regularly assess the outcomes for learners
- Ensure processes and skills are in place to continuously improve customer service

Organisational Excellence

Aim 1.2: To ensure OCN NI's services and activities are delivered to the highest standards.

Priorities for 2019-2023:

- Ensure OCN NI maintains compliance with the qualifications' regulators and always aims to exceed requirements
- Ensure our Centres receive appropriate support from OCN NI
- Develop appropriate structures and systems to receive feedback and respond to the views of stakeholders
- Review, measure and report on OCN NI's performance



Goal 1: To be the Awarding Organisation of choice

Marketing and Communications

Aim 1.3: To increase awareness of OCN NI and our work; effectively market our qualifications to relevant audiences; and ensure appropriate communication with our stakeholders.

Priorities for 2019-2023:

- Develop, implement and review a Marketing and Communications Plan
- Strengthen the organisation's external profile with the public, decision-makers and opinion-formers
- Promote the wider value of OCN NI accreditation to evidence how we improve lives and society
- Review, measure and promote the organisation's distinctive brand and its reputation for trust and credibility
- Strengthen the value, reputation, distinctiveness and currency of OCN NI qualifications with employers and other stakeholders



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We will continue to promote learning as a tool for transformation, ensuring our learners have qualifications which enable them to succeed in life.

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Goal 2: To promote learning as a tool for transformation

Advocacy

Aim 2.1: To work in partnership to advance learner education throughout life and effectively contribute to departmental policy.

Priorities for 2019-2023:

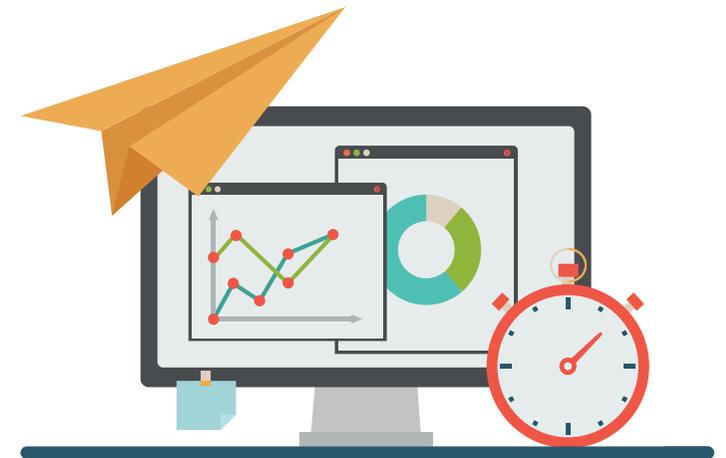
- Develop, implement and regularly review an Advocacy Plan for advancing education and qualifications and influencing departmental policy developments
- Demonstrate the contribution of OCN NI to the draft NI Programme for Government and outcome-based commissioning
- Engage effectively in relevant collaborations, forums and networks
- Contribute to the development of the Qualifications Framework tailored to the needs and aspirations of learners

Financial and physical resources

Aim 2.2: To demonstrate best practice in resource planning, management and reporting; and effectively demonstrate value for money.

Priorities for 2019-2023:

- Ensure OCN NI generates sufficient net income to enable it to achieve its aims and priorities in a sustainable way
- Effectively and efficiently plan and manage organisational finances and ensure appropriate finance policies and procedures are in place and implemented
- Review the potential for reducing costs, improving efficiency and ensuring effective return on investment
- Ensure the organisation has the physical resources it requires to achieve its plans and that these are effectively managed
- Ensure external associates deliver to the highest standards



Goal 2: To promote learning as a tool for transformation

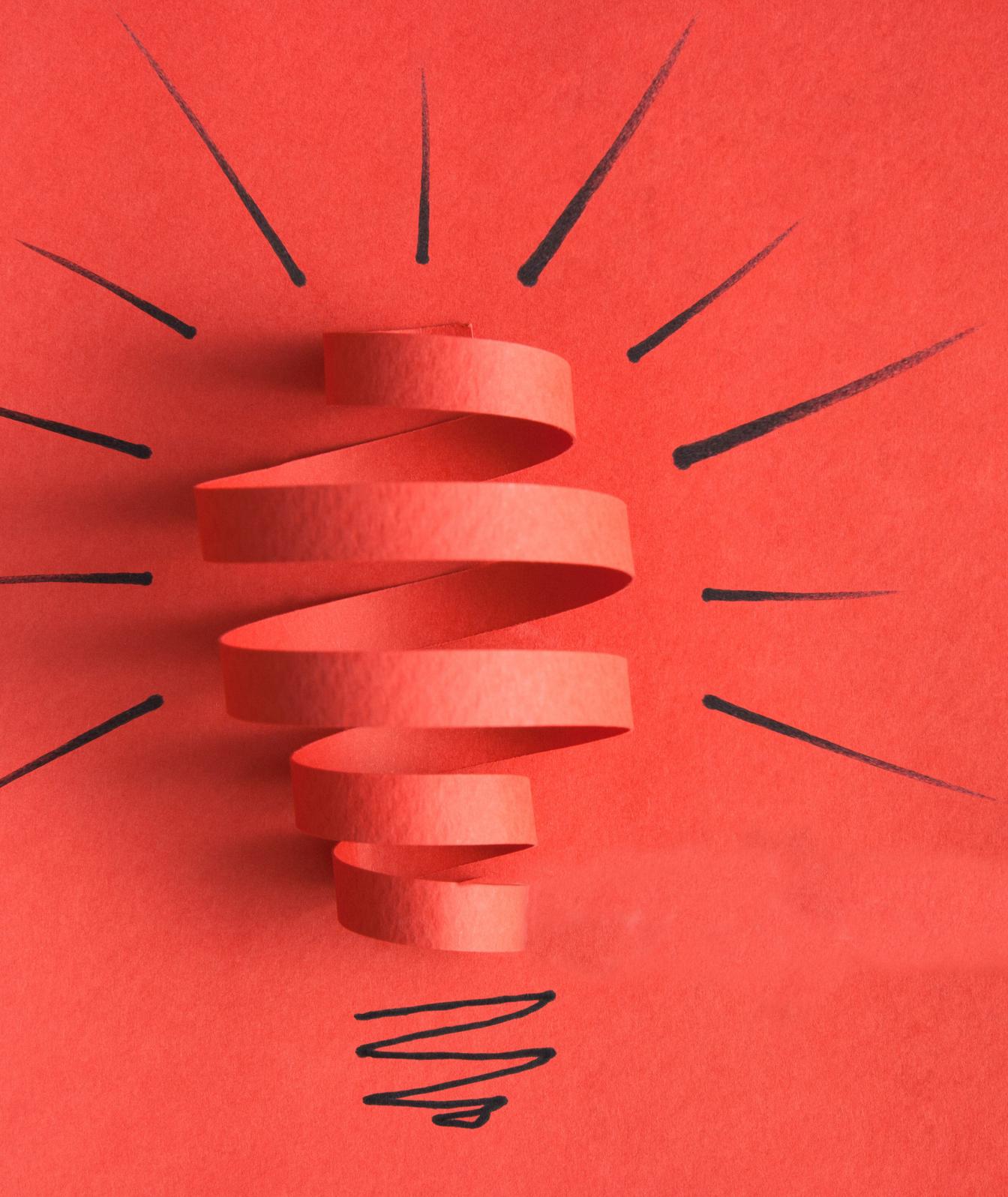
Governance

Aim 2.3: To ensure the governance of the organisation complies with the law and best practice.

Priorities for 2019-2023:

- Ensure the responsibilities of the Board, individual board members, office-bearer roles and committees are clear and regularly reviewed
- Ensure the Board has the appropriate skills to govern effectively and is appropriately balanced
- Ensure all board members are thoroughly inducted and receive relevant training
- Ensure OCN NI complies with company, charity, health and safety, GDPR, employment law and other statutory requirements
- Ensure the organisation identifies and manages risk effectively
- Ensure the organisation has appropriate strategic and operational plans, which are effectively implemented, and progress is regularly reported to the Board
- Regularly review the Board's governance performance and that of each director
- Develop, implement and review a governance Action Plan





**Innovative,
Creative &
Continuously
Improve**

Goal 3: To be innovative, creative and continuously improve

Qualification Portfolio

Aim 3.1: To expand and develop qualifications and services to meet current and future learner needs and aspirations.

Priorities for 2019-2023:

- Develop new qualifications and subject areas to meet the needs and aspirations of learners and other stakeholders
- Increase the number of learner registrations and awards
- Review, update and improve existing qualifications
- Expand and develop OCN NI's engagement with relevant sectors
- Continuously improve the assessment process
- Expand OCN NI's geographical reach
- Celebrate the achievements of learners and our Centres

Technological innovation

Aim 3.2: To embed innovative use of technologies in all we do.

Priorities for 2019-2023:

- Develop the use of technology in student assessments
- Utilise current technology in the delivery of learning
- Develop the use of technology in monitoring outputs and outcomes
- Utilise technology to improve the efficiency of organisational processes



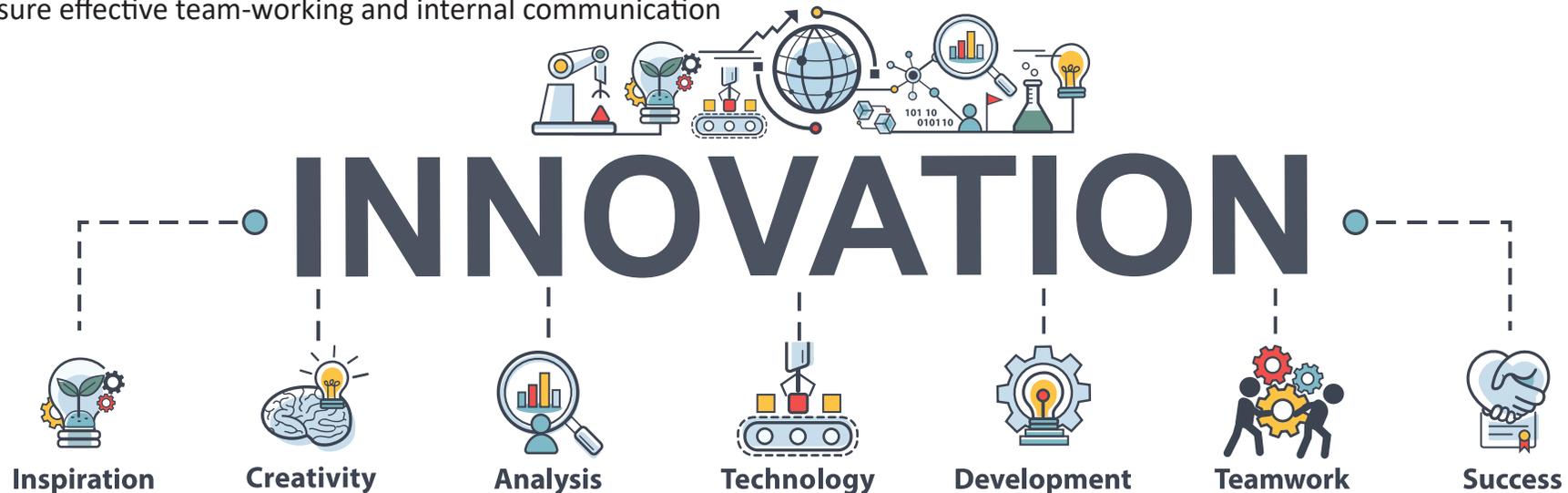
Goal 3: To be innovative, creative and continuously improve

Engaging and empowering staff

Aim 3.3: To be an effective learning organisation and employer of choice.

Priorities for 2019-2023:

- Ensure all new and promoted staff avail of appropriate induction processes
- Develop, implement and review appropriate staff learning and development plans
- Maintain Investors in People accreditation
- Achieve ISO 9001 accreditation
- Become certified as an organisation with a Customer Service Excellence (CSE) quality mark
- Ensure the organisation has the appropriate complement and structure of appropriately skilled and experienced staff to achieve growth and a continued high standard of service
- Ensure staff are effectively managed and encouraged to contribute to the success of the organisation
- Ensure that the organisation is recognised as an employer of choice and has the appropriate HR policies, procedures, terms and conditions of employment to comply with the requirements of the law and demonstrate best practice
- Recognise staff achievements and contribution and promote effective employee feedback and engagement
- Ensure effective team-working and internal communication



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Our qualifications enable learners to develop their skill set and enhance employment opportunities.

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Open College Network NI Strategic Plan 2019-2023

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Published September 2019