



ASSOCIATION
OF COLLEGES

AoC survey on Personal and Social Development and Enrichment in colleges

Association of Colleges report: May 2019



1. What is Personal and Social Development (PSD)?

AoC is using a definition of PSD which covers four broad areas:

- Careers guidance and preparation for progression / employment
- Physical and mental health / wellbeing
- Citizenship education, including equality and British values
- Enrichment and curriculum enhancement activity

These areas flow from the seven elements of the graded Personal Development theme in the new Ofsted inspection framework:

- Careers guidance
- Preparation for next steps
- Health and well-being
- Citizenship
- Equality & diversity
- Fundamental British values
- Enrichment.

2. What is Enrichment?

We can categorise enrichment activity loosely under seven themes:

- Sport, fitness, physical and mental health and wellbeing
- Citizenship, political literacy, leadership and advocacy
- Creative and performing arts and cultural literacy
- Language and literacy
- Enterprise and economic literacy
- Contributing to the community
- Understanding the world, global issues and international links

These overlap with some of the PSD areas and are not mutually exclusive. Many activities will fall into more than one category, but this is a useful way to map the range of activity.

3. The survey

The survey was sent to all AoC member colleges in April/May 2019 and was completed by 132 separate colleges; 50% of incorporated colleges (General FE,

sixth form and specialist colleges) as well as nine other providers including six academy convertors.

4. Colleges are very committed to PSD and Enrichment

The survey responses show that there is a strong commitment to PSD and enrichment activity in colleges. Over 95% of responding colleges agreed that PSD is an essential element of study programmes for all 16 to 19-year-old students.

Careers guidance and preparation for progression / employment were seen as essential by 100% of the colleges which responded. Physical and mental health and wellbeing by 98%, enrichment or enhancement activities by 98% and citizenship education by 96%.

99% of colleges offer curriculum enhancement activities within teaching departments and 86% encourage all students to be involved in at least one enrichment activity.

80% of colleges record student involvement in PSD and 77% record student involvement in enrichment activity. 79% of colleges have a staff member or team dedicated to PSD and/or enrichment activity. 29% also offer certification for either PSD or enrichment activity.

87% of colleges expressed a willingness to share good practice in this area.

Feedback included:

“PSD is essential to supporting learners, helping them to reach their potential, guiding them and enabling them to get the most from college...”

PSD is essential in educating, challenging and developing students – helping them to navigate the various challenges they will face...

PSD is essential to help students develop as rounded citizens...

Everyone involved recognises the importance of PSD and how it can mean the difference between success and failure for students...

PSD is such an important part of the work we do, and students value the opportunities offered...

This is extremely important work and we are glad it is being recognised as such...

PSD is the key to student progression...

PSD is intrinsic to developing students and support progression...

We are glad this is being seen as more central and not just an add-on...

PSD activities improve the interactions between different groups of students, foster good relations, develop an awareness of diversity and nurture a cohesive community...

PSD is a vital component in developing young minds and attitudes...

PSD activities and events build a sense of community..."

5. The range of PSD and enrichment activity in colleges

Across the sector, colleges are offering a wide range of PSD and enrichment activity.

The following are offered by 95% or more colleges:

- Careers and progression guidance (100%).
- Learning about British values, extremism, exploitation and staying safe, including e-safety (100%)
- Marking awareness days or months, such as Black History Month (99%).
- Educating about physical and sexual health, mental health and wellbeing (96%)
- Charity fundraising (96%).

In addition, the following are offered by over 75% of colleges:

- Opportunities for competitive sports (89%) and non-competitive physical activity (90%).
- Citizenship education, eg: in human rights, politics, democracy and the law (90%).
- Student societies and groups such as a women's group, LGBTQ and friends (90%).
- Learning life skills (89%).
- Opportunities for volunteering and Youth Social Action (89%).
- A lecture programme with external speakers (77%).

The following are offered by 50-75% of colleges:

- National Citizen Service (74%) or Duke of Edinburgh Award (51%).

- Visual arts projects (70%), dance and drama activities (63%).
- Leadership development, including sports leadership (69%), public speaking and debating (53%) and campaigning activity (57%), including environmental projects or campaigns (57%).
- Entrepreneurship or youth enterprise activity (64%) and learning economic literacy (58%).
- Road safety education, including driving lessons (59%).
- Opportunities to undertake research, including via an Extended Project Qualification (58%).
- International links and partnerships (52%).

The following are offered by fewer than half of colleges:

- Peer mentoring schemes (45%).
- Music or DJ'ing activity (48%) or instrumental music lessons (29%).
- Creative writing projects (47%) or reading programmes (45%).
- Opportunities to learn another language (32%).
- Model United Nations (11%).

Colleges were asked to list any other enrichment or enhancement activity not covered in the list of activities mentioned in the survey, and this additional list can be broken down as follows:

- 20 mentions of sport, physical or mental health activities
- 13 mentions of employment or enterprise activities.
- 11 mentions of volunteering or community engagement activities.
- Six mentions of citizenship, leadership and advocacy activities.
- Six mentions of visits and/or life skills activities.
- Five mentions of creative, visual or performing arts activities.
- Two mentions of language or literacy activities.

The survey did not ask what proportion of students are engaged in enrichment activity or how many students are engaged in each type, so it is not possible to assess the actual reach of such activity. The number of mentions is not a measure of reach or impact. However, the number of colleges offering different types of activity gives a sense of the range that is available, or not, across colleges and how far we are from full coverage of opportunities across the seven suggested themes.

6. Partnership working in PSD and enrichment activity

Colleges are working with a diverse range of partners to provide enrichment activities. The most mentioned partners were:

- National Citizen Service: 34%
- Police: 27%
- Duke of Edinburgh programme: 26%
- Health services, PCTs / CCGs / Hospitals: 23%
- Local authorities: 22%
- 'Charities and voluntary organisations' (unnamed): 20%
- Sports Clubs, foundations and governing bodies: 19%
- Employers and Chambers of Commerce: 18%
- Universities: 15%
- Banks: 13%
- National Careers Service, CEC / NCOP: 12%
- MIND: 11%

7. The need for additional funding

Many colleges pointed out that the scope of their student engagement work was limited by funding constraints.

Comments included:

"This is an area where cuts have hit most deeply..."

PSD is vital but underfunded...

Essential but often squeezed...

Funding for this work is often squeezed due to other priorities - more is needed...

Funding and time constraints restrict our ability to offer a wider enrichment programme...

It is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain support for PSD and enrichment due to a lack of funding...

We are unable to provide a comprehensive PSD programme due to funding restrictions...

It is challenging to provide the range of activities we used to offer...

We are extremely limited in what we can do...

Lack of funding has meant a significant reduction in enrichment activity...

Traditionally we had a wide PSD offer but this is no longer possible...

Dedicated, ring-fenced funding for this would enhance delivery further....

Explicit funding for PSD should be made available...

More funding would enable more to be done..."

8. Next steps

AoC will:

- Promote a better understanding of the PSD curriculum and raise its profile, celebrate and share good practice and support further developments in this area.
- Support colleges to explore the possibilities of partnership working to address gaps in provision.
- Work with partners to develop a post-16 citizenship curriculum framework.
- Undertake further research to gain a better understanding of:
 - the benefits of different types of enrichment activity,
 - the proportion of students engaging with enrichment activity and the numbers of students engaged in different types of activity.
 - the use of certification of PSD or enrichment activity.

For further information on PSD or enrichment in colleges, please contact Eddie Playfair, Senior Policy Manager eddie.playfair@aoc.co.uk.