



How we have provided Value for Money to Students

As a specialist health sciences University College, we are committed to the health and wellbeing of our students. We provide complimentary treatment for all students in our 32-room purpose built onsite training clinic. Our clinical facilities also include MRI, digital imaging, quantitative fluoroscopy and diagnostic ultrasound and we will shortly be opening our new integrated rehabilitation centre with nine clinic rooms and a multi-zoned rehabilitation space, which will be a centre of excellence in community rehabilitation.

Student wellbeing and support services are a key priority. Since the start of the 2019-20 academic year, we have been embedding student wellbeing and support services within AECC UC (having previously commissioned these from a neighbouring university) and this in-house provision has had a significant impact on the take up of our services, which have grown in response to student demand.

We have continued to invest in the staffing in our Student Support department, including the appointment of a Student Finance Advisor during the year. This role has enabled us to provide independent financial advice, guidance and support for students, in a confidential setting, and is done independently of the AECC finance department. With the current financial situation, we are expecting high demand for this service in the 2022-23 academic year and have therefore increased the staffing in the area from 0.5 fte part time to full time.

Overall, appointment slots for our student services (wellbeing, counselling and study skills) have increased from the previous year, demonstrating greater efficiency and effectiveness. Student services are promoted at all undergraduate inductions and at other opportunities throughout the year. Students are signposted to key resources and study skills modules and during summer 2022 we ran a transition survey for new and returning students to provide insight into the student experience over the summer and to enable proactive support to be prepared. This is led by our Head of Library and Student Services. The results of this survey also informed a Transition Event held specifically for new students from under-represented groups starting this September 2022.

We have now completed the relocation of the Student Services department to a ground floor location within our main building, which will enable them to be located in close proximity to the library. This move will mean that our Student Services will have more prominence, and we hope the improved physical accessibility will encourage more students to seek help when they need it.

During the 2021-22 year the University College set up a Student Support fund to assist students who are struggling financially as a result of exceptional circumstances, with clear guidelines on the eligibility and type of support available in line with National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA) good practice. As a result of the current financial situation the Executive have recently approved an additional £20k to be allocated to this fund from the contingency within our existing budget.

During the period of closure of the student gym during Covid restrictions, the University College worked in partnership with the Students' Union to invest in new shock absorbent flooring, which has a track of astro-turf alongside and significant pieces of gym equipment. This means that the gym is now an impressive offer for people who wish to partake in a range of fitness training activities and is used on a regular basis by a large number of students.

We are one of the few universities in the country, outside medical colleges, to have a human prosection laboratory onsite, which is used regularly by University College students to support and enhance learning in anatomical sciences.

All courses are accredited by the relevant professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) where this is appropriate. AECC University College graduates are highly sought after in the workplace and regularly command salary levels above the national average.

The University College hosts an annual careers fair to assist students in the transition between study and working life. This 'Future Pathways' event ran in March 2022 with 39 chiropractic clinics in attendance, with the keynote speaker from the Art of Brilliance and to providing goodie bags for all final year students, which included a student choice of book, 'How to be a Wellbeing', which was written by the keynote speaker. A range of other speakers representing relevant PSRBs and providing helpful guidance on transitioning into regulated healthcare professional. Final year students from the School of Rehabilitation, Sport and Psychology were able to attend the main Future Pathways event, but additionally had an employability and futures session run by their course leader. Anecdotal feedback is that a number of AECC University College students found employment opportunities as a result of the Future Pathways event. The Library and Student Services team also manage a jobs board via Moodle where job adverts are posted for the attention of final year students.

Staff are readily available for students and the University College operates with an overall staff : student ratio of 1 : 20. The number of face to face staff-led teaching sessions (contact hours) ordinarily range between 12 to and 15 hours per week.

The National Student Survey (NSS) gives an indication of value perceived by students. A separate report was sent to the Board of Governors in July 2022, which highlighted areas for improvement. The overall result was disappointing but not surprising given that the cohort responding to this NSS on final year practice placement for the majority of this 'intern' year and impacted significantly by the Covid pandemic. Positive scores of 86% for library resources, 88% for opportunities to work with other students, and 75% for learning community demonstrates the excellent learning resources and community feel generated by AECC as a small and specialist health sciences HE provider. A detailed NSS plan for Schools and Services has been developed to ensure that aspects of Assessment and Feedback and Organisation and Management are focused upon post-pandemic. This will be reviewed regularly over semester one for effectiveness and adapted in response to student feedback. The role of technology-enhanced education is under review through a specific project to enhance the uniformity and utility of our virtual learning environment, including the expansion of electronic marking and assessment and reviewing / refreshing unit content on the digital platform.

Financial Review

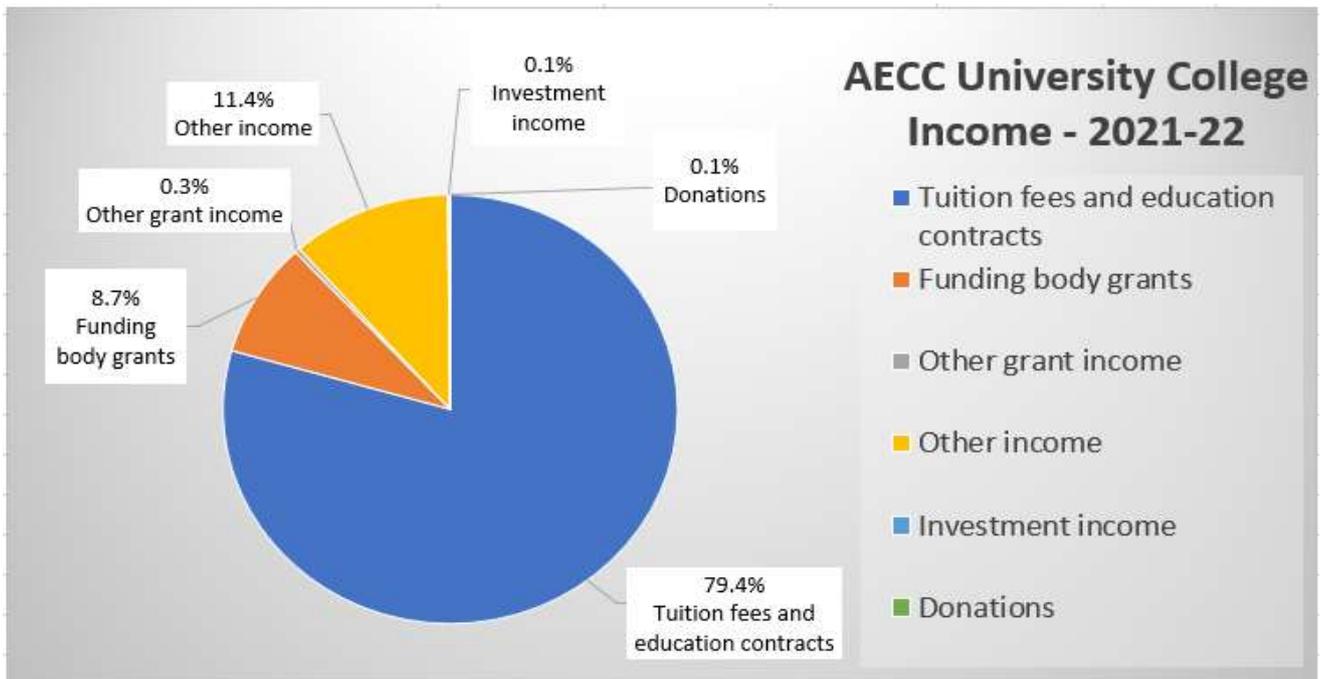
AECC University College is again able to report successful financial performance in the year ended 31 July 2022. With the operational surplus increased by £298k to £1,445k (2021: £1,147k).

Total income increased by £1.99m (19%) from the previous year with growth seen in most areas. Part of this is undoubtedly due to us successfully emerging from the Covid 19 pandemic, which had a severe impact on operations and consequently financial performance in the 2020-21 year.

Tuition fee income and educational grants, which account for 88% of our total income, increased by 19% from £9.22m in 2021 to £10.94m in 2022. This growth was achieved despite the tuition fee for UK undergraduates being capped at £9,250 per student for the fifth year in a row.

Clinical income, which was one of the areas of activity most significantly hit by Covid restrictions in 2020-21, grew by 30% from £903k to £1,078k, with increases experienced in all areas; Chiro, MRI, Ultrasound and X-ray.

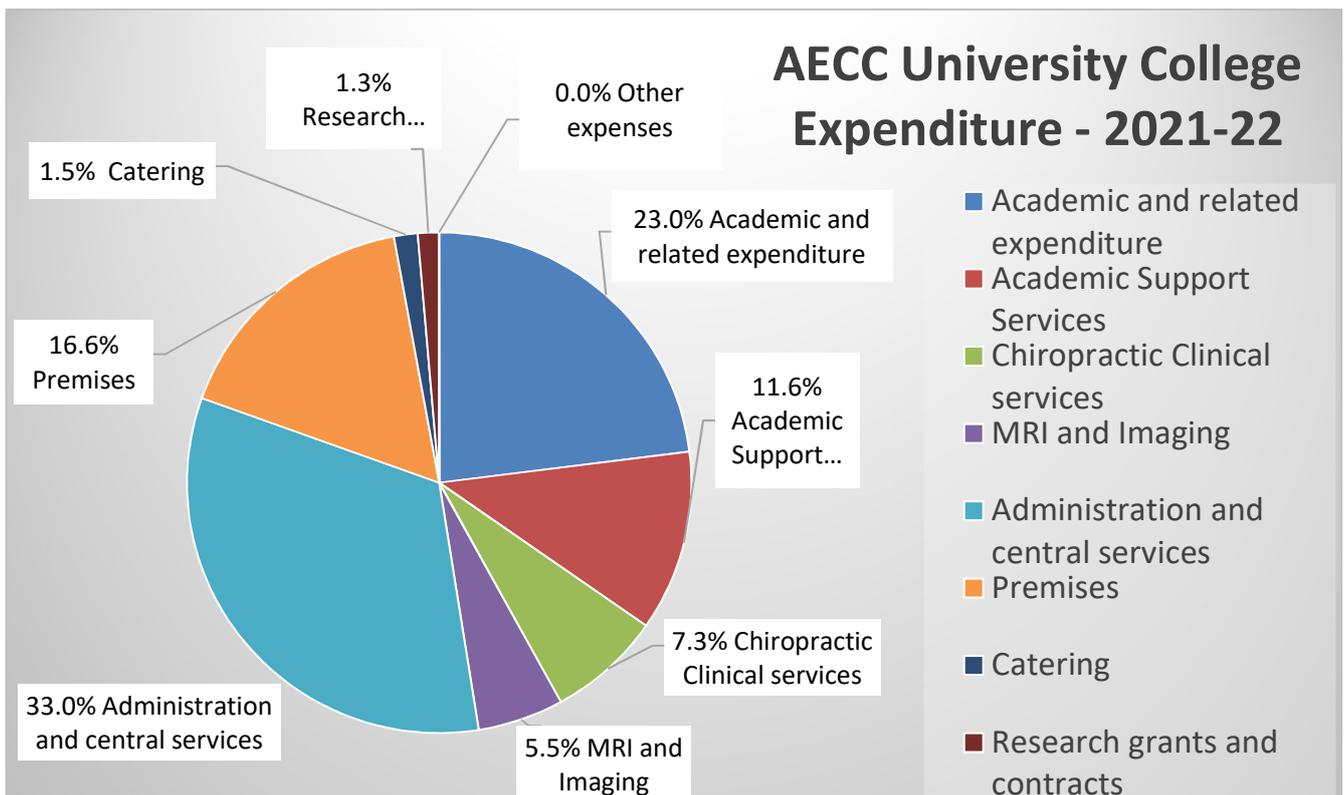
Catering income also saw a rise in income and is now approaching pre-pandemic levels, with increasing numbers of students, staff and visitors returning to the campus following the easing of restrictions.



Overall expenditure increased by £1,693k (18.0%) from £9.29m in 2021 to £10.98m.

In response to the ongoing difficulties that many sectors of the economy are experiencing in recruiting and retaining good staff, we made two pay awards to our staff in the year; a 1% overall increase with effect from 1 August 2021 followed by a further increase of 2% and £600 per full time member of staff, with effect from 1 April 2022. This second pay award was as a result of a decision to move the annual pay award to 1 April to align with any changes in tax or national insurance contributions introduced by the UK Government.

Non pay costs increased by £679k (27%) from £2.50m in 2021 to £3.17 in 2022. This not only reflects the overall increase in the activities of the University College, but also emerging cost pressures, particularly in relation to energy costs, insurance and maintenance costs mainly related to the ongoing updating of the existing listed building on the main campus and also the new Garnet Campus acquired in 2020, which has undergone a major refurbishment over the last two years to bring it up to required standard.



Capital Investment

During the year the University College has made significant investment in its infrastructure and equipment.

The main emphasis has been on completing the construction of the new Integrated Rehabilitation Centre on the Garnet campus which formally opened in October 2022 and commenced operations in November 2022. During the year £2.89m was spent on this project although a large proportion of this has been funded by a way of a capital grant of £2.20m from Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership. This new facility will enable the University College to expand both its clinical and educational offering over the coming year focussing on rehabilitation and the training of Allied Health Professionals.

AECC was also successful in bids to Health Education England and Office for Students for capital funding totalling £819k. This, together with investment from our own reserves has meant that new cutting edge equipment totalling over £1m has been acquired during the year to improve both our educational and clinical facilities. This equipment includes an Anatomage table, patient simulation equipment, motion tracking cameras, force sensing tables and a major software upgrade on our upright MRI scanner.