Newcastle University

SENATE

Title of paper: Building a simplified curriculum - proposal for a new Qualifications, Credit and Programme Design Framework (QCPDF)

Main purpose of the paper: For decision

Presenter(s): Prof Ruth Valentine, PVC Education and Prof Rene Koglbauer, Dean of Lifelong Learning and Professional Practice and Director of Educational Leadership Centre

Date of paper: 11 June 2025

Purpose of the paper:

To present for consideration the new Qualifications, Credit and Programme Design Framework (QCPDF).

Recommendations:
- To approve a recommendation from UEC for the QCPDF to be implemented alongside the Leading Edge Curriculum Framework as part of the Education Strategy.
- Authorise UEC to approve the final version of the QCPDF, complete with the elements noted as 'to be developed', unless they raise 'substantive issues of academic principle or precedent'.

Consultation to date (including any previous committee consideration and its outcome):
Wide stakeholder engagement – with colleagues and students - has been undertaken in the development of the Leading Edge Curriculum including the elements which now form the QCPDF. UEC endorsed the QCPDF for approval by Senate.

Report to University Education Committee (UEC)	
14 May 2025	
Building a simplified curriculum - proposal for a new Qualifications, Credit and Programme Design Framework (QCPDF)	
Summary:	This paper presents the first formal output of the Education Strategy Leading Edge Curriculum Project for consideration and approval by University Education Committee.
Background:	One of the four objectives of the Education Strategy 'Education for Life 2030+: a vision for education and skills' is the creation of a new universal curriculum framework. The Qualifications, Credit and Programme Design Framework is the output of the Leading Edge Curriculum Project, Project 1: Models of delivery and structures and captures the key policy changes around the credit and teaching patterns of our undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes that have been developed.
Relation to Strategy:	Education Strategy
Resource Implications (People, Time, Money)**:**	The new curriculum framework will be implemented through a supported transformation process enabling all programmes to be in line with the Leading Edge Curriculum by 2029. Substantial resource has been identified to support transformation and considered through the appropriate University channels.

Equality Analysis undertaken	Yes		☒	No		☒
	See Annex A.					

Consultation:	The principles and ideas embodied in the QCPDF have been originated by a core group of colleagues representing academic and PS stakeholders from across the University. A substantial number of consultation events have taken place through webinars, existing meetings (FECs, Directors of Education forum etc.) and all Schools have been offered a meeting on the Leading Edge Curriculum Project in May and June 2025.
Governance Trajectory to date:	The QCPDF was considered and approved at the Education Strategy Programme Board on 7 May 2025. If endorsed by UEC it will be presented to Senate on 24 June 2025.
Resolution Required:	UEC are asked: • To endorse the sections of the QCPDF as presented for onward recommendation to Senate and authorisation for UEC to approve the final version. • To note the sections identified for addition or further development which will be brought back for UEC approval

Approval	☐	Endorsement/ Recommendation	☒	Discussion	☐	Information	☐
Risks and Implications Included	Yes	☐		No	☐	N/A	☒

Is the paper to be closed? (If yes, please state the reason below):		~~Yes~~/No
Author(s):	Leading Edge Project Leads: Sara Marsham, Rene Koglbauer, Stuart Edwards and Rachel Dearlove	
Date of paper:	8 May 2025	

Building a simplified curriculum - proposal for a new Qualifications, Credit and Programme Design Framework (QCPDF)

Background and rationale

1. Our Education Strategy, 'Education for Life 2030+: a vision for education and skills', set down the challenge to develop a Leading Edge Curriculum through '*a new universal curriculum framework for Newcastle that speaks to our values, is inclusive by design, supports our disciplines with pedagogic innovation, reflects the expectations of our employers, and simplifies and harmonises structures across the University*'.

2. This proposal for a new Qualifications, Credit and Programme Design Framework (QCPDF) is the first formal output of the project to deliver a Leading Edge Curriculum and it is being brought to UEC and Senate ahead of other elements as it is proposing changes to and harmonisation of the structure of how we deliver education. The QCPDF builds on and expands the current Newcastle University Qualifications and Credit Framework.

3. It fits with the other expected outputs of the Leading Edge Curriculum Project shown below (final titles of outputs likely to differ). All other elements, and the complete version of the QCPDF, will come to UEC for consideration and endorsement at its away day in September and will go to Senate in November 2025 for final approval.

Leading Edge Curriculum Framework • Principles of Teaching and Learning • Principles of Assessment • Principles of programme design • Encounters with the Leading Edge • Cross-cutting curriculum themes • Policy statement on global opportunities and placements	Education for Life Skills and Attributes
	Qualifications, Credit and Programme Design Framework (QCPDF)

4. To be able to deliver our ambitions for the Leading Edge Curriculum, we need to create a simplified and harmonised approach to designing and delivering programmes across the University. Creating a coherent and intellectually stimulating student experience will be achieved through simplifying programme structures and balancing a strong programme narrative, built around programme level design, with choices that we can realistically deliver. Harmonising and simplifying our programme structures aligns with our ambition to free up time and space for professional and academic staff.

5. Currently we have great variation in module credit sizes, varied academic structures through the semester and academic year, and there is no guidance on compulsory vs optional curriculum content. Some degrees have year-long modules, others have semester long modules, and still others use block teaching lasting six weeks or less. We do not have an institutionally agreed framework to overcome idiosyncratic, operationally challenging, and workload intensive programme design.

Guiding principles

6. In developing the Leading Edge Curriculum, and particularly the QCPDF, we have sought to consider the following guiding principles:

- Ensuring coherence with attention to student progression through levels
- Reducing assessment volumes and workloads for students and staff
- Creating space and thinking time through simple, consistent, harmonised approaches
- Facilitation of programme-level approaches and programme-level assessments
- Facilitation of joint programmes, interdisciplinarity and shared modules
- Optimised timetabling and space usage

- Avoiding time-consuming exceptions processes and inconsistency in student experience
- Some flexibility to accommodate different disciplines and types of programmes
- Strengthening cohort identity and students' shared appreciation of the discipline through managed student choice
- Enabling the University to operate within its resources, especially time, space, and staffing

Summary of the proposals

7. The following are the key change proposals within the QCPDF:

- All modules are to be taught in linear mode and taught and assessed in a single semester, with limited pre-agreed exceptions. This includes moving away from the use of 'block' teaching for Level 6 and 7 within SAgE.
- All UG and PGT programmes to use 20 credit modules, with limited use of 10, 40, 60 and 120 credit modules only in specific prescribed circumstances. No use of other module credit sizes.
- Standardised requirements for compulsory dissertation, project or equivalent module for Bachelors, Integrated Masters, Taught Masters and Research Masters.
- For UG a staggered maximum volume of optional credits per stage, and for PGT per programme
- Adjusting qualification and credit restrictions to accommodate the move to a base 20 module size.

8. The document is not yet complete, there are sections to be added or developed as marked in *grey italicised text*, but they are either summarising existing policy, relate to more detailed technical aspects of use of modules and credit, or are cross references to other parts of the Leading Edge Curriculum.

Benefits

9. The following are planned benefits of the changes as part of the overall Leading Edge Curriculum:
- More focused time for teaching, scholarship and research through simplification of structures and better workload distribution
- Increased student satisfaction and improved NSS/PTES outputs resulting from more consistent experience and balanced student workload
- Reduced workload for programme and module administration due to streamlined approval processes and documentation and ongoing maintenance.
- Standardisation of credit and teaching patterns providing simplicity for joint honours programmes and creating flexibility for multidisciplinary programmes.
- Consistency of structures alleviates the administrative burden of managing wide variations in programme design.
- Provides a programme design and sets of modules that can be more resiliently delivered within resources
- More straight forward and optimised timetabling and space usage

Implementation

10. The QCPDF would be implemented as part of the overall Leading Edge Curriculum as part of the curriculum transformation programme from 2025-26 onwards (pilot planned for Spring 2026).

Qualifications, Credit and Programme Design Framework (QCPDF)

Introduction

1. The Qualifications, Credit and Programme Design Framework (QCPDF) sits alongside, and holds the same status as the University's Regulations, providing information on the level, duration, award type, minimum total credits and any specific credit and level restrictions for the qualifications that the University awards. It also sets out details of the University's academic year and its programme design conventions.

2. The expectation is that all programmes meet the requirement of the QCPDF. Exemptions from elements of the QCPDF for individual programmes can be agreed on an exceptional basis by University Education Committee. More information on criteria for consideration are provided in Section 6.

3. Changes, additions or deletions to the QCPDF should be proposed to Taught Programmes Subcommittee for consideration.

4. The QCPDF applies to all programmes for which Newcastle has sole academic responsibility for programme design and award of the qualification.

5. The applicability of different sections and provisions of the QCPDF for:

6. programmes jointly designed and delivered with educational partner organisations will be determined as part of the approval process for those programmes and that partnership and will be documented in an annex to the legal agreement.

7. programmes delivered on a commissioned closed enrollment basis

    i. programmes delivered wholly online will be determined on a case-by-case basis as part of the programme approval process.

Section 1: Academic year

[To be added – summary of the key decisions already made around the academic calendar]

Section 2: Programme types

8. The University operates two different types of taught programmes:

    i. **Credit-bearing, modular programmes** – programmes are constructed around standard amounts of credit, in modules, with these credits relating directly to learning hours. Progression requirements are standardised and awards are calculated according to the University and programme regulations. Modules within programmes can either be compulsory or optional, and can also be designated as 'core' which indicates modules which must be passed. Modules can be offered in more than one programme, including programmes outside of the home academic unit. Students accumulate credits as they study, and through recognition of prior learning, can be accepted onto our programmes from other institutions where the previous learning can be mapped to the programmes at Newcastle.

    ii. **Non-credit bearing, non-modular programmes** – programmes with teaching, learning and assessment integrated across the programme. Patterns of study and duration of different elements are individual to each programme, as are progression requirements and the approach to calculation of the award. The terms compulsory and

core may be used by these programmes but relate to specific teaching activities and programme assessments rather than modules. Alternative regulatory requirements in respect of these programmes are detailed in individual programme regulations and within the University Regulations.

9. All provisions of the QCPDF apply to all credit-bearing, modular programmes.

10. All newly proposed programmes will be credit-bearing, modular programmes.

11. All non-credit/modular related provisions of the QCPDF apply to non-modular programmes, but provisions that relate to credit and modules do not.

Section 3: Credit

12. Section 5 states the number and level of credits required for each award (modular awards only). One credit equates to 10 notional hours of learning.

13. Credits are awarded at specific levels; only one credit level can be attributed to any given module. Guidance on credit level descriptors is attached as Appendix B. The University has adopted those developed by the Northern Ireland Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (NICATS) Project, not as mandatory criteria, but rather as a guide for academic units to use if considered helpful, either as they stand or adapted at subject level.

14. The QCPDF sets out the minimum credit values that programmes must meet in order to gain the relevant qualification (Section 5), along with a number of other programme design conventions relating to modules and credit (Section 4). It does not prevent specification of higher values appropriate to any given qualification in order to reflect the breadth of subjects offered and external points of reference, for example, the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. *[Existing NUQCF text, to be reviewed: 'Neither does it prevent additional non-credit-bearing components of a programme which must be undertaken for an award to be made, for example, cross-modular assessment.]'*

15. As long as qualifications meet the specific credit and level restrictions in Section 5 they can include a mix of credit from different levels up to the level of the award e.g. Honours degree can be a mix of levels 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Section 4: Programme design conventions

Programme level design

[To be developed - a section summarizing the programme level design and learning outcomes approach, relationship of programme design with the Education for Life Skills and Attributes. Awaiting the completion of those outputs]

Maximum credit per year

16. The maximum credit load per undergraduate academic year is 120 credits.

17. The maximum credit load per postgraduate academic year is 180 credits.

Credit balance across semesters

18. Semesters should be balanced in credit with 60 credits per semester.

Module credit size and semesterisation

19. All conventional UG and PGT modules are 20 credits in volume (200 notional learning hours). All modules must be taught and assessed within the same Semester, unless one of the exceptions noted for non-conventional modules in paragraph 18, 19 and 20 below applies.

20. Multiples of 20 credits (within a single semester) can only be used for the following non-conventional modules:

    i. 60 credit – for dissertations, projects and equivalent; placements and study abroad.

    ii. 40 credit – for dissertations, projects and equivalent

    iii. [Full list of non-conventional to be developed]

21. 20 credit modules or multiples of 20 credits taught across more than 1 semester are only allowed for the following non-conventional modules:

    i. 20 credits – only for continuing language learning modules and their paired content modules.

    ii. 40, 60 or 80+ credit modules spanning 2 or 3 semesters – for dissertation, projects or equivalent.

    iii. 120 credit, year-long modules – for placements and study abroad

    iv. [Full list of non-conventional modules to be developed]

Credit pattern

22. All programmes will be designed in line with the following credit patterns when using only conventional modules – including sub-degree level qualifications. The pattern can be adapted to as needed to include non-conventional modules allowed as specified in paragraphs 19 and 20.

Undergraduate programmes – Stage 1 & 2

	Semester 1	**Semester 2**
Stage 1	3 x 20 credit modules	3 x 20 credit modules
Stage 2	3 x 20 credit modules	3 x 20 credit modules

Undergraduate programmes leading to an Honours degree – Stage 3

23. All Honours degree programmes will include a 40 credit dissertation, project or equivalent

Stage 3	**Semester 1**	**Semester 2**
Model A	3 x 20 credit modules	2 x 20 credit modules 1 x 40 credit module
Model B	2 x 20 credit modules	2 x 20 credit modules
	1 x 40 credit dissertation/project	
Model C	2 x 20 credit modules 1 x 40 credit module	3 x 20 credit modules

Undergraduate programmes leading to an Integrated Master's – Stage 3

	Semester 1	Semester 2
Stage 3	3 x 20 credit modules	3 x 20 credit modules

Undergraduate programmes leading to an Integrated Master's – Stage 4

24. All Integrated Master's degrees will include a 40 or 60 credit dissertation, project or equivalent.

25. Stage 4 can be structured flexibly to accommodate the dissertation, project or equivalent as shown in the possible combinations of Models A to G, with the recognition of credit load from the dissertation/project module being even or uneven between semesters.

Stage 4	Semester 1	Semester 2
Incorporating a 40 credit dissertation/project		
Model A	3 x 20 credit modules	1 x 20 credit modules 1 x 40 credit module
Model B	2 x 20 credit modules	2 x 20 credit modules
	1 x 40 credit dissertation/project	
Model C	2 x 20 credit modules 1 x 40 credit dissertation/project	3 x 20 credit modules
Incorporating a 60 credit dissertation/project		
Model D	3 x 20 credit modules	1 x 60 credit dissertation/project
Model E	1 x 60 credit dissertation/project	3 x 20 credit modules
Model F	2 x 20 credit modules	1 x 20 credit module
	1 x 60 credit dissertation/project (20/40)	
Model G	1 x 20 credit module	2 x 20 credit modules
	1 x 60 credit dissertation/project (40/20)	

Taught Masters

	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3
Taught Masters (180 credits)	3 x 20 credit modules	3 x 20 credit modules	1 x 60 credit dissertation/project

26. For Taught Masters comprising more than 180 credits:

    i. the dissertation element will comprise not less than one-third and not more than a half of the total number of credits.

    ii. the credit pattern should conform to the base conventional module parameters of 20 credits, delivered within a single semester; but placement of the dissertation, project or equivalent can be arranged according to the needs of the programme.

Research Masters

27. For Research Masters:

i. the dissertation element will comprise 80, 100 or 120 credits.

ii. the credit pattern should conform to the base conventional module parameters of 20 credits, delivered within a single semester; but placement of the dissertation, project or equivalent can be arranged according to the needs of the programme.

Teaching pattern

28. Teaching will be delivered on a linear basis throughout a semester (or across semesters for non-conventional modules), for example, in a semester with three 20 credit modules, these will be delivered simultaneously.

Optional modules

29. There will be the following maximum volume of optional credit per Stage for undergraduate programmes and per programme for standard length (180 credit) postgraduate taught programmes. There is no minimum volume. This restriction does not apply to combined honours programmes. *[Further modelling will be needed in relation to joint honours programmes]*

Stage 1	20
Stage 2	40
Stage 3	60
Stage 4	60
PGT (180 credit Masters)	60

Degree pathways

[To be developed]

Credit level

[Existing rules on this are implied by the credit and level restrictions in the table in section 5. Narrative to be added]

Zero credit and additional credit modules

[To be developed]

Aggregated assessment

[To be developed]

Sharing modules between Levels

[To be developed]

Sharing modules between programmes

[To be developed]

Section 5: Qualifications and their credit values

30. Qualifications are mapped to the Office for Student's [Sector recognised standards](#), QAA [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies](#) (FHEQ) and taking into account the [Higher Education Credit Framework for England](#).

Qualification Category	Full-time duration	Newcastle Qualification (Abrv)	Total credits (min)	Credit and level restrictions
Level 3				
Foundation Certificate	one year	Foundation Certificate in Biological and Biomedical Sciences	180	Min 180 credits at Level 3
International Foundation Certificate	one year	International Foundation Certificate	120	Min 120 credits at Level 3
Level 4				
Certificate of Higher Education	one year	Higher Education Certificate	120	Min 100 credits at level 4 or above
Level 5				
Diploma of Higher Education	two years	Higher Education Certificate (CertHE)*	240	Min 100 credits at level 5 or above
Foundation Degree	two years	Foundation Degree+	240	Min 100 credits each at levels 4 and 5. Max 20 credits at Level 3 during Stage 1 only Max 40 at Level 4 beyond Stage 1
Level 6				
Pass Degree	three years	Pass Degree**		Min 100 credits each at levels 4 and 5, maximum 60 credits at Level 6. Max 20 credits at Level 3 during Stage 1 only Max 40 at Level 4 beyond Stage 1
Honours Degree	three years	Bachelor of Arts (BA) Bachelor of Engineering (BEng) Bachelor of Laws (LLB) Bachelor of Music (BMus) Bachelor of Science (BSc)	360	Min 100 credits each at levels 4, 5 and 6. Max 20 credits at Level 3 during Stage 1 only Max 40 at Level 4 beyond Stage 1
Honours Degree	three years	Bachelor of Science Oral and Dental Health Sciences	Non-modular	
Honours Degree	four years	Bachelor of Medical Science*	Non-modular	
Level 7				
Graduate Certificate	1/3 academic year	Graduate Certificate	60	Min 40 credits at Level 6 Max 20 at Level 3

Qualification Category	Full-time duration	Newcastle Qualification (Abrv)	Total credits (min)	Credit and level restrictions
Graduate Diploma	2/3 academic year	Graduate Diploma	120	Min 100 credits at Level 6 Max 20 at Level 3
Primary qualification in medicine	five years	Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS)	Non-modular	
Primary qualifications in dentistry	five years	Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS)	Non-modular	
Integrated Masters	four years	Master of Pharmacy (MPharm)	Non-modular	
Integrated Masters	four years	Master of Biology Master of Chemistry Master of Computing Master of Earth Science Master of Engineering Master of Environmental Sciences Master of Mathematics Master of Mathematics and Statistics Master of Physics Master of Planning Master of Science (MSci) Master of Speech and Language Sciences	480	Min 100 credits each at Levels 4, 5, 6 Min 120 credits at Level 7. Max 20 credits at Level 3 (during Stage 1 only) Max 40 at Level 4 beyond Stage 1
Undergraduate Masters	two years	Master of Architecture	240	
Postgraduate Certificate	1/3 postgraduate year	Postgraduate Certificate	60	Min 40 credits at Level 7 Max 20 credits at Level 6
Postgraduate Diploma	2/3 postgraduate year	Postgraduate Diploma	120	Min 100 credits at Level 7 Max 20 credits at Level 6
Postgraduate Diploma	two years	Postgraduate Diploma	Non-modular	
Taught Masters Degree	one year	Master of Arts (MA) Master of Business Administration (MBA) Master of Clinical Education Master of Medical Education (MMedEd) Master of Clinical Research Master of Education Master of Fine Art (MFA) Master of Laws Master of Public Administration	180	Min 160 credits at Level 7 Max 20 credits at Level 6

Qualification Category	Full-time duration	Newcastle Qualification (Abrv)	Total credits (min)	Credit and level restrictions
		Master of Public Heath Master of Science (MSc) Master of Town Planning Masters in Teaching and Learning		
Taught Masters Degree	one year	Masters of Science and Laws, MScL	180	Min 160 credits at Level 7, max 20 credits at Level 6
Taught Masters Degree	two years	Master of Clinical Dentistry	Non-modular	
Taught Masters Degree	three years	Master of Clinical Dentistry in Endodontics (MClinDent) Master of Clinical Dentistry in Periodontics (MClinDent) Master of Clinical Dentistry in Prosthodontics (MClinDent)	180	
Taught Masters Degree	three years	Master of Art Museum and Gallery Practice Master of Heritage Practice Master of Museum Practice	260	Min 160 credits at Level 7 Max 20 credits at level 6**
Taught Masters Degree	three years	Master of Landscape Architecture	300	Min 160 credits at Level 7 Max 20 credits at level 6**
Taught Masters Degree	three years	Master of Science in Language Pathology	360	Min 160 credits at Level 7 Max 20 credits at level 6**
Taught Masters Degree	four years	Master of Science in Clinical Applications of Psychology*	Non-modular	
Research Masters Degree	one year	Master of Laws Master of Philosophy	Non-modular	
Research Masters Degree	one year	Master of Research (MRes) Master of Letters (MLitt) Master of Music (MMus)	180	Min 160 credits at Level 7 Max 20 credits at level 6**
Level 8				
Doctorate	three years	Doctor of Philosophy	Non-modular	
Doctorate	two years	Doctor of Dental Surgery Doctor of Medicine	Non-modular	
Doctorate	three years	Doctor of Business Administration Doctor of Clinical Psychology	Non-modular	
Doctorate	four years	Doctor of Engineering	Non-modular	
Doctorate	three years	Doctor of Education	Part-modular	min 160 credits at Level 7 max 200 credits at level 7 or lower

Qualification Category	Full-time duration	Newcastle Qualification (Abrv)	Total credits (min)	Credit and level restrictions
Doctorate	three years	Doctor of Applied Educational Psychology	Part-modular	min 160 credits at Level 7 max 240 credits at level 7 or lower
Doctorate	six years (PT)	Doctor of Educational Psychology	Part-modular	120 credits at level 7 to be completed within three years
Doctorate	three years	Integrated Doctor of Philosophy	Part-modular	120-200 credits to be undertaken Max 200 credits at level 7 or lower; min 120 credits at 7
Doctorate	four years	Engineering Doctorate	Part-modular	120-200 credits to be undertaken Max 200 credits at level 7 or lower; min 120 credits at 7

*exit awards only

** Exceptionally, up to a maximum of 40 credits at Level 3 or 4 may be included in a Masters programme where they need to be included in order to allow students to develop skills required to undertake research.

+Foundation degrees are currently not in use

FHEQ requirements

31.   FHEQ qualification descriptors should be referenced to ensure that the programme aligns with the appropriate reference point. A summary of the qualification descriptors is provided in Appendix A. Programme specifications should make explicit reference to the FHEQ level and have an accurate award title.

32.   The FHEQ states that institutions should ensure that the title given to any qualification reflects the level of achievements, appropriately represents the level, nature, volume and field(s) of study undertaken, and is not misleading. The FHEQ guidance on qualifications nomenclature is provided as Appendix C.

Section 6: Exemptions from the QCPDF

33.   Along with the University Regulations, the QCPDF sets the University threshold standards for the design and award of qualifications. It is designed to be all encompassing and flexible enough within the rules set to accommodate disciplinary variations.

34.   Exemptions to the Regulations or the QCPDF are normally only considered by University Education Committee where:

i.   Requirements of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) set a higher threshold standard than contained within the Regulations or QCPDF for accredited programmes.

ii.   [To be developed]

Appendix A *[existing Appendices to the NUQCF]*

Summary of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies

This Appendix is a summary of the qualification descriptors contained in Section 4 of The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (October 2014).   The full framework is available from the Quality Assurance Agency's web site at:
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/qualifications-frameworks.pdf

FHEQ level				
Level 4	Level 5[1]	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8
Examples of Newcastle University Qualification				
Higher Education Certificate	Foundation Degree Higher Education Diploma	Honours Degree (e.g. BA, BSc, BEng) Graduate Certificate Graduate Diploma	Integrated Masters (e.g. MEng, MComp, MBBS) Postgraduate Masters (e.g. MA, MSc) Postgraduate Research Masters (e.g. MRes, MLitt)	Doctorates (e.g. PhD, EngD, EdD)
Qualifications are awarded to students who have demonstrated:				
• knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study • an ability to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, in order to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts	• knowledge and critical understanding of well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed • ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studies, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context	• a systematic understanding of key aspects of the field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline • an ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline • conceptual understanding that enables the student:	• a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice • a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship	• the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication • a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline

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[1] The descriptor for this level should be met in full for all Foundation Degrees. It should be used as a reference point for Higher Education Diploma awards

of their subject(s) of study	• knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study • an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this will influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge	o to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline o to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship in the discipline • an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge • the ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline)	• originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline • conceptual understanding that enables the student: o to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline o to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses	or area of professional practice • the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems • a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry
Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:				
• evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work • communicate the results of their study/work accurately	• use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis	• apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects	• deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to	• make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and

and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments • undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment	• effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively • undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations	• critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution – identify a range of solutions – to a problem • communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences	specialist and non-specialist audiences • demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level • continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level	conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences • continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches.
And holders will have:				
• the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility	• the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making	• the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring: o the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility o decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts o the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of professional or equivalent nature	• the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring: o the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility o decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations o the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development	• the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

Appendix B

Credit Levels and their Descriptors

In undertaking studies at this level, a student at Newcastle University will be able to:

Level 8	Make a significant and original contribution to a specialised field of enquiry demonstrating a command of methodological issues and engaging in critical dialogue with peers.
Level 7	Display mastery of a complex and specialised area of knowledge and skills, employing advanced skills to conduct research or advanced technical or professional activity.
Level 6	Critically review, consolidate and extend a systematic and coherent body of knowledge. Critically evaluate new concepts and evidence from a range of sources. Transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills and exercise significant judgment in a range of situations.
Level 5	Generate ideas through the analysis of concepts at an abstract level with a command of specialised skills and the formulation of responses to well defined and abstract problems.
Level 4	Develop a rigorous approach to the acquisition of a broad knowledge base. Employ a range of specialised skills and evaluate information using it to plan and develop investigative strategies. Determine solutions to unpredictable problems.
Level 3	Apply knowledge and skills in a range of complex activities demonstrating comprehension of relevant theories. Access and analyse information independently and make reasoned judgements, selecting from a wide choice of procedures in familiar and unfamiliar contexts.

Appendix C

Extract from <u>The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies</u>

Titling conventions for qualifications

6.8 Public understanding of the achievements represented by higher education qualifications requires transparent and consistent use of qualification titles.

6.9 The title of any qualification accurately and appropriately reflects the level of achievements, the nature, volume and field(s) of study undertaken, and is not misleading.

Level

6.10 In order to ensure that qualification titles accurately convey information about the level

of the qualification:

• the titles 'honours' (for example, bachelor's degree with honours), 'master' (for example, Master of Arts) and 'doctor' (for example, Doctor of Philosophy) are used only for qualifications that meet, in full, the expectations of the qualification descriptors at Level 6, 7 and 8 on the FHEQ/SCQF Level 10, 11 and 12 on the FQHEIS respectively (but see note to the master's degree qualification descriptor)

• titles with the stem 'graduate' (for example, 'graduate diploma') are used for qualifications from courses of study that typically require graduate entry, or its equivalent, and have learning outcomes that match relevant parts of the descriptor for a qualification at Level 6 on the FHEQ/SCQF Level 9 or 10 on the FQHEIS

• titles with the stem 'postgraduate' (for example, 'postgraduate diploma') are restricted to qualifications where the learning outcomes of the course of study match or exceed relevant parts of the descriptor for a qualification at Level 7 on the FHEQ/SCQF Level 11 on the FQHEIS.

6.11 In accordance with the above, the title Postgraduate Certificate in Education is reserved for those PGCE qualifications that are set at Level 7 of the FHEQ and align with the qualification descriptor for Level 7. The title Professional Graduate Certificate in Education is used for those PGCE qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland that are set at Level 6 of the FHEQ and align with the FHEQ qualification descriptor at Level 6.2 Further guidance on the PGCE title is available on the QAA website.

Volume of study

6.12 The award of higher education qualifications is based on the demonstrated achievement of outcomes rather than years of study, but references can be made to volume of study and credit in order to indicate the approximate time expected to achieve the relevant learning outcomes. Volume of study and credit can therefore be used as an indicator of the range and depth of the learning outcomes and can, as a consequence, distinguish between types of qualifications at the same level.

6.13 For example, the title 'diploma' generally indicates a smaller volume of learning than a degree but a larger volume than a certificate (and an associated differentiation in the range of intended learning outcomes). A range of diplomas and certificates are offered by higher education providers:

• Undergraduate diplomas (for example, DipHE) are differentiated from undergraduate certificates (for example, CertHE) by both level and volume of study; the former are at Level 5 of the FHEQ/SCQF Level 8 on the FQHEIS, and the latter are at Level 4 of the FHEQ/SCQF Level 7 on the FQHEIS.

• Graduate diplomas and certificates are at the same level (Level 6 on the FHEQ/SCQF Level 10 on the FQHEIS) but are differentiated from each other by volume of study and learning outcomes. The title 'certificate' normally signifies learning outcomes which would imply study equivalent to at least one-third of a full-time academic year, and the title 'diploma' normally signifies study equivalent to at least two-thirds of a full-time academic year at the relevant level (and, where credit is awarded, the volume of credit specified by the relevant credit framework).

• Postgraduate diplomas and certificates are at the same level (Level 7 on the FHEQ/SCQF Level 11 on the FQHEIS) but are differentiated from each other by volume of study and learning outcomes. The title 'certificate' normally signifies learning outcomes which would imply study equivalent to at least one-third of a full-time academic year, and the title 'diploma' normally signifies study equivalent to at least two-thirds of a full-time academic year at the relevant level (and, where credit is awarded, the volume of credit specified by the relevant credit framework).

In Scotland, Professional Graduate Diplomas in Education are at the same level as Postgraduate Diplomas in Education (SCQF Level 11) and the use of the title 'Professional' does not imply a difference in level.

Nature of study

6.14 The title of 'degree' is awarded only for achievement in full of the outcomes set out in the relevant qualification descriptor as follows:

• 'foundation degree' is used only in respect of qualifications at Level 5 on the FHEQ

• 'bachelor's (non-honours) degree in Scotland' is used only in respect of qualifications at SCQF Level 9 on the FQHEIS

• 'bachelor's degree with honours' is used only in respect of qualifications at Level 6 on the FHEQ/SCQF Level 10 on the FQHEIS

• 'master's degree' is used only in respect of qualifications at Level 7 on the FHEQ/SCQF Level 11 on the FQHEIS

• 'doctoral degree' is used only in respect of qualifications at Level 8 on the FHEQ/SCQF Level 12 on the FQHEIS.

For foundation degrees, at Level 5, institutions may wish to consult the Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement.

6.15 The abbreviated titles PhD and DPhil are used for qualifications where assessment is solely by a final thesis or published work; or by artefact, composition or performance that is accompanied by a written commentary placing it in its academic context.

6.16 The abbreviated title MPhil is generally used for qualifications awarded following extended master's courses that typically involve a substantial element of research or equivalent enquiry.

Field of study

6.17 Titles used for doctoral qualifications awarded after courses that include a substantial taught element normally include the name of the discipline in the title (for example, EdD for Doctor of Education).

6.18 Qualification titles that reflect the subject focus of courses of study in two disciplines (for example, a joint honours qualification) use titling conventions based on:

• 'A and B', where there is an approximately equal balance between two components

• 'A with B' for a major/minor combination where the minor subject accounts for at least a quarter of the course.

6.19 Qualification titles do not normally reflect more than three subject components. Where there are more than three significant components, the title 'Combined Studies' is appropriate.

Annex A: Leading Edge Curriculum Equality Analysis

STEP 1 – DEFINE THE FOCUS

Name/title of what this EA is about	**Leading Edge Curriculum**
Lead officer/Manager (owner of EA)	**Sara Marsham**
Team members involved	**Rene Koglbauer, Stuart Edwards, Rachel Dearlove, Michelle Black, Sharon Herkes**
Start date	**31.1.2025**
Initial completion date	**11.6.2025**
Review date and frequency	To be reviewed as part of the new Universal Curriculum Framework implementation
Who does it affect? e.g., students, colleagues, other stakeholders	Colleagues Current/potential students (implementation decision yet to be taken)

Is the EA for something new or being revised?

☒ New

☐ Revised

Briefly describe what this EA is about and what it is focusing on

The purpose of this initial Equality Analysis is to consider the impact of the decisions made by the Leading Edge Curriculum in its development of a new Universal Curriculum Framework to be implemented by Newcastle University for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes.

As the University is introducing a new Universal Curriculum Framework for the first time, this Equality Analysis is predictive. It aims to anticipate potential positive and negative impacts on EDI in relation to the Universal Curriculum Framework's implementation and any process/culture changes required by colleagues.

The Leading Edge Curriculum project is one of the four projects that form part of the Education Strategy programme of work. The overarching aims of the strategy (and therefore the Leading Edge Curriculum project) are:

- **Equity:** to provide a core, universal offer for all students
- **Encounters with the Leading Edge:** to provide a curriculum that ensures all students will have encounters with our world leading research and the leading edge of industry, practice and society.
- **Fit for the Future**: to ensure all our students are fit for their future, our teaching is fit for the future of our offer and our colleagues are fit for the future of HE.

Who will the new Universal Curriculum Framework impact?

The project will involve the redesign and reapproval of all undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes to ensure their alignment to the principles of the new framework. It will therefore impact:
- All colleagues responsible for programme and module design and development (either directly or in a supporting role e.g. Faculty Education teams/School Education colleagues).
- All undergraduate and postgraduate taught students – an implementation decision is still to be taken in terms of whether this will include current students whose programmes will be redesigned to align with the new framework.
- Central services colleagues including: Registry and Education services; Student Recruitment and Marketing; Estates; Learning & Teaching Development Service; Careers Service; Student Wellbeing Advisers; Student Progress Services.
- New students who will enter onto redesigned programmes.

Key changes that have been approved by the University's Programme Board and University Education Committee to date include:
- 20 credit modules, semesterised and linear delivery for all credit bearing, modular programmes
- All honours undergraduate programmes will include a 40 credit dissertation, project or equivalent
- All Integrated Masters degrees will include a 40 or 60 credit dissertation, project or equivalent
- Taught Masters comprising more than 180 credits:
  i. the dissertation element will comprise not less than one-third and not more than a half of the total number of credits.
  ii. the credit pattern should conform to the base conventional module parameters of 20 credits, delivered within a single semester; but placement of the dissertation, project or equivalent can be arranged according to the needs of the programme.
- Research Masters:
  i. the dissertation element will comprise 80, 100 or 120 credits.
  ii. the credit pattern should conform to the base conventional module parameters of 20 credits, delivered within a single semester; but placement of the dissertation, project or equivalent can be arranged according to the needs of the programme.
- Embedding of personal, professional and future-focused Education for Life skills and attributes within all programmes.
- Structured encounters with the leading edge of research, industry, practice and society for all students which will further enhance their holistic development including employability.

STEP 2 – GATHER EVIDENCE & CONSULT

What evidence and consultation with colleagues or students has been used to determine any implications (negative and positive) for different groups? Examples of evidence include:
- Colleague and/or student diversity profile data
- Comparator/benchmarking data (internal or external)
- Take-up/usage data by different groups
- Survey results e.g. satisfaction, experience or engagement surveys
- Feedback and anecdotal evidence from colleagues or students
- Reports of discrimination, harassment, victimisation, complaints, concerns or grievances
- Findings of research/reports or good practice relevant to this EA (internal or external)

If there are any gaps in evidence that limit the assessment, try to fill them before progressing. If gaps remain, explain this and identify if this limits the assessment, and how you will seek address this in the future at Step 4.

Colleague and/or student diversity profile
The project group will be looking at diversity data for our Academic and Professional Services community to identify any potential impact on specific groups (taken from the latest University EDI report: UNI EDI Report Final.pdf**)**

Comparator/benchmarking data (internal or external)
Project members have met with several UK and international universities (Reading, Leeds, De Montfort, Hull and Victoria University, Australia) and as part of these conversations have explored how they introduced the new curriculum to their students, what the response was from students and any issues that arose from its introduction. None of the universities we spoke to flagged any issues we needed to consider or address.

Take-up/usage data by different groups
The universities we spoke to in the UK adopted their new curriculum for all students in order to ensure equity and the new Curriculum Framework intends to do the same for all credit bearing, modular degrees. Three degrees have been identified as non-credit bearing, non-modular (Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy) whose programmes already align in many ways with some of the new curriculum framework's planned underpinning principles:

- **Pharmacy:** The General Pharmaceutical Council shape the principles which include: clinical and scientific knowledge integration to help prepare students for work placements; lifelong learning and reflective practice; cultural competence and inclusion.
- **Medicine:** The principles are shaped by the General Medical Council and reflect the educational, professional and societal expectations of a medical practitioner. These include: outcome based education (GMC specify 'Outcomes for Graduates'; integration of scientific knowledge with clinical practice including work placements; lifelong learning and reflective practice; research and evidence-based practice; equality, diversity and inclusion.
- **Dentistry:** General Dental Council are introducing a Safe Practitioner Framework in September 2025 which builds on many of our underpinning principles including: evidence based practice; cultural competence and inclusivity; lifelong learning and reflective practice; clinical competence including work placements.

It is yet to be decided whether the new Universal Curriculum Framework's is implemented incrementally (introduced for first years whilst continuing students remain on their original programmes) or for all students at the same time (new and continuing). Should the latter be decided upon, engagement will be carried out with students to understand any impact on them and how this may be mitigated.

Survey results e.g. satisfaction, experience or engagement surveys

The project will be considering NSS, NES, PTES results that may indicate curricula concerns.

Within the project's three workstreams and our student focus groups we have explored the equity aim and how this has shaped inclusive practice. The project Change Management plan that is currently being developed will map out the ways in which we will measure the delivery of the new curriculum's benefits and will ensure both student and colleague feedback is obtained.

Feedback and anecdotal evidence from colleagues or students
We have more than 100 colleagues from across the University involved with the Leading Edge Curriculum to enable us to understand and think through the implications of the decisions we need to make in the development of a new Universal Curriculum Framework. We have the NUSU Education Officer on our Project team who brings the student perspective. We have held a number of workshops for colleagues and students to get feedback on our proposals and all of the elements of the framework have been developed in conjunction with colleagues. We have the FMS Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as a member of one of our project groups to ensure we consider our new framework through an EDI lens.

Student Workshops/meetings: These gathered feedback on the Education Strategy aims (equity, leading edge, fit for the future) and the Leading Edge Curriculum underpinning principles (active learning, reflective practice and cross cutting themes: global, sustainability, digital and social justice). The student feedback was considered by all relevant projects. Any specific areas not currently within the scope of the Leading Edge Curriculum were picked up with relevant colleagues. For example: to address the issue of equity in terms of the need for tailored academic writing support (specifically highlighted for international students), a meeting was held with INTO and the University's Academic Services unit to explore how academic skills can be more equitably provided and included as part of the programme design thinking. We have requested a proposal from colleagues in these areas on how this could work better. A meeting of the NUSU Liberation Officers was also attended at which we asked them to flag any issues from their represented communities' perspective which were also fed into the project work.

Reports of discrimination, harassment, victimisation, complaints, concerns or grievances

We have met with several Schools that raised concerns about the adoption of a new curriculum framework (medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, modern languages, business school) and have delivered at all School meetings during May/June in order to gain feedback on any concerns colleagues may have. For those Schools unable to accommodate an in-person meeting, we have online webinars and a recorded version with clear feedback mechanisms so all colleagues have an opportunity to access information on the curriculum framework and its implementation.

Findings of research/reports or good practice relevant to this EA (internal or external)

Although a number of universities are undertaking a similar exercise, this is relatively new work within the UK HE sector and there are therefore no longitudinal studies that we can draw on. In our conversations with universities that have undertaken a similar exercise, we have sought to understand the challenges this work posed for colleagues and how they sought to alleviate those. This has fed into our project, communications and implementation plan e.g. Leeds University flagged the need to provide clear brief, resource the redesign work adequately and consideration of workload with dedicated time provided for colleagues involved in the redesign process.

STEP 3 – ASSESS IMPACT & DECIDE HOW TO PROCEED

Using the evidence and feedback gathered in Step 2, answer the following two questions considering all the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. Where no negative or positive implications can be identified, please specify if impacts are unknown or you anticipate a neutral impact. Where relevant, consider combinations of protected characteristics (intersectionality) and other considerations, such as parental responsibilities or socio-economic background.

1. **Are there any negative impacts for any group(s)?** Examples include:
   - A group being treated less favourably
   - A group being placed at a disadvantage
   - A group being impacted (negatively) more than others
   - Not making reasonable adjustments for disabled people
   - Barriers to access and participation
   - Poorer experiences or outcomes
   - Negative affect on relations between groups
   - Any other negative implications or findings

2. **Are there any positive impacts for any group(s)?** Examples include:
   - Enabling access and participation
   - Anticipatory adjustments for disabled people
   - Improving colleague/student experience or outcomes
   - Preventing discrimination, harassment or victimisation
   - Fostering good relations between groups
   - Any other positive implications or findings

Group	Impact	Comments – please explain your assessment here
Age Being a certain age, in a certain age range, or stage of life (e.g., menopause, retirement).	☒ Positive ☒ Negative ☐ Neutral ☐ Unknown	**Academic colleagues delivering the new curriculum:** **Positive:** • Academic colleagues will benefit from:

o being upskilled which will ultimately make them more employable/ innovative/ successful/ satisfied etc.
o more focused time for teaching, scholarship and research through simplification of structures and better workload distribution.
- Academic/PS colleagues will benefit from the reduced workload for programme and module administration due to streamlined approval processes and documentation and ongoing maintenance.
- Colleagues involved in timetabling/estate use will benefit from more straightforward and optimised timetabling/space usage.
- Consistency of structures alleviates the administrative burden of managing wide variations in programme design.

Negative:
- Potential for workload stress in delivering a new curriculum - may be exacerbated for early career colleagues who are trying to establish research and teaching careers and/or more established staff who feel destabilised by change/ introduction of new practices/technologies - need to consider training, support, workload allocation, change management etc. to avoid burnout.
- Potential for stress resulting from the workforce resizing that is currently in progress.

We will be monitoring ongoing impact through meetings with Schools to understand any challenges being faced by colleagues. The potential impacts identified will be considered in the scheduling of programmes and in the level of support provided with the redesign and reapproval process.

Colleagues experiencing menopausal symptoms: Will need to consider any adjustments required to accommodate the needs of colleagues experiencing menopausal symptoms in terms of programme redesign session start/finish times, breaks and room facilities.

Mature students:

Positive:
- A new curriculum tailored to include up-to-date industry knowledge and skills, and possibly more networking opportunities, may be more attractive to mature students looking to advance/change career.
- The new curriculum framework will be designed to provide an equitable education for all students based on pedagogic innovation and the embedding of personal, professional and future-focused skills and attributes within all programmes. It will also enable structured encounters with the leading edge of research, industry, practice and society for all students which will further enhance their employability.

		• Student satisfaction should be increased as a result of a more consistent experience and balanced student workload. **Negative:** We need to ensure that the needs and experiences of mature students are considered to avoid them feeling isolated. This could include, for example, ensuring support for adapting to new technologies and teaching methods, if they have been out of the educational system for a while.
Disability Physical or mental condition, including unseen, which (untreated) has a substantial and long-term impact, which might recur. **Unpaid carers** are protected from discrimination related to their association with/responsibilities for caring for a disabled person.	☒ Positive ☒ Negative ☐ Neutral ☐ Unknown	**Colleagues:** **Positive:** • Reduced workload for programme and module administration due to streamlined approval processes and documentation and ongoing maintenance. • More focused time for teaching, scholarship and research through simplification of structures and better workload distribution • Consistency of structures alleviates the administrative burden of managing wide variations in programme design. **Negative:** • The transformation to a new curriculum could increase workload in the short term and be more demanding/stressful for some colleagues with disabilities/ unpaid carers - this may need consideration e.g. support, adjustments, ensuring appropriate accessibility etc. • Will need to consider any adjustments required to accommodate the needs of colleagues with a disability in terms of the programme redesign session start/finish times, breaks and room facilities. **Students:** **Positive:** • The new curriculum framework will be designed to provide an equitable education for all students based on pedagogic innovation and the embedding of personal, professional and future-focused skills and attributes within all programmes. It will also enable structured encounters with the leading edge of research, industry, practice and society for all students which will further enhance their employability. • Student satisfaction should be increased as a result of a more consistent experience and balanced student workload. **Negative:**

		Potential negative for current students that transitioning to a new curriculum could be challenging for some students with disabilities requiring significant adjustments and increased support.
Gender affirmation Including all non-binary and trans identities who do and do not undergo medical or other transitions.	☒ Positive ☒ Negative ☐ Neutral ☐ Unknown	**Positive:** Curriculum design could benefit Trans, Transitioning and Non-Binary' students if it's more inclusive and holistic by design with safe spaces. **Negative:** For any student/colleague undergoing gender reassignment, moving to a new curriculum could be more challenging and more support may be needed.
Marriage & civil partnership Being married or in a civil partnership (relevant to employment only).	☐ Positive ☐ Negative ☐ Neutral ☐ Unknown	
Pregnancy & maternity Being pregnant, having recently given birth, being on maternity leave or breast/chestfeeding.	☒ Positive ☒ Negative ☐ Neutral ☐ Unknown	**Colleagues:** **Positive:** • Reduced workload for programme and module administration due to streamlined approval processes and documentation and ongoing maintenance. • More focused time for teaching, scholarship and research through simplification of structures and better workload distribution. • Consistency of structures alleviates the administrative burden of managing wide variations in programme design. **Negative:** • Colleagues returning from parental leave may find the transition particularly challenging if a lot has changed whilst they are off - transitioning to a new curriculum could more challenging and more support may be needed. • Consideration will need to be given to colleagues with breast/chestfeeding responsibilities in terms of training session times, breaks, room location. **Students:** **Positive:** • The new curriculum framework will be designed to provide an equitable educational for all students based on pedagogic innovation and the embedding of personal, professional and future-focused skills and attributes within all programmes. It will also enable structured

		encounters with the leading edge of research, industry, practice and society for all students which will further enhance their employability.
		• Student satisfaction should be increased as a result of a more consistent experience and balanced student workload.
Race & ethnicity Majority and minority ethnic groups. Where relevant, nationality or national origins, and related factors such as culture or language.	☒ Positive ☒ Negative ☐ Neutral ☐ Unknown	**Students:** **Positive:** • The new curriculum framework will be designed to provide an equitable educational for all students based on pedagogic innovation and the embedding of personal, professional and future-focused skills and attributes within all programmes. It will also enable structured encounters with the leading edge of research, industry, practice and society for all students which will further enhance their employability. • Academic English support for international students is being considered as part of the Leading Edge Curriculum. • Global and social justice are cross-cutting themes which hopefully will increase cultural competency across all student groups and embed a decolonised curricula which showcases global input/views/innovations. **Negative:** The potential need for enhanced support and inclusive design to reduce isolation could turn into a negative impact if not addressed.
Religion or belief • Having/not having a religion. • Having/not having philosophical beliefs that apply to an important aspect of life.	☒ Positive ☒ Negative ☐ Neutral ☐ Unknown	**Positive:** • Consideration of inclusive and holistic design could have positive impacts in decreasing isolation for students from minority groups. • New curriculum design will need to consider the differing needs of students and colleagues from different faith backgrounds in terms of timetabling teaching and assessment, both for regular prayer/gatherings and for specific religious celebrations. **Negative:** Need to consider that by achieving equity/parity, the current offering/flexibility for some students could be removed or /decreased.
Sex In UK law, female or male.	☒ Positive ☒ Negative ☐ Neutral ☐ Unknown	**Positive:** • The new curriculum design could empower female students by highlighting the achievements of women in various fields, boosting their confidence and aspirations and interactions with industry etc. • The new curriculum could provide positive role models for students of both sexes e.g. male psychologists and female engineers - this may need consideration to ensure that all

		students feel represented in the various role models they see over the course to prevent isolation - this equally applies to other groups above e.g. disability, race etc. • The new curriculum framework will be designed to provide an equitable educational for all students based on pedagogic innovation and the embedding of personal, professional and future-focused skills and attributes within all programmes. It will also enable structured encounters with the leading edge of research, industry, practice and society for all students which will further enhance their employability. **Negative:** Colleagues - female colleagues may be disproportionately affected by an increased workload mentioned above e.g. due to the increased likelihood of being unpaid carers/parental responsibilities, because female colleagues are more likely to have taken on additional work supporting students etc.
Sexual orientation A person's sexual attraction to other people, or lack thereof.	☒ Positive ☒ Negative ☐ Neutral ☐ Unknown	**Positive/Negative:** For any student/colleague with minority sexual orientations, transitioning to a new curriculum could more challenging and more support may be needed; however, the curriculum design could benefit these students if its more inclusive and holistic by design with safe spaces etc.
Other considerations Such as parental responsibilities, wellbeing, socio-economic background, or working pattern.	☐ Positive ☐ Negative ☐ Neutral ☐ Unknown	Consideration will need to be given to: • colleagues/students with childcare responsibilities in terms of programme redesign session start/finish times. • colleagues' working patterns in terms of dates on which sessions are held. • for those students currently on programmes with block teaching, there may be a potential impact on students' flexibility to undertake fixed hours part-time work.

Intersectionality
Characteristics in combination e.g. disability & race, age & pregnancy, sex & religion, more than one disability.
	☒ Positive
	☒ Negative
	☐ Neutral
	☐ Unknown
		Colleagues:
		
		Positive:
		• Academic colleagues:
		  o will be upskilled which will ultimately make them more employable / innovative / successful / satisfied etc.
		  o will benefit from more focused time for teaching, scholarship and research through simplification of structures and better workload distribution.
		• Academic/PS colleagues: will benefit from the reduced workload for programme and module administration due to streamlined approval processes and documentation and ongoing maintenance.
		• Colleagues involved in timetabling/estate use will benefit from more straightforward and optimised timetabling/space usage.

	- Consistency of structures alleviates the administrative burden of managing wide variations in programme design. The potential impacts mentioned below will be compounded where a student or colleague has a combination of characteristics so careful consideration will be needed on how to mitigate these impacts. **Negative:** - Potential for workload stress in delivering a new curriculum - may be exacerbated for early career colleagues who are trying to establish research and teaching careers and/or more established staff who feel destabilised by change/ introduction of new practices/technologies - need to consider training, support, workload allocation, change management etc. to avoid burnout. - The transformation to a new curriculum could increase workload in the short term and be more demanding/stressful for some colleagues with disabilities/ unpaid carers - this may need consideration e.g. support, adjustments, ensuring accessibility etc. - Colleagues returning from parental leave may find the transition particularly challenging if a lot has changed whilst they are off (similar considerations needed to those already mentioned above) - transitioning to a new curriculum could more challenging and more support may be needed. - Potential for colleagues to feel isolated – need to consider enhanced support and inclusive design to address this. **Students:** **Positive:** - The new curriculum framework will be designed to provide an equitable educational for all students based on pedagogic innovation and the embedding of personal, professional and future-focused skills and attributes within all programmes. It will also enable structured encounters with the leading edge of research, industry, practice and society for all students which will further enhance their employability. - Student satisfaction should be increased as a result of a more consistent experience and balanced student workload.

Conclusions
Summarise your key findings below.

The Equality Analysis has identified some considerations in relation to the implementation phase in relation to session timings, facilities and duration.

The inclusive curriculum design is being implemented to try to address inequities and provide a better learning experience for all students and the project team recognise that there may be short term negative implications for colleagues and students.

Decide how to proceed
How does your assessment suggest the proposal/policy/initiative should proceed? You can explain your answer in the box below.

☐ **Stop or postpone** (e.g. in order to consider EDI implications in more depth).	☐ **Alter in order to address impacts** (set out the actions required at Step 4).	☒ **Proceed as planned** (if there are any negative impacts, you will need to be able to objectively justify this decision).

The Universal Curriculum design is being implemented to try to address inequities and provide a better learning experience for all students.

The project group recognises that there may be short term negative implications for colleagues and students and the project group are currently considering how these may be mitigated as part of the Leading Edge Curriculum implementation plan.

We do recognise that, whilst steps will be taken to consider all protected characteristics and their intersection as part of the development, there may be intended consequences which we plan to measure and address.

STEP 4 – PLAN ACTION

The action plan is being considered and will start to be populated once the final elements of the new universal curriculum framework are all approved.

We will be monitoring ongoing impact through meetings with Schools to understand any challenges being faced by colleagues. The potential impacts identified will be considered in the scheduling of programmes and in the level of support provided with the redesign and reapproval process.

The assessment in Step 3 should inform **actions to be recorded below and included in Faculty, School or Central services plans**. For example: - actions to mitigate negative implications or enable positive implications - actions to fill gaps in available evidence - actions to consult with colleagues or students **This action plan should also outline how and when you will *monitor impacts* during implementation and review this EA.**			
Actions	Due date	Assigned to	Managed by