

Senate Oversight of Education and Research

1. Introduction

At the meeting of Senate on 19 February 2025, it was agreed that Senate should receive a framework for monitoring the academic character and mission of the University. As part of the discussion, it was noted that Senate already receives a significant volume of quantitative and qualitative information and reports, including the reports from Senate sub-committees. It was agreed that a schedule of existing information should be provided together with a plan for additional reports at an appropriate level of granularity.

At a subsequent meeting of Senate on 21 May, it was additionally agreed that Senate and Council should work together more closely on the development of future facing plans for education and research. This was discussed and agreed at Council on 2 June and a session will be scheduled in the next academic year to facilitate joint working.

2. Current Schedule of Senate Reports

Senate already monitors academic character and performance with regular reports that are typically presented at Faculty and School level. In some instances, data is presented at subject, discipline or UoA level; the sub-committees of Senate typically delve into more granular detail.

Topic	Level	Sub-Committee / Frequency
Student Surveys - NSS - NES - PTES - PRES	University and School / Subject Levels	University Education Committee / Annual Report to Senate
Annual Report on Quality and Standards	University and Programme Level	University Education Committee / Annual Report to Senate
Graduate Outcomes	University, Faculty and School Levels	University Education Committee / Annual Report to Senate
Teaching Excellence Framework	University and Faculty Levels	University Education Committee / Updates to Senate across 4-year cycle and UEC minutes circulated at each meeting of Senate
Research Excellence Framework	University Level (early in the cycle), Faculty and School Level (included as the cycle progresses)	University Research and Innovation Committee / update to Senate as cycle progresses and URIC minutes circulated at each meeting of Senate
Knowledge Exchange Framework	University Level	University Research and Innovation Committee and University Engagement and Place Committee / Updates to Senate across 3-year cycle and URIC and UEPC minutes circulated at each meeting of Senate

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Student Casework	University and Faculty Levels	University Education Committee / Annual Report to Senate
Annual Statement on Research Integrity	University Level	University Research and Innovation Committee / Minutes circulated at each meeting of Senate
Newcastle University Students' Union Impact Report	University Level	Annual Report to Senate
University Regulations	University Level	Annual Update to Senate
Student Recruitment and Admissions Update	University Level	Annual Update to Senate, Education Committee and Global Committee review detail and trends
Annual Promotions Report	University and Faculty Level	Annual Report to Senate and Council / University Promotions Committee and Faculty Promotions Committees
New Newcastle University Centre of Research Excellence (NUCoRE) Proposal	University, Faculty and School Levels	University Research and Innovation Committee / Submitted to Senate for approval according to NUCoRE governance procedure

3. Additional Reports

3.1 Enhanced Reporting from Sub-Committees

It is proposed that more granular information discussed at the sub-committees could be made more visible to members of Senate, for example an annual list of programme approvals and withdrawals or an annual list of student exchange agreements. The strategic risks monitored by sub-committees could also be made available to Senate. This would give Senate access to more information relating to academic character and improve visibility of the work undertaken by the sub-committees. In addition, it is proposed that Senate receives a regular verbal update from the Senate representative and/or Chair of the sub-committee on any significant matters of business.

3.2 Trend Information in PowerBI

It is proposed that a new dashboard is made available to members of Senate with trend information relevant to education and research at an appropriate level of granularity. It is envisioned that data on all units would be presented at Faculty and School level with the ability to drill-down to constituent disciplines in the larger Schools, for example:

Trends for the last 5 years:

- Taught student numbers
- Research student numbers
- Academic FTE

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- Student Staff Ratio
- Application trends and market share
- Student Survey Results
- REF Outcomes
- Research grant capture
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3.3 Future Academic Shape

As noted above, it was agreed at Council that a regular joint session should be arranged in the new academic year to facilitate greater joint working between Senate and Council. The topic of the joint session would be to discuss future ideas for the academic shape of the University. To inform the discussion, relevant information would be brought together to include both financial and academic performance.

As part of NUShape, each academic unit and Faculty developed Strategic Delivery Plans for the period 2024-2029. These will be updated in 2025-26. These plans include qualitative and quantitative information relating to the future academic character of each Faculty. It is proposed that the Faculty plans are shared with Senate, potentially as part of the joint session with Council.

4. Conclusion

The framework presented above will build on the existing reports and will therefore enhance the Senate oversight of education and research.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor

June 2025