



1. Provider context

1.1 Who we are

Newcastle University is a globally recognised research-intensive university and an anchor institution in the North East. From our origins in the 1830s, we have built a proud legacy of education, research and innovation and provided students with the knowledge, skills and ideas to meet the region's maritime, industrial, agricultural, social, cultural and healthcare needs. This legacy is echoed today in our thematic strengths across a research-informed educational curriculum with a rich seam of training in professional and vocational practice in: Ageing & Life Sciences, Data, OnePlanet, Cities & Place, and Culture & Creative Arts. We continue to serve regional, national, and international educational needs with 21% of our students from the North East, 85% from the UK, and 15% non-UK.

Today, we are a diverse community comprising: ~29,000 students (~22,000 undergraduate, from >140 countries), >6,000 colleagues (27% from >90 non-UK countries), and ~250,000 alumni worldwide, all working together with a host of partners in the community, public and private organisations.

Our three faculties are based in Newcastle city centre within a 15-minute walking radius: Humanities and Social Sciences (HaSS) is the largest, with nine discipline-based schools, three research institutes and School X, established in 2021 to develop distinctive interdisciplinary programmes; Medical Sciences (FMS), with five schools (including medicine and dentistry) and three research institutes; and Science, Agriculture and Engineering (SAgE) with four schools. As the University has grown (23,000 students in 2016 to 29,000 in 2022), we have diversified our disciplinary base, re-established physics and launched film and media, and education in 2015, added sport and exercise sciences in 2017 and dietetics in 2020, and incorporated pharmacy from Durham University in 2017.

We also operate in Singapore to educate students in engineering (NUIS) and in Malaysia to meet the demand for medical and biomedical graduates (NUMed). These facilities have encouraged mobility and a global outlook for students and colleagues. For example, across 2018–19 and 2019–20 44 UK students benefitted from study in Malaysia.

Recent global rankings reflect our achievements in education and research, with improvements since 2016 in Leiden (114th to 66th), QS (168th to 122nd) and THE (190th to 139th) as well as outstanding performance in sustainability rankings (18th in QS and 8th in THE rankings for UN SDGs). In REF2021, we achieved our best-ever rank of 15th overall for research power (THE rankings). We are recognised as a top 25 institution in Europe for excellence in teaching (THE Europe Teaching Rankings, 2019) and achieved five QS Stars both for Teaching and for Employability (QS, 2022). We won THE Outstanding Support for Students in 2019 and 2020 and Outstanding Technician of the Year in 2021. In 2022, we were shortlisted for the THE University of the Year.

1.2 Our vision and strategy

In 2018, we launched a new Vision & Strategy (1) comprising four cross-cutting strategies: Education for Life, Research for Discovery and Impact, Engagement and Place, and Global. In 2022, we reaffirmed our vision to be a values-led world-leading University, advancing knowledge, providing creative solutions, and solving global problems. The four interlocking strategies all contribute to the educational experience, and the institutional values inform how students develop and influence the graduates they become.

Colleagues and students working together are committed to recognising, celebrating and increasing the diversity of our student population, including those from under-represented groups. The Strategy aims to develop the whole person, by supporting and preparing students to shape the societies in which they will live and the professions they enter through a holistic approach to academic, personal and professional development. The attributes and skills characterising our graduates are embedded across our programmes and the gains we intend them to make while they are with us are captured in our Education for Life Framework.

Through our Education Strategy we strive to provide:



An inspiring and effective educational experience



Personalised resources and support across the learner journey



A supportive and nurturing environment for educational excellence



Opportunities for students to enhance their employability and develop skills for life

We pledge to:



Enhance the holistic development of our students through our Education for Life Framework

Students are at the centre of strategy delivery, acting as partners in their education. We act on feedback and work with them to co-create their learning experiences as they, in turn, challenge us to do better.

1.3 Our students

We recruit academically able, highly motivated, enthusiastic students of all ages and backgrounds, supporting them to succeed and achieve strong employment or further study outcomes. We have 22,000 undergraduate students, most of whom study full-time and on campus, across over 185 degree programmes spanning 30 CAH2 subject areas.

Our student body is diverse. In 2021–22, around one in six had a declared disability, nearly one in five identified as coming from a minority ethnic group, and around one in 20 were mature students. Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is a core value. We are a University of Sanctuary, hold an institutional Athena Swan Silver award and a Bronze Race Equality Charter award, and through over 20 years of partnership working with education providers via our PARTNERS Programme, we actively recruit and support students from diverse backgrounds and under-represented groups to provide them with opportunities for academic and personal success. In the last four years particularly, we have increased the number of students from low participation areas and these students continue to have good graduate outcomes. We are 3rd in the UK for Diversity and Inclusion (Whatuni Student Choice Awards, 2021) and were awarded 5 QS Stars for Inclusiveness (QS, 2022).

1.4 Educational leadership and student partnership

Strategic leadership is provided by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education, supported by a Dean of Education in each faculty and a Director of Education in every school and institute. In 2019, we appointed a Dean of Lifelong Learning and Professional Practice to drive strategy in this area including our provision of apprenticeships and CPD, and a Professor of Practice for Inclusive Education who provides thought leadership for inclusive education via our Inclusive Newcastle initiative. In 2022, we appointed a Dean of Digital Education to accelerate our drive to develop online and on-campus digital pedagogies.

Students are partners in all aspects of our education, including quality assurance processes, project workstreams, interview panels, and representation on the most senior decision-making bodies. We are committed to listening to the student voice and working together to enhance educational experiences. Student representation via over 1,500 representatives is run jointly with our Students' Union (NUSU) to ensure every student is represented in our institutional decision-making processes and can contribute to the enhancement of their programme and learning experience (2,3). Student representatives are trained by NUSU and contribute through our consultation system as course representatives and student chairs of staff–student committees (SSCs).

Council, Senate, Court and many key University committees and groups include student members, and we particularly value our Sabbatical Officers challenging and working with us in governance and on projects to continually improve educational experiences. In 2021–22, we increased the number of student representatives on University Education Committee from two to five. In addition to being committed members of Faculty Education Committees, twice a year students lead these committees, further democratising these governance spaces. The students are supported in the development of their chairing and facilitative skills.

1.5 Consideration of the TEF indicators

We are proud of the educational experience we offer and the outcomes our graduates secure; the rest of this submission therefore describes our strategies for educational excellence. We are pleased that our student outcomes indicators show performance at or above benchmark, but we acknowledge that the overall indicators for four out of five NSS domains are well below benchmark. The NSS shows a change over time with lower satisfaction in 2021, which has persisted in 2022. The indicators do conceal substantial diversity between different disciplines, with some subject areas having satisfaction consistently in line with or above benchmark.

We know that several factors will have influenced our NSS scores. These include the pandemic, with particularly severe impacts in Newcastle owing to early lock down, and a significant cyber security incident in September 2020 that temporarily disrupted university systems, which, despite our best efforts, did impact upon students' experience. Setting these aside however, we have undertaken a detailed review of every corner of the institution to understand what may lie behind what students are telling us about their experiences through the NSS. Although not in time to impact the current TEF indicators, we have initiated a Student Experience Action Plan with a steering group chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and involving our students through Sabbatical Officers. The Action Plan is well underway and includes prioritising provision of present-in-person education and synchronous sessions, strengthening induction to support a sense of belonging, refreshing training and engagement with personal tutors, devolving communications with students, offering more resource and extracurricular activities to support student wellbeing, and simplifying student-facing policies and procedures. All schools have undertaken local reviews and put in place priorities agreed with students based on specific areas of concern with progress monitored at faculty and university level. We have also agreed specific University-wide commitments with our students, detail of which is within the TEF Student Submission. We are optimistic that our student-centred approach, the fundamental quality of our research-led teaching, and the opportunities we offer in support of successful student outcomes, will be reflected in the recovery of our previously excellent student satisfaction.

1.6 Student involvement in the TEF

NUSU Sabbatical Officers have been active members of the groups supporting the production of this submission and have produced and shared an independent submission on behalf of the student body.

1.7 Note on language

In this document 'students' refers to undergraduate (UG) students. Where postgraduate (PG) data cannot be disaggregated this is noted in the text. Numbers in brackets represent references. Student quotations are provided anonymously.



2. An inspiring and effective educational experience

Our students experience a journey to develop their fullest potential. Alongside essential subject knowledge our curricula are research-informed, with teaching methods and assessment designed to develop students' research and employability skills through experiential learning, helping them to gain the attributes that will enable them to be successful after graduation and fulfil our vision of an Education for Life.

2.1 Realising the benefits of world-leading research

As a research-intensive university the what, why and how of teaching and learning is informed by the concepts, evidence and outputs of research and scholarship. Research-led teaching describes our institutional approach to teaching and the construction of curricula embedded in the following ways: supporting discipline-based learning educators undertaking pedagogic, research and scholarship activities to enable more effective teaching and assessment; and students learning through engagement in a range of research activities. The latter is increasingly being used across all disciplines through project-led learning, collaborative projects and formal research undertakings in the curriculum and beyond.

Our educational offer takes place within the context of pioneering research, enriching the learning environment. Nearly three quarters of our modules (74%) are led by research-active colleagues in schools or research institutes (4). The thriving discipline-based research institutes provide stimulating research and learning environments, and our cutting-edge clinical and scientific research facilities and infrastructure underpin this. We also have 16 multidisciplinary Centres of Research Excellence (NUCoREs) across the University, each of which is tasked with development of the research-informed curriculum around their topic. For example, our Cities NUCoRE's involvement in Enrichment Week provided an opportunity for students to learn from, and contribute to, the planning and design of the Gateshead Riverside Project.

Students are challenged to engage with the frontiers of knowledge by interacting with colleagues working at the forefront of their disciplines and are trained in and given the opportunity and skills to undertake and publish research themselves. Engineering students undertake research in eight innovative research centres where we are key partners. Year three and four mechanical engineering students form Newcastle Racing, a Formula 1 Student Research Team who design, build and drive a racing car in the national event at Silverstone. Stu Brew, Europe's first student-run microbrewery, provides chemical engineering students with the opportunity to engage in research into sustainable brewery design. Supported by our Research Impact Office, our Year three animal science students host an annual conference where around 100 researchers and industry experts attend REF case study research talks by our students. English literature and creative writing placed first in the UK in

REF 2021 (THE); students in those disciplines benefit significantly in terms of access to innovative content, cutting-edge approaches including practice-led research, connections to collaborative partners, and interaction with award-winning researchers, poets, and authors as teachers.

Most students undertake research as part of the formal assessment for their programme, with 88% of programmes including a compulsory or optional item of research-based work assessed via a project, dissertation, or other research element, supervised by research-active colleagues (5). In biomedical, nutrition and sports sciences, 83% of these projects were supervised by research institute-based colleagues, many of them global leaders in their field. These figures exclude medicine, dentistry, and speech and language sciences which incorporate research and skill development in other ways such as the 'Student Selected Component in Medicine' and independently researched case reports in the module 'Human Diseases in Dentistry'. In 2021–22, 35% of medical students intercalated, the majority to Master of Research programmes that require significant research projects (6).

"The strong research-led curriculum is exemplary, with the provision of an extensive range of relevant, diverse and interesting research projects."

External Examiner comment, BSc/MSci Biochemistry, 2020–21

Linking research and teaching is firmly embedded in our processes for programme design, development, monitoring and (re)approval. Ensuring that teaching is informed by research is a focus of programme design, and this is tested thoroughly at approval (including confirmation from an external subject specialist that this requirement has been met). All external examiners are asked to comment annually on whether the programmes for which they are responsible demonstrate links between research and teaching, and this is a specific focus in the periodic review of programmes as a requirement for (re)approval.

2.2 Professional recognition for excellence and employability

The effectiveness of our programmes in developing higher-level skills, knowledge and attributes is evident from the recognition by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). As well as demonstrating external professional recognition of the value and rigour of our programmes, the high proportion of programmes accredited by PSRBs reflects a commitment to enhancing the employability of our students, to support them in reaching their potential after graduation, and to making significant contributions to society and the economy.

Table 1: PSRB recognition of our programmes (7)

	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
No. of PSRBs recognising programmes	54	55	61	61
No. of programmes with PSRB recognition	124	127	134	134
% of total student body on a PSRB-recognised programme	53	53	58	57

2.3 Embedding real-world experiences and global perspectives

In addition to exposure to research through the curriculum and students undertaking research themselves, many of our programmes are designed around experiential learning as it relates to the professions and wider world of work. Regardless of discipline, most of our students can choose to incorporate a year-long work-based placement or international mobility experience into their degree.

We previously only offered work-based placements within a section of our portfolio, but having seen the benefits of the experience for student progression to highly skilled employment, the decision was taken that from 2017–18 almost all undergraduate students (except those on clinical programmes and a small number of others) would have the opportunity to undertake an assessed work-based

placement year accruing 120 credits. Within two years we saw a 67% increase in the number of students taking full-year placements (8). This decision was made based on compelling evidence: over the period 2014–16, 94% of undergraduates who had undertaken a placement were in employment or further study six months after graduating, while 88% were in highly skilled employment (DLHE 2014–15 and 2015–16 combined), both of which exceeded our overall performance.

Students undertake placement years across the UK and at global businesses such as GE, Nike, L'Oréal, AstraZeneca, Pfizer and PepsiCo as well as regionally with Northumbrian Water, Waterstones and Newcastle Building Society. Placements include a structured programme delivered through the Careers Service via our VLE, with each student allocated a tutor responsible for helping them make the most of their placement year, formative assessment, and a final impact and development report as a capstone piece. Around 620 students (11% of penultimate year students) were on a placement year as part of their degree programme in 2021–22 (9). Whilst there was a dip in placements during the pandemic, activity is now nearly back to pre-pandemic levels (727 in 2018–19, 672 in 2019–20). We continue to see improved progression for students who have taken any form of placement. Placement students have highly skilled or further study graduate outcomes at least six percentage points higher than students who have not taken placements (10).

In addition to an 'add-on' year, placement and workplace experience is built into many programmes. Clinical students do structured clinical placements as a part of their degree, and pharmacy students volunteer in student-run professionally supervised pop-up clinics at centres across Newcastle serving disadvantaged populations in need of health care. Dentistry students undertake a six-month programme of developing and delivering oral health education (OHE) to targeted community groups such as Sure Start schemes, nurseries, and mother and toddler groups. The programme was highly commended by the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry Innovation Award 2020. Speech and language sciences students undertake supported clinical placements at our Children's Speech and Language Clinic and Tavistock Aphasia Centre.

The Flying Start degree provides an innovative fast-track route into chartered accountancy, with integrated paid work placements at PwC. The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales is part of this collaboration via programme design and accreditation. During the last 20 years this has enabled over 1,000 students to gain business skills and real-world experience through paid work placements alongside professional accreditation with dedicated support from academics and PwC. 98% graduate with a 2:1 or 1st, with 600+ joining PwC and going on to roles including Finance Director, Head of Group Finance and Head of Audit. Placements in Years two and four, and professional exams covering 12 of the 15 papers required for Associate Chartered Accountant status ensure that graduates remain at the forefront of business both regionally and globally (11).

In chemistry and civil engineering, students can take an accredited year in industry where they spend 12 months with an organisation such as Procter & Gamble or AkzoNobel. Within marine sciences, all Year two students undertake a work placement with a sector-relevant provider, including the Marine Management Organisation, the Government's independent regulator for England.

Alongside this, many of our professionally-oriented programmes have an industrial advisory board or equivalent that plays a vital role in curriculum review and development. In other areas (such as our medical sciences provision), there is extensive co-delivery of undergraduate programmes ensuring that this provision is constantly informed by issues at the forefront of professional practice.

A 20-credit optional Career Development Module is offered across all three faculties, in 77 programmes in 2021–22. The module involves 50 hours of placement experience through tutoring in schools, volunteering activities, or part-time work. Assessment is via a 'professional portfolio' combining personal development planning and reflection. During the four TEF years, 1,345 students chose to study one of these modules.

Our prioritisation of real-world experience also extends to international opportunities. Through our Study Abroad programme students can undertake a work placement or spend up to 12 months learning at one of our 200+ partner universities, experiencing a different culture and gaining a new perspective on the world and themselves whilst gaining 120 credits towards their degree. In 2021–22, we supported 679 students to undertake overseas placements and welcomed 319 exchange students from international partner universities, enhancing student diversity and bringing opportunities for intercultural engagement for students in Newcastle. We also offer short-term mobility placements as a flexible and accessible route for global exposure. Through our Summer Programmes, students can undertake summer schools at partner universities across the world. We employ a team of 11 student Global Ambassadors across the University, who work closely with us to co-create programmes designed to improve the student experience and promote global opportunities.

Students also benefit from experiences made possible by our international campuses. To enhance student mobility and increase their awareness and understanding of other cultures and contexts, the MBBS (medicine) programme established a one-semester Malaysia-UK exchange programme between Newcastle and NUMed (our fully owned campus in Malaysia, which offers the same five-year MBBS degree as the Newcastle UK campus and is GMC, UK and MMC, Malaysia accredited). Between 2018–19 and 2019–20, 44 Newcastle and 35 NUMed students participated in the exchange (12), which was unfortunately paused from 2020–22 due to COVID-19. A research project assessing the impact of this transnational exchange found a huge impact on students' personal and professional growth (12).

2.4 In-person and digital delivery designed to engage and challenge

We are a university of place and our programmes are delivered primarily in-person and on campus. COVID-19 disrupted this, and prior and ongoing investments in digital education helped us to protect the student educational experience and safeguard academic standards through the pandemic. That investment enables us to support and enhance our approach to delivery but it has not changed our central identity. Retaining elements of blended delivery alongside in-person education supports the accessibility and inclusivity of our offer.

We provide wide choice and flexibility in programme design, enabling students to tailor their studies to their own interests and strengths. Our timetable is built around this, enabling student curiosity to drive what we teach. Most degrees allow free choice over a proportion of modules studied – from 20 credits in more regulated degrees to full freedom over the honours years in many arts and humanities degrees. Students can further shape their experiences with a placement or year abroad. All these expectations and features are built into our programme (re)approval, monitoring and review processes, which all include students, student feedback and external advisers. In this way, we ensure that programmes are coherently designed, drawing all elements together to support learning, progression and attainment.

We systematically collect, consider and act on feedback at programme, school and institutional level. Our approaches to gathering feedback have grown and changed in part due to feedback from students. All students are invited to provide a range of holistic reflections on their experience via a core set of questions at two points in each academic year, combined with module-specific questions that inform and shape teaching and learning. We also use more informal approaches to gathering feedback through mid-module check-ins for all modules. Gathering feedback early helps identify and resolve live issues and allows changes to benefit the reporting cohort. Practice is supported through a toolkit with individual teaching staff able to pick from a menu of approaches. Students are also central to programme review processes as full members of the review panel, and there are multiple opportunities to hear directly from students about their experiences to inform commendations and recommendations.

Students are supported to learn through a range of pedagogical approaches. Core subject knowledge is delivered through traditional or interactive lectures, seminars enable reflection and discussion of key ideas, tutorials provide small group opportunities, and workshops develop practical application of theories. All are supported by learning materials embedded in VLEs. Each programme has an approach to delivery adapted to disciplinary need, providing great diversity in the way we support learning and skill development.

In-field and virtual fieldwork are embedded in the curriculum of natural and environmental sciences, engineering, geography and archaeology degrees. During the COVID-19 pandemic, natural and environmental sciences programmes used software such as Flip to deliver poster conferences and ThingLink to create immersive 360° virtual field environments allowing students to observe, explore and collect data for analysis and interpretation. In marine sciences, 90% of Year one and two students agreed that virtual field environments were a very good/excellent replacement to in-person delivery (13). Where these approaches enhance in-person provision they are now embedded.

“I found it so useful that more in depth photos were taken because they highlighted things that I would most likely have missed if I was on the shore.”

BSc Marine Biology student, 2020

Real-world and hands-on experiences are foregrounded in teaching delivery, for example: working with clients (accounting, journalism), exhibition materials (media, fine art) and design spaces (architecture). Simulated learning environments in law enable skills development within the curriculum and pro bono projects provide students with the opportunity to give back to their community, harnessing real-life experiential and engaged learning experiences, underpinned by social justice values. Our Urban Sciences Building and the Helix site comprise a living laboratory providing computing and engineering students with real-time data, for example on cyber-physical systems and smart energy grids. Outstanding specialist scientific facilities include a food handling laboratory, sensory evaluation laboratory, and biomechanics laboratories for nutrition, dietetics, and sport and exercise science. Students in natural and environmental sciences and engineering are taught at our two farms, the Dove Marine Laboratory, the Blyth Marine Station, the Emerson Cavitation Tunnel, and onboard our state-of-the-art research vessel (The Princess Royal, designed in-house by colleagues and students), providing real-life experience. We use a skill and teaching ladder for practical skill development, for example, wet and computer-aided laboratories in Year one and progression to more independent practical experiences in Year two prepare students to complete research-based dissertations in Year three.

Delivery of the medical curriculum centres around 25 core clinical cases, with anatomy taught using human cadavers and tissue in a specialist dissecting room supported by technology, including Complete Anatomy, Virtual Human Dissector and our Sectra terminal. These platforms enable students to appreciate the 3D nature of anatomy and apply their knowledge to clinical imaging, an essential skill in clinical practice. Specialist clinical teaching and consultations occur in our clinical

skills training suite which includes simulation and consultation rooms. Dental and therapy students use specialist dental clinical skills clinics and a technical training unit, using haptic VR headsets.

Language learning within programmes is delivered in a multidisciplinary way incorporating culture, film, politics and history alongside sophisticated language learning teaching methods including the use of our dynamic conference interpreting suite, tandem learning (pairing native language speakers of two languages to learn from each other) supported by our Language Resource Centre and our expert teachers in language laboratories.

2.5 Effective assessment for learning

Assessment is central to our approach to education. Robust assessment design and practice ensure that we reliably assess student learning and can provide detailed feedback to students. Assessment also influences both what and how students learn and the skills they develop; schools therefore consider assessment holistically across modules in relation to programme learning outcomes. This ensures a range of tailored methods are used for both formative and summative assessment to support development of a wide range of skills, demonstrate discipline-specific learning appropriate to the level of study, and challenge students to stretch themselves.

Programmes utilise a wide range of foundational assessment formats and approaches from writing tasks to rigorously assess critical thinking and research skills to unseen examinations (in-person or online) for robust testing of learning outcomes, as well as other core assessment practices including group work, posters, presentations, reports, MCQs, video submissions, performances, artefacts, competency testing, research projects and dissertations. All of these assessment methods ensure students demonstrate their full potential as reflective learners. As noted above, most of our programmes include a substantial independent research element in assessment. We have seen a shift in the balance of, and diversity of assessment types accelerated by the pandemic but sustained beyond. In 2018–19, 35% of assessments were written examinations, that has now fallen to 22% in 2022–23. Growth has been seen in the proportion of modules using essays, portfolio and other written exercises, demonstrating a diversification of assessment approaches (14).

Authentic assessment, based around tasks that ensure students develop skills and competencies that can be transferred directly to the workplace, is embedded in many programmes. Biomedical science students develop communication skills by producing a blog or press release while natural and environmental sciences students produce infographics and short videos. Engineering students use realistic collaborative and ethical approaches to work on authentic design projects. Just as in industry, computing students develop software assessed through technical demonstration. Independent projects for English literature students include curation of online exhibitions, using industry-standard platforms, drawing together skills in research, analysis and communication. Dentistry students work together on an assessment task to develop patient-centred educational tools appropriate to specific patient groups. Geography students on an experiential learning module engage with local social, economic and political geographies by volunteering with community groups. They design research projects to support the groups and are assessed on a portfolio including outputs for the partner group. Project learning is also used in philosophy, with students supported to produce individualised work from Years two to three, developing their thoughts for use within a conceptual framework. This authentic scaffolded approach is distinctive, using assessment design for tailored individual educational growth.

“...it’s good to see colleagues thinking about the way “traditional” academic skills and methods can be deployed alongside and as applied skills, relating directly to our working environment... an ambitious and forward-looking module that really integrates the critical thinking students in English are trained to do with skills they will need in the future.”

External Examiner, 2019–20, BA(Hons) English Literature

In the last 15 years, we have invested in digital assessment as part of our strategy to enhance in-person learning with digital tools. Our VLE (Canvas) is used to deliver online quizzes, moderated discussions, electronic submissions and advanced marking functionality. Turnitin is integrated into submission ensuring integrity and deterring plagiarism with Turnitin Feedback Studio streamlining marking processes. Online submission is routine, enabling electronic feedback using comment libraries linked to criteria alongside rubrics to be provided.

“I think the automated comments and marking rubric make the marker more fair as it ensures they connect each section of work to the relevant criteria section.”

Year 2 student, 2018

Our digital education team won the international eAssessment Award in 2020 for the Best Use of Summative Assessment for our deployment of digital exams. The pivot to remote assessment and marking in Spring 2020 and full implementation of Inspira Assessment in 2021 has led to the deployment of digital exams both in-person and online on an ongoing basis. Digital exams provide great flexibility in terms of question type and recreate a more ‘real-life’ experience. In 2021–22, 148 digital exams took place (14) and in 2022–23, 241 are planned. NUMBAS, an online assessment system for mathematical subjects which allows randomised questions to be embedded in a VLE with instant feedback including solution suggestions, was created by our eLearning Team in mathematics, statistics and physics (who won a national Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) in 2020) in collaboration with students. This system is now used for numerically based online assessment at Newcastle and 1,000 other institutions (15).

“...students were keen to receive the sort of discretion offered by a human marker... the idea that a small mistake early in a calculation should not unduly affect a student’s overall mark.... we worked with students to develop a feature to digitalise this discretion... This is a novel approach to tackle the limitation of digital assessment systems.”

CATE application, 2020

Assessment literacy is developed through effective use of feedback and feed-forward. Explaining assessment design and unpacking the criteria with students ahead of assessment supports their understanding. For example, politics and architecture students and colleagues have co-created criteria to support learning, with timetabled sessions where students discuss criteria and “mark” exemplars. Many programmes use peer assessment to develop assessment literacy, and the Academic Skills Team provides additional support. High-quality timely feedback in diverse formats supports students’ learning. Feedback is given in multiple formats, individually or to the cohort as appropriate, and a 20-day turnaround for feedback is in place for all programmes.

“I was appreciative of the audio file to support the feedback given for the students ... one we were sent was very revealing about the level of feedback given to the students...I am really impressed at the level of feedback and this is consistent across the board...Recorded feedback is actually an easier but more effective way to give user-friendly feedback to students.”

External Examiner, 2019–20

We continually seek to enhance our approach to assessment, recognising that NSS outcomes suggest that some students are dissatisfied. In 2021 and 2022, we have used an agile sprint model to engage and collaborate with colleagues and students. These have resulted in several actions improving communications to students about how feedback works; dissemination of good practice

templates and resources; a feedback culture campaign; workshops on values-focused feedback with schools; and a VLE module on feedback for learning.

Academic challenge is central to all our programmes, underpinned by rigorous academic standards through programme approval, robust external scrutiny, and assurance of standards through external examining. Our external examiners consistently confirm that the academic standards of our programmes meet national expectations and are comparable to those of similar UK universities. Our classification outcomes have been relatively consistent over time compared with the trend towards improved outcomes in the sector. We experienced similar changes in outcomes to the sector during 2019–20 and 2020–21, which we attribute to the impact on assessment delivery and the mitigations made to help students complete degrees without detriment. We expect results to be in line with pre-pandemic outcomes in 2022–23.

Table 2: Proportion (%) of degree classifications for Levels 6 and 7 honours degree programmes, 2014–15 to 2021–22

	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
First Class	22.6	21.4	23.4	24.4	24.5	32.4	35.6	29.8
Upper Second	58.7	59.5	57.9	56.8	57.5	56.0	53.4	53.8
Lower Second	16.0	15.7	15.6	15.2	15.0	10.4	9.2	13.7
Third/Pass	2.7	3.3	3.1	3.6	3.1	1.3	1.8	2.6

We are aware of awarding gaps for some student groups and have a commitment to close the Black:White awarding gap in our Access and Participation Plan. Progress on this will be reviewed for our next Plan.



3. Personalised resources and support across the learner journey

Providing resources and support tailored to our students' needs is a core part of our offer. This ensures they have a good experience and achieve their full potential while studying.

3.1 Physical and digital infrastructure and resources

Our NSS 'Learning Resources' indicator (apart from 2020–21) falls within 2.5% of the benchmark indicating provision is 'very high quality'. This reflects strategic investment made in IT, library and course-specific resources responding to, and working with, students in prioritising expenditure. We have been externally recognised for our facilities, being awarded 5 QS Stars for Facilities in 2022. This built on our Outstanding Estates Team of the Year award in 2021 (THE).

We have spent £131m on capital refurbishments and new builds from 2018–19 to 2021–22 (16). This expenditure delivered eight new/improved teaching buildings, including the Dame Margaret Barbour Building (completed in 2021), which provides a suite of high-quality teaching and learning spaces including social learning spaces, seminar rooms, teaching kitchen, sensory suite and clinical suites. In 2019, we opened a new dedicated learning and teaching centre in the Frederick Douglass Centre. The building accommodates both lectures and innovative learning approaches like breakout groups, self-directed study, and flipped lectures, with students not lecturer the focus of attention.

Students have access to four campus libraries, with the main building open 362 days a year, with 24/7 access during term time. All libraries see high student usage with 1,529,180 visits in 2018–19.

In 2021–22, libraries began to see a return to pre-pandemic occupancy levels – a trend that is continuing in 2022–23 (17). The four libraries provide a total of 3,388 study seats, including individual (47%), IT (22%) and collaborative (31%) seats (18). The average annual spend on library provision is £11.5m, with 50–55% spent on information resources (18). Over the TEF period, our eJournal collection increased from 50,267 titles in 2018–19 to 58,029 titles in 2021–22 (18). We have also invested significantly in enhancing our eBook collections, which have expanded from 536,933 in 2018–19 to 760,787 in 2021–22 (18). A successful patron-led element of acquisition policy allows students to propose items. We typically purchase 1,600–2,000 books per annum in response to student requests (18).

The libraries are engaging and collaborative spaces, responsive to students' changing needs. We have a strong culture of engaging students in the design of our spaces. All major redevelopment projects completed between 2018–19 and 2021–22 incorporated student input at design stage and used feedback on the new spaces once implemented. Students can feed back about services and resources by using a 24/7 libchat service, email, or in person. We manage an average of 2,751 online chats per annum and 85% of these are rated as excellent by the students who engage with them (18).

We have held the Charter Mark Award and its successor, Customer Services Excellence, since 1995. This exacting standard requires us to evidence our engagement with students and to show how this informs service development (19). At our last review in 2021, we received 10 'Compliance Plus' awards, which recognised the many ways in which we put student users at the heart of service delivery.

The library's online subject and resource guides are designed to signpost students to discipline-specific resources and tools they are likely to need. They attracted an average of nearly 250,000 visits per annum during the TEF period (20). To complement this, in 2021–22 the library launched a set of seven Canvas courses for self-enrolment with interactive content to support students looking to develop academic and information skills. Feedback to date has been strongly positive for these modules and nearly 1,800 students took the courses in 2021–22 (20).

During the TEF period, we have delivered a wide range of online learning, teaching and assessment initiatives. These include a new VLE (Canvas), a new digital assessment platform (Inspera), and development of a new integrated personal reflection and ePortfolio tool (NU Reflect). Through Canvas, students have 24/7 access to their course content, including online collaboration tools, discussions with fellow students and tutors, lecture captures, and blended video recordings. Canvas is a strategic enabler, supporting an integrated learning experience. Colleagues and students from all faculties were involved in the procurement of the VLE, contributing to requirements gathering and vendor selection via surveys and focus groups. We have a baseline requirement for all Canvas modules, setting a standard for navigation and content, providing a consistent experience across programmes and modules that has served to remove barriers to interaction.

The core functionality of Canvas has been enhanced to better support inclusive and interactive teaching. For example, H5P added the ability to create engaging and interactive content. To date, 561 interactive objects have been created using the tool, improving the online experience (21). Ally, a tool to make digital learning content more accessible, was introduced in August 2021. Since then, the overall institutional accessibility score for online content in Canvas has risen from 56.1% to 68.6% (22). In addition, students have made 104,053 alternative downloads of content and colleagues have made 92,106 fixes to content, greatly improving access and availability of online resource (22).

We have invested in Hybrid Learning facilities in 17 teaching rooms so that online participants are able to interact and participate along with in-person attendees and tutors. We have been a sector leader in the use of lecture-capture and event-recording software with ReCap (Panopto) facilities in place across all lecture venues for over a decade – all lectures are recorded by default. Recordings are available to all students enrolled on the module and made available automatically and promptly via Canvas. The figures below show engagement levels with ReCap for UG and PGT students combined.

Table 3: Engagement levels with ReCap (23)

	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
No. of recordings	36,307	37,053	43,476	34,539
Unique user views	1,427,497	1,626,620	2,959,996	2,071,596
Days of recording delivered	17,439	18,543	26,247	19,833

As well as online software and platforms, the University invests heavily in physical IT infrastructure to support students studying on campus and off, whether through our laptop loan scheme or via one of the 5,279 student cluster machines. These enable students to access key resources and specialist software. Pre-pandemic, our library-based laptop loans scheme operated four-hour loans, with 8,817 in 2018–19. During the pandemic, this service switched to providing longer-term loans to students in need, alongside broader efforts to support students with poor or no IT and broadband access. We invested over £500,000 in equipment to eradicate ‘digital poverty’ (24). The longer-term laptop loan model is now offered alongside the original four-hour loan scheme.

The University App (introduced in 2012) provides just-in-time information and is a key part of the digital experience. It allows students to manage key aspects of university life in one place, from study space availability and library loans to teaching timetables and exam dates. The app is used by over 80% of students each month (internal usage data, 2022) and holds a 4-star rating in Google Play and Apple Apps.

3.2 Personalised academic support

Academic support beyond an individual programme scaffolds the student educational experience and brings specialist advice and resources to all students. We offer a comprehensive approach to academic support through induction, personal tutoring, peer mentoring, and academic skills development.

We make continual improvements to our student induction based on annual student feedback, working with students to make this vital transition to higher education as effective as possible and help new students settle into university life. Responding to feedback, we have moved towards a hybrid induction approach working on a ‘Just in Time’ model where we are able to feed in timely information when needed throughout their first semester (and available year-round). Using school-specific Canvas Communities, we tailor the content of the induction to suit the students and their needs. By focusing the central, online induction provision on content needed by all students, streamlining content and serving it electronically, we have freed up time in schools to deliver bespoke in-person events as well as online content which meets the needs of students and is tailored to their course. This means students get the best of both worlds, with in-person content that fosters a sense of belonging and delivers key messages about their experience and their academic discipline as well as online content they can access at any time, when they feel they need it in their journey to support their academic experience.

We further ensure that our induction offer is tailored to students by running an early, in-person welcome and induction programme for international students as well as other groups such as neuro-diverse students. For those who are not able to arrive early, we also offer a ‘re-induction’ programme in November to ensure they receive the same tailored support as their peers.

“Newcastle University is very welcoming to international students, and as one I feel very comfortable saying that the university goes above and beyond to ensure my safety and for an easy and smooth transition into this new chapter of life.”

International student, 2019

Every student has a personal tutor to facilitate their academic and professional development and promote their sense of belonging by providing an ongoing first point of contact for support. Personal tutors advise on academic matters, as well as signposting students to wellbeing support, often starting with their school-based Wellbeing Adviser. We place particular emphasis on establishing the tutor-tutee relationship in the tutee's first term with a first meeting within four weeks of arrival. Each student is offered at least two personal tutor meetings in each of the autumn and spring terms in each year of their studies. We partnered with NUSU in the development of our approach to personal tutoring, with student representatives involved in school and faculty consultations.

Personal tutoring is tailored to the student's stage of learning and scaffolded by access to key information such as marks achieved and academic progression, making an important contribution to the effectiveness of personalised tutorial support. To support meaningful and supportive conversations, all students and personal tutors have access to digital tools, data and resources (NU Reflect) to support reflective learning and practice. Senior Tutors in each school are essential in ensuring that personal tutoring is working effectively and in providing support to colleagues.

All new students are also allocated a peer mentor who is typically a student from a later year of study, based in the same school, with around 1,000 students each year acting as mentors (25). Their role is to support new students to integrate into the University and their programme academically, socially, and culturally. This direct access to the advice and support of a more experienced peer during the first semester helps new students settle into life as a university student, whilst the peer mentor benefits from dedicated training and the opportunity to practise a range of transferable skills and have their experience recorded on their Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR). In 2021–22 63% of undergraduates found peer mentoring useful and it was ranked as 3rd (after induction and meeting their personal tutor) in terms of supporting transition to university (25).

Our Academic Skills Team offers academic writing tuition and a wide range of study skills support, including exam revision, time management, critical reading and note-taking. Students can book onto one-to-one tutorials – 650 to 800 tutorials took place in each year in the TEF period – or they can join one of the Your Skills sessions for group tutorials, workshops and writers' groups (26). From 2018–19 to 2021–22, staffing in the team nearly doubled from 3.5 FTE to 6.5 FTE resulting in an increased range of channels through which students may seek help, and an increased number of curriculum-embedded teaching sessions – 85 sessions in 2021–22 up from 20 sessions in 2020–21 – with a wider reach across the three faculties (26). We have also accelerated the development of engaging, self-directed online resources on the Academic Skills Kit (ASK) website, with students involved in the co-creation of resources. Site traffic increased from 9,317 views in March 2021 to 17,987 views in July 2022 (a total of 268,863 views) (26).

We offer Maths Aid sessions for individual students – afternoon drop-in sessions, bookable appointments and, since the pandemic, online sessions – as well as specific specialist support modules, such as for biomechanics and pharmacy. Over the past four years (2018–19 to 2021–22), we have provided additional maths support to 1,399 students (27).

We support students to further develop their research skills and knowledge by sponsoring students to attend the British Conference of Undergraduate Research (BCUR). This is a multidisciplinary conference for undergraduate level research, and during the four-year TEF period we sponsored 43 students to attend (2021–22 was online).

Our Language Resource Centre, located in a state-of-the-art study centre, is available to all students. Students have access to a wide range of self-study resources for over 100 languages and practise their language skills through peer-assisted learning in groups or one-to-one. In-session language support is available to students who have English as an additional language in lecture style and workshop format as well as one-to-one tutorials. As part of our University-Wide Language Programme (UWLP), we also offer 12 languages as extracurricular 10-credit modules in evening classes at five levels from beginner to advanced.

Advice, information and guidance are available to disabled applicants and students at all stages of their time with us to ensure that they have equality of opportunity to succeed in and progress beyond their studies. Our Disability Support team (25 colleagues (21.4FTE)) liaise with schools over students' support requirements and work with students to remove barriers and engage with them as partners in their individual learning journey.

We have significantly increased our investment in student wellbeing and mental health to keep pace with increased demand. Since 2020–21, we have expanded our Student Wellbeing Adviser team from 3 to 13.3 FTE to ensure that we continue to provide outstanding support for all students. School-based Wellbeing Advisers (SWAs) support students with any mental or other wellbeing issue they may experience. They support and complement the role of the personal tutor by providing a local wellbeing contact who can support or signpost students to centrally provided services such as counselling, chaplaincy and Student Survivor Support services. Students have reported that a key benefit of having locally placed SWAs is that the advisers understand their programme and associated challenges.

"The service is fantastic and it has really changed my experience at university... [the] support has been critical in enabling me to progress in my degree... and makes me feel like a valued member of the student body."

Anonymous feedback, SWA Evaluation, 2021–22



4. A supportive and nurturing environment for educational excellence

Our colleagues are at the heart of the educational provision we deliver and as such the recruitment, support and development of these colleagues and of their practice is key to our approach to teaching excellence.

4.1 Prioritising professional development

We actively embed excellent academic practice across the institution by supporting our colleagues to achieve a recognised teaching qualification (Academic Teaching Qualification (ATQ) as defined by HESA) as a core professional baseline. After a period of sustained institutional focus, we have succeeded in increasing our proportion of colleagues who teach or support learning (including Academic, Professional Services and Technicians) with an ATQ to 67% (HESA data, 2021–22). This has been enabled by doubling our supporting staff resource, embedding the requirement to gain Fellowship recognition with Advance HE as part of probation for academic colleagues, and supporting professional services and technical colleagues with key roles relating to learning and teaching to gain an ATQ. Senior and Principal Fellows are also supported to then mentor new colleagues leading to a virtuous circle of investment in academic practice.

We establish this culture of professional development from the start of colleagues' careers with us. Our Introduction to Learning and Teaching in HE (ILTHE) for PGR students and Research Assistants provides focused training for those taking their first steps into teaching. We have supported 1,221 students and colleagues through this programme in the four years of the TEF period. Feedback from participants on ILTHE shows them to be more confident in their ability to support and assess students (30).

Colleagues who are new to teaching at Newcastle University are supported by the Newcastle Educational Practice Scheme (NEPS) to develop their learning and teaching skills alongside working towards Fellowship with Advance HE. In January 2020, we introduced a new professional development scheme designed with flexibility in mind, with participants taking a blend of online and in-person learning modules, over six to 24 months, with support from the professional development team and an academic mentor, enabling them to shape their practice and pedagogic interests and emerge as reflective practitioners. Feedback on the programme has been extremely positive, and colleagues have been able to make immediate contacts across the University from the start of their teaching contract (31).

"It has helped my habit of reflective practice, of seeking new material on the pedagogy of my subject, it has led to me talking to colleagues more about pedagogy, it has led me to feel much more connected with the university."

NEPS Participant, 2021

Alongside this programme, we provide outstanding support to enable other groups of colleagues to achieve national and sector recognition through the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) scheme at Senior Fellow, Fellow, or Associate Fellow level. The impact of this holistic approach to supporting colleagues at every stage of their career path can be seen in the total number of colleagues holding fellowships: this stands at 1,548 colleagues (511 Associates, 879 Fellows, 147 Senior Fellows, and 11 Principal Fellows) (32). We are significantly above sector average for HEA Fellowship recognition at 51.4% (the sector average is 46.1% and Russell Group average is 36.2% (33)).

Over the past four years, we have had 89 Senior Fellowships awarded – 35 in the past academic year, exceeding the Advance HE benchmark of 20 per year (33) – providing a body of senior educational leaders to act as mentors and drive educational enhancement across the institution. We support all educational leaders at programme and school level to have the maximum impact with a dedicated leadership development programme of three days of bespoke training delivered by an external consultant. 126 colleagues from across all faculties have completed the programme since its inception in 2013, and 53 over this TEF period (34).

Originating in one faculty in 2017–18, we have now introduced learning and teaching sabbaticals for colleagues across the institution, mirroring those available for research. These enable individuals to contribute to their school's strategic priorities and explore and embed work which will have a clear benefit to learning, teaching and/or the student experience.

4.2 Cultivating our teaching and learning community

To support colleagues in the ongoing development of their professional practice, our Peer Dialogue approach supports structured conversations between peers regarding learning and teaching. This is a key way in which we support colleagues to enhance their teaching practice, learn from others, reflect on their own development, and improve the student learning experience. Peer Dialogue is embedded in our quality assurance and governance processes with Faculty Education Committees (FECs) monitoring this and sharing best practice.

Our annual Learning and Teaching conference showcases and shares effective, creative and collaborative approaches to learning and teaching across the institution. During the period of this submission, 766 colleagues have attended over the three conferences (the March 2020 conference

was cancelled) (35). Feedback from the 2022 conference highlights its value: 95% of those who responded agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “The conference provided me with ideas or examples of effective practice which I may use in my own learning and teaching practice” (35).

In August 2021, the new Learning and Teaching @ Newcastle Hub was launched, bringing together everything colleagues need to develop their pedagogical practice, digital expertise and professional skills. The site also hosts our growing learning and teaching case studies database (188 articles currently) and is supported by a monthly Learning and Teaching newsletter, blog, social media presence, and a fortnightly podcast.

We also have a wide range of well-established and effective educational development groups at school, faculty and institutional levels. These include the school Directors of Education Forum, where postholders share and disseminate effective practice from their schools and develop this network of leaders for education; and the Student Voice Forum, which operates as a similar space co-owned with NUSU, and attended by students and colleagues, focusing on all elements of student feedback and representation. There are also spaces with a specific focus such as the Educational Research Development and Practice network, which promotes pedagogical research and NUTELA (NU Technology Enhanced Learning Advocates). Other networks have been formed by peers, such as the Newcastle Educators network, developing a ground-up community across the institution of colleagues supporting each other to develop their teaching practice.

4.3 Rewarding, celebrating and disseminating teaching excellence

Our commitment to supporting and developing outstanding educators is reflected in our promotions data. The University offers two teaching career pathways, teaching and scholarship or teaching and research; both pathways rely on evidence of excellence and impact. We undertook focused work in this area as part of an international Higher Education Academy (now Advance HE) funded project, co-led by two of our National Teaching Fellows, which still informs our approach today (36). Internal resources, workshops and tailored support for colleagues are provided as part of a development programme open to all seeking promotion on the basis of their teaching. The impact of this can be seen in the increase in both the number and proportion of successful applications for teaching and scholarship, which has risen from a 45% success rate in 2011–14 (three-year average to smooth data) to an 80% success rate in 2018–21. Over the same two periods, there has been a doubling in the number of applications for teaching-based promotion (from 76 to 160) as promotion through this route has become further embedded (37).

The annual Vice-Chancellor’s Education Excellence Awards celebrate and raise the profile of educational innovation in our institution by rewarding individuals and teams who have significantly enhanced the student educational experience and inspired others. Between 2018–19 and 2021–22, six teams received these high-profile awards (38).

Our colleagues also attract national recognition for their contributions to teaching excellence, with

colleagues attracting 18 awards in total since the scheme began (39). Our NTFs all provide outstanding guidance and leadership within their schools, the University and beyond in designing and delivering world-class teaching and learning. Their contributions have resulted in international, governmental and national teaching collaborations with Université Paris-Est Marne-La-Vallée, Berklee College of Music, and Australia’s Future Leader initiative. They have made contributions to national HE policy and practice, for example acting as an academic lead to Universities UK Step Change Committee to support the mental health of HE students. During the same period, four teams have received recognition via the Advance HE CATE award for their impact on teaching and learning (40).

We also incentivise educational development financially through the University Education Development Fund (EDF) which provides grants to support the development of innovative new

approaches to learning, teaching and academic support across the University. Awards of up to £2,500 for projects in an individual school provide seed funding for local initiatives, and of up to £10,000 for projects involving cross-school collaboration provide wider institutional impact. To receive funding, all projects must be developed by and delivered in collaboration with students and for the benefit of students. Over the last four years, funded projects have focused on key strategic educational objectives such as widening participation, supporting wellbeing and community membership, and enhancing accessibility and inclusion (including work that has led to our “University of Sanctuary” status) along with responsive projects to support decolonising the curriculum, developing post-pandemic blended learning frameworks, and bridging the transition gap to university. The EDF has also funded the creation of a student “maker zone”, the development of museum exhibit space, and the creation and roll-out of virtual laboratories.



5. Opportunities for students to enhance their employability and develop skills for life

Our coherent, well-designed programmes have embedded within them our approach to research-led teaching, experiential learning, employer involvement in the curriculum and access to dedicated career development modules. Through this we make certain that every student has the framework within their core educational experience to prepare them to progress to highly skilled employment or further study.

5.1 Demonstrating excellent student outcomes in context

Within the Employer Reputation measure of the QS World University Ranking 2023, we are 65th in the world (and 11th in the UK). This is based on the world’s largest employer survey, drawing upon responses from the last five years, where global employers are asked to identify providers who produce the most competent, innovative and effective graduates.

We have excellent continuation, completion and progression outcomes for our students. The continuation rate for our student population overall is ‘outstanding’ for all four TEF years, and our completion and progression rates over the period are ‘very high quality’. This is mirrored in the majority of data split by student characteristics (with splits outside of ‘very high quality’ relating to very small student groups).

We recognise that some of our subjects have progression outcomes below their respective benchmarks – history and archaeology, allied health, biosciences, and politics are the largest of these subject groupings. We have reflected on whether our student population has characteristics that may make further study or highly skilled employment less likely at the survey point of 15 months after completion. For history and archaeology, we believe the limitations for qualifying employment in the heritage, creative sector and professional archaeology in the region may mean that our graduates who come from or remain in the region are less likely to be in qualifying roles at the survey point, with some moving away after this point to seek opportunities elsewhere. Approximately two-thirds of our allied health and biosciences graduates progress to postgraduate study after graduating. The majority of these enter 12-month MSc or MRes which may mean they are in a period of transition at the point of survey. Outcomes for our politics graduates are overall 2.8% below benchmark, but nearly half (46.4%) of results are broadly in line with or above the benchmark and are lining up (or have lined up) their next career step at the point of survey. The other subject areas below benchmark – creative arts and design, education and teaching, and materials and technology all have relatively small student numbers resulting in large data swings.

5.2 Supporting work readiness

The University's Student Employability and Enterprise Strategy sets out our approach, emphasising a shared role between the Careers Service, schools and NUSU. Our award-winning Careers Service (Educate North Awards student experience winner 2018) plays a pivotal role supporting all students to progress into a range of fulfilling career destinations as professional, adaptable and engaged graduates capable of positively shaping their own futures and that of the world around them. We provide bespoke career education, guidance and work-based learning opportunities to students at all stages of career preparedness, enabling them to enhance their employability whether their aspirations be for graduate employment, further study, or starting their own business. There were over 6,000 student interactions with the Careers Service in every year covered by this submission (interactions with the MyCareer platform used for making appointments, events, vacancy advertising) (41).

Careers and employability are embedded in every school, with a dedicated Academic Lead for Student Employability and Enterprise. They offer leadership and direction on matters relating to student employability, enterprise and graduate employment outcomes as well as acting as a point of communication between schools and relevant student services. We are enhancing access to employability-related information and self-directed learning options within schools. In September 2021, we launched a tailored 'Skills and Employability' Canvas site in our School of Natural and Environmental Sciences. This site includes a bespoke career management tool designed to be accessible and inclusive for students, including those who would not otherwise have engaged with the Careers Service – 37% of the school's students accessed the site in its first week alone (42). We have since rolled out the approach to four other schools, with further expansion across the wider University planned.

Careers Registration is our initiative that helps to track students' career readiness throughout their time with us – we received 9,300 responses in 2021–22 (43). At the start of each academic year, students answer questions regarding their level of career readiness and their plans for the future as part of the registration process. We use these to provide insight for schools and the Careers Service to track educational gains and employability as students progress, inform strategic planning using real data around students' career thinking and preparedness, and target bespoke communications to students that are most relevant to their individual needs.

Our Career Insights Programme (CIP) is a year-long, intensive programme of activities and events, aimed at advancing the graduate outcomes of students from under-represented groups. It provides over 50 hours of extracurricular activity for each employment sector-based stream, therefore ensuring all participants can complete the ncl+ Award (see below). When students have successfully completed the programme they automatically receive a £200 bursary, which helps towards costs associated with purchasing workwear, travelling to work experience opportunities and attending interviews. The programme launched in 2015 with a cohort of 30 students, and since then has continued to expand and work with an increasing number of students each year (117 in 2020–21). Participants complete an employability skill and career confidence self-assessment at the start and end of the programme. Analysis of this data demonstrates that the programme has a substantial positive impact on employability skill development, understanding of career opportunities and development of work readiness (44). CIP alumni who responded to a survey in June 2020 were 78% in employment, 20% undertaking further study (Masters or PhD) and only 2% unemployed (44).

Table 4: Evaluation of 2019–20 Career Insights Programme (CIP) cohort (44)

	Before CIP (%)	After CIP (%)
I have started working with the Careers Service to explore my future career options	19.7	41.9
I do not have a lot of work experience	43.6	25.6
I am not sure how to make the most of my work experience on my CV/in job application forms	75.2	34.2

The ncl+ Award recognises and rewards skills, such as communication, teamwork, planning and organising, gained through extracurricular activities enabling students to demonstrate their achievements to employers. It is recorded on their HEAR and degree transcript. To receive the award, students must complete 40 hours of extracurricular activity with an activity log, four short online learning units, and a set of competency-based assessments to demonstrate what they have gained from their experiences. Across the four-year TEF period 1,721 students have achieved this award (45). Students can stretch their achievement further by completing one of five themed ncl+ advanced awards delivered in partnership with NUSU.

5.3 Hands-on work experience

Gaining relevant work experience is a key part of our approach to supporting students in achieving positive outcomes following graduation. We offer an extensive range of paid internships, on campus, with SMEs in the North East and with large multinationals. The opportunities are designed to be flexible around students' academic timetables and are available throughout the year, both term time and during vacation. In 2021–22, 337 students (UG) undertook an internship through our scheme with 1,373 (UG and PG, substantial majority UG) taking place in total during the four-year TEF period despite a reduction due to the pandemic (45). Students were placed with North East SMEs spanning a range of sectors as well as with large multinationals such as Siemens and AkzoNobel.

91% of students placed on internships off campus in 2021–22 felt their Ncl Internship helped them prepare for a graduate job.

A wide range of paid work opportunities are available on campus each year for students via our JobsOC scheme, including casual temporary roles and internships providing accessible employment experience opportunities. Students are encouraged to use their work towards the ncl+ Award. 3,095 students carried out a total of 259,302 hours of paid work on campus in 2021–22, an increase from 2020–21 (2,304 students) and 2019–20 (2,921 students) (46). Analysis of Graduate Outcomes data for the last three years for JobsOC participants compared with students who did not participate in JobsOC, shows more positive outcomes (highly skilled employment/further study) for students who participated by two percentage points (47).

Students wishing to build on their research experience can access opportunities to undertake an eight-week paid summer project and work alongside active researchers through the Research Scholarships scheme or to undertake field research in other countries through the Expeditions scheme. These research activities provide an opportunity for students to find out what research is like, to develop research and problem-solving skills and to engage in enquiry-based learning. The production of a poster at the end of the project helps to develop the student's professional communication skills. In 2018–19, the number of applications (196) and funded projects (123) peaked before two years of the scheme not running during the pandemic. In 2021–22, 41 applications were received, with 39 projects funded (48).

We hold a Data Insights Bootcamp every year (through our NUCoRE and National Innovation Centre in Data), an intensive two-week programme which offers experiential learning to students from across the University, giving them the opportunity to work with real-world data problems. Teaming students with industry partners who bring 'live' data problems with them, they work together to explore the problems and propose relevant solutions.

"Before starting the Bootcamp, I didn't quite understand how much data science is involved in any business. It definitely forced me, in a good way, to think outside the box."

Student and bootcamp participant, 2022 (49)

One of our strengths is the access we provide our students to employers, potential investors and businesses. We advertise over 4,500 graduate jobs, work experience opportunities and part-time roles per annum and our Careers Service organises an annual programme of employer presentations, employer-led skills sessions and major careers and recruitment fairs attracting approximately 200 organisations, as well as managing smaller more bespoke fairs and events, such as 'Science Careers Outside The Lab' and a 'Creative Careers Conference'. Our recruitment fairs are attended by approximately 4,000 students annually.

We are proud that around 26% of our students in employment choose to work in the North East after they graduate (50). Of these graduates, 73.6% were in highly skilled employment (2019–20 Graduate Outcomes data).

We are currently a Top 5 university in the UK for student and graduate entrepreneurship (51) and have been awarded 5 QS Stars for Innovation (2022). We work with students (and recent graduates) who want to work for themselves, full or part-time, through our START UP programme. Support includes confidential one-to-one coaching and tailored business advice, skills development, equity-free grant funding, co-working space, and other valuable opportunities to help students advance their self-employed career. There are currently 203 START UP-supported businesses trading with a combined annual turnover of close to £88m (51). Between them, they have raised over £44m in external investment, won national and global awards, and created 947 full-time equivalent jobs (51). We are very proud of these numbers because we know the commitment, drive, passion and ambition of the graduates behind them.

START UP Founderships is a six-month business pre-accelerator providing one-to-one coaching and mentoring, group workshops, access to influential partnerships, £7,500 for living costs, and up to £10,000 in business funding. Since 2015 we have supported 21 founders of 30 businesses to raise over £22m in funding, generate over £54m in turnover and create 199 jobs (51).



6. Our Education for Life Framework

As demonstrated throughout this submission, we prioritise the holistic development of our students so that they can pursue the lives they wish to live and shape the future of society and their professions. In articulating our intent for our students' educational gains, we have drawn on areas of our existing practice with the objective of providing a structured framework for colleagues and students to use in their planning, reflection and development. We have worked with colleagues, students and external partners from businesses and industry to develop and gain approval for our new framework.

Figure 1 shows the five key domains in which we expect our students to make significant gains while they are with us. These domains are closely aligned with our overarching 'Vision & Strategy', our four cross-cutting strategies and represents an enhancement of our existing Graduate Framework.

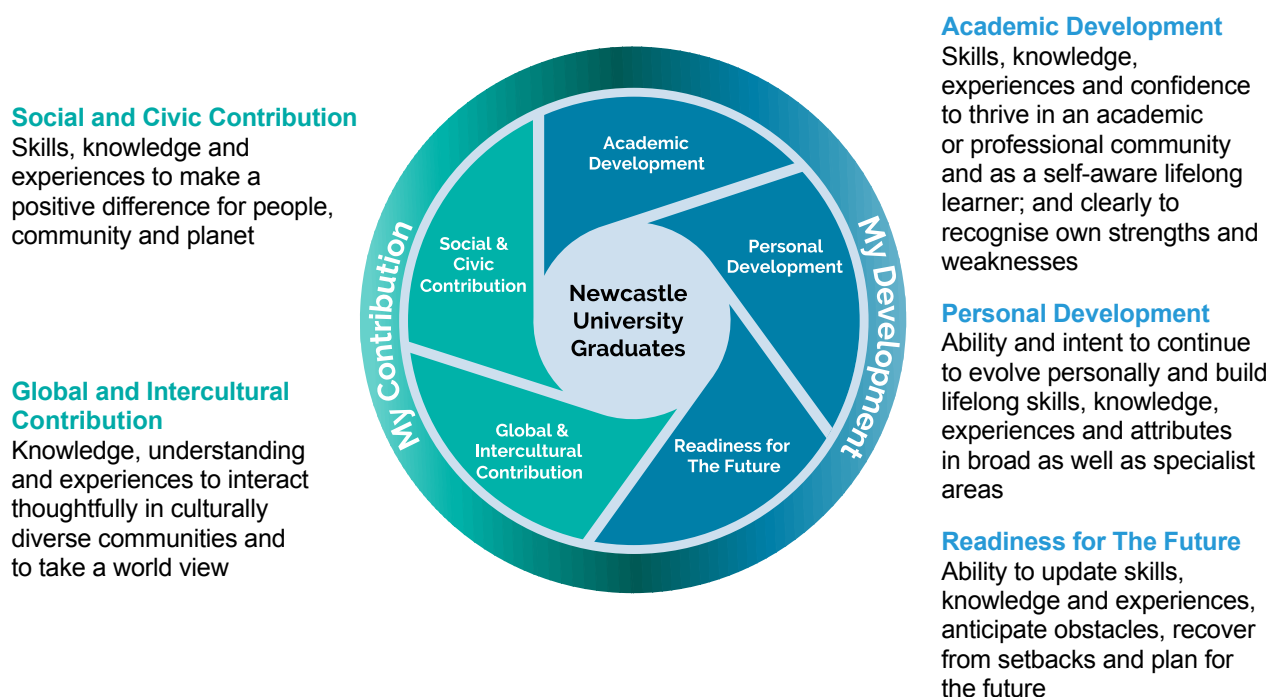


Figure 1: Our Education for Life Framework

Three of the five domains (Academic Development, Personal Development and Readiness for The Future) focus on a student's personal development, primarily gained through their educational experience, whilst the other two domains (Global and Intercultural Contribution, and Social and Civic Contribution) relate to students' contribution to society in its widest sense, through a wide range of interdisciplinary, work-related, and extracurricular opportunities and encounters. A key feature of this framework is that the five domains are integrated and interdependent, with gains in one area supporting gains in others. The Education for Life Framework is underpinned by our commitment to equity and inclusion, demonstrated by our Inclusive Newcastle initiative which supports our ambitions expressed through our Access and Participation Plan and our Race Equality Charter Bronze Award action plan.

This framework has been designed to be applicable to every programme, be meaningful in the disciplinary context and be relevant for all students. Our Degree Programme Directors, colleagues, students and partners will agree the range of skills, experiences, and attributes students should gain within each of the domains for each programme. For new/revised programmes and as part of programme review, the framework will be built into our programme approval and review processes. We intend to build the framework into our Personal Tutoring approach to engage individually with students supporting them to consider their strengths and weaknesses, identifying areas for growth and ambitions through a process of reflection and challenge.

How we support students to achieve these gains is described in the following sections in the main body of our submission: an inspiring and effective educational experience, personalised resources and support across the learner journey, opportunities for students to enhance their employability and develop skills for life. They are also summarised for each domain below along with potential measures that we are considering and sources of evidence for the gains students make.

Table 5: Summary of how we support gains and potential evidence and measures for gains

Domain	How we support gains	Potential sources of evidence/measures
Academic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core educational experiences as part of programme of study • Student learning analytics • Academic skills support • Personal tutoring • Peer mentoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student learning analytics • Summative assessment for measuring subject knowledge • Distance travelled from entry to module attainment to degree outcome
Personal Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ncl+ activity • Placement opportunities • Student representatives • Curriculum – sustainability etc embedded in the curriculum; to include within programme approval and review • Students involved in research projects or largely student-led/co-researchers • Summer vacation projects/scholarships • Central services support (Careers, Language Centre, Libraries, Disability Advisory Team) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment tools/surveys • NSS optional questions (B1) • Ncl+ Award
Readiness for The Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career education, information, advice and guidance • Work experience opportunities • Career development modules and Engaged learning modules • Research and expedition scholarships • Central services support (Careers, Language Centre, Libraries, Disability Advisory Team) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Registration Survey • NSS optional career questions (B3) • Ncl+ Award • Self-reflections pre and post placements, work experience, work-based learning modules • Measure of students' knowledge exchange – consultancy projects, site visits etc
Global and Intercultural Contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work and study abroad – Global mobility opportunities • Collaborative Intercultural Encounters – a series of 12 workshops aimed at students from across disciplines and degree levels • Global Virtual Exchange Fund for virtual mobility opportunities • Intercultural workshops for MA Cross-Cultural Communication Students • Collaborative Online International Learning (virtual mobility experiences) • Global and Cultural Awareness Open Badge • Volunteering opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSS optional question on environmental sustainability (B16) • Inclusion of competence measure in student surveys
Social and Civic Contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student volunteering opportunities utilising and practising discipline-based skills • Service-learning and project-based learning modules supporting Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise partners • Consultancy projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ncl+ Award • Accredited Career Development module • References • NU Reflect and new reflection tool

7. Closing statement

We are committed to delivering an education for life for every one of our students. We provide an exceptional, research-led education and an abundance of opportunities for students to develop core employability skills, underpinned by an infrastructure of tailored support so our students can fulfil their potential while they are with us and in their future careers. This submission has set out our strategies for excellence and the evidence for our success in meeting this commitment, and the impact it has on our students' progression. It illustrates how we work, and will continue to work, in partnership with our students and stakeholders to put students at the centre of the institution.

References

- 1 ['From Newcastle. For the world. Our vision & strategy'. 2018](#)
- 2 [Student Representation Policy](#), March 2017
- 3 School representative numbers recorded in internal NUSU records for TEF period
- 4 Number of modules led by research-active colleagues calculated from internal records – contract type of recorded module leaders (teaching and research and research only staff classed as research active)
- 5 Percentage of programmes with an assessed research element calculated from internal programme records for TEF period
- 6 Intercalation rate calculated from student records for TEF period
- 7 PSRB data calculated from internal programme records for TEF period
- 8 Calculated from HESA Student Core files for relevant years
- 9 Calculated as number of penultimate year students on a year-long placement during the TEF period, taken from student records
- 10 Calculated from HESA Student Core files and Graduate Outcomes responses
- 11 [Business Accounting and Finance BSc Honours](#) course page
- 12 Data taken from student exchange records
- 13 Survey of 79 natural and environmental sciences students who had experienced a virtual field environment, presented at Microbiology Society Conference, April 2022
- 14 Internal assessment diversity analysis from Module Outline Forms for TEF period
- 15 Taken from [NUMBAS webpage](#), accessed December 2022
- 16 Calculated from internal expenditure records for TEF period
- 17 Data taken from internal user records for TEF period
- 18 Data taken from internal records systems for TEF period
- 19 [About the Library webpage](#), accessed December 2022
- 20 Data taken from internal user records for TEF period
- 21 Data from H5P management console, collected October 2022
- 22 Data from Ally reporting in Canvas, collected October 2022
- 23 ReCap internal usage data for TEF period
- 24 Internal report 'Student IT Scheme in Response to Covid', Finance Committee, March 2021
- 25 Data from internal records, averaged over the TEF period
- 26 Academic Skills internal records and usage statistics

- 27 Maths Aid internal records for the TEF period
- 29 Recorded on the [BCUR Newcastle website](#), accessed December 2022
- 30 ILTHE annual reports for 2018–19, 2019–20, 2020–21, 2021–22
- 31 NEPS Feedback report, August 2022, LTDS
- 32 Advance HE Fellowship HESA Staff Academic Teaching Qualification Category Report – Newcastle University, data retrieved November 2022
- 33 Advance HE Annual Review of Accredited Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Schemes Newcastle University 2021–22 Report, LTDS
- 34 Internal programme participant records
- 35 Internal conference records for TEF period
- 36 [Promoting Teaching Project: Making evidence count, Advance HE webpage](#)
- 37 Internal HR records
- 38 Recorded on the [Vice-Chancellor's Education Excellence Awards webpage](#), accessed December 2022
- 39 [National Teaching Fellows database, Advance HE](#)
- 40 [Collaborative Awards for Teaching Excellence, Advance HE](#)
- 41 Internal Careers Service records
- 42 SNES Employability and Enterprise Working Group, CATE 2022 award submission/case study
- 43 Careers Registration Report University Overview 2021–22, November 2021
- 44 Internal Career Insights 2020–21 Report
- 45 Internal Careers Service Data
- 46 Student Employment on Campus system data
- 47 Internal JobsOC data combined with Graduate Outcomes data
- 48 Internal research scholarships and expeditions records
- 49 [Presenting the 2022 Data Insights Bootcamp webpage](#)
- 50 Internal analysis of Graduate Outcomes data
- 51 Evidence gathered as part of the [HESA HE BCI survey 2020–21](#) data collection