

University of Nottingham Submission for TEF 2023

Contextual Statement

The University of Nottingham (UoN) is a research-intensive global university that offers students from all contexts and cultures a distinctive opportunity to develop academic and professional competencies, creativity and new ways of thinking across the rich and diverse range of programmes led by our five faculties: Arts, Engineering, Science, Medicine and Health Sciences, and Social Sciences. We have over 54,000 students (38,000 students in the UK and 16,000 at sizable, mature campuses in China and Malaysia), and employ over 8,000 people worldwide. Our education is research-led, multi-disciplinary and underpinned by our university values of inclusivity, openness, fairness, respect and ambition. We offer transformative and authentic learning experiences that lead to qualifications highly valued by employers, and lifelong membership of our world-changing alumni community. We provide a student experience of exceptional breadth and depth, with personal development opportunities in and beyond the curriculum that lead to outstanding graduate outcomes.

Our University Strategy published in 2019 sets out seven ambitions: solving problems and improving lives; supporting potential; developing the campus experience; cultivating a global mindset; fostering creativity, discovery and experiment; contributing to the sustainable development goals; and embedding collaboration in all that we do.¹ In the context of teaching and learning, achieving these goals is progressed through the Education and Student Experience Strategic Delivery Plan (ESE SDP), the successor to the Transforming Teaching strategy which was described in our TEF 2017 submission.² The ESE SDP was co-created with colleagues from all areas of the institution, alongside the Students' Union sabbatical officers, and was informed and shaped by our student evaluation and feedback data. We published the ESE SDP in 2021 following a delay due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Learning from Covid subsequently became one of its five priorities, which map to the TEF as follows:

Priority 1: Learning from the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure that our education and student experience is inclusive, agile and responsive, built on good practice, and enables potential (Covid Statement, SO2, SO3).

Priority 2: Creating an empowering physical and virtual estate; improving our welfare and engagement processes (SE5, SE6).

Priority 3: Working with students, alumni, employers and professional bodies to co-create inclusive curricula that embeds our university values, supports good mental health, develops professional competencies and learning for sustainability (SE1-4, SE7, SO3, SO4, SO6).

Priority 4: Putting student experience and student wellbeing at the heart of all we do, co-creating inclusive and global community and facilitating opportunities to engage locally and internationally through volunteering, work experience, placements and mobility (SE1-4, SE7, SO1, SO2, SO5).

Priority 5: Diversifying our student intake, developing new entry routes and enabling 'non-traditional' learners to succeed (SE3, SO5).

University Council approves the strategic direction of the university, with its external members playing a critical role in challenging and influencing strategy. University Senate oversees education and research, including academic quality and standards. The University Executive Board, led by the Vice-Chancellor, has overarching responsibility for Education and Student Experience, with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (PVC) for Education and Student Experience accountable for delivery of the ESE SDP and chairing Education and Student Experience Committee (a sub-committee of Senate). The PVC is supported by a team of Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellors and Digital Learning Directors (SE4, p.10), and by Vice-Provosts at our China and Malaysia campuses. The team operates with a matrix management structure which ensures that the needs of faculties and campuses are balanced with the needs of the whole institution. In 2018 the new role of PVC for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) was created. The role-holder leads a team of EDI Coordinators and Faculty Directors for EDI who provide expert input to the ESE team.

As an institution, we hold Athena Swan Silver status and Bronze Race Equality Charter status. We have an ambitious Access and Participation Plan and have invested in a range of posts and initiatives to support students with protected characteristics. The impact of this is evidenced through the excellent outcomes achieved by our students from underrepresented groups (Student Outcomes, p.19).

We were awarded Gold in the 2017 TEF. Since then, we have significantly extended and enhanced our teaching, learning and digital capabilities and facilities. We have developed new organisational structures to support and promote student welfare. We have strengthened staff-student co-creation through professional, paid roles for students which position them as equal partners in strategic curriculum and student experience projects (SE7, p.16). We have substantially increased the percentage of our staff with teaching qualifications or recognition against the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) from 57% in 2018-19 to 81% in 2021-22, compared to the sector's growth from 41% to 46% over the same period (SE4, p.9). Our curriculum is shaped by our research. More than 56% of our research outputs are the result of ongoing work with our international collaborators, representing partnership with more than 6,500 non-UK organisations since 2019. We are ranked seventh in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 for research power according to Times Higher Education.

In 2017 we created a new professional service department: Student and Campus Life. Drawing upon the work of the American educationalist, Ernest Boyer, our ambition was to create the conditions for a complete student experience in order to promote belonging and improve retention and outcomes.³ We now have well-developed support provision in the areas of disability, health and wellbeing, faith, welfare, security, and sport. In 2017 we opened the £40M David Ross Sports Village on our University Park campus. This offers a fantastic range of sports facilities for our students and has contributed to us being named The Times Sports University of the Year in 2019 and 2021. In 2018 we opened the £9M Cripps Health Centre – the biggest General Practice health centre in the country for students, staff and the local community.

Student voice lies at the core of our values. It is threaded through our governance and strategy at all levels and across our campuses. Students are members of the majority of decision-making bodies at senior-levels across the institution; not only those relating to education. The Students' Union (SU) Education Officer, Postgraduate Officer and Liberation Officer are members of the senior ESE governance groups and work closely with the university leadership team. Student Engagement Associates (SEAs) are full partners in the major strategic projects through which the ESE SDP is progressed and our strength in staff-student partnership is externally recognised

through the contributions that SEAs make to sector-level conferences and workshops (SE1/2, p.5; SE7, p.17).

Our students have access to exceptional opportunities to learn both from and with their peers at our sibling campuses in China and Malaysia. For example, we offer virtual classrooms (in which students work together in real time), 2+2 programmes where students take portions of their degrees on different campuses, and inter-campus mobility. We integrate senior leaders and student representatives from China and Malaysia into our governance structures, with the Vice-Provosts and Student Representatives being members of Senate and the Education and Student Experience Committee.

This submission demonstrates the impact on our students of developments since 2018. It evidences the distinctive educational gains that we offer, demonstrating how we help our students acquire knowledge and skills and reflect on how these skills support professional and personal goals. It highlights the interventions and services that enable our students to achieve graduate outcomes that are at benchmark within a high-achieving benchmark group, and materially above benchmark for groups of students traditionally underrepresented in higher education. It demonstrates how we partner with students on strategic projects to redesign curricula and redevelop services for the whole student community. In the process of writing our submission we worked closely with the SU. We shared drafts and provided funding to support the SU research methodology. We aspired to be open and transparent, soliciting feedback from both the SU and our wider University community.

Covid Statement

Our collective determination during the pandemic to recover, rebuild and renew is baked into our ESE SDP as Priority 1: 'Learning from the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure that our education and student experience is inclusive, agile and responsive, built on good practice, and enables potential'. We conducted qualitative research resulting in a report to Senate on 'Education for the Future' which captured what we had learnt about effective teaching and learning. We participated in two collaborative projects funded by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA): 'Different perceptions of learning through Covid' (2021, led by the University of Portsmouth and with a Student Engagement Associate leading the UoN research)⁴; and 'Hybrid Teaching' (2022, led by us).⁵ We conducted quantitative research through two iterations of a tailored Covid student experience survey in autumn 2020 and spring 2021. This provided specific feedback that could be used to enhance our provision rapidly. For example, students told us that they preferred us to contact them via email or the 'MyNottingham' App (which provides access to emails, timetables, maps and meal cards), that they wanted greater consistency in staff use of digital technologies and that remote assessments were most valuable if they assessed problem solving. This research has informed our use of online and open book exams. Our changes to assessment have, overall, been welcomed by students as accelerating a shift away from exercises focused upon recall of facts and towards assessments focused on problem solving. The research has also reinforced some of the advantages of hybrid teaching (simultaneous online and in-person delivery), which has been particularly helpful for our students with disabilities, mature students, as well as those with caring responsibilities and international students.

The resilience of students and staff during the pandemic was remarkable. Students volunteered in testing and vaccination centres while continuing to study. Our summer intake of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery students was the first cohort in the UK to return to in-person classes in July

2020 and our medical and healthcare finalists graduated early to join the front-line. Teaching staff innovated using lab simulations, virtual field trips, story-telling applications and other digital means to maintain learning. However, for some students, the pandemic was a cause of significant anxiety as they were asked to adjust many times over a short period. Recognising this, we adapted our personal tutoring system (SE5, p.12) to ensure we maintained the effectiveness of tutoring relationships during Covid. This, together with the introduction of the Student Engagement Dashboard in 2021 (SE5, p.13), allows us to identify students in difficulty and to intervene early where there could be risks to continuation, completion and ultimately, progression.

Student Experience

Our ESE SDP is the mechanism through which we are delivering the 2019 University Strategy. Co-creation with students runs through all five of the ESE SDP priorities (p.1) and our model for this has evolved since our 2017 TEF submission. We value our students as researchers, partners and co-decision makers. Through paid roles, for example as Student Ambassadors or Student Engagement Associates, our students work alongside our staff to enhance curriculum, to design inclusive services and to prioritise investment both in new and improved facilities.

To monitor student experience and the impact of the ESE SDP, we use various sources of data. We supplement the data that we receive via the National Student Survey (NSS) with data collected via our internal Student Evaluation of Module (SEM, response rates of 28.5% in 2018-19, 24.5% in 2019-20, 18.4% in 2020-21, 15.5% in 2021-22), and the Nottingham Student Experience Survey (NSES, response rates of 14.3% in 2018, 9.4% in 2019, 10.7% in 2021), and during Covid via our tailored survey (2020 response rate of 15%; 2021 response rate of 9%). SEM allows us to respond to module-specific student feedback almost in real time as surveys are completed multiple times during the year. The NSES is an internationally benchmarked survey provided by iGraduate, often called the Student Barometer, which allows us to obtain comprehensive feedback from current non-final year undergraduates on areas such as arrival, support services, living and learning experience. We run the survey in the UK, China and Malaysia, enabling us to compare data across our student populations internally and to use this for early identification of areas of excellence and innovation as well as development. We also run an annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES). In 2022, PTES results demonstrated that UoN had performed strongly in eight out of the nine sections, placing us overall above sector average.

Teaching, Assessment, Content and Delivery (SE1 and SE2)

We have excellent teachers who are subject experts and reflective practitioners. Students report high levels of satisfaction with teaching (NSS Q1-4 average 82.2% over the four years of data used in TEF) meaning that we are broadly in line with a relatively high benchmark (82.7%). This is corroborated by our internal data sources (NSES, SEM). The nature of our institution means that students are routinely taught by academic staff who are internationally recognised researchers and students report their enjoyment of engaging with complex concepts. This is borne out by responses to NSS Q3 'The Course is intellectually stimulating' (85% agree/strongly agree in 2022), and in responses to the 2021-22 NSES in which 81.4% of students reported that their course often or very often 'challenges them to do their best work'. Students benefit from a wide range of teaching delivery methods informed by pedagogy and appropriate to the discipline. Varieties of active and technology-enhanced learning are widely used and received renewed impetus through the pandemic. Our investments in teaching facilities such as laboratories, design studios, libraries and the Monica Partridge Building (SE6, p.15) provide outstanding learning environments.

Student Evaluation of Module (SEM) demonstrates that our staff are delivering what students need to achieve their learning outcomes. For example, SEM surveys show that in 2021-22 81.5% of undergraduate students agreed that 'the learning activities and resources are helping me to achieve the learning outcomes' and 85.4% agreed that 'I know how and where to get help and support for this module when I need it'. However, feedback from student focus groups indicates that students feel over-assessed, and that student experience across a year of study can feel incoherent; this is reflected in our scores for NSS questions 8-11. Work to address this via our Curriculum Transformation Programme is key to our institutional strategy (Priority 3, ESE SDP p.1).

We have made progress with our strategic priorities in inclusive curriculum and student co-creation (SE7, p.17) For example, in 2019-20 our lecturers in Politics and Philosophy collaborated with the University of Birmingham to develop an accessible database of resources and a series of workshops to support inclusive curriculum work. Online toolkits are now in use across UoN and include a 'Guide for Critical Reflection and Action' in Social Sciences⁶ and an Inclusive Curriculum Toolkit' in Medicine and Health Sciences.⁷ The Social Sciences toolkit has been accessed over 2,000 times and has led to diversification and increased authenticity of assessment. Students have contributed to these initiatives through focus groups and by working with staff to identify examples, authors, readings and topics to make the curriculum more inclusive.

In 2018 we created a UoN framework for programme-level curriculum design centred on student co-creation. This framework, which is being rolled out across all courses, recognises the central importance of designing inclusive programmes to support student learning and employability. Careers and Employability Services (CES) provide important inputs into curriculum design to ensure that skills for employability are embedded, for example through the UoN Professional Competencies (Student Outcomes, p.20).⁸

In 2021, undergraduate programmes within the Schools of Pharmacy and Mathematical Sciences were redesigned using the UoN framework. The programme teams defined graduate attributes for their programmes and built learning activities and assessments to align with these. The attributes are informed by input from stakeholders including students, employers and alumni. Central to the learning design is a holistic consideration of assessment, ensuring assessment literacy, authenticity and coherence, and removing unnecessary burden. Student co-creators employed as SEAs undertake the same process in parallel, developing their own proposed learner journeys, and the final programme design emerges through negotiation. Examples of student-led learning resources that are now integral to programmes are a portfolio of mathematical skills in the MMath and BSc Mathematics and scaffolded training in disability awareness in the MPharm. The new MPharm programme was launched in 2022, with the new mathematics programmes due to be launched in 2023.

The SEAs involved in the Pharmacy and Mathematical Sciences curriculum redesign have contributed to sharing UoN's sector-leading co-creation model at a variety of conferences, including to QAA, as well as to the Vice-Chancellor and University Executive Board. In September 2022 three UoN presentations featured at the RAISE 2022 conference hosted by the University of Lincoln: 'Student input to introduce diversification in Mathematics curriculum design', 'Developing a framework for curriculum co-design with students at the University of Nottingham' and 'Student and staff experiences of co-creating the Pharmacy curriculum'.

Engaging colleagues across the institution in the need to move away from ‘traditional’ approaches to curriculum, delivery and assessment is a complex long-term change project. In recognition of this, UoN has committed significant central funds to a three-year programme of work (2022-25) known as the Curriculum Transformation Programme (CTP) through which we will develop expertise in programme-level curriculum design in all schools. As well as providing resources to central teams who support the CTP, and payment for SEAs, the funding enables programme leads to concentrate on design.

Complementing the CTP, we have an ambitious Curriculum Management and e-Assessment Project (CM&eA). This commenced in 2019 with a focus upon providing digital tools to support electronic assessment. Our vision for CM&eA is to empower students across all disciplines to demonstrate their learning by engaging with timely feedback on authentic, inclusive and robust assessments – for example through curriculum mapping, e-portfolios, in-class formative assessment tools and through implementing ‘Bring your own device’ at scale. When this work was delayed by the pandemic, we took the opportunity to reframe the project by learning from the emergency shift to online teaching and assessment. For example, we have deepened our understanding of how wellbeing is embedded in curriculum through student engagement, actionable feedback, proportionate assessment, and inclusive design. Several studies reporting on the preparatory phases of these closely related strategic projects, the CTP and the CM&eA, have been published by our staff.⁹

We are proactively acting on our learning from the pandemic. We recognise the impact of the emergency short-term changes to teaching and assessment upon student experience and this is reflected in our NSS scores. However, the results from our internal surveys (SEM, NSES and the two Covid experience surveys) often contrast with the NSS data (Table 1). It is likely that the different timing and target groups of these surveys explain these discrepancies. For example, SEM feedback is provided immediately after each module giving us data on whether ‘the criteria for the assessments on this module are transparent and clearly explained’ at the modular level whereas NSS Q8 asks students to reflect on their whole course.

Table 1: Assessment Survey Data

	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22
NSS (% agree/strongly agree)				
Q8 The criteria used for marking have been clear in advance	67%	67%	67%	62%
Q9 Marking and assessment has been fair	69%	69%	65%	63%
Q10. Feedback on my work has been timely	72%	65%	57%	55%
Q11. I have received helpful comments on my work	65%	64%	60%	58%
SEM (% agree/strongly agree)				
The criteria for the assessments on this module are transparent and clearly explained	76%	76%	80%	80%
NSES (% satisfied/very satisfied)				
Explanation of marking / assessment criteria	84%	84%	-	74%
Fair and transparent assessment of my work	90%	90%	-	87%
Feedback on coursework/written submissions	85%	85%	-	77%

Satisfied with the process of remotely submitting coursework/assignments	n/a	n/a	-	94%
Covid Experience Survey (% satisfied)				
Assessment timetables and deadlines have been made clear to me	n/a	-	76%	n/a
Reasonable adjustments to assessments adequate	n/a	81%	-	n/a

The roll-out of the CTP across UoN is expected to impact positively on students' understanding of their assessments in future years. In the interim, our best practice - examples of which are given below - are shared via the mechanisms described in SE4 (p.11).

The School of Veterinary Medicine and Science was an early adopter of our approach to programme-level curriculum design. The Veterinary Medicine and Surgery degrees have a coordinated programme of assessment that leads students towards overall clinical competency to meet Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Day 1 and American Veterinary Medicine Association competencies. The assessment strategy covers three broad areas of clinical competence across all five years of the course: knowledge and its application; clinical and practical skills, and professionalism.

Assessment reflects both content and stage, ensuring constructive alignment within the curriculum. Regular formative assessments allow students to identify their development needs and timely feedback on summative assessments informs future study plans. Students use an electronic portfolio to support a personalised academic action plan in years 1-3 and a clinical progression and employability action plan in years 4 and 5. The school receives outstanding results for assessment and feedback in the NSS with the % agree/strongly agree scores for questions 8-11 ranging between 86% and 95% over the last five years, placing the school first within the sector. The redesigned MPharm (see above) which launched in 2022 uses a similar approach to the Veterinary Medicine and Surgery programme. Examples of good practice from other schools and departments include:

- Personal development planning in Civil Engineering using a portfolio: Students complete workshops, for example in Computer Aided Design, sustainability tools, or programming in Python, motivated by a personal development skills portfolio continuously reviewed in partnership with tutors. Since implementing this model, Civil Engineering has been consistently above sector average for NSS Question 8: 'The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance' (fourth in sector with 86% agree/strongly agree in 2022). In 2022, the department achieved a 79% agree/strongly agree score for NSS Question 9 'marking and assessment has been fair'.
- Student-led sessions in an Evolution and Behaviour module taken mainly by Zoology students in Life Sciences: Students co-create resources, set pre-reading and answer questions on this. After group presentations, they choose an essay question based on a topic presented by their peers. They submit their draft essay for peer review and review three drafts in return for feedback prior to submission. In the 2022 NSS, the % agree/strongly agree scores for questions 1-6 ranged between 85% and 92%, and Zoology was first in the sector with an overall score of 82.1%.
- Improving feedback in Politics and International Relations: In 2018 the school reviewed sample feedback from every staff member and delivered all-staff training to establish greater consistency and quality of experience for students, addressing feedback tone and

automating key processes. They launched new marking criteria (attached to every assessment) and saw agree/strongly agree that 'the criteria used in marking have been clear in advance' (NSS Q8) increase by 5% between 2018 and 2019. Levels of student satisfaction captured via SEM demonstrate increasingly positive responses to the question 'the criteria for the assessments on this module are transparent and clearly explained'.

Research-Informed Teaching and Employer Engagement (SE3)

UoN is a research-intensive institution ranked seventh in the UK for research power in REF 2021. Research in the subject discipline leads and enriches our curriculum and our students contribute to cutting-edge research and knowledge exchange. Across all disciplines, our students are given formal opportunities to develop their understanding of research methods throughout their course and engage directly in independent research through a final capstone project and/or co-curricular activities. Sitting alongside our disciplinary research is our pedagogic research, championed by the increasing number of staff on our Teaching and Curriculum Leadership career pathway. Their expertise is disseminated across the institution via our annual Teaching and Learning Conference and other events (SE4, p.11) so that the greatest number of students can benefit from new knowledge and best educational practice.

In the 2022 Knowledge Exchange Framework, UoN was confirmed as one of England's leading universities for working collaboratively with industry and the public sector, and for the commercialisation of intellectual property. In the last three years we have delivered over £350M in knowledge exchange activity business incubators and industry research partnerships. Our strong profile in knowledge exchange enables us to draw on employer input for curriculum design and delivery, and to offer entrepreneurial education. We run a major UK social entrepreneurship competition ('the Ingenuity Programme') open to all our students and alumni and 30 partner institutions across the country, which sets out to drive social mobility and tackle major UK social and environmental challenges through the creation of innovative start-ups and grass-roots initiatives. The competition allows students to develop ideas with the assistance of industry experts, UoN academics and peers, and to produce a market-ready product or service. Last year we awarded £89,000 of seed funding and delivered over £750,000 of net social impact. Feedback from participants is positive: 'Ingenuity has been the most exciting and rewarding experience I could dream to be a part of'. The Ingenuity Lab, based at the UoN Innovation Park on our Jubilee Campus, helps students and alumni to explore their business ideas and start their own enterprises. Recent businesses nurtured by the Lab include Hungry Panda, a Chinese food delivery service that now operates in more than 60 cities and has subsequently received more than \$220 million in investments and Think for the Future, an educational organisation that pilots interventions to improve the education of young people. Our Enactus Nottingham team of over 100 student entrepreneurs have successfully developed several enterprise businesses, positively impacting communities around the region and beyond: they were recognised as one of the top four Enactus teams at the 2022 World Cup in Puerto Rico (out of 2,500 worldwide).

Innovative ways of integrating research and employer engagement into teaching have been developed in several schools and we have recently set up a cross-institutional expert group to share good practice and provide an evidence-informed toolkit for the CTP (SE1/2, p.5). For example, the School of Chemistry runs active-learning laboratory projects as part of an 'Industry-Ready Graduates' strategy previously developed with GlaxoSmithKline. Other projects include the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative which engages students in drug discovery research that also contributes to decolonising curriculum work. Over 70 students been involved since 2019. Our

NSES data shows that student satisfaction with Chemistry lab sessions is very high and has increased over the years (from 92% in 2017 to 95% in 2021). In the Faculty of Arts, the module 'Researching Media and Culture' introduces Film and TV students to 'research as practice', bringing in external speakers from industry and running methods workshops: these prepare students for their final-year dissertations. Music and Computer Science students collaborate in the 'Music and Mixed Reality' module to respond to briefs by arts organisations for public dissemination. In Architecture and Engineering, a group of low or zero carbon houses constructed on University Park with sustainable energy technologies is used in design, construction and research projects.

In 2018 UoN began developing degree apprenticeships (DAs) as part of our strategy to deepen employer engagement. Currently 124 businesses send apprentices to us, forming the basis of innovative collaborative partnerships that support the closing of regional and national skills gaps in healthcare, architecture and engineering. We do not yet have any reportable NSS data for DAs. However, students do report positively on the benefits of their apprenticeship in our annual surveys and in tripartite reviews: for example, 'The programme is very attractive as there is no cost to the apprentice, so you learn state-of-the-art best practices and see the real-time benefits in your work without the financial burden'.

Staff Professional Development (SE4)

In support of student learning, we have embedded a variety of mechanisms through which line managers support teaching staff to reflect on their practice and to share practice with others. These mechanisms include our Advance HE accredited Nottingham Recognition Scheme (NRS), the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE) and the Postgraduate Certificate in Medical Education. All new teaching staff must achieve qualification or recognition within two years of appointment, fellowships and teaching qualifications are criteria for reward and recognition, and staff are allocated workload time for achieving these. This approach has allowed us to grow a diverse community of Advance HE fellows who provide mentorship to colleagues across our disciplines, job families and job levels, and provide educational leadership. For example, Principal and Senior Fellows lead key initiatives such as CTP and E-assessment projects (SE1/2, p.5). We also support our technical and professional services staff to gain Associate Fellowship via the Associate Teacher Programme. UoN was the first university to do this as long ago as 2015.

The NRS enables experienced staff to claim recognition for their contribution to teaching and learning support based on evidence of engagement with the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF). When the NRS was established in 2015, 1,021 of our academic staff were fellows of Advance HE, constituting 27% of our academic staff at the time. We set ourselves an institutional target for 75% of our academic staff to hold or be working towards a HESA recognised teaching recognition or qualification by 2020 (which we exceeded), and 100% by 2025. According to HESA Staff Record data, we now track well above the UK sector for the percentage of academic staff with Advance HE fellowships awarded through all routes combined. Between 2017-18 and 2021-22, the sector average grew from 35.9% to 46.1% whereas the UoN average grew from 42.8% to 81% (2,831 of 3,495 eligible staff in this year).

The PGCHE is delivered by the School of Education with input from academic advisors from all five faculties. It is accredited by Advance HE and is aligned with both the UKPSF and the theory and practice underpinning our initial teacher education. In March 2022 Ofsted assessed their Initial Teacher Education provision as outstanding across all dimensions. In 2018, we commissioned an external review to help us strengthen the PGCHE's alignment to our priorities in curriculum design,

assessment and inclusive practice. Subsequent feedback from external examiners has noted the effectiveness of refreshed and new modules on course design and blended learning.

The observation of teaching as a part of regular staff development, as a formal part of the PGCHE, or as preparation for a fellowship application or a Lord Dearing Award (see below) underpins our practice. In 2019 we agreed that all observation schemes and processes would be overseen by our Teaching and Learning Observation College (TLOC), which was established in 2013. TLOC has recruited over 170 experienced academic and professional services staff who can provide professional, independent, and consistent peer observation and professional dialogues for colleagues across job families, campuses, schools, and disciplines.

Academic appointments and promotion via a teaching and learning route has long been an option, but successes through these routes have rapidly accelerated over the last five years. In 2020 UoN formally relaunched the 'Teaching and Curriculum Leadership' career pathway, signalling the expectation for staff on this route to provide leadership supporting our education strategy. There are now 39 Teaching and Curriculum Leadership professors across our five faculties. In 2022, 37% of all promotions, and 20% of professorial promotions were via this route, demonstrating our commitment to developing the best pedagogic practice. Promotion to the professoriate at UoN requires all candidates, irrespective of pathway, to evidence both their own professional development and 'Leadership in the professional development of others via a demonstrable record of supporting/mentoring junior staff and peer support, including for early career staff'.

Educational leadership is also provided by our community of 15 National Teaching Fellows, who have been externally recognised for their excellence by Advance HE. Amongst these 15 are 8 of our senior leaders, including two of our Pro-Vice-Chancellors.

In 2018, we created Digital Learning Directors (DLDs) for each faculty. The DLDs are academics seconded into a leadership team responsible for development and delivery of strategy, for optimising the quality and effectiveness of digital learning resources, and for doing this in partnership with students through Faculty Digital Strategy Groups. These strategy groups advise the DLDs on a range of projects at institutional and faculty level, for example:

- Development and leadership of faculty training programmes and communities of practice for online and blended teaching.
- Development of student digital learning support, incorporating analysis of data from the JISC digital discovery tools.

Each DLD also takes leadership of university-wide projects; for example, DLD Science leads on e-Assessment; DLDs for Arts lead on Engage Lecture Capture and on Moodle module re-design; and DLDs for Engineering lead on the Windows Virtual Desktop and Student Engagement Dashboard (SE5, p.13). Students routinely co-create enhancements with staff and help to embed them. In 2019-20 a team of paid students worked as consultants and designers alongside a DLD to implement the 'Moodle Redesign' initiative. This used pedagogic research and student evaluation to inform a best practice framework for the design of module pages in our virtual learning environment.

We employ over 700 technicians across our campuses in the UK, China, and Malaysia with expertise that spans our disciplines. Technicians help to ensure that laboratory and practice-based teaching is up to date and responsive to identified skills gaps and industry needs. In 2017 we were founding signatories to the Technician Commitment, aligning ourselves to its four pillars of visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability. Technical staff are supported through the

Teaching and Learning Development Programme, dedicated training, funding and awards, and through mental health awareness training to support their interactions with students. UoN hosts the UKRI funded TALENT Programme, which champions the technician role and offers strategic insights into delivering technical skills within the UK.

For over 20 years, we have run the Lord Dearing Award (LDA) scheme to recognise individuals, teams and departments who have made an outstanding contribution to teaching, learning and professional practice. All staff with a direct link to the student experience, including professional services and technical staff, are eligible for the award, and awardees form part of a community of distinguished practitioners along with our NTFs. Examples of recent awards include recognition for efforts to promote awareness of autism and other neurodivergent conditions in teaching and learning, and the development of a transition module in the Business School for students without A-Level maths, leading to improved progression rates among those students. Excellent teamworking at UoN has also been recognised externally through two Collaborative Teaching (CATE) Awards. In 2021, the Health e-Learning and Media team was recognised for the co-creation of digital educational resources with healthcare students, practitioners and patients. In 2018, the RELATE team was recognised for a leadership programme for student nurses and midwives.

Each year UoN runs a calendar of key CPD events with focused themes to support delivery of the university strategy. Since 2018, we have organised over 90 different CPD short courses on aspects of education and student experience which have seen more than 5,000 attendees. Annual teaching and learning conferences attract several hundred internal delegates to share their good practice and test new ideas, often in partnership with students. Recent conference themes include accessibility, universal design, and digital learning. To maximise knowledge exchange on pedagogy, we have an editorial team who guide conference papers through to publication in collected volumes.¹⁰ One of the last on-campus events in March 2020 was a conference exploring how the barriers faced by students with disabilities could be removed. 'Designing Programmes for Learning' conference in support of our CTP (SE1/2 p.5).¹¹ This event shared progress on programme-level design from across the sector and considered how to effect institution-wide change. Many of these activities (e.g., conferences, NRS, LDA) are tri-campus and facilitate the sharing of good practice internationally.

Supportive Learning Environment (SE5)

From arrival to graduation, we provide clear pathways through which our students receive structured and tailored support within and beyond the curriculum. We work hard to help students reflect on and understand their own needs so that they can develop as independent learners, self-accessing the wide range of co-curricular services we provide. Our ESE SDP Priority 4 (p.1) puts 'student experience and wellbeing at the heart of all we do', and in so doing we take an approach that considers the full student journey.

We recognise the importance of early engagement with students. Offer-holders are surveyed on their specific needs so that we can deliver services in ways that are appropriately tailored, minimising the need to react post-arrival. On starting their course, students are asked to reflect on their levels of confidence, where they feel the greatest challenge might arise, and how they prefer to receive feedback and communication. This survey allows academic schools and professional services teams to design tailored induction programmes.

To support the transition to university life, in 2021 we established a Residential Experience (ResX) unit within the Student and Campus Life department. ResX comprises permanent staff and over

100 paid student ambassadors. The team co-design and co-deliver events and activities to meet the needs of our students. At the start of 2021-22 ResX supported 2,100 individual students across our 23 halls of residence and organised 1,308 individual events and activities ranging from wellbeing drop-ins to movie nights, barbecues and drumming workshops. Our 20 volunteer chaplains and 30 different Students' Union-organised faith societies provide another dimension, playing an important role in the creation of a safe and supportive environment for everyone. To support students who live off-campus we have a dedicated community engagement team that works closely with the Students' Union. Services include advice on safety and crime prevention, house hunting, how to be a good neighbour, volunteering and community placements. This comprehensive approach helps our students to develop their sense of belonging.

Our wellbeing support has evolved significantly since the creation of Student and Campus Life in 2017. In 2021 we increased resource levels to meet demand (particularly from students with protected characteristics) and in order that we could strengthen ongoing assessment of service impact. We recruited an additional 7.5 (FTE) staff which has enabled us to increase student access in 2021-22 as follows:

- 1,406 students have been supported by our Mental Health Advisory team;
- 2,333 students have been supported by our Counselling service;
- 4,709 students have been supported by our Support and Wellbeing service.

Our Disability Support Service has grown to meet the changing needs of our students. Between 2019-20 and 2021-22, the number of student support plans created rose from 1,623 to 2,254. Our Support Worker Service increased its provision of practical support through student assistants, manual notetaking, exam support and sighted guides from 6,663 hours in 2019-20 to 12,652 hours in 2021-22. More detail on our support for disabled students can be found below (Student Outcomes p.24).

In May 2021 we introduced a new service called 'Report and Support'. This is a digital platform through which students and staff can report an incident on or off campus and receive support. In its first full year of operation, we received and dealt with over 450 reports, indicating that student awareness of the service is good. 'Report and Support' is a key driver in helping us to tackle unacceptable behaviour.

The strands of activity led by Student and Campus Life are dimensions of a student support strategy built around our comprehensive framework for personal tutoring. Tutoring helps students to reflect upon and develop their practice as learners. It provides them with tailored support by reviewing academic progress, encouraging participation, supporting wellbeing, providing next-steps career information and signposting to specialist services. The University Senior Tutor leads a network of 131 School-based senior tutors and the senior tutors in turn lead the personal tutors who each support several students. Senior and Personal Tutors undertake annual training, covering safeguarding, mental health first-aid, bystander and Prevent training. The tutoring framework is owned by a Senior Tutor Network that includes colleagues from the Students' Union and Student and Campus Life. The effectiveness of tutoring contributes to the high levels of satisfaction reported against relevant questions in the NSS, NSES and Covid Experience Surveys:

Table 2: Academic Support Survey Data

	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22
NSS (% agree/strongly agree)				
Q12: I have been able to contact staff when I needed to	89%	86%	83%	81%

Q13: I have received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my course	75%	74%	69%	68%
Q14: Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices on my course	70%	70%	64%	65%
NSES (% satisfied/very satisfied)				
Getting time from academic staff when I need it/personal support with learning	90%	91%	-	89%
Overall satisfaction with Personal tutors	93%	91%	-	92%
COVID Experience Survey (% satisfied)				
Opportunities to ask questions	n/a	-	81%	n/a

Contacting staff was sometimes challenging during Covid-related lockdowns, particularly when staff were managing caring responsibilities alongside their university duties. This will have contributed to the small decline in recent NSS results for Q12.

In early 2021 we launched the Student Engagement Dashboard to help our personal tutors offer the best support to students. The dashboard tracks student engagement across our main digital learning platforms such as Moodle, as well as attendance in face-to-face classes using QR codes. We use it as a tool to support student wellbeing and belonging (engagement being a key indicator) by identifying when participation in learning has dropped or is at a level which may cause concern about progress and wellbeing. The Students' Union are active contributors to the dashboard's development and to the policy on data privacy and usage which is published to all students and staff.

We provide comprehensive resources for students to access during their learning journey. The Student Academic Skills Team (SAST) offers 'Study Chat' webinars tailored to student study practices at different stages. They run 'Study with Us' (facilitated online learning sessions that aid focus and motivation), and they provide one-to-one consultations, digital learning resources for 'anytime, anywhere' access, and support for peer mentoring schemes. They work with students on criticality and argument, planning and structuring writing, group work and presentations, time management and note making. The team also offers disciplinary-specific study skills sessions designed in partnership with academic schools. The number of these delivered per academic year has increased from 99 in 2019-20 to 208 in 2021-22. The SAST is responsive to individual learning needs and characteristics, helping students to deal with imposter syndrome, and to build confidence to contribute to tutorials, seminars and lectures. The team includes staff dedicated to providing tailored support for students from underrepresented groups, for example through summer schools. The breadth and depth of SAST activities has grown to such an extent that in 2021-22 it recorded 13,228 instances of engaging with students.

Our British Council accredited Centre for English Language Education (CELE) prepares students for whom English is not their first language for the demands of academic study in all disciplines at all levels. CELE covers academic skills such as argumentative writing, criticality, academic integrity, clear communication in written and spoken form, working with tutor feedback and assignment structures, research methodology and learner autonomy. Provision has grown significantly in recent years, with a rise in student registrations from 2,451 in 2018-19 to 4,165 in 2021-22. CELE's consultation service offers students up to 12 individual sessions per year to support them in developing their strengths. These sessions allow for tailored support that can help a student raise their performance significantly. There is also a strong element of pastoral care

where students and tutors collaboratively explore learning strategies. CELE also provides online self-study materials for all UoN students with over 2,000 registered users. Over the last three years, CELE has expanded its academic support by 43% with over 2,000 hours of class time, over 500 consultation hours and over 4,000 actual taught hours.

For over a decade, UoN has offered a range of optional 'open' online courses to supplement the academic curriculum and to support potential and current students in raising their confidence and attainment. We run some of these courses through Moodle (UoN students only), and others via the FutureLearn platform. These 'open' courses have no entry requirements and are designed to enable peer to peer learning across our UK and international campuses or between UoN students and other learners. In 2018-19, 3,597 students participated in online Moodle courses such as 'Your University Journey' and 'On Course for your Masters'. Promotion of 'Your University Journey' was paused during Covid owing to its focus on physical learning environments, but it was relaunched for 2022-23. Our FutureLearn courses include 'Virtual Work Experience and Exploring the Veterinary Profession' (23,160 enrolments to 05/01/23), 'Introduction to Mathematical Methods for University-Level Science' (1,595 enrolments to 05/01/23), and 'Foundations of Science for Undergraduate Degrees' (1,189 enrolments to 05/01/23).

Physical and Virtual Learning Resources (SE6)

Every member of staff at UoN plays their part in enabling our students to achieve their potential, be it through teaching and direct student support, or through maintenance and development of infrastructure and services. We are fortunate in having beautiful green campuses with diverse landscapes and architecture. Our University Park Campus has been a Civic Trust Green Flag Award Winner every year since 2003 – the only university campus to achieve this status. Our Learning Environment Steering Group leads the provision of cutting-edge learning facilities for our students across all our UK campuses, through both our physical estate and our virtual resources. We continually invest in improving these further, maintaining a cycle of infrastructure upgrades and the development of accessible and flexible spaces. Our success in doing so is evidenced through the NSS as well as other data sets:

Table 3: Learning Resources Survey Data

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
NSS (% agree/strongly agree)				
Q18: The IT resources and facilities provided have supported my learning well	85%	81%	72%	75%
Q19: The library resources (e.g., books, online services and learning spaces) have supported my learning well.	89%	90%	76%	84%
Q20: I have been able to access course-specific resources (e.g equipment, facilities, software, collections) when I needed to.	89%	88%	76%	83%
SEM (% agree/strongly agree)				
Learning activities and resources are easily accessible	-	-	86.3%	86%
NSES (% satisfied/very satisfied)				
Satisfaction with Learning technology	87%	85%	-	92%
Satisfaction with Online Study Material	n/a	n/a	-	87%
Satisfaction with Virtual learning environment	93%	88%	-	88%

Satisfaction with IT support/helpline	91%	89%	-	87%
Satisfaction with Physical library facilities	90%	90%	-	94%
Satisfaction with Library service support	96%	95%	-	97%
COVID Experience Survey (% satisfied)				
Resources and Access to learning materials	n/a	82%	87%	n/a

Access to our on-campus facilities was limited due to Covid lockdowns in 2019-20 and 2020-21, contributing to the decline in scores for NSS Questions 18, 19 and 20 in these years. The significant investment in our facilities and libraries has meant that as our students have returned to campus the number of favourable responses to these questions have increased.

Over the past five years we have made substantial investments in 22 major teaching and learning developments in our facilities. These investments include new laboratory facilities for medicine, science and engineering courses (£17M), expansion of our farm and our Vet School (£9.5M) and the £21M Monica Partridge Building (MPB) on University Park, which opened in 2018. Dedicated solely to teaching, the MPB provides state-of-the-art physical and digital facilities that offer an accessible learning environment suiting different learning styles and enabling individual and collaborative study. Facilities include high quality audio equipment and interactive screens for collaboration. These are available 24/7, with students able to book spaces or just drop in. In addition, we have invested £32M in our libraries and £11M in digital infrastructure to support teaching and learning.

Our eight university libraries offer almost a million print books, 180,000 journals and 300,000 e-books. In addition, our Manuscripts and Special Collections department comprises 3.5 million archives, significant art, archaeological and geological collections, and 80,000 printed volumes. The libraries are heavily used by our students: pre-Covid, they received 2.5 million visits per year. While the number of visits dropped from spring 2020, numbers climbed back to 1.5 million in 2021-22, with students rating the facilities highly in NSS and NSES (Table 3, p.14). Since 2018 we have invested in improved access to printed and digital resources, study and social space as well as teaching rooms. New facilities enable students to participate in synchronous and asynchronous online learning, attend video meetings, and create and practise presentations. Our libraries provide over 5,000 study spaces, including rooms for group and private study, a cinema, computer rooms and informal study areas with varied seating. Libraries also house assistive technology rooms to support students with disabilities.

We subscribe to the JISC Digital Experience Insights survey to gather intelligence about student needs. In 2022, 82% of students (of 1,324 respondents) rated the quality of the online learning environment as good or better (compared with 78% for the higher education sector) and 83% of students agreed that online learning materials were accessible to them (compared with 77% for the sector). Between 2021 and 2022 the number of students agreeing that the support that UoN provides for them to learn online is good or better increased from 57% to 69%, where the sector average is 66%).

Our virtual learning environment, Moodle, is used across the institution. The Digital Learning Directors have worked with our Learning Technologists to roll-out standardised Moodle templates and to disseminate best practice to provide a more consistent experience for students. This includes a focus on accessibility as part of our commitment to meeting Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations. For 2022-23 we have implemented the Brickfield Accessibility Moodle

plugin which identifies accessibility issues with content, provides automatic fixes and provides training and advice to staff about creating fully inclusive learning materials.

UoN uses Echo360 (internally branded as 'Engage') for lecture recording. Engage offers various interactive tools, the ability to livestream lectures, note-taking functionality and learning analytics. The availability of lecture recordings enhances student experience, promotes equity and inclusivity, and gives students control of their own learning. UoN has provided a lecture recording service since 2008, and our August 2019 Engage policy, developed in partnership with the Students' Union, requires all staff to use it unless specific exemptions apply. Between 2018-19 and 2021-22, we saw a 40% increase in the number of lecture recordings, with a rise from 29,276 to 49,178 recordings as staff adapted their practice during the pandemic.

Our IT support represents a staff-student partnership that is designed to be responsive to different student needs. We have a network of Student IT Tutors who are trained and paid to provide peer-to-peer support via 'Smart Bars' across our campuses; this includes triaging issues to staff. Our Laptop Loan and Repair service (average 1,400 repairs undertaken per year) ensures that no student has to struggle without a suitable device to support their learning. The service has been further extended in 2021-22 to help address the cost-of-living crisis – currently we have 527 devices on loan, increased from 289 pre-pandemic with over £400K invested in this service over the past three years.

We are committed to continuous improvement in digital technology. In 2018 we launched the Digital Futures programme, a five-year initiative designed to advance our digital maturity, delivering significant changes to culture and ways of working as well as technology. In 2020 when Covid halted normal working and operating procedures, Digital Futures investments in collaboration and communication tools meant that we were able to make full use of Office365 tools swiftly and almost seamlessly for students and staff. Through Digital Futures, we have invested over £5M to improve our infrastructure and equip students to develop the digital literacy necessary for outstanding graduate outcomes, including the CM&eA (SE1/2, p.6).

Embedding Engagement (SE7)

We believe that our engagement with our students and their engagement in their learning are opposite sides of the same coin. As described in SE5 (p.13), we use the Student Engagement Dashboard for early identification of students who may need support with their wellbeing and sense of belonging. Our vision is to work *with* our students, rather than relying solely on responding retrospectively to their feedback; this is articulated in Priority 3 of the ESE SDP (p.1), which itself was developed in partnership with students. An important aspect of student engagement is their active involvement in teaching sessions. Through the Digital Learning Directors (SE4, p.10) we promote the use of active learning across the institution by providing training and support. For example, audience response systems which provide 'live' feedback to staff are used widely, allowing teachers to adjust their teaching appropriately, contributing to a positive student experience through which students are heard and remain engaged.

Student voice is integral to everything that we do, not only in teaching and curriculum, but also over the wider student experience. Students are represented on committees at the highest level (Senate and Council), and at course level (via student-led consultative meetings with staff known as Learning Community Forums). Student focus groups are used routinely to help develop key resources, such as inclusive curriculum toolkits (SE1/2, p.5). Several of our professional services employ student ambassadors to support events and service design. For example, since 2020 the

CES team has employed student ambassadors to co-design webpages, the new Careers tile on the MyNottingham app (p.3) and inspiring content for social media campaigns. The team also employ students who share their career journeys with their peers on the Careers blog.

SEM surveys take place for every module every year, ensuring that module review routinely takes student voice into account. Students are confident that good mechanisms are in place for them to provide feedback on their course (NSS % agree/strongly agree scores ranging between 77% and 85% since 2018 for 'I have had the right opportunities to feedback on my course') but are less confident that their feedback is valued and has been acted on. This has been a persistent issue but was particularly acute during the pandemic. Nonetheless, student responses to relevant NSES questions are more positive in this area, with % satisfied scores of 80%+ over the past three years of data for 'Student feedback on my course is taken seriously and acted upon' and, importantly, 85%+ over the past three years for 'I feel part of a student community committed to learning'.

Underpinning some of the frustration from students that their voice is not acted on is a lack of clarity of the relevance of the learning activities that they are asked to engage in. Evidence to support this contention includes the fact that the 'Student Voice' TEF indicator is materially above benchmark in the Vet School and in the School of Pharmacy, both of which have worked in partnership with students to co-create constructively aligned programmes that are clearly articulated to students. Through the CTP we have embedded this partnership approach to promote a common understanding of the purpose of newly designed learning activities and to ensure that our courses are explicit about that purpose. In parallel, we are developing more timely feedback mechanisms (for example through 'Town Hall' meetings, pioneered during the pandemic), so that where possible student concerns result in changes that are experienced by the cohort that provides the feedback.

The organisation of our course representative system is overseen by the SU who acknowledge that more work needs to be done to ensure that representatives engage effectively with the wider cohort. In 2018-19 an Academic Representation Group was set up in partnership with the SU. This has developed role profiles for representatives and good practice guidance for student and staff role-holders on Learning Community Forums.

Our student partnership strategy started with the Students as Change Agents (SACA) scheme in 2014-15. SACA has supported a range of student-staff partnership projects impacting every faculty and directly touching the experience of thousands of students through the development of new and improved services, activities and learning resources. SACA projects are designed for lasting impact - for example, a 2016 project in Architecture nearly halved printing costs, reducing hidden course costs for subsequent cohorts. Peer-led clinical skills training sessions and mock exams in Nursing and Pharmacy, developed through SACA, are now a permanent part of the learning support environment for these professionally-accredited subjects. Creative Software Workshops teaching skills for careers in digital media that were first developed in 2019 by SACA students continue to be co-designed and delivered in the Faculty of Arts.

In 2019, SACA was recognised with a European Consortium of Innovative Universities Team Award, which described the scheme as an 'educational innovation that challenges conventional thinking'.¹² Several SACA projects have impact beyond UoN, with students owning and leading on further developments. One example is Psychstart, a career-based peer mentoring scheme for medical students interested in exploring a career in psychiatry that launched in 2017. The scheme has expanded to the Universities of Newcastle, Manchester and Cambridge,

Other

examples include partnerships with the student-led Afro-Caribbean Medical Network to co-create supportive and empowering events for Afro-Caribbean Healthcare students.

More recently we have refined our approach to student co-creation, and in 2019 we launched the Student Engagement Associates (SEAs) scheme. This provides paid roles for students to engage in strategic partnership projects to improve the student experience. It is a critical component of CTP. Since 2019 we have employed SEAs from all faculties to work on a variety of co-creation projects, including an online module on digital conduct, an EDI toolkit, and research into student views and requirements for the design of a new city centre campus. These projects have wide institutional impact; for example, over 4,000 students are enrolled on the SEA-designed 'Academic Integrity' module in 2022-23.

Summary

The education that we offer students is underpinned by a deep commitment to staff professional development, by innovation in teaching and support and by partnership working. We take a holistic view of university life, investing in health and wellbeing services to enable student success. In the following sections, we provide further evidence to demonstrate how the transformative and authentic learning experiences that we offer translate into outstanding outcomes for our students.

Student Outcomes

According to HESA 2022, in 2019-20 our undergraduate programmes produced more graduates who enter highly skilled employment than any other UK higher education institution.¹³ The 10 most frequent employer destinations for our students are the NHS, PWC, Deloitte, EY, KPMG, Amazon, Barclays, Boots, the Civil Service and CVS. We do this through tailored and inclusive student services in line with our 2019 University Strategy. This sets out the mission and goals that inform distinctive UoN educational gains that prepare our students to 'collaborate in learning, scholarship and discovery across all realms of knowledge, solving problems and improving lives' through their contributions to current and emerging professions. These educational gains include:

- Proactive citizenship: through a range of student partnership opportunities students are empowered to drive change and encouraged to reflect on the skills they develop;
- Value added employment prospects: students from underrepresented groups (including those meeting widening participation criteria and students with disabilities) are supported to succeed in their degrees and in obtaining highly skilled employment;
- Civic engagement: Students are offered many and varied opportunities to engage in local initiatives, including support in the community, and local businesses (for example through placements);
- Global engagement and inclusive outlook: all students have opportunities to develop an awareness of global issues and to build empathy towards different cultures.

Our family of campuses in the UK, China and Malaysia provide invaluable opportunities for students to develop as global citizens. This may be via collaborative teaching, for example through the tri-campus 'Making of Modern Asia' module taught by the School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies. It may be through 2+2 programmes (where students move between campuses for different years of study) or overseas placements. Between 2018-19 and 2021-22, nearly 3,000 UK-campus students chose to take one of these, and we use HESA Data to monitor student take-up so that we can ensure our use of tailored funding and support is enabling underrepresented students to have equal access. For example, across the time period 436 students with a declared

disability took part in an overseas placement. Global engagement can also be through our other international partnerships, for example with a fellow member of the Universitas 21 network.

The impact of UoN educational gains is evidenced through our graduate outcomes. These are at benchmark within a high-achieving benchmark group, and materially above benchmark for groups of students traditionally underrepresented in higher education. Our overall indicators are 95.7% for continuation (against a high benchmark value) 95.8% for completion and 81% for progression. Of note are the outcomes for those students who begin their university journeys with additional forms of challenge or disadvantage:

- Students in IMD quintiles 1 and 2, and students who are eligible for free school meals have progression rates that are materially above benchmark (81.1%: +2.3% over benchmark).
- Black students have progression rates materially above benchmark (84.3%: +4.3% over benchmark).
- Students who enter UoN aged 31 and above (largely Nursing and Midwifery students) have progression rates which are materially above benchmark (92.1%: 3.9% over benchmark).
- Completion rates are materially above benchmark for our ~5700 non-UK Domiciled students.
- The continuation and completion rates of students on programmes with an integrated foundation year are materially above benchmark.
- The continuation and completion rates for our small group of part-time students are materially above benchmark.

We have created our own 'added value' indicator for progression by using the ratio of TEF data to the entry tariff data from the Guardian University Guide 2023 (Table 4). Out of all large higher education institutions (+12,500 full-time first-degree students), UoN is the first ranked UK university for the 'value added' from point of entry (tariff) to progression at 15 months.

Table 4: Progression/Tariff Added Value Indicator

Provider	Progression Score	Progression Rank	Tariff	Progression / Tariff	Rank among HEIs with > 12,500 FT first degree students
University of Nottingham	81.0%	13	152	53.3%	1
Loughborough University	82.0%	12	156	52.6%	2
King's College London	83.4%	9	163	51.2%	3
The University of Bath	87.2%	5	177	49.3%	4
University of Warwick	83.5%	8	173	48.3%	5

The strength of our indicators for student outcomes reflects the success of our approach to achieving educational gains and enhancing employment prospects. We support the acquisition of these gains through services and interventions that ensure students develop and apply skills, reflect on what skills are developed and understand how these skills can support their long-term professional and personal goals. Below, we describe some of the ways in which we support our students, before highlighting some of the measures that enable our underrepresented students to achieve outcomes that are materially above benchmark.

Professional Competencies

Since 2018, all degree courses are required to embed four UoN 'Professional Competencies' in the curriculum: Professional Communication, Co-ordinating with others, Digital Capabilities, and Reflection. We embed these through learning outcomes in academic and co-curricular courses and modules, for example through the Nottingham Advantage Award (see below), explaining to students how engagement with them will enhance their employability. This approach provides opportunities for teaching enhancement through the sharing, adoption and adaptation of good practice across our diverse portfolio of academic disciplines and research-led vocational training.

The four competencies are reviewed to ensure they align with ever-changing needs. For example, JISC data has shaped our approach to embedding Digital Capabilities. In 2018 JISC reported that only 41% of all UK university students believed their courses were preparing them for a digital workplace. In response, we launched an institutional 'Preparing for the Digital Workplace' campaign. This campaign saw 1,195 students in 2018-19 undertaking the self-assessment available through JISC's Digital Discovery Tool. To complement this data set we ran a bespoke survey for recent graduates. The 375 alumni respondents confirmed the importance of digital capabilities in the workplace and reinforced the need to develop these capabilities through their courses. The resulting Student Digital Capabilities Delivery Plan 2021-24 delivers two support packages: The Digital Student and The Digital Graduate. The Digital Student supports new students with their transition into university and their progression through to mid-stage, the point at which they are preparing for their dissertations or independent research projects. The Digital Graduate addresses specific gaps identified by UoN alumni in the areas of big data, programming and coding, and artificial intelligence and will go live in 2023-24. SEAs worked on both support packages, and SU Officers were on the steering group to ensure the lived experience of students was at the forefront of this work. This evidence-based approach to building student digital capabilities as one of our professional competencies has led to invitations from JISC over the last three years to deliver keynote addresses at two national Building Digital Capability conferences, participate in a panel at JISC Digifest, and publish a case study for the sector.¹⁴

Since 2019 students have had access to 'magpie', an online personalised learning system, which tailors its content to match the needs of each student and then to focus on their individual career skills: between 2019 and 2022, there were 3,215 distinct logins to the system, with the top articles viewed including mental health while working from home, and building business relationships.

Nottingham Advantage Award

A key enhancement to the journey of our students is the Nottingham Advantage Award (NAA). This offers a wide choice of optional modules to help students acquire skills that complement their academic studies. We take care to ensure that NAA learning is available to all, for example by developing modules for students in part-time employment or volunteering roles. During the pandemic, one NAA module was created specifically for our medical and healthcare finalists, and other 'key worker' students.

The NAA is built around three themes: Preparation for professional life and lifelong learning [with an emphasis upon reflective practice]; Service for the public good; and Personal development – the attitudes and skills to manage own growth. Modules are available in a range of categories, including mentoring, career skills, community and volunteering, cultural awareness and project management. Students tailor their choices to their own developmental needs and interests and their modules appears on their degree transcript. The options available are continually reviewed to

ensure the NAA caters to the changing needs of students and employers. For example, through a Students as Change Agents project (SE7 p.17) students co-created a tailored NAA pathway for our postgraduate students which launched in 2019. Since 2018-19, 3,604 students have completed 5,881 modules through the NAA, using this programme to build their confidence and employability further.

Placements and Internships

Priority 4 of the ESE SDP (p.1) captures our strategic goal to ensure all students can benefit from placements and internships to add to their educational gain and progression outcomes. We see placements providing particular social capital benefit for our underrepresented students. Integrated placement years are available in a range of areas including (but not limited to) our Faculty of Engineering, Nottingham University Business School, and the Schools of Mathematical Sciences, Computer Science, Chemistry and Physics and Astronomy. Since 2018-19 it has been possible for all undergraduates not registered on a degree programme that includes a placement year to participate in an optional placement year after their penultimate year of study; this is then appended to their degree title. Table 5 presents analysis showing that there is a positive correlation between taking part in a placement and the graduate outcomes of students from all backgrounds. The benefit for students with a disability is particularly striking.

Table 5: Impact of Placement Activity on Graduate Outcome %, split by ethnicity.

Student Group	Did Not Participate in a Placement*	Participated in a Placement*	+/- Value Added Uplift to Graduate Outcomes
BAME	86.3%	89.9%	+3.6%
White	85.1%	90.4%	+5.3%
Female	85.0%	88.1%	+3.2%
Male	85.9%	93.4%	+7.5%
Disabled	83.3%	95.1%	+11.8%

*The term 'Placement' includes Year in Industry placements and shorter Careers led Work Experience Scheme placements. Data source: CES, covering Graduate Outcome data for 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20.

To ensure that all students can benefit from placements, we have vacation and 7-hours per week opportunities that can be undertaken either for academic credit or as part of the NAA. For example, the Faculty of Social Sciences partners with 80 external organisations including think tanks, advocacy and charitable organisations, local government, civic, 'third sector' and education to provide around 200 short placements annually. The faculty provides travel grants and full funding at the UK national living wage to ensure that widening participation students are not excluded.

Complementing placement opportunities is a wide range of work experience schemes that are available to all students. CES delivers the 'Nottingham Internship Scheme' which creates over 150 paid internships for students within local organisations during spring and summer vacation periods, with a minimum of national living wage compensation. In partnership with Nottingham Trent University, the 'Digital Marketing Academy' offers students and recent graduates the opportunity to learn from industry professionals and gain professional accreditation. The 'Nottingham Consultancy Challenge' partners students with local organisations to manage short-term projects.

Analysis shows that students who participate in placements and other work experience, irrespective of the length, see an uplift in their employment outcomes, salary and degree award, as well as in their feelings of career-readiness, when compared against non-participating peers (Table 6, p.22).

Table 6: Impact of CES Work Experience on Graduate Outcome %, on track % and Attainment

	% in Graduate Outcome*	% on Track	% Attaining a Good Degree (1st or 2:1)
UoN Baseline	85.7%	79.7%	89.8%
Did not take part in CES Work Experience Scheme	85.5%	79.4%	89.6%
Took part in CES Work Experience Scheme	90.3%	84.8%	95.1%

*Data source: CES, covering Graduate Outcome data for 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Our Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data for the tax year 2019-20 show that UoN alumni who graduated three years prior to this point reported median salary earnings of £30,700. This was the joint 11th highest median salary by university, providing further evidence of the impact of our interventions upon progression.

Sport

Sport contributes significantly to Priority 4 of the ESE SDP (p.1) by supporting student wellbeing and belonging. It improves cognitive ability, boosts self-esteem and confidence, promotes cross-cultural engagement, and develops life skills that embody the UoN educational gains. In a 2019 survey, 215 of our employer partners identified teamwork, interpersonal skills and problem-solving as key skills developed through sport.

Recognising the benefits of sport to student outcomes, our strategy is to make access to sport as easy as possible for as many of our students as possible. Our facilities are designed to be inclusive, serving all levels of sporting commitment and ability. Across our UK campuses currently, 13,282 students are members of our sector-leading sports facilities (including the £40M David Ross Sport Village). Through disability referrals, we issue discounted (by 50%) Sport and Fitness memberships; between 2018 and 2022, 807 students benefited from these referrals. We operate 73 sports clubs with 8,971 members and we deliver 153 group exercise classes every week.

We have a dedicated Inclusive Sport Officer and a Disability Sport Officer to support students with a disability and/or a long-term health condition, and a wheelchair basketball Development Officer. Our expert fitness team work closely with students to offer tailored support; for example, supported fitness sessions and quiet gym times for students with sensory needs. In April 2022 we extended the opening hours of our Jubilee fitness suite during Ramadan so that students could plan their gym use around their fasting commitments. Over 500 female students have attended our 'Girls Night In', a free event for female students to try new sports and pick up fitness freebies, with 42% coming from a black or ethnic minoritized background. We have also developed a Men's Health Active initiative which connects sport and physical activity with positive mental health and is driven by student Men's Health Ambassadors. We currently have £750,000 allocated to initiatives that encourage the widest participation in sport.

Through our comprehensive sport strategy, we provide targeted support for students with varying aspirations and needs. The strength and impact of our offer is externally recognised, for example by our success in the Times Higher Education awards. We have been Times Higher Sports

University of the Year twice, most recently in 2021. In 2022 we won the College of University Business Officers Association award for Excellence in Student Sport. Our inclusive approach and focus upon participation from underrepresented groups contribute to the achievement of outcomes that are materially above benchmark for these students.

Students classified in IMD quintiles 1 and 2 and/or eligible for Free School Meals

Our progression rates for students in IMD quintiles 1 and 2, and students who are eligible for free school meals are materially above benchmark. Recognising the financial challenges that may be faced by widening participation students from low-income backgrounds, we offer a range of financial support, for example through our Hardship Fund and our Crisis Fund. Widening participation students receive priority access to our spring internship programme and overseas travel bursary (Student Outcomes, p.21). Between 2018-19 and 2022-23 we have more than doubled the number of students supported through the Hardship Fund from 198 to 416 (with budget uplift from £309,000 to £756,000). We have extended our Core Bursary and Nottingham Potential Bursary to Medics in their Clinical Placement years, recognising that NHS funding for these years is not keeping pace with the funding other students receive from the Student Loan Company. This year, 120+ students will benefit from the £330K allocated to this. In addition, a new bursary for our care experienced and estranged students has been introduced in 2022-23, backdated to September 2020. We have increased our assessment of essential living costs for a hardship application by 10.5% in line with National Association of Student Money Advisers' guidelines to better support students.

Black and Other Ethnically Minoritised Students

Our black students have progression rates that are materially above benchmark. We support their progression outcomes through targeted schemes that help them and other minoritised groups to build networks and social capital. Tailored mentoring schemes are growing across UoN and include schemes for black students launched in the Faculties of Science and Engineering in 2020-21 and 2021-22. These schemes partner students with a mentor who is an alumnus of UoN and acts as a role model. The 'Lunch with a Leader' scheme provides students with valuable opportunities to engage with high-profile industry leaders over a shared meal. 'Get Connected: LGBTQI+' and 'Get Connected: Black and Mixed Heritage' events are offered in partnership with the Students' Union. These are designed to encourage a sense of belonging and provide opportunities for students to engage with alumni and employers who are willing to share their authentic lived experience of the workplace. Each event includes a panel Q&A and time for more informal networking. Since 2018-19, 278 students have attended these events. An undergraduate attendee noted: 'Get Connected was the first time that I was able to speak face-to-face with alumni who looked like me, shared my experiences and could wholeheartedly understand what it's like to be a BME student about to be a young graduate entering the workforce'. A full programme of events is run across schools and faculties, and by the university, for Black History Month.

Mature, Care Experienced and Estranged Students

Progression rates for our mature students are materially above benchmark, but interventions to improve other outcomes metrics need more time to have impact. For example, we have invested significantly in support for mature students through dedicated online resources and the recent appointment of a senior manager focused upon addressing the barriers that exist for these students. To support carers, we keep student places in our nursery affordable and offer additional support to families in hardship. Although Covid has disrupted access to this service, 131 students

have received childcare bursaries over the last three years; in 2021-22, 29 students made use of the Playcentre, and 15 students used the Day Nursery. We run a two-day induction event called 'Kickstart' to support the transition of our mature, care experienced and estranged students. This includes workshops with key information about finance, academic support and wellbeing, and opportunities for students to meet peers from similar backgrounds. There are follow-up activities throughout the first year, including a peer-mentoring scheme which currently has 43 mentors and 120 mentees. Attendance on the Kickstart programme was 150 students in 2019 and has been 90 per year since, including during the online-delivered sessions during the Covid pandemic.

Students with Disabilities

The continuation, completion and progression data for our students with disabilities is broadly in line with benchmark. In 2021-22 we had 5,114 registered students with a declared disability, of whom 4,326 had a personalised support plan. This represents a significant increase in support needs since TEF 2017. We have responded to this by establishing an expert team of 21 permanent staff and 55 support workers embedded in the department of Student and Campus Life who tailor support to the needs of individual students. In 2021-22 the team provided 12,652 hours of support comprising study assistants, practical support, manual note taking, examination support and sighted guides. We invest more than £1M every year in services to support student mental health and have recently signed up to the Student Mental Health Charter to help us enhance our current service. In 2021 we rolled out the Student Engagement Dashboard (SE5, p.13) which allows us to quickly identify students who are struggling and ensure that appropriate support is provided.

Foundation Students

We have six integrated foundation programmes providing alternative routes into Arts, Science, Engineering, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Health Sciences for students who might not otherwise access a UoN education. The continuation and completion rates of students on these programmes are materially above benchmark. All foundation courses offer opportunities to widening participation (WP) students as well as mature students, students who are the first in their family to enter university, and students with a declared disability. The percentage of WP students taking a UoN foundation year varies across the six courses from 50% to 100%. Typically, over 60% of a foundation course entry is from a BME background, over 10% are mature students, and 20% have a declared disability. Foundation students may join us with low (or no) level 3 qualifications, with good A-level grades in the 'wrong' subjects for their chosen degree pathway, or with impaired performance due to extenuating circumstances. The content of our Foundation Year goes over and beyond the content of the required A-level so that students are fully equipped for both their degree subject and the transition to degree-level study. For example, students on the Foundation Engineering and Physical Sciences programme study maths and further maths in an engineering context. They learn computer programming through languages such as Matlab alongside practical academic competency skills.

Summary

As shown above, we take a data-driven approach to the development of our wide range of curricular and co-curricular interventions so that they can be scaled and targeted. This has translated into outstanding student outcomes which are at benchmark within a high-achieving benchmark group, and materially above benchmark for groups of students traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

Conclusion

University of Nottingham students join a learning community that offers clearly articulated opportunities to achieve distinctive educational gains. Our university values are embodied within core skills to be acquired, practised, and evidenced through the student journey. Through these, our students achieve their potential, and many make important contributions to solving global challenges. Our education and student experience are inclusive by design, led by our disciplinary and pedagogic research and informed by our global outlook and footprint. We actively embed co-creation between staff and students, and extend this through partnership working between staff, students, alumni, employers and our local community. We inspire and engage our students, tailoring our offer to individual needs so that all our students can make the most of the outstanding environment, learning and other resources available. We evaluate, learn from and improve what we do and, by working together, we harness our expertise, our creativity, our energy and our commitment to our communities. Together, we offer: 'An education that is more than a degree'.

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