University of Nottingham
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

Strategic Delivery Plan for Education and Student Experience (ESE)

Ratified by:

- **Education & Student Experience Committee (ESEC) on 26 March 2021**
- **University Executive Board (UEB) on 07 April 2021**

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1.Executive Summary

"*An education that is more than a degree*" (University Strategy, 2019).

The University of Nottingham is a research-intensive global university that offers students from all contexts and cultures a unique opportunity to develop academic and professional competencies, creativity and new ways of thinking and being across the rich and diverse range of programmes led from our five Faculties. Our education is research-led and multi-disciplinary. It offers transformative and authentic learning experiences that lead to qualifications highly valued by employers, and lifelong access to our world-changing alumni networks. Our student experience provides unrivalled breadth and depth of personal development opportunities in and beyond the curriculum.

The Education and Student Experience Strategic Delivery Plan (ESE SDP) has been developed to support the implementation of the University of Nottingham Strategy (https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/strategy/home.aspx). The ESE SDP aligns to the University's seven strategic goals:

1. Solving problems and improving lives: through a world-class education that addresses real world challenges, social and industrial needs.

2. Supporting Potential: through recruiting and retaining a diverse community of students and staff with the potential to contribute to current and emerging professions.

3. Developing the campus experience: prioritising wellbeing, identity, belonging, access and inclusion through both our physical estate and digitally-enabled modes of teaching.

4. Cultivating a global mindset: through critical thinking and reflection, intercultural/interdisciplinary learning opportunities, physical and virtual mobility, placements and internships.

5. Fostering creativity, discovery and experiment: through stretching, multi-disciplinary curricula (academic, co- and extra-curricula), critical thinking, entrepreneurship and strategic engagement with scientific and creative industries.

6. Contributing to Sustainable Development Goals: through research-engaged teaching and through the articulation of professional competencies and learning for sustainability in our curriculum design.

7. Embedding collaboration in all that we do: through staff-student collaborative working, team-building across departments and job families, the co-creation of curriculum and student experience, and through the building of meaningful and productive relationships with our civic partners and our alumni.

The ESE SDP is informed by two key relationships.

First, 'Education and Student Experience' is a consciously holistic phrase that acknowledges the contribution of the broader experience of University life (health and wellbeing, personal growth, citizenship, friendship) to the achievement of academic potential.

Secondly, the ESE SDP and the Research SDP are mutually inter-dependent in creating an educational eco-system infused with a researcher mind-set and researcher values, with students invited to become part of the research community 'from the inside', through cutting-edge curriculum, co-creation of new knowledge and expert academics who are passionate about their subject area and the contribution its students can make to society.

The ESE SDP is an iterative document that will be reviewed regularly and updated to ensure that it remains relevant to our mission and to our community. Its lifespan is not constrained until such time as the University strategy is refreshed. Underpinning the SDP is a commitment to progressing work that will make a difference to our staff as well as to our students, through the rebalancing or reduction of

administrative workloads to enable time for curriculum development, research and teaching, service enhancement and education scholarship. The ESE SDP is operationalised via an action plan. This will initially cover the 2 academic years 2021-22 and 2022-23 and will include work undertaken as part of the response to, and recovery from, Covid-19.

The SDP has been written following a series of workshops involving colleagues from UoN UK, UNNC and UNM. Student input has been through Student Union Sabbatical Officers in the UK, but also indirectly through student evaluation and feedback across the three campuses.

The five ESE priorities are a mechanism through which we demonstrate compliance with our regulatory and statutory obligations while also going beyond these in our striving for global excellence. The priorities therefore acknowledge our current state alongside our ambition. They recognise the need to progress 'renovation for innovation' in order to deliver the action plan and activities that underpin the strategy. The five priorities are categorised as 'Foundational' or 'Ambition' (with shorthand in brackets):

Foundational
- **Priority 1:** We will continuously reflect on, listen to and learn from, the experiences of our students and staff through and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure that our education and student experience is inclusive, agile and responsive, that it is built on good practice, enables potential for both students and staff, and that our degree standards are maintained. (COVID+)

- **Priority 2:** We will create an empowering physical and virtual estate that meets the needs of our students and staff now and in the future. This will include the progression of major data-driven initiatives to improve our core student record management systems, welfare and engagement processes. (INFRASTRUCTURE)

Ambition
- **Priority 3:** We will work with students, alumni, employers and professional bodies to co-create curricula (academic, co- and extra-curricula), that embeds our university values, supports good mental health, develops professional competencies and learning for sustainability. We will support students to achieve their academic and professional potential through an inclusive and digitally-enabled education of the highest quality and relevance informed by pedagogy, evidence-based practice and scholarship. (CURRICULUM)

- **Priority 4:** We will put student experience and student wellbeing at the heart of all we do, ensuring that all students, irrespective of how and where they study, quickly feel part of, and jointly create, our inclusive and global community and are enabled to build meaningful and lifelong relationships. This will include facilitating opportunities to engage locally and internationally through volunteering, work experience, placements and mobility. (STUDENT EXPERIENCE)

- **Priority 5:** We will diversify our student intake, developing new entry routes and 'non-traditional' modes of delivery to attract widening participation and international students, apprentices, post-experience and professional learners. We will provide the best opportunities for these students to succeed through a sector-leading approach to supporting and engaging with them. (DIVERSIFICATION)

The ESE Strategic Delivery Plan is owned by Education and Student Experience Committee (ESEC), with the action plan that operationalises it owned by ESEC's sub-committees:

- Teaching and Learning Committee (tri-campus),
- Student Experience Committee (tri-campus) and the,
- Student Life and Campus Teaching Committees (UNM and UNNC).

Members of TLC, SEC, CTC (UNM), CTC (UNNC) and SLC (UNNC) lead strands of activity within the action plan, reporting against agreed milestones/KPIs to ESEC.

2. University Values

In our Education and Student Experience, we value:

Inclusivity	Ambition	Openness	Fairness	Respect
We are a community where everyone can contribute and be appreciated for who they are.	We set the highest standards for ourselves and our work and support each other to achieve them.	We adopt a straightforward and transparent way of communicating with each other and with the world, championing the free exchange of ideas.	Our decisions and actions are consistent, impartial and ethical.	We have regard for each other's rights and feelings, and demonstrate this in our behaviour, treating each other with kindness.

Our students and staff construct meaning from all 'touch points' within their UoN experience. We will 'design-in' our University values to all of these touch points so that our processes, policies and services have inclusivity and respect at their heart, equip students and staff with ambition and growth mind-sets, and are transparently fair and equitable.

We are committed to:

- High-quality teaching underpinned by robust and effective assessment and feedback.
- Promoting and engaging with the student voice through consultation and co-creation of our curricula and student experience.
- Tailored and personalised academic support, with the infrastructure this needs, across every stage of the student journey through our Schools and Professional Services.
- Outstanding learning resources via our physical and digital infrastructure and our international partners.
- Maintaining and enhancing our track record of excellent student outcomes and learning gain, both through transition to the workplace and through access to further study.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion for all our students and the staff who support them.
- Nurturing the professional development of our staff, and progressing work to reduce or rebalance administrative workloads, so that they may achieve their own aspirations and effectively support our students to do likewise.
- Building strong partnerships that cross departments and job families, thereby enabling effective use of our expertise, and facilitating spaces for creativity and innovation.

We will adopt a developmental student journey approach to all our strands of activity, refreshing our pre-arrival and transition activities, and nurturing progression from UG to PGT, and PGT to PGR, as well as into the workplace. We will invest equally in our Foundation, Undergraduate, Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research students (PGRs in partnership with the Researcher Academy). Our student journey approach will be conceptualised as:

- Phase 1 (transition into University, building community and a sense of belonging),
- Phase 2 (academic achievement),
- Phase 3 (preparation for graduation, mastery, or continued professional development).

3. Campus Coverage

Our education and student experience are nuanced by national contexts and cultures. While the UK, China and Malaysia campuses work to the same ESE SDP, the starting points and order of priority by which the SDP is operationalised vary. For example, the course of the global Coronavirus pandemic in 2019-2021 is different in each location, affecting not only the immediate delivery of education and student experience, but also the identification of staff, student and campus development needs. Size and shape priorities vary between the campuses, and there will be different strategies for professional and work-

based learning in each country, responding to market and government priorities for economic recovery. Hence, while the ESE SDP is shared by the three campuses, the action plans by which it is delivered are developed and owned locally under the leadership of the PVC for ESE (UK) and Vice-Provosts for Teaching and Learning (UNM and UNNC).

4. Links to Other Strategic Delivery Plans

Each of the Strategic Delivery Plans contributes towards our Education and Student Experience. This section provides a non-exhaustive description of some of the key connections, mapped to the five priorities.

Research
The Research SDP is the sibling of the ESE SDP. Research is core to our identity, underpinning and enabling all our educational endeavours. Our research leads and enriches our curriculum, enabling us to develop bold and innovative programmes that support economic recovery, that contribute to the reduction of social inequalities and the challenges of climate change. Our research also enriches our co- and extra-curricular offer. Through the intellectual interactions between teachers as researchers and students as researchers, students at all levels are; a) exposed to research through teaching and learning and our world-leading research facilities; b) given formal opportunities to develop and apply their understanding of research methods; c) challenged to engage directly in research through a final capstone project and/or co-curricular activities. The Action Plan that supports the ESE SDP will 'call out' the specific actions to be progressed in partnership with Research and in the furtherance of educational research and scholarship. The Research SDP and the enabling strategies and plans will do likewise, referencing their contribution to delivery of the ESE SDP. (Priorities 1-5)

Enabling Plans
Achievement of the ESE priorities is dependent upon the Enabling Plans.

Knowledge Exchange
Opportunities for students to engage with Knowledge Exchange through placements, co-curricular activities such as the Nottingham Advantage Award, entrepreneurship, volunteering opportunities and through supporting the activities of Student Societies and student-led initiatives. Diversification of our educational offer through continuing professional development programmes designed in partnership with employers. (Priorities 3 - 5)

Global Engagement
Focus upon personal and professional development through intercultural learning, development of global mindsets through international teaching partnerships, student mobility (physical and virtual), and curriculum design. Support for the student journey through development of a sector-leading induction and welcome programme. Working in tandem with Global Engagement to develop a new Europe Global Engagement Strategy which delivers a new approach to engagement with our partners in Europe, to develop module materials and online resources to discuss the impact of Brexit and other geopolitical issues from our uniquely global perspective, and to support civic and cultural exchange activities between the UK and Europe. (Priorities 2, 3, 4 and 5)

EDI
Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in our culture. Encouraging better decision making through diverse contributions; diversifying our student and staff populations and empowering all to achieve their best. Enabling those with protected characteristics to have an equal opportunity to progress in their studies and careers, and an equal outcome. Provision of accurate and timely EDI data and resources to Schools and Departments to support them in removing awarding gaps, decolonising curricula and developing inclusive teaching. Meeting our legal obligations in line with the 2010 Equality Act and promoting the health, safety and security of staff and students. Going beyond our institutional targets as set out in the Access and Participation Plan to work for the benefit of all students from disadvantaged groups. (Priorities 1-5)

Civic
Working with local communities to identify and encourage people who would benefit from our education. Development of local and regional partnerships to enable strategic approaches to raising aspiration, widening access and participation, as well as student volunteering; provision of opportunities for student projects, placements and internships in the local community that link to the Sustainable Development Goals. Realisation of our unique cultural asset of Lakeside Arts to develop a sense of belonging whilst also engaging students in personal development. (Priorities 4 and 5)

Environmental Sustainability
Support to develop relevant programmes and modules, as well as creative approaches to the teaching of sustainability across all disciplines, embedding of environmental sustainability in our culture through our ways of working (including teaching and learning), our behaviours on campus, and our contributions to sustainability within our local communities (Priorities 2 and 3).

People
Staff development, reward and recognition processes that incentivise education and student experience leadership and create equal parity of esteem between academic career routes, thereby enabling delivery of the ESE priorities; commitment to the rebalancing or reduction of administrative workloads to free staff time for curriculum development, teaching and service enhancement and education scholarship. (Priorities 1-5)

Digital
Nurturing a culture of excellence in digitally-enhanced teaching and learning, underpinned by training, support and resource for the professional development of staff. Delivery of robust digital solutions for blended teaching, learning and high-quality, data-driven assessment; procurement and development of innovative technological approaches that enable programme-level design, learning analytics, and support emerging disciplinary pedagogies. Deployment of digital solutions that support the broader student experience, and also bring efficiencies for staff. (Priorities 1-5)

Estates Development Framework
Campus plans that enable the ESE priorities of the University: for example, the re-design of learning, leisure and residential spaces to embed inclusion, accessibility, identity and belonging; collaborative ways of working that enable co-creation and partnership between staff, students and local communities. (Priorities 2 and 4)

Financial Sustainability
Investments in priority projects (e.g. student record management, e-assessment, campus plans) to enable all ESE priorities; diversification of our course portfolio through both modes of study (e.g. degree apprenticeships, University of Nottingham Online) and curriculum (e.g. creation of new programmes from our world-leading research), ensuring always that we have the right staffing levels to deliver the highest quality. (Priorities 1-5)

5. Key Priorities

The five priorities articulate 'renovation for innovation' through foundational work relating to Covid-renewal and ESE infrastructure, alongside our ambitions to secure our position as a world-leading, research-intensive university that offers a fantastic education for everyone with the potential to benefit from it.

There are numerous activities, in progress or planned, that support delivery of the five priorities and through which we demonstrate how we fulfil and go beyond our regulatory and statutory obligations. The following section provides examples of some of the 'big ticket' items aligned to each area. These activities will in turn be prioritised and phased through the ESE Action Plan. Some of these activities relate closely to work that will be progressing in partnership with other Strategic Delivery Plan areas – this will be monitored through careful capturing of all dependencies in the action plans.

Priority 1: We will continuously reflect on, listen to and learn from, the experiences of our students and staff through and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure that our education and student experience is inclusive, agile and responsive, that it is built on good practice, enables potential for both students and staff, and that our degree standards are maintained. (COVID+)

Activities include:
- Facilitation of cross-faculty reflection and sharing of good practice to support the further development of our teaching and student support from 2022-23 onwards.
- Proactive steps to mitigate for the impact of Covid-19 upon student performance in assessment.
- Rapid analysis and dissemination of all surveys of student experience to inform forward planning.
- Analysis of staff feedback on their experiences in 2020-21 (e.g. via the Digital Insights Survey) to inform staff development and support.
- A co-ordinated approach to staff training and support to enable further development of our blended teaching according to good pedagogical principles and to help manage workload.
- Covid-specific policies, principles and guidance to be consulted on and published to Schools and Departments.
- Provision of applicant support through a dedicated portal offering both interaction and information.

Priority 2: We will create an empowering physical and virtual estate that meets the needs of our students and staff now and in the future. This will include the progression of major data-driven initiatives to improve our core student record management systems, welfare and engagement processes. (INFRASTRUCTURE)

Activities include:
- Implementation of an integrated whole-university approach to supporting student wellbeing, guided by data and by external reference points such as the University Mental Health Charter, good practice from sector bodies (e.g. BACP) and research from leading academics.
- The roadmap for student record management system(s) improvements will be published and regularly updated.
- The processes and practices that the student record management system supports will be simplified and standardised, with an initial focus upon student registration and start of session, management of assessment, and student self-service.
- Further development of our approach to timetabling to ensure fit to our pedagogy, including moving towards greater automation and greater transparency of scheduling to reduce the likelihood of clashes or poor experiences.
- The Student Experience Committee will examine wellbeing and engagement data and oversee targeted work on our Access and Participation Plan.
- Data-driven work to determine how student learning and achievement should be supported through the development of our physical and virtual estate.

Priority 3: We will work with students, alumni, employers and professional bodies to co-create curricula (academic, co- and extra-curricula), that embeds our university values, supports good mental health, develops professional competencies and learning for sustainability. We will support students to achieve their academic and professional potential through an inclusive and digitally-enabled education of the highest quality and relevance informed by pedagogy, evidence-based practice and scholarship. (CURRICULUM)

Activities include:
- Championing a new approach to programme design which focuses on the student journey, professional competencies, wellbeing and inclusion alongside the acquisition and mastery of subject knowledge.
- Through programme design and review, acceleration of work to remove degree awarding gaps, (including scale-up of 'Decolonisation' activities).

- Progression of the e-Assessment business case to provide foundational tools for our teaching infrastructure, for example programme design, curriculum mapping, assessment and feedback, and tools for student self-directed learning.
- Development of School Enhancement Plans to progress work related to the Access and Participation Plan, TEF and Degree Outcomes.
- Launch, and further development, of the Student Engagement Dashboard to enable early intervention and support, and implementation of learning analytics.
- Further work to streamline and simplify the Quality Manual.
- Facilitation of cross-departmental teams in support of the vision for digitally enhanced teaching and learning; including staff development and student support.
- Progression of work on student digital capabilities to address development needs and infrastructure requirements.

Priority 4: We will put student experience and student wellbeing at the heart of all we do, ensuring that all students, irrespective of how and where they study, quickly feel part of, and jointly create, our inclusive and global community and are enabled to build meaningful and lifelong relationships. This will include facilitating opportunities to engage locally and internationally through volunteering, work experience, placements and mobility (STUDENT EXPERIENCE)

Activities include:
- Improvement of our transition support for students moving into higher education from widening participation groups (where our data allows us to identify and target support to these), for international students, for students with non-traditional qualifications and for students from the University of Nottingham International College.
- Development of intriguing, inclusive educational opportunities for co- and extra-curricular activities that enhance students' life skills and promote community outreach and social impact.
- Taking a new approach to life on campus which sees staff and students partner to help develop blended spaces for study, cafés, computer facilities and relaxation – blurring boundaries that are often far too structured across all universities.
- Further development by Careers and Employability Services (CES) of sector-leading approaches to skills development and career exploration that encourage engagement throughout a student's time at Nottingham.
- The Senior Tutor's Network and our Campus Life departments will lead a refresh of our vision for pastoral, faith and counselling support.
- In partnership with Student Representative Bodies, development of sector-leading induction and welcome programmes that support student transition, enable students to build their own experience and provide a basis for community building and awareness of our shared responsibilities across that community.
- Work with Lakeside Arts and partners (e.g. CES, industry) to develop a creative and cultural offer that supports student wellbeing and contributes to personal development and the realisation of career aspirations.
- Development of a sporting offer that maximises engagement in sport and physical activity to support student health, mental health, enjoyment, personal development and success.

Priority 5: We will diversify our student intake, developing new entry routes and 'non-traditional' modes of delivery to attract widening participation and international students, apprentices, post-experience and professional learners. We will provide the best opportunities for these students to succeed through a sector-leading approach to supporting and engaging with them. (DIVERSIFICATION)

Activities include:
- Exploitation of digital solutions to increase the accessibility of our programmes, and to widen participation.

- Development of a more strategic approach to our widening participation activities through our existing partnerships.
- Further development of placements and internships, both physical and virtual.
- Development of a 'make once, use many times' model to enable greater agility to reach new markets.
- Strategic growth of our Degree Apprenticeship provision through focus upon high-value programmes with industry partners.
- Work to grow our understanding of Ofsted regulation in order to confidently support our degree apprenticeships.
- Launch of the first programmes under the 'University of Nottingham Online' brand.
- Co-creation of continuing professional development provision in partnership with employers and industry.
- Development of strategies to nurture creativity, entrepreneurship and interdisciplinarity, seeking opportunities to foster global mindsets and life-enhancing alumni relationships.

6. Outcomes and Key Performance Indicators
(Section to be updated following confirmation of ESE KPIs)

The purpose of the ESE Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is to crystallise a shared view of the outcomes required from the strategy. The KPIs will enable the teams responsible for delivery of the ESE SDP to understand where their work contributes, to prioritise their activities, and to set local success measures. They will provide a 'golden thread' that connects work at institutional, faculty, and school or department level.

All KPI measures fit to the UoN Performance Framework principles (aligned with our values, clarity, availability, performance-oriented, cascadable, independent, enabling benchmarking, longevity). Discussions with regards to the ESE KPIs are ongoing, with decisions expected in late Spring 2021. Once agreed this section will be updated to reflect decisions.

The KPIs will vary across UoN UK, UNNC and UNM but will be broadly equivalent. The proposed ESE KPIs for the UK campus include:

Access and Participation (Priorities 1-5)
Our UK Access and Participation targets are defined as a composite indicator: a set of numeric indicators summarised in a single rating. Our APP targets are:

Access
1. Reductions in the gap in participation in higher education (HE) for students from underrepresented groups: targeting students from low participation areas.
2. Reduction in the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups: targeting students from lower socio-economic households.
3. Contribution to national improvement in closing the gap in entry rates at higher tariff providers between the most and least underrepresented groups by working collaboratively with 'Realising Opportunities' (RO).

Success
4. Reducing the non-continuation gap for students from underrepresented groups: focusing upon mature students.
5. Reducing the attainment gap for students from underrepresented groups: focusing upon students from minority ethnicities.
6. Reducing the attainment gap for students from underrepresented groups: focusing upon students with disabilities.

Graduate Outcomes (Priorities 1, 3, 5)
This KPI would focus on the Graduate Outcomes Survey results (using the Guardian League table methodology) and the percentage of students in a positive graduate outcome (i.e. students who find graduate level employment, or enter further professional or Higher Education study within fifteen months of graduating).

National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction
The KPI being considered is the percentage of respondents 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' in relation to the NSS.

The NSS is under review by the Office for Students, who have signalled that its purpose will become primarily to drive enhancement, with student choice as a secondary factor. We expect the NSS questions to change.

There are many challenges with using the NSS at present. NSS data from 2020 and 2021 is Covid-compromised across the sector. NSS offers evidence only in relation to undergraduates and only at the end of their programme. However, we know that the NSS will continue to feature in the UK Teaching Excellence Framework exercise. It is also highly likely to continue to be used by league tables and the media.

7. Risk Management

The University Risk Register includes enterprise level risks in relation to ESE, along with appropriate mitigating actions and controls. All risks associated to this Strategic Delivery Plan and the accompanying Action Plan will be managed through a separate project risk register, with agreed scores and mitigation. This will be owned and monitored by the Education and Student Experience Committee (ESEC). The ESE SDP Risk Register will be reviewed periodically and any changes to risk scores will be reported to the designated risk owner.

8. Governance

Governance for the strategy will be delivered over three tiers.

- **Tier 1: Project:** Each individual project and/or activity will have its own governance, reporting as appropriate to Steering Groups on each campus (e.g. the APP Steering Group or the Higher Degree Apprenticeship Joint Academic Board in the UK).

- **Tier 2: Local (campus specific):** The action plans underpinning the ESE SDP will be governed through Teaching and Learning Committee and Student Experience Committee for the UK, the Campus Teaching Committee for UNM, and the Campus Teaching Committee and Student Life Committee for UNNC.

- **Tier 3: Global (whole university):** Education and Student Experience Committee acts as the programme board to bring together decision makers and key stakeholders to ensure the programme runs effectively, is delivered on time, and within agreed quality specifications.

University Executive Board (UEB) has ultimate sign-off of the ESE SDP.

9. Implementation

The ESE SDP is implemented through its action plan. This will include timescales for each project or activity aligned to one of the five priority areas, as well as information about the dependencies with work

underway under one of the enabling plans (e.g. People, Digital). A senior ESE lead or leads will have oversight of each priority area, and each project or activity will have an operational named lead. Faculties and Professional Services should reflect the agreed priorities within their local business plans, with professional services incorporating key aspects of those priorities in a Professional Services Education & Student Experience Action Plan.

Monitoring of progress towards School and Department-level versions of the action plan will be through Faculty ESE Committees, with 'deeper dives' via periodic Educational Enhancement and Assurance Reviews (EEARs) and reviews of programmes and curricula. Identification of additional resource and expertise required by Schools and Departments to achieve local objectives will be through the Faculty ESE Committees.

The ESE SDP (and its action plans at all levels) are reliant upon a culture of collaboration and sharing of good practice. The ESE endeavour requires partnership working between staff, students, alumni, neighbours and employers. It requires us to form teams that cross campuses, job families and disciplines. By working together, we enrich our education and student experience through the joint harnessing of our expertise, our creativity, our energy and our commitment to our communities. Together, we offer:

"*An education that is more than a degree*" (University Strategy, 2019).