LIVERPOOL
HOPE
UNIVERSITY
Est. 1844

Stage	Project Brief	Project ID No.	
Project Title	**University Academic Framework Redesign:** **move to semesters and to standard UG modules bearing less than 60 credits.**		
Version	1		
Project Sponsor	Penny Haughan		
Project Manager	Dave Sennett (Semesters) and Mark Fry (Modules)		
Description	In redesigning its academic framework, the University is proposing to transition from the existing three-term based system to a two-semester based system, with smaller, more focused modules to replace the 60 Credit units which make up the current UG model.		
Project Categorisation (H) **(if known)**	Categories impacted by this proposal are: (1) Cost Reduction, through introduction of potential for sharing of curriculum across disciplines; (2) Revenue Growth, through increased choice and flexibility in the portfolio attracting additional applicants, additional opportunities for recruitment of study abroad and summer school international students, freeing of the summer period for conferencing activity, exploitation of the LLE as an opportunity for recruitment and more focussed time for staff to undertake research and KE projects.		

	(3) Student Enhancement, students will have enhanced experience through access to city wide events, extended periods for employment, shorter period of non- contact over Christmas (5) Support, through improving fit with standard requirements of the digital infrastructure meaning less reliance on in house solutions (6) Strategic, through enhancement of opportunities for growth of the student body (7) Business Risk, through implementing a model which more closely fits with the wider sector and international partners.
Strategic Importance	The University needs to standardise its academic framework structure to that of the sector. This will facilitate close working with other institutions and increase synergies with the international market. The university also needs to modernise its academic offer particularly at UG level.
Benefits	Transitioning to a semester system would allow for more in-depth exploration of subjects, reduce the stress of exam periods at only the end of year, and would allow a more flexible view of the various courses offered by Hope for both home and international students. A semester system would align our calendar with many international universities, facilitating student exchanges and research collaborations. The model would provide opportunities for internships, work experience, and staff research time. This structure also accommodates the desire for students to engage in part-time work, potentially reducing financial stress and enhancing their practical skills. Feedback from many parts of the Hope community and experience and evidence from external competitors and stakeholders has indicated that moving to a two-semester model will address these issues. Smaller modules offer greater flexibility in curriculum design and student choice. They allow for more specialised topics, easier updates to course content, and the ability to combine modules in innovative ways. They also potentially give students opportunity for more choice in what they study. This approach can lead to more engaging learning experiences, as students can tailor their education more closely to their interests and career goals. Smaller modules also facilitate interdisciplinary studies, which are increasingly valued in the job market. We can ensure the 'Hope-ness' of our degrees by ensuring that each subject portfolio of modules addresses the threads of our strategic plan and also aspects of the Hope Graduate attributes. We also need to use the opportunity to ensure that all QAA Benchmarks are being met. Feedback from many parts of the Hope community and experience and evidence from external competitors and stakeholders has indicated that moving to a smaller module model will address these issues.
Impact of not delivering	Continuing with the three terms model will mean that the institution continues at a disadvantage in the market. This is in terms of attractiveness to both applicants for our degree programmes and staff to work at the university.

Major dependencies	Population of the SLC database with term dates* for all our UG courses (at all levels - F, C, I & H) that we are running in 2025/6 will be required by the SLC by **31st January 2025.** * Exact start and end term dates for terms 1, 2 and 3 of each level of study - F, C, I & H. 3 term dates must be given as per the SLC's requirements, irrespective of whether the course is delivered over 2 semesters or 3 terms going forward. Term 1, 2 and 3 start dates will drive the expected loan payment dates to the students. A schedule of semester dates will need to be in place by 31 January 2024 for the first 6 years of delivery. Basic modular model needs agreement prior to 2025 entry applicant days which start from February onwards.
Critical resources required, incl. ITS work	Scoping, mapping and implementation work would be needed from ITS, Student Admin and the Data team. Re working of curriculum documentation would be needed form academic schools. QA checks and balance would be needed from the Quality team, including reference to any external accreditations.
Estimated budget	There is no requirement for financial outlay in non-staff budget terms, but there will be a considerable outlay in terms of staff time.
Proposed start date	Consultation for October 2024
Proposed completion date	Phase 1. 1 September 2025 Phase 2. 1 September 2026 Phase 3. 1 September 2027
Project Board decision	Yes　　　　　No　　Defer
Version: **Date approved:** **Notes:**	
Change Portfolio Board decision	Yes　　　　　No　　Defer
Version:	

Date approved:			
Notes:			
Strategic Change Board decision	Yes	No	Defer
Version:			
Date approved:			
Notes:			

Project Brief: Revised academic year structure and changes to module sizes

1   Background

The University's strategic plan states that the university will provide education that transforms lives by committing to 'Develop and implement best practice in the delivery of very high-quality learning and teaching and student support' and also will 'strengthen our lifelong learning mission including widening access and ensuring good outcomes for our graduates'. In this light, the proposed redesign of our university's academic framework represents a significant shift in our approach to higher education. This plan aims to address the evolving needs of our students, staff, and the broader academic community. By focusing on flexibility, efficiency, and modernisation, we seek to create an environment that better prepares students for the demands of the contemporary workforce while also improving the teaching and research experience for our staff.

The primary objectives of this redesign are 1) to increase curriculum flexibility and efficiency, 2) to facilitate changes in the portfolio 3) to provide students with more opportunities to take up part-time work and experiential learning, 4) to facilitate international student study and 5) to provide staff with opportunities for more consolidated periods of time for research and for leave.

To do this effectively the University is proposing to transition from the existing three-term based system to a two-semester based system, with smaller, more focused modules, which should offer more choice for students and increased flexibility in delivery patterns. This paper outlines the two key areas of proposed change and provides an opportunity for discussion, ensuring that if we want to make these changes, we can achieve the necessary goals while maintaining academic quality and fostering a supportive community.

1.1 Alignment with University priorities

Strategic categories impacted by this proposal are:

(1) Cost Reduction, through introduction of potential for sharing of curriculum across disciplines;

(2) Revenue Growth, through increased choice and flexibility in the portfolio attracting additional applicants, additional opportunities for recruitment of study abroad and summer school international students, freeing of the summer period for conferencing activity, exploitation of the LLE as an opportunity for recruitment and more focussed time for staff to undertake research and KE projects.

(3) Student Enhancement, students will have enhanced experience through access to city wide events, extended periods for employment, shorter period of non- contact over Christmas

(5) Support, through improving fit with standard requirements of the digital infrastructure meaning less reliance on in house solutions

(6) Strategic, through enhancement of opportunities for growth of the student body

(7) Business Risk, through implementing a model which more closely fits with the wider sector and international partners.

2 Project Definition

2.1 Project Objectives

The overall aim of this project is to implement a new academic framework, moving to semesters and to standard UG modules of less than 60 credits.

2.2 Project Scope and Exclusions

The project aims to address the structure of the academic year and the modular framework which sits within it. It is intended to be conducted in three phases:

Phase 1 Introduction of semesters and introduction of smaller module sizes for Levels F and C.

Phase 2. Introduction of smaller modules for Level I.

Phase 3. Introduction of smaller modules for Level H.

At present there is no intention to change the credit values of existing PGT provision.

2.3 Project Deliverables

The project will deliver a framework for a semester based academic year for all taught provision. It will also introduce a standard UG module size which is smaller than the current 60Credit norm.

2.4 Delivery resources

- Strategic Lead: Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost
- Semester project Lead: Director of Student Enrolment and Administration with assistance from SEA, ITS, data team.
- Module project Lead: Head of Student Enrolment and Administration with assistance from SEA, ITS, data team, QA and academic schools

2.5 Constraints

- Business continuity in case of system failure: the academic year structure and the modular framework are a fundamental part of SITS. Backups are therefore available as part of our well-established student record system. In the case of failure of this system we can revert to a paper-based records for a short period of time.
- Student returns to outside bodies: the need for appropriate returns to the OfS and others will be built into the agreed timeline for the project.

2.6 Interfaces

This project is part of the university's strategic plan in proving education that transforms lives. It particularly intersects with the Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy which aims to provide opportunities for personalised learning and development and the optimisation of academic success and student wellbeing.

2.7 Assumptions

Staff capacity: These projects require a substantive contribution of time from staff across multiple academic and professional services areas. Much of this will need to be frontloaded in the period Jan-April 2024.

Minimum Teaching Hours: The new model will maintain the currently agreed minimum teaching hours for each UG student as Levels F and C 12 hours per week. Levels I and H 10 hours per week.

Tutorials: The new model will maintain the requirement for each student to have a tutorial with a named tutor at least once a week.

Initial Curriculum Development: The initial (phase 1) development of the new model will consist of rearrangement of existing curriculum rather than the creation of new content, except where it becomes apparent that existing content is not adequate.

Accredited courses: Where programmes are currently accredited by an external body the identified phases of the project may need to be adapted to address the requirements of the accrediting body.

3   Project Benefits & Outcomes

Benefits	Measures
Increased applications for UG programmes	Increase in acceptances for a range of identified programmes by 10% for 2027/28
Improved flexibility of UG programmes	10% of UG curriculum shared between at least 2 programmes by 2027/8
Improved optionality within UG programmes	At least 50% of UG programmes to have some optionality by 2027/28
Improved opportunities for students to undertake work experience during the extended Summer period.	Reduced absence during term time.
Improved opportunities for staff research over the extended Summer period	Increased outputs
Changes to academic regulations and reassessment requirements.	Reduced numbers of students needing to retake a full academic year

4   Outline Business Case

The Strategic Case: This project aligns with the University's strategic plan to provide education that transforms lives. To facilitate this the University needs to standardise its academic framework structure to that of the sector. This will facilitate close working with other institutions and increase synergies with the international market. The university also needs to modernise its academic offer particularly at UG level to make its provision more attractive to applicants.

The Economic Case: The project sets out to use the time of academics and students more effectively, to make Hope courses more attractive and to expand opportunities for easier access for international and LLE cohorts.

The Financial Case: The cost of implementing these projects will be in staff time.

The Commercial Case: The project is essential if we are to make course courses more attractive to the market and more efficient to deliver. It will also free up time for additional research and other activities which may well generate income.

The Management Case: The project sponsor is the Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost who will oversee project implementation design. It will be operationally managed by the Director of Student Enrolment and Administration and the Head of Student

Enrolment and Administration, who is a SITS superuser at the institution and is invested in success with this system to improve student and staff experience. Support will be provided by ITS, SEA, the data team, QA and academic colleagues.

5 Tolerances

There is limited tolerance in the implementation of Phase 1. Introducing semesters across the whole provision and changing module sizes for Levels F and C is a significant task in the time available. This is dependent of a very wide range of colleagues across the institution.

There is significantly more tolerance in time for Phases 2 and 3.

Key areas for consideration in relation to tolerances are:

- **Time**: Delivery of Phase 1 for the start of academic year 2025/26 is tight. Once commenced the process will need to be completed to ensure student records are correct and timetables available at induction. A second constraint is the need to share academic year dates with the SLC by the end of January 2025. We will also need these dates to schedule the student record according to data futures for 3 years of fulltime students and 6 years of part time students.
- **Cost**: there will be no tolerance for additional cost unless we need to bring in additional staff to complete data entry. This would be minimal an could be done at grade 3 level.
- **Scope**: the scope is clear and there is not any anticipated change to this given the extensive consultation that has taken place.

6 Risks and Uncertainties

Likelihood: 1 = Rare and 5 = Almost Certain

Impact: 1 = Insignificant and 5 = Catastrophic

Risk & Description	Likelihood (1-5)	Impact (1-5)	Response Measure
Delay in agreement of academic year structure leading to failure to supply SLC with appropriate dates on time.	3	3	Academic year structure to be modelled as the first action and to be available in draft prior to Christmas break 2025.

Insufficient staffing resource to make necessary changes in SITS.	2	3	Colleagues with SITS training to be identified across the university and to be tasked with basic changes as necessary leaving the SEA and Data Teams to make the high level changes to SITS.
Curriculum documentation not completed in a time frame needed to make SITS changes	3	3	Simplified version of approval documentation to be created to reduce the burden of administration. No change to curriculum content to be expected in Phase 1.
Some curriculum needing to be substantially altered	1	3	Undertake an initial analysis of all provision to ascertain any areas of concern. If identified then resource to be prioritised in these areas.
Accrediting bodies not accepting changes over 3 years as described in Phase 1 and requiring full reapproval.	2	4	QA manager to negotiate with PSRB interim solution to be identified.
Timetables not available for Level F and C students in October 2025	2	5	Progress to be monitored closely. If this seems likely an alternative simple paper based solution will be put in place for the start of term.

7 Customers, Users and Other Stakeholders.

- External customers / users: prospective students (UG, PGT, study abroad, Clearing), offer holders, international agents, recruitment partners
- Internal customers / users: ITS, Data team, UK Recruitment, International Recruitment, academic schools.

8 Information Security[1]

The project involves the redesign of curriculum and academic year models within SITS. It will not involve the manipulation of data relating to individual students.

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[1] These will be assessed via: https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/data-protection-principles/

Assessment Tool for Identifying Major Projects

This tool is used to identify major projects and is based on the following characteristics:

- Total cost of the project
- Impact of the project on students and staff
- Complexity of the project
- Reputational impact on the University or College if the project runs into difficulties

The tool may be used as is or adjusted to meet the particular needs of the individual institution.

Characteristic		Mark	Project Score
Cost of Project Costs must include all time/resource spent on the project and not just the dedicated project team. A total cost of ownership approach is used which includes all project costs over 48 months including recurring costs	2m or over	15	2
	250k or over	7	
	50k or over	5	
	20k or over	3	
	Under 20k	2	
Duration of Project	Over 12 Months	3	3
	Between 6-12 months	2	
	Less than 6 months	1	
Impact on Staff and Students	Direct impact on students and/or staff across the institution	4	4
	Direct impact on students and/or staff across a Faculty or large Professional Service Areas	3	
	Direct impact on students and/or staff at a School or single Professional Service Area	2	
	Impact on some students/staff within School or Professional Service area	1	
Complexity			

High Four or more external stakeholders or partner organisations including external suppliers and**/or** Affects a large number of diverse stakeholders with significant changes to roles, business processes, IT systems and ways of working	High Impact	4	
Medium One to three external stakeholders or partner organisations including external suppliers and**/or** Affects a large group of people having similar roles or expertise with some significant changes to business processes, IT systems and ways of working **Low** No external stakeholders or partner organisations **and/or**	Medium Impact	2	2
Affects few people with little or no change in business processes, IT systems and ways of working	Low Impact	1	
Reputational Impact If project gets into difficulties or its not delivered	Potential for impact UK and/or international profile	4	2
	Potential impact on national profile only i.e., OFS	2	
	Potential for local impact	1	
	Project Score		13
	Major Project – Yes/No		Yes

If score is 11 or over then the project will be considered Major.