

Report to:	Senate			
Date of meeting:	21 January 2025			
Report title:	University Academic Framework Redesign			
Agenda item:	[leave blank – be filled in by the secretary]			
Report Author(s):	Penny Haughan			
Presented by:	Penny Haughan			
History:	This document was considered by UEB on 14 January 2025. Minor clarifications were made following this meeting.			
Status: [put an X in one box]		Assurance	X	Discussion
	X	Decision		Information
Executive Summary				
<p>This document sets out recommendations for consideration in relation to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A move from a three term to a two-semester model for the academic year. 2. The introduction of a 30C based academic framework. 				
Recommendation(s) and Next Steps:				
Senate should consider the overarching recommendations as described above and the more detailed recommendations which provide more context and are listed in the document.				
Financial Implications				
No direct financial implications but there is a time commitment which will be needed from some colleagues.				
Risks				
<p>The initial stages of this project will need to be completed in a relatively short time period.</p> <p>The structure of our academic year and the framework of our degree may be deterring some students from choosing Hope as their firm choice of university.</p>				
Equality and/or Data Protection Implications				
An EIA is being developed alongside the project.				

University Academic Framework Redesign

1. Introduction

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. It is crucial that we consider this in a manner that ensures we can achieve the necessary goals while maintaining academic quality and fostering a supportive community.

This paper outlines the two key areas of proposed change, provides feedback from the consultation and makes recommendations for the way forward.

2. Consultation

The university community has been consulted on these proposals in a number of ways:

1. An initial proposal document was circulated to all academic /academic related colleagues
2. The DVC has run open sessions for discussion in each faculty and for professional services teams (notes are available from all of these meetings – these are summarised in Appendix 1)
3. An online feedback platform has been available to all colleagues (a summary document of all feedback is available – these are included in Appendix 1)
4. Colleagues have emailed the DVC's office directly giving feedback
5. Discussion with the SU
6. Consultation at the student sounding board

There have also been discussions with colleagues from other HEIs both at the DVC network meeting and on a personal basis. Note has also been taken of changes in HE policy in particular but not exclusively related to introduction of the LLE in 2026.

The consultation discussed both the revised academic year structure and the move to a new academic structure with smaller modules. The points made by colleagues are summarised in Appendix 1.

The proposal has been documented as part of the new university Project Management process and has been assessed as a major project (Appendix 2).

The proposal has been subjected to initial scrutiny with regard to matters associated with equality impact. This process will be continued throughout development of the project.

3. Project details and Recommendations

Project A. Revised Academic Year Structure

Plan:

- Transition from 3 terms to 2 semesters
- Introduce semesters each of 12 weeks of teaching with subsequent assessment periods

Justification: 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.

Recommendation:

The University should move from a three-term model to a two-semester model.

There is almost unanimous support for this change in the university community. There is however, concern over the timescale of implementation and the detail related to activities in periods outside of teaching terms.

In relation to the external environment, it is clear that this change will bring the university into line with the norm in the sector. It will facilitate easier recruitment of international students and will provide extended periods for staff research and student employment.

If this change is implemented there is much detail to be considered. As a result of the consultation there are a number of other recommendations which address more detailed aspects of this change.

Recommendations related to the structure of the year:

- a. The university should move to the 2-semester model across all levels in September 2025.
- b. The start of the academic year should be brought forward to facilitate 12 weeks of teaching prior to Christmas and to ensure that Hope students can participate in the city-wide fresher's activity.
- c. The academic year for the coming 6 years should be mapped immediately to meet HESA deadlines (see Appendix 3). This should apply to all cohorts with the exception of Social Work and PGCE where some nuanced changes would be necessary to account for placement requirements.

- d. In the first year the pattern should deviate slightly from the principles above to accommodate some pre-planned building works (see Appendix 4). This will mean a combined induction and week 1 teaching experience for new students.
- e. The University should consider introducing an additional 'catch up' induction period, so that students who are recruited through clearing at a very late point can still join the university community with the necessary support.
- f. Where the new model translates into a continuous period of 10 weeks or more of teaching, a reading week should be introduced to break this period into more manageable units.
- g. The new model should be appropriate for delivery of both semester-long and year-long modules as appropriate to individual disciplines.
- h. The Christmas break for students should be 2 weeks, which commences as soon as Semester 1 teaching is complete.
- i. The Christmas break should be followed by a 2-week assessment period which should
 - i. Facilitate semester 1 formal or practical examinations where these are necessary.
 - ii. Provide opportunity to undertake outstanding coursework or project work, either to complete a module or to continue with activities if a module is year-long (see Project B in this document).
 - iii. Provide induction opportunities for incoming students on courses with a January start.
 - iv. Where year-long modules are in place, subject teams should give clear, timely guidance to students about their expectations during these two weeks.

Assessment related recommendations:

- j. Assessment related to Semester 1 modules should be marked according to the 4-week agreement. These marks should be entered into SITS as provisory outcomes. Faculty teams should hold a subject meeting to consider these marks and marks should be returned to students in a timely manner. This should include guidance where reassessment is necessary and particularly where it can reasonably be conducted during Semester 2. This process should be used only as appropriate, as in the early stages of this change significant numbers of students will remain on year-long modules.
- k. Faculty and University Assessment Boards should be held during February to confirm available provisional marks.
- l. The Easter break should comprise the 2 weeks either side of Easter Sunday and teaching weeks should be arranged around this as appropriate.
- m. The end of Semester 2 should be followed by a 1-week assessment period which should
 - i. Facilitate Semester 2 module / year-long module formal or practical examinations where these are necessary.
 - ii. Provide opportunity to undertake outstanding coursework or project work, to complete a module.
- n. Assessment related to Semester 2 modules should be marked according to the 4-week agreement. These marks should be entered into SITS as provisory outcomes. Faculty teams should hold a subject meeting to consider these marks and marks should be returned to students in a timely manner. This should include

guidance where reassessment is necessary as early as possible. All marks will need to be subsequently considered and confirmed by the appropriate Faculty/University Assessment Boards.

- o. The university should reconsider its approach to reassessment and the normal requirement should be to bring work which has been afforded a fail grade up to an appropriate standard rather than introducing completely new pieces of assessment for students to complete.
- p. A reassessment week should be added a period of 5 weeks after the Semester 2 assessment week. Where additional assessment opportunities are outstanding for individual students (for example where students have been unwell at the time of previous opportunities) these should be arranged at the end of the Summer period under the guidance of the Registrar.
- q. There should be an expectation that reassessment is completed within the designated week allowing marking and Board processes to be complete prior to graduation. This will require the current Board processes related to reassessment to be expedited.

If the University accepts the overarching recommendation to move to semesters, these further recommendations will need to be clarified by the relevant members of the community through the appropriate working groups.

Project B. Move to an academic framework based on smaller modules

Plan:

- Move to smaller modules to create units which are more focused and specialised
- Identify compulsory and optional modules for each subject (some of which may overlap)
- Consider university wide interdisciplinary modules which are available to all students
- Introduce flexibility in terms of joint/major/minor/single subject exit and well as emphasising the benefit of studying single honours courses.

Justification: Smaller modules offer greater flexibility in curriculum design and also more opportunity for ownership of modules at a local level. They allow for more specialised topics, easier updates to course content, and the ability to combine modules in innovative ways. They may 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.

Key fundamentals: small group teaching for personalised learning is one of the central commitments of the strategic plan so we need to keep the spirit of the tutorial model albeit possibly in a revised format. We have committed to minimum teaching hours of 12 hours per week for Levels F/C and 10 Hours a week for Levels I/H. We will need to honour these minimums, but recognise that some subjects require significantly more. We also need to use the opportunity to ensure that all QAA Benchmarks are being met.

Recommendation

The University should move from an academic framework based on 60 Credit modules to one fundamentally based on 30 credit modules but with the availability of a limited number of 15 Credit modules.

There is significant support from across the university for a change to the academic framework encompassing smaller modules.

In addition to bringing the University into line with the sector in the UK and increasing opportunity for international recruitment, the change will increase flexibility of the whole Hope academic offering.

If this change is implemented there is much detail to be considered. As a result of the consultation there are a number of other recommendations which address more detailed aspects of this change.

Recommendations related to overall framework, module size and teaching hours:

- a. The University should adopt an academic framework based on 30C modules with a limited number of 15C modules. Although this paper primarily addresses detail related to UG programmes, the same principles should be applied to PG programmes wherever possible.
- b. The University should expect that the Hope Graduate Attributes (see the Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy) be evidenced across all Hope curricula.
- c. Each 30C module should represent 300 hours of learning of which a proportion (see d. below) is through direct contact in timetabled teaching.
- d. The principle of a minimum of a total of 12 hours of teaching per week at Levels C & F and 10 hours of teaching per week at Levels I & H should be maintained. Under a 30C model this means 30 credits should provide:

Levels C & F, a minimum of 6 hours of teaching per week per 12 week semester per 30C.

Levels I & H, a minimum of 5 hours of teaching per week per 12 week semester per 30C.

In some subjects these hours might be consolidated across several weeks provided that each 30C provides:

Levels C & F, a minimum of 72 hours of teaching in total.

Levels I & H, a minimum of 60 hours of teaching in total.

Where they are considered appropriate, teaching hours for 15 C or 30C year long modules should be 50% of these values per 12 week semester.

Recommendations related to teaching patterns:

- e. The current requirement for a standard pattern of teaching at each level should be disbanded. Subjects should decide what pattern best suits the discipline at a certain level, allowing for an increase in the diversity of learning opportunities, provided the requirement for tutorial indicated in f. below is met.
- f. The principle of every Level C student being in a tutorial group (15-20 students) which meets once a week with a named tutor in their subject/each of their subject for a minimum of an hour, should be maintained.

This tutorial would need to be placed in one of the 30 credit modules. This tutor should be identified as these students' Personal Tutor

- g. Each 30C module should be able to be delivered either in a 12-week block or in a year-long format. The pattern of delivery for each academic programme should be agreed centrally and should comprise year-long or semester-long 30C modules in multiples of two (see appendix 5).
- h. In programmes where it is deemed appropriate, the current 60C modules may be retained, although if this is the case it should be recognised that the flexibility discussed in i. below may then not be available to students on these programmes.
- i. In programmes where international recruitment is identified as a priority, a maximum of two 30C units per academic year at each level in I and H may be split into two 15 credit modules to facilitate recruitment of international students. If appropriate these 15C modules may be made available to home students, for example; as optional credits from a subject other than that they are registered for, as Faculty-wide standard modules or as generic options such as for work placement etc.
- j. The new framework should introduce the availability of major/minor exit programmes of study based on a 240/120 credit split and a single subject exit programme based on a 300/60 split (60C of the minor at Level C), alongside the existing single honours (360 Credit) and combined Honours (180/180) programmes. This should only be possible where appropriate curriculum and staffing exists.
- k. Where programmes are part of the combined honours system timetabling of 30C units associated with the designated majors should continue within existing blocks. Where this is not the case the full UG timetable should occupy the period of 9am – 6pm across the full week and should use all available space at the most appropriate times.
- l. Every programme/major should have four/two clearly identified 30C modules at Level C and Level F. At Level C in single honours programmes up to 60C of these may be generic and shared between programmes. At Level F generic provision should also be considered (see o below). Where a 60C model has been agreed these expectations should be amended as appropriate.
- m. These changes should be made at Levels C and F for September 2025. The new model should be introduced for levels I and H in September 2026 and September 2027 respectively.

Recommendations related to documentation of Levels F & C:

- n. In the first instance academic colleagues should be asked to remodel each of their existing Level C 60C modules into two 30C modules. Unless there is good academic reason the curriculum content and assessments should be maintained and simply split into two parts. There should however be an opportunity to:
 - i. Introduce learning outcomes (to replace expectations),
 - ii. Revise assessments to reflect a standard word count (see y. below) and update assessment maps (although there is a reasonable assumption that this is already mostly complete via changes agreed this academic year),
 - iii. Revise teaching patterns if deemed necessary.
 - iv. Produce a skills map for Levels F & C focussed on the Hope Graduate Attributes listed in the L, T & A Strategy.
- o. In the light of changes at a national level, Level F should be reconsidered to comprise four 30C modules which are shared across Faculties. The university should produce clear guidance regarding which of these modules should be taken by students registered on specific programmes.

- p. Level F modules should also be remodelled once the overall framework for Level F has been agreed (see o above).
- q. To facilitate the necessary changes to documentation, Deans/HOS should identify individual colleagues to oversee this work and should ensure that these colleagues have space in their 2024/25 allocated workload to undertake the exercise related to Levels C and F.
- r. The University should ensure that the Level C and F documentation to facilitate these changes is as simple as possible and requires minimal academic input. It should ensure that the majority of the documentation is completed centrally and that the information about the newly created modules is recorded appropriately on the central systems.
- s. To ensure externality each relevant external examiner should be asked to verify the new modules as appropriate.
- t. Where programmes carry external accreditation the PSRB should be informed of the change to the structure of these levels of study (F & C) with an assurance that there has been no change of curriculum. It is possible that further dialogue with some PSRBs may be necessary. In these instances a slightly amended timescale may need to be applied.

Recommendations related to documentation of Levels I & H:

- u. During the period April 25 – December 25 Heads of Schools should facilitate colleagues to discuss curriculum content for Levels I and H. A model for mapping curriculum should be produced by the L&T team in collaboration with Faculty colleagues. Appropriate documentation should be provided centrally as per (r) above.
- v. As part of the documentation submitted in December 2025 the requirements for each programme should include
 - i. A revised programme overview including programme aims
 - ii. An indication of where optional 30C or 15C modules might be made available at Levels I and H
 - iii. An indication of how placement or other university wide optional modules might be made available to students on this programme.
 - iv. A skills map focussed on the Hope Graduate Attributes listed in the L, T & A Strategy.
- w. In the case of accredited programmes, consultation with the PSRB should take place to understand the requirements for continued accreditation of the programme. In these instances a slightly amended timescale may need to be applied.

Recommendations related to the university regulations:

- x. The university should consider the introduction of CertHE entry level courses. This is particularly in the light of changes at a national level related to Foundation Years. There should be a recognition of the additional wraparound support required for CertHE entry students.
- y. The university should adopt a standard word count of 6000 words (or equivalent) of assessment for each 30C module. The exception to this is the Dissertation which should follow the current university convention which states: "The dissertation should demonstrate academic effort broadly in line with that involved in an 8-10,000-word desk-based dissertation in the Humanities, on the understanding that in

some cases, such as where the student has adopted a Practice as Research model, the product of the student's effort may be very different in size and nature from a desk-based dissertation."

- z. Once the principles of the new framework have been agreed the Registrar should be requested to create the appropriate regulatory guidance. It is anticipated that this should include opportunities for compensation between modules and potentially condonement of a small quantity of failed credits.
- aa. The university should move away from the use of Levels F, C, I and H and move to the sector norm of Years 0 – 3.
- bb. No student should be registered for more than the equivalent of 60C per semester

If the University accepts the overarching recommendation to move to 30C modules, these further recommendations will need to be clarified by the relevant members of the community through the appropriate working groups.

3. Next steps

- i. Senate to consider the recommendations above, being aware that approval would need to happen in January so that the University has the model for applicant days and the relevant return can be made to the OFS in a timely fashion.

Should the recommendations be agreed:

- ii. A number of working parties will be set up to oversee the various threads and challenges of these developments (including QA processes and documentation, timetabling, SITS set up, marketing and communication, assessment arrangements etc).
- iii. The project framework documentation and the Equality Impact Assessment will continue to be developed.
- iv. Consultation on the detail of the agreed model will continue with the community through the relevant forums, and necessary clarifications will be made as the process continues.
- v. Implementation will begin with an intention to:
 - (i) introduce the new semester model for all levels in September 25
 - (ii) introduce the new modular structure for Levels F and C in September 25 and then follow through with I and H in subsequent years

PH January 2024

Appendix 1: Feedback from Consultation

Feedback was gathered from colleagues through various channels, including open discussion sessions with Faculties and Professional Services Teams, responses to an online feedback platform, and email correspondence directed to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. These avenues provided a comprehensive insight into staff perspectives and suggestions. A summary is provided below:

Feedback on Academic Calendar / Semesters

88% of colleague responses to the online feedback platform indicated that we should move to a 2 Semester calendar

	Feedback
Course Mapping Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty aligning existing course content with new semester structure – initially simply split existing content?• Potential loss of depth or breadth in curriculum during conversion• Potential fragmentation of intensive creative projects if mid year gap too long or if modules end at mid year• Challenges in maintaining continuous artistic momentum for creative subjects• Some programmes will sit outside of the 'norm', i.e. accredited courses
Workload and Scheduling Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid changes to teaching loads and contact hours – non negotiables are retaining minimum teaching hours and keeping tutorials• Potential compression or expansion of course content – need to be aware of this as develop new model• Adjustments to academic calendars and exam periods including concern over timing of project in completion of first phase for September 2025 should we have further conversations and wait to 2026?• Workload in terms of documentation to be completed for QA purposes – need to streamline documentation to facilitate smooth transition• A break / reading week would remain important, particularly during Semester 1• Need to consider changes in timing for end-of-term exhibitions and performances for creative subjects• Potential misalignment with external arts events and festivals• Reconfiguration of studio spaces and equipment scheduling for creative subjects• Potential reduction in dedicated creative practice time• Adjustments to material procurement and project planning cycles will be needed• Consideration of QA workload for academic colleagues• Flexibility for staff and students of working outside normal hours

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there flexibility within own programme as to whether they should be short and fat or long and thin? • Suggestion for 11-week teaching • Some universities do more teaching during the week, up to 18hrs
Administrative Complexity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant administrative overhead for prof services – registrar, student admin, QA ITS etc office • Consider potential load on faculty admin offices • Would the timetable be ready for an earlier start in September?
Assessment & Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion to bring Induction Week forward by 1 week and therefore the end of year forward by 1 week to provide more time for marking • There doesn't seem to be space for a revision week, would this be possible • Suggestion for a 2 week break followed by 2 week assessment period at Christmas and Easter • Would mark checking events at the end of the Semester work better than interim Assessment Boards • Need to leave time for marking as per union agreement – this means board times need to reflect this • Assessments submitted mid-Semester will provide opportunities to implement feedback for future assessments • Pros and cons of having exams either side of Christmas – may be better after Christmas as gives students more time to revise • Would an earlier reassessment period be possible for Level H, in advance of Graduation • Could we manage without mid year boards but still give early opportunity for reassessment? • Can we simplify the form that reassessment takes? • Reconsideration of the methods of reassessment and whether students could work to 'fix' the parts of their assessments where learning outcomes were not met • It may be likely that students with mitigating circumstances would be unable to complete an early reassessment prior to Graduation and would still need to complete assessments in August. Need to also consider timescales for handling appeals/misconduct cases
Financial Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs associated with system updates and administrative restructuring • Potential impact on student experience and notification to new applicants is urgent
Student Learning Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about learning continuity during transition – this will be for new students only (except current foundation year) • Potential additional workload for tutors from curriculum and scheduling changes • Variations in course pacing and learning outcomes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorter or longer creative process timelines resulting from semester break affecting project completion • Restructuring of studio-based and performance-based courses will be needed in some areas • Modifications to critique and workshop formats for creative subjects • Impact on student portfolio and professional exposure opportunities • A 12 week Semester would work well for PGT • Semesters would provide a clearer structure to the academic year that students understand and aligns us with other HEIs • Student feedback via Student Voice Committees has indicated a preference for Semesters
Pedagogical Adaptations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for some staff training and curriculum redesign to meet semester requirements • Potential challenges in maintaining educational quality during transition – now we have QA office this should be mitigated • Differences in teaching strategies between term and semester models -need L&T colleagues to consider if this is an issue
Research and Academic Workflow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change to research schedules and academic project timelines – could give longer uninterrupted periods for staff research? • Potential impacts on graduate student supervision and progress • Concern raised re equalities and how the new model could meet many different needs. May need to consider mitigations where appropriate • Moving to 12 week semesters could make it difficult to obtain CRT • In lengthening the terms there will be less time for research time through the year (loss of December reflective week). Concentrating research time into the summer is challenging as this would coincide with annual leave

Feedback on Modules

92% of colleague responses to the online feedback platform indicated that we should move away from 60 credit modules to smaller units for UG courses

	Feedback
Pedagogical Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for fragmentation of comprehensive learning and reduced depth in subject understanding • Opportunities for combined, major/min, single plus cross univ. modules
Curriculum Design Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructuring course content into discrete modules will take time – is this too quick – should we consider doing this for 2026? • Priority in ensuring coherence across interdisciplinary learning but also maximising opportunities • Maintaining academic integrity and progression • Potential for fragmentation of sustained creative processes – consider this when thinking about size of modules • Modules could result in reduced time for deep artistic exploration in creative subjects • Interruption of long-term project development • Strategic plan must run through the curriculum • Important to ensure course cohesion and subject pathways, and ensure offerings meet benchmark statements • Potential for common core modules to be introduced across the Faculties • Do module sizes have to be standardised? How would this work for combined subjects? • Option choice may need to be limited for dual major students • Caution to be taken with changing the module set-up for accredited courses • Could work based modules be offered in place of dissertations? • Work experience may be better placed at Level I instead of H
Student Learning Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential increased cognitive load from frequent course shifts – need to ensure modules are not too small • Need to maintain student support – intention is to keep tutorials • Will still want to stage comprehensive creative works – need to consider if additional challenge under modular system • Reduced continuity in performance preparation for creative subjects • Need to ensure that students still have appropriate opportunities to develop skills – probably need to build skills map through all curricula

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for superficial engagement with complex techniques, shortened technical skill acquisition windows and reduced opportunity for iterative creative learning if not managed well under new model • Opportunities for interdisciplinary modules will allow teams to work together creatively and for students to work with other disciplines • Need to avoid fragmentation of collaborative initiatives through modules that are too small. • Is Hybrid teaching a possibility? • Should elements of choice be offered at Levels I and H and not at Level C
Administrative Complexity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More complex credit and progression tracking will be necessary – SITS is designed for this but will need to relook at regs. • Potential increased administrative overhead • Potential complications in student record management – again will need to look at regs but opportunities for compensation etc will benefit students • Timeframe for project is very tight – could consider delay to 2026? • Related issues with QA documentation – will need new version of approval process to simplify requirement from academic colleagues • Increased complexity for timetabling and need to have more timetabling resource • Increased complexity in studio and equipment allocation?
Assessment & Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to develop new assessment strategies to fit modules • Challenges in measuring holistic learning outcomes – documentation will need to address this. • Potential for more frequent but shorter evaluation cycles • Difficulty evaluating holistic creative growth over shorter modules? • How will we spread assessments between modules? • Potential for compensation between modules - should benefit students but regs will need adjustment
Resource Allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased demand for flexible teaching resources • Potential need for more adaptive learning technologies to fit new academic year pattern • Challenges in scheduling and space management
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapting teaching methodologies to shorter learning units may need support from L&T • Faculty admin colleagues may need further SITS training

Appendix 2: Project Management



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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.	

	<p>(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</p> <p>(5) Support, through improving fit with standard requirements of the digital infrastructure meaning less reliance on in house solutions</p> <p>(6) Strategic, through enhancement of opportunities for growth of the student body</p> <p>(7) Business Risk, through implementing a model which more closely fits with the wider sector and international partners.</p>
Strategic Importance	<p>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.</p> <p>The university also needs to modernise its academic offer particularly at UG level.</p>
Benefits	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Impact of not delivering	<p>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.</p>

Major dependencies	<p>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.</p> <p>* 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.</p> <p>A schedule of semester dates will need to be in place by 31 January 2024 for the first 6 years of delivery.</p> <p>Basic modular model needs agreement prior to 2025 entry applicant days which start from February onwards.</p>		
Critical resources required, incl. ITS work	<p>Scoping, mapping and implementation work would be needed from ITS, Student Admin and the Data team.</p> <p>Re working of curriculum documentation would be needed from academic schools.</p> <p>QA checks and balance would be needed from the Quality team, including reference to any external accreditations.</p>		
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	<p>Phase 1. 1 September 2025</p> <p>Phase 2. 1 September 2026</p> <p>Phase 3. 1 September 2027</p>		
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 and 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 Security¹

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.

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			

<p><u>High</u> Four or more external stakeholders or partner organisations including external suppliers and/or</p> <p>Affects a large number of diverse stakeholders with significant changes to roles, business processes, IT systems and ways of working</p> <p><u>Medium</u></p> <p>One to three external stakeholders or partner organisations including external suppliers and/or</p> <p>Affects a large group of people having similar roles or expertise with some significant changes to business processes, IT systems and ways of working</p> <p><u>Low</u></p> <p>No external stakeholders or partner organisations and/or</p> <p>Affects few people with little or no change in business processes, IT systems and ways of working</p>	High Impact	4	2
	Medium Impact	2	
	Low Impact	1	
<p>Reputational Impact</p> <p>If project gets into difficulties or its not delivered</p>	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.

Appendix 3

Semester Dates 2024 – 2031

	25/26		26/27		27/28		28/29		29/30		30/31	
1	September 1 2025		August 31 2026		August 30 2027		September 4 2028		September 3 2029		September 2 2030	
2	September 8 2025		September 7 2026		September 6 2027		September 11 2028		September 10 2029		September 9 2030	
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	Induction											
	Teaching											
	Reading week											
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	Assessment											
	Reassessment											
	Graduation											

Appendix 4

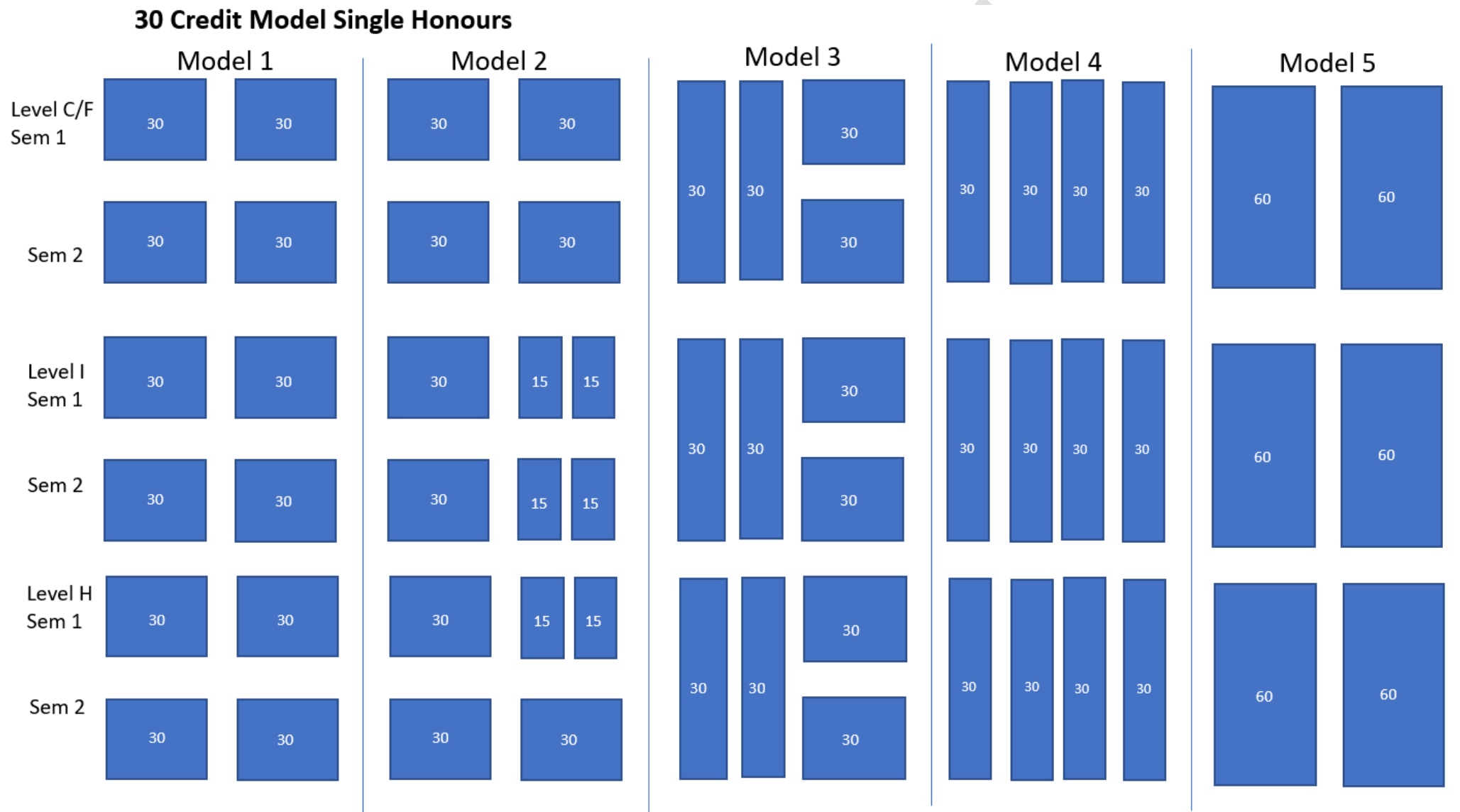
Semester Dates 2024 – 2031 with year one change

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	Reading week											
	Holiday											
	Assessment											
	Reassessment											
	Graduation											

Appendix 5

Module Patterns NOTE THAT THESE ARE ALL EXAMPLES. AVAILABLE MODELS WILL BE DEFINED BY THE RELEVANT WORKING GROUP.



30 Credit Model Combined Honours

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3			Model 4				Model 5	
Level C/F Sem 1	30	30	30	30			30	30	30	30		60	60
Sem 2	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30		
Level I Sem 1	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	60	60
Sem 2	30	30	30	15 15	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	60	60
Level H Sem 1	30	30	30	15 15	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	60	60
Sem 2	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	60	60

30 Credit Model Major/Minor Honours

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3			Model 4			
Level C/F Sem 1	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Sem 2	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Level I Sem 1	30	30	30	15 15	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Sem 2	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Level H Sem 1	30	30	30	15 15	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Sem 2	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30

30 Credit Model Single subject exit Honours

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3			Model 4				Model 5	
Level C/F Sem 1	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	60	60
Sem 2	30	30	30	30			30						
Level I Sem 1	30	30	30	15 15	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	60	60
Sem 2	30	30	30	30			30						
Level H Sem 1	30	30	30	15 15	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	60	60
Sem 2	30	30	30	30			30						

30 Credit Model Single Honours with university wide options

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3			Model 4			
Level C/F Sem 1	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Sem 2	30	30	30	30			30	30	30	30	30
Level I Sem 1	30	30	30	15 15	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Sem 2	30	30	30	30			30	30	30	30	30
Level H Sem 1	30	30	30	15 15	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Sem 2	30	30	30	30			30	30	30	30	30