University of Staffordshire Programme Learning Outcomes

Introduction

This document presents the programme learning outcomes used at University of Staffordshire, and guidance around tailoring them to different courses and Levels, as approved by Education Committee in October 2025.

The programme learning outcomes were revised to align with the Curriculum Framework and Academic Strategy, whilst ensuring continued adherence to the FHEQ. This revision was taken as an opportunity to address some of the unclarities surrounding the previous University 8. In addition, the critical reasoning skills employers increasingly ask for in graduates, as well as those needed to responsibly use emerging digital tools where added.

Contents

Guiding Principles

Scope
The guidance in this document covers all provision, including higher/degree apprenticeships and partner provision at all Levels. It applies to parttime as well as fulltime courses, whether taught online, in hybrid setting or on campus. Guidance on applying the programme learning outcomes to non-standard provision can be found on page 10.

Inclusivity and accessibility
Programme learning outcomes should be phrased in a way that is inclusive and accessible to a diverse student body, staff, employers and professional bodies. The way the programme learning outcomes are written serves as an example for module learning outcomes. However, simplified phrasing should not come at the expense of meaning, preserving detail or nuance where necessary.

- Action-oriented: Use one (preferably short) sentence containing active verbs. The focus of the outcomes should be on behaviour that students ought to demonstrate.
- Clarity and readability: Use plain, unambiguous language. Avoid jargon and overly technical phrasing.
- Avoid modality lock-in: State what should be achieved (e.g. 'communicate effectively'), rather than prescribing how it must be demonstrated (e.g. 'write' or 'present'). This preserves flexibility in assessment design.
- Inclusivity of scope: Phrase outcomes broadly enough to recognise diverse cultural and professional contexts. For example, 'support individuals and families' is more inclusive than 'support men and women.'
- Inclusivity in attainment: Write outcomes that can be achieved regardless of background or entry route. For example, 'collaborate constructively with a diverse range of people' avoids assuming one professional or cultural model.

These principles also align with broader commitments to inclusivity and decolonising the curriculum, by ensuring that programme learning outcomes leave space for diverse knowledge sources, cultural perspectives, and professional contexts.

Level 6 programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of your Level 6 programme as a University of Staffordshire graduate, you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate detailed contemporary knowledge and a systematic understanding of theories, concepts, professional practice, skills and competencies within your field of study and their societal impact. *Knowledge & understanding*

2. Integrate your knowledge and transferable skills to formulate arguments and devise appropriate, evidence-based solutions to complex problems at the forefront of your field of study. *Application & problem-solving*

3. Apply critical reasoning skills in response to real-life challenges around sustainability and ethics, both individually and in collaboration with a diverse range of people. *Critical reasoning & collaboration*

4. Evaluate the use of state-of-the-art digital tools and their resulting outputs within your field of study, considering how these can be applied to enhance professional practice. *Digital literacy*

5. Conduct academic research using methods suitable to the context of your field of study, whilst critically examining the accuracy and limitations of sources and data. *Research skills*

6. Communicate effectively to professional, academic and non-specialist audiences about the practical implications of knowledge, skills and research findings from your field of study. *Communication*

7. Reflect critically on gaps and biases in your knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes, and utilise these insights to improve your decision-making as a professional in unpredictable contexts. *Reflection*

8. Take responsibility in engaging with lifelong learning opportunities in line with your development needs and aspirations to continue growing your professional practice, transferable skills and competencies. *Personal development & entrepreneurship*

Guidance on adapting the programme learning outcomes to specific fields of study

- Each course will use the 8 programme learning outcomes listed above.
- Each of these programme learning outcomes can be adapted to the relevant field of study, but its essence should remain the same. Appendix 1 shows examples of adaptations to different fields of study for each programme learning outcome at Level 6.
- If necessary, a maximum of 2 subject-specific programme learning outcomes may be added. These need to be entirely different from the existing 8 to avoid duplication.
- Level 6 modules need to map to all 8 programme learning outcomes, i.e. a programme learning outcome at Level 6 cannot be met by Level 4 and Level 5 modules only.

Level 4 and Level 5 programme learning outcomes

For the programme learning outcomes at Level 4 (CertHE) and Level 5 (DipHE), you will need to decide which aspects from the Level 6 programme learning outcomes will be covered at Level 4 and Level 5.

- Level 4 modules need to map to all 8 programme learning outcomes, adapted to the Level.
- Level 5 modules need to map to all 8 programme learning outcomes, adapted to the Level.
- Rather than linguistically altering the programme learning outcomes, the Level 4 and Level 5 programme learning outcomes should reflect what content will be covered at this Level.

Example 1:

At Level 4, two modules contain exercises through which students reflect on the use of technical knowledge in the workplace. It does not yet require reflection on skills, behaviours and attitudes. The knowledge that is being reflected on is technical knowledge only.

Level 4 – PLO7: Reflect critically on gaps and biases in your technical knowledge~~, skills, behaviours and attitudes,~~ and utilise these insights to improve your decision-making as a professional ~~in unpredictable contexts.~~

Level 5 builds on this with a module that includes another reflective assignment. Here, students reflect on the all the knowledge have they gained so far and how they could apply the theories/models introduced in the course in (unpredictable) situations encountered in the workplace. It still does not require reflection on skills, behaviours and attitudes.

Level 5 – PLO7: Reflect critically on gaps and biases in your knowledge~~, skills, behaviours and attitudes~~, and utilise these insights to improve your decision-making as a professional in unpredictable contexts.

At Level 6, one module has a particularly strong employability focus. Students are asked to reflect on how they would respond to difficult situations that may occur in the workplace based on video case studies. The final assessment is a reflection on a simulation where students respond to an ad hoc situation. The final project module is based on a live brief and includes an element of reflection, as well. Through these modules, students now meet the full Level 6 programme learning outcome.

Level 6 – PLO7: Reflect critically on gaps and biases in your knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes, and utilise these insights to improve your decision-making as a professional in unpredictable contexts.

Example 2:

At the start of a Level 4 module, students give an oral presentation to a small group of peers on an interpersonal skill of choice. They explain why this skill is important to their aspired profession and how they plan to improve their mastery of this skill during the module.

Level 4 – PLO6: Communicate effectively to ~~professional, academic and~~ non-specialist audiences about the practical implications of ~~knowledge~~, interpersonal skills ~~and research findings~~ from your field of study.

Several Level 5 modules require students to incorporate academic sources into written reports. These reports are aimed at suggesting improvements or solutions to common problems within the profession.

Level 5 – PLO6: Communicate effectively to professional~~, academic~~ and non-specialist audiences about the practical implications of knowledge and skills ~~and research findings~~ from your field of study.

The final Level 6 module has students conduct applied research and write up a dissertation. This enables them to meet the full Level 6 programme learning outcome.

Level 6 – PLO6: Communicate effectively to professional, academic and non-specialist audiences about the practical implications of knowledge, skills and research findings from your field of study.

Example 3:

A Level 4 module has students conduct literature research on the development of the field study during a chosen period in history. Integrated workshops from the Library & Academic Skills team teach students how to reference, how to read academic papers and how to select sources.

Level 4 – PLO5: Conduct literature research using Harvard referencing, whilst critically examining the accuracy ~~and limitations~~ of sources ~~and data~~.

At Level 5, students devise a methodology for a quantitative study that uses large, publicly accessible datasets. They practice how to manipulate the dataset, for instance by removing duplicates and creating dummy variables. The assessment takes the shape of a portfolio in which students explain why and how they worked with the datasets, and how this led to their proposed methodology.

Level 4 – PLO5: Conduct academic research using quantitative methods suitable to the context of your field of study, whilst critically examining the accuracy ~~and limitations of~~ sources and data.

A Level 6 module includes small-group discussions on the mandatory literature. Each week, students talk through the findings of the studies that made up the preparatory reading. They also critique the methodology and the conclusions drawn. One lecture focuses on conflicts of interest in the profession and its research sphere. After this module, students meet the full Level 6 programme learning outcome.

Level 6 – PLO5: Conduct academic research using methods suitable to the context of your field of study, whilst critically examining the accuracy and limitations of sources and data.

Level 3 programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of your Level 3 programme as a University of Staffordshire graduate, you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the focus and scope of your field of study, including the associated skills and competencies. *Knowledge & understanding*

2. Devise appropriate, evidence-based solutions to problems within your field of study and workplace. *Application & problem-solving*

3. Collaborate constructively with peers and experienced professionals to apply your collective knowledge and skills. *Critical reasoning & collaboration*

4. Use digital tools common to your field of study, considering how they can be applied in the workplace. *Digital literacy*

5. Apply research methods suitable to the context of your field of study, whilst examining the accuracy of sources and data. *Research skills*

6. Communicate effectively to professional and non-specialist audiences about knowledge and skills within your field of study. *Communication*

7. Reflect on gaps in your knowledge and skills, and utilise these insights to improve your decision-making in the workplace. *Reflection*

8. Recognise your development needs and engage with lifelong learning opportunities to grow your knowledge, skills and competencies. *Personal development & entrepreneurship*

Level 7 programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of your Level 7 programme as a University of Staffordshire graduate, you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate detailed contemporary knowledge and a systematic understanding of theories, concepts, professional practice, skills, competencies and their societal impact, as well as new insights at the forefront of your field of study. *Knowledge & understanding*

2. Integrate your knowledge and transferable skills to formulate arguments, generate knowledge and devise original, evidence-based solutions to complex current and future problems at the forefront of your field of study. *Application & problem-solving*

3. Apply critical reasoning skills in response to real-life, transdisciplinary challenges around sustainability and ethics, both individually and in collaboration with a diverse range of people. *Critical reasoning & collaboration*

4. Evaluate the use of state-of-the-art digital tools and their resulting outputs within your field of study, considering how these can be applied to enhance academic research and professional practice. *Digital literacy*

5. Conduct rigorous academic research whilst evaluating the suitability of methods used within your field of study and critically examining the accuracy and limitations of sources and data. *Research skills*

6. Communicate effectively to professional, academic and non-specialist audiences about the practical and academic implications of complex knowledge, skills and research findings from your field of study, including when you are being challenged. *Communication*

7. Reflect critically on gaps and biases in your knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes, and utilise these insights to improve your decision-making as a researcher and professional in unpredictable contexts. *Reflection*

8. Take responsibility in engaging with lifelong learning opportunities in line with your development needs and aspirations to continue growing your academic research, professional practice, transferable skills and competencies. *Personal development & entrepreneurship*

Underlined phrases display the differences compared to Level 6

For courses with intermediate awards, please refer to the Course Design Guide.

Level 8 programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of your Level 8 programme as a University of Staffordshire graduate, you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate substantial expert knowledge and a systematic understanding of theories, concepts, professional practice, skills, competencies and their societal impact, as well as new insights at the forefront of a niche within your field of study. *Knowledge & understanding*

2. Integrate your knowledge and transferable skills to formulate arguments, generate knowledge and take leadership in devising original, evidence-based solutions to complex current and future problems at the forefront of your field of study, whilst adapting to unforeseen problems. *Application & problem-solving*

3. Apply critical reasoning skills and synthesisation of academic research in response to real-life, transdisciplinary challenges around sustainability and ethics, both individually and in collaboration with a diverse range of people. *Critical reasoning & collaboration*

4. Evaluate the use of state-of-the-art digital tools and their resulting outputs within your field of study, promoting how these can be applied to enhance the societal impact of academic research and professional practice. *Digital literacy*

5. Conduct original, rigorous academic research whilst evaluating the suitability of methods used within your field of study and critically examining the accuracy and limitations of sources and data, thereby expanding scientific knowledge through peer-reviewed publication. *Research skills*

6. Communicate effectively to professional, academic and non-specialist audiences about the practical and academic implications of complex, incomplete knowledge, skills and research findings from a niche within your field of study, including when you are being challenged. *Communication*

7. Reflect critically on gaps and biases in your knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes, and utilise these insights to improve your decision-making as a researcher and professional in unpredictable contexts, and influence others to do the same. *Reflection*

8. Take full responsibility in engaging with lifelong learning opportunities in line with your development needs and aspirations to continue growing your academic research, professional practice, transferable skills, competencies and development of original solutions. *Personal development & entrepreneurship*

Underlined phrases display the differences compared to Level 7

Guidance on different types of provision

Courses with pathways and optional modules

- Each pathway should have its own set of programme learning outcomes to reflect the specific content of that pathway.

Courses where two subjects are combined ('with': one subject has more weight than the other)

- Courses with a secondary subject should use programme learning outcomes that reflect both the main subject and the secondary subject.
- The maximum of 2 subject-specific programme learning outcomes can be used to cover the integration of the main subject and the secondary subject.
- The secondary subject should be reflected in at least 2 out of 8 programme learning outcomes at each Level.
- The secondary subject should always be reflected in the programme learning outcome on 'Knowledge and understanding' at each Level.

Courses where two subjects are combined ('and': both subjects have equal weighting)

- Courses covering two subjects should use programme learning outcomes that reflect both subjects.
- The maximum of 2 subject-specific programme learning outcomes can be used to cover the integration of both subjects.
- Both subjects should be reflected in all 8 programme learning outcomes at each Level.

Higher and degree apprenticeships

- Integration of academic and workplace learning: outcomes should be phrased so they can be demonstrated through a blend of university study and professional practice in the workplace.
- Alignment with occupational standards (KSBs): outcomes should encompass and align with the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) in the relevant apprenticeship standard. Mapping to KSBs should be made explicit during course design. Programme learning outcomes can be adapted to reflect the wording used in the KSBs.

Courses with PSRB requirements

- Professional body requirements: For regulated professions, outcomes should prepare apprentices to meet the expectations of the relevant professional or statutory body. Programme learning outcomes can be adapted to reflect the wording used in the PSRB.

Top-up courses

- The programme learning outcomes should follow the guidance for the corresponding Level of the top-up course.

Relation to module learning outcomes

- Each module learning outcomes is mapped to 1 programme learning outcome by referring to its abbreviation (e.g. ‘Knowledge and understanding’ or ‘Reflection’).
- When mapping module learning outcomes to subject-specific programme learning outcomes, refer to these using the abbreviations ‘Subject PLO1’ and ‘Subject PLO2’.
- Each module in its entirety should map to at least 1 programme learning outcome.
- To write module learning outcomes, it is advised to use phrasing comparable to the programme learning outcomes to ensure it corresponds to the appropriate Level.

Appendix 1 – Adaptations to specific fields of study (Level 6 examples)

1. Demonstrate detailed contemporary knowledge and a systematic understanding of theories, concepts, professional practice, skills and competencies within your field of study and their societal impact. Knowledge & understanding

Minimum adaptation: Demonstrate detailed contemporary knowledge and a systematic understanding of [field of study] theories, [concepts/techniques/methods], professional [practice/standards], skills and competencies, and their societal impact.

Maximum adaptation:
Example 1 – BSc Forensic and Investigative Psychology: Demonstrate detailed contemporary knowledge and a systematic understanding of psychological theories, concepts, professional standards and the societal impact around issues in human functioning, with a focus on forensic psychology.

Example 2 – BSc Paramedic Science: Demonstrate detailed contemporary knowledge and a systematic understanding of disease mechanisms and pharmacological theories and concepts, as well as safe and effective treatment methods and their impact on patients.

Example 3 – BA Esports: Demonstrate detailed contemporary knowledge and a systematic understanding of theories and professional practices within esports, including societal impact in terms of sustainability, emerging technologies and the global industry.

Example 4 – Biomedical Scientist Apprenticeship: Demonstrate detailed contemporary knowledge and a systematic understanding of human body systems, disease processes and laboratory practice in biomedical science, including the impact on public health, through integration of theory with workplace application.

2. Integrate your knowledge and transferable skills to formulate arguments and devise appropriate, evidence-based solutions to complex problems at the forefront of your field of study. Application & problem-solving

Minimum adaptation: Integrate your [field of study] knowledge and transferable skills to formulate arguments and devise appropriate, evidence-based solutions to complex [environmental/ethical/legal/financial/organisational/political/technical/technological] problems at the forefront of [field of study].

Maximum adaptation:
Example 1 – BA English Literature & Creative Writing: Integrate your knowledge and transferable skills in creative writing to formulate arguments and devise appropriate, evidence-based solutions to complex communications problems at the forefront of your field of study.

Example 2 – BSc Sports and Exercise Science: Integrate your knowledge and transferable skills at the forefront of Sports and Exercise Science to formulate arguments and devise appropriate, evidence-based solutions to complex physical and mental problems.

Example 3 – BSc Cloud and Network Computing: Integrate knowledge on cloud and network computing with your transferable skills to formulate arguments and devise appropriate, evidence-based solutions to complex data storage problems at the forefront of the industry.

Example 4 – Digital & Technology Solutions Professional Apprenticeship: Integrate your knowledge and transferable digital skills to formulate arguments and devise appropriate, evidence-based technological solutions at the forefront of your field of study to solve complex business problems encountered in the workplace.

3. Apply critical reasoning skills in response to real-life challenges around sustainability and ethics, both individually and in collaboration with a diverse range of people. Critical reasoning & collaboration

Minimum adaptation: Apply critical reasoning skills in response to real-life [field of study] challenges around sustainability and ethics, both individually and in collaboration with a diverse range of people.

Maximum adaptation:
Example 1 – BEng Mechanical Engineering: Apply critical reasoning skills in response to real-life sustainability and ethics challenges related to mechanical engineering, both individually and in collaboration with a diverse range of industry stakeholders.

Example 2 – BSc Nursing Practice: Apply critical reasoning skills in response to real-life challenges around sustainability and ethics to improve the quality of care provided to patients, both individually and in collaboration with a diverse range of people within and outside of medical settings.

Example 3 – BA Action for Stage and Screen: Apply critical reasoning skills in response to real-life challenges around sustainability and ethics in the acting industry, both individually and in collaboration with a diverse range of people.

Example 4 – Chartered Manager Apprenticeship: Apply critical reasoning skills and workplace best practices in response to real-life organisational challenges around sustainability and ethics, both individually and in collaboration with a diverse range of people, whilst balancing the implementation of solutions with delivering objectives.

4. Evaluate the use of state-of-the-art digital tools and their resulting outputs within your field of study, considering how these can be applied to enhance professional practice. Digital literacy

Minimum adaptation: Evaluate the use of state-of-the-art digital tools and their resulting outputs within [field of study], considering how these can be applied to enhance professional practice.

Maximum adaptation:
Example 1 – BA International Relations and Intelligence: Evaluate the use of state-of-the-art digital tools and their resulting outputs in the context of International Relations and Intelligence, considering the positive and negative influences on international cooperation and security.

Example 2 – BA Early Childhood Studies: Evaluate the use of state-of-the-art digital tools and their resulting outputs, considering how you can use these for your own professional development and to enhance digital literacy in children.

Example 3 – BSc Health and Social Care: Evaluate the use of state-of-the-art digital tools within health and social care, considering how you can use these tools and their resulting outputs to improve the quality of care provided to patients.

Example 4 – Manufacturing Engineer Apprenticeship: Evaluate the use of AutoCAD, simulation and emerging digital tools in manufacturing engineering, considering how their outputs can be applied to optimise processes and support workplace innovation.

5. Conduct academic research using methods suitable to the context of your field of study, whilst critically examining the accuracy and limitations of sources and data. Research skills

Minimum adaptation: Conduct academic research using [qualitative and/or quantitative] methods suitable to the context of [field of study], whilst critically examining the accuracy and limitations of sources and data.

Maximum adaptation:
Example 1 – LLB Law: Conduct academic research using methods suitable to the context of Law, whilst critically examining the accuracy and limitations of legal data from doctrinal, practice and policy sources.

Example 2 – BA Animation: Conduct academic research on animation processes, culture and industry standards using methods suitable to the field of study, whilst critically examining the accuracy and limitations of sources and data.

Example 3 – BSc Criminology: Conduct academic research using qualitative and quantitative methods suitable to the context of Criminology, whilst critically examining the accuracy and limitations of sources and criminal offence data.

Example 4 – Operating Department Practitioner Apprenticeship: Conduct academic research using suitable methods to inform evidence-based practice in operating department care, whilst critically examining the accuracy and limitations of clinical sources and data.

6. Communicate effectively to professional, academic and non-specialist audiences about the practical implications of knowledge, skills and research findings from your field of study. Communication

Minimum adaptation: Communicate effectively to professional, academic and non-specialist audiences about the practical implications of [field of study] knowledge, skills and research findings.

Maximum adaptation:
Example 1 – BMid Midwifery: Communicate effectively to professional, academic and non-medical audiences about the practical implications of midwifery knowledge, skills and research findings to support individuals and families in maternity care.

Example 2 – BSc Computer Games Design: Communicate effectively to professional, academic and non-specialist audiences about the practical implications of research findings, knowledge and skills in game mechanics and 3D modelling.
Example 3 – BA Film Production: Communicate effectively to professional, academic and non-specialist audiences, including clients and viewers, about the practical implications of filmmaking knowledge, skills and research findings.

Example 4 – Paramedic Apprenticeship: Communicate effectively to professional, academic and non-specialist audiences about the practical implications of pre-hospital care knowledge skills and research findings, adapting your communication style to diverse needs.

7. Reflect critically on gaps and biases in your knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes, and utilise these insights to improve your decision-making as a professional in unpredictable contexts. Reflection

Minimum adaptation: Reflect critically on gaps and biases in your knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes, and utilise these insights to improve your decision-making as a [field of study] professional in unpredictable contexts.

Maximum adaptation:
Example 1 – BSc Biomedical Science: Reflect critically on gaps and biases in your knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes as a biomedical scientist, and utilise these insights to improve your decision-making in unpredictable situations relating to diagnosis and treatment.

Example 2 – BA Music Production: Reflect critically on gaps and biases in your knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes in relation to the changing world of the creative industries, and utilise these insights to improve your decision-making as a professional in music production.

Example 3 – BSc Professional Policing: Reflect critically on gaps and biases in your knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes, as well as those present within the field of policing, and utilise these insights to improve your decision-making as a policing professional in unpredictable contexts.

Example 4 – Social Worker Apprenticeship: Reflect critically on gaps and biases in your knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes related to providing ethical, anti-oppressive support, and utilise these insights to improve your decision-making as a social worker in unpredictable, high-pressure contexts.

8. Take responsibility in engaging with lifelong learning opportunities in line with your development needs and aspirations to continue growing your professional practice, transferable skills and competencies. Personal development & entrepreneurship

Minimum adaptation: Take responsibility in engaging with lifelong learning opportunities in line with your development needs and aspirations to continue growing your [field of study] professional practice, transferable skills and competencies.

Maximum adaptation:

Example 1 – BA Fashion Design: Take responsibility in engaging with lifelong learning opportunities in line with your development needs and aspirations to continue growing your professional practice, design portfolio, transferable skills and competencies.

Example 2 – BSc Operating Department Practice: Take responsibility in engaging with lifelong learning opportunities in line with your development needs and aspirations to continue growing your transferable skills, competencies and practice as an operating department professional.

Example 3 – BA Social Work: Take responsibility in engaging with lifelong learning opportunities in line with your development needs and aspirations to continue growing your professional practice, transferable skills and competencies in supporting individuals and families as a social worker.

Example 4 – Police Constable Apprenticeship: Take responsibility in engaging with lifelong learning opportunities in line with your development needs and aspirations as a police constable to continue growing your evidence-based professional practice, transferable skills, competencies and accountability.

Appendix 2 – Alignment to the Curriculum Framework

Outcome heading	Level 6 programme learning outcome	Pillar 1 – Accessibility & Inclusivity	Pillar 2* – Simulation-based Education	Pillar 3** – Professional Practice, Enterprise & Employability	Pillar 4 – Sustainability	Pillar 5 – Academic, Research & Digital Skills
1. Knowledge & understanding	Demonstrate detailed contemporary knowledge and a systematic understanding of theories, concepts, professional practice, skills and competencies within your field of study and their societal impact.			✓	✓	✓
2. Application & problem-solving	Integrate your knowledge and transferable skills to formulate arguments and devise appropriate, evidence-based solutions to complex problems at the forefront of your field of study.		✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Critical reasoning & collaboration	Apply critical reasoning skills in response to real-life challenges around sustainability and ethics, both individually and in collaboration with a diverse range of people.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Digital literacy	Evaluate the use of state-of-the-art digital tools and their resulting outputs within your field of study, considering how these can be applied to enhance professional practice.			✓	✓	✓

5. Research skills	Conduct academic research using methods suitable to the context of your field of study, whilst critically examining the accuracy and limitations of sources and data.	✓				✓
6. Communication	Communicate effectively to professional, academic and non-specialist audiences about the practical implications of knowledge, skills and research findings from your field of study.	✓	✓	✓		✓
7. Reflection	Reflect critically on gaps and biases in your knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes, and utilise these insights to improve your decision-making as a professional in unpredictable contexts.	✓		✓	✓	✓
8. Personal development & entrepreneurship	Take responsibility in engaging with lifelong learning opportunities in line with your development needs and aspirations to continue growing your professional practice, transferable skills and competencies.			✓	✓	✓

* Simulation is a tool, meaning that this pillar is not directly reflected in the programme learning outcomes. Nevertheless, using simulation-based education contributes to the attainment of several programme learning outcomes.
** This pillar applies to all provision but is particularly central to foundation degrees and higher/degree apprenticeships, where professional practice is an embedded and assessed component of learning.

Appendix 3 – Alignment to relevant frameworks (Level 4, Level 5, Level 6*)

Outcome heading	Level 6 programme learning outcome	BA/BSc Dublin descriptor**	Level 6 FHEQ descriptor***	Level 5 FHEQ descriptor	Level 4 FHEQ descriptor
1. Knowledge & understanding	Demonstrate detailed contemporary knowledge and a systematic understanding of theories, concepts, professional practice, skills and competencies within your field of study and their societal impact.	Knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that, while supported by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study.	A systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline.	Knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed.	Knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study.
2. Application & problem-solving	Integrate your knowledge and transferable skills to formulate arguments and devise appropriate, evidence-based solutions to complex problems at the forefront of your field of study.	Can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and	Apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects.	Ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context.	Evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work.

		sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study.	To devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline.		
3. Critical reasoning & collaboration	Apply critical reasoning skills in response to real-life challenges around sustainability and ethics, both individually and in collaboration with a diverse range of people.	Have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues.	Critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution - or identify a range of solutions - to a problem. An ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline.	Use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis.	N/A

4. Digital literacy	Evaluate the use of state-of-the-art digital tools and their resulting outputs within your field of study, considering how these can be applied to enhance professional practice.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5. Research skills	Conduct academic research using methods suitable to the context of your field of study, whilst critically examining the accuracy and limitations of sources and data.	N/A	To describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline. To make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline).	Knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study.	An ability to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, in order to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of their subject(s) of study.

6. Communication	Communicate effectively to professional, academic and non-specialist audiences about the practical implications of knowledge, skills and research findings from your field of study.	Can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.	Communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.	Effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively.	Communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments.
7. Reflection	Reflect critically on gaps and biases in your knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes, and utilise these insights to improve your decision-making as a professional in unpredictable contexts.	N/A	An appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge. Decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts.	An understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge.	N/A
8. Personal development & entrepreneurship	Take responsibility in engaging with lifelong learning opportunities in line with your development needs and aspirations to	Have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.	The ability to manage their own learning. The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment.	The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.	The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility.

	continue growing your professional practice, transferable skills and competencies.		The exercise of initiative and personal responsibility. The learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.	Undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations.	Undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment.

* There are no Dublin descriptors or FHEQ descriptors for Level 3.
** The Dublin descriptors form the international framework for Higher Education qualifications to ensure equivalency across European institutions. National frameworks may have additional elements or outcomes and can include more detail.
*** Each Level 6 course should meet the FHEQ descriptors according to the OfS B2.2 standard. However, the descriptors have not been formulated with the intention of being used as programme learning outcomes. Rather, they aim to provide context for the articulation, review and development of Level 6 qualifications. In other words: the descriptors provide points of reference for higher education providers when setting and assessing academic standards.

Appendix 3 – Alignment to relevant frameworks (Level 7)

Outcome heading	Programme learning outcome	MA/MSc Dublin descriptor	Level 7 FHEQ descriptor
1. Knowledge & understanding	Demonstrate detailed contemporary knowledge and a systematic understanding of theories, concepts, professional practice, skills, competencies and their societal impact, as well as new insights at the forefront of your field of study.	Have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with the first cycle, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context.	A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice.
2. Application & problem-solving	Integrate your knowledge and transferable skills to formulate arguments, generate knowledge and devise original, evidence-based solutions to complex current and future problems at the forefront of your field of study.	Can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem-solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study.	Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.
3. Critical reasoning & collaboration	Apply critical reasoning skills in response to real-life, transdisciplinary challenges around sustainability and ethics, both individually and in collaboration with a diverse range of people.	Have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements.	N/A

4. Digital literacy	Evaluate the use of state-of-the-art digital tools and their resulting outputs within your field of study, considering how these can be applied to enhance academic research and professional practice.	N/A	N/A
5. Research skills	Conduct rigorous academic research whilst evaluating the suitability of methods used within your field of study and critically examining the accuracy and limitations of sources and data.	N/A	A comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship. To evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses. To evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline.
6. Communication	Communicate effectively to professional, academic and non-specialist audiences about the practical and academic implications of complex knowledge, skills and research findings from your field of study, including when you are being challenged.	Can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously.	Deal with complex issues - both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

7. Reflection	Reflect critically on gaps and biases in your knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes, and utilise these insights to improve your decision-making as a researcher and professional in unpredictable contexts.	N/A	N/A
8. Personal development & entrepreneurship	Take responsibility in engaging with lifelong learning opportunities in line with your development needs and aspirations to continue growing your academic research, professional practice, transferable skills and competencies.	Have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.	Demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level. Continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level. The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring: the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility; decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations; the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Appendix 3 – Alignment to relevant frameworks (Level 8)

Outcome heading	Programme learning outcome	Doctorate Dublin Descriptor	Level 8 FHEQ descriptor
1. Knowledge & understanding	Demonstrate substantial expert knowledge and a systematic understanding of theories, concepts, professional practice, skills, competencies and their societal impact, as well as new insights at the forefront of a niche within your field of study.	Have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field.	A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice.
2. Application & problem-solving	Integrate your knowledge and transferable skills to formulate arguments, generate knowledge and take leadership in devising original, evidence-based solutions to complex current and future problems at the forefront of your field of study, whilst adapting to unforeseen problems.	N/A	The general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems.
3. Critical reasoning & collaboration	Apply critical reasoning skills and synthesisation of academic research in response to real-life, transdisciplinary challenges around sustainability and ethics, both individually and in collaboration with a diverse range of people.	Be capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas.	N/A

4. Digital literacy	Evaluate the use of state-of-the-art digital tools and their resulting outputs within your field of study, promoting how these can be applied to enhance the societal impact of academic research and professional practice.	N/A	N/A
5. Research skills	Conduct original, rigorous academic research whilst evaluating the suitability of methods used within your field of study and critically examining the accuracy and limitations of sources and data, thereby expanding scientific knowledge through peer-reviewed publication.	Have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity. Have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national or international refereed publication.	A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry. The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication.
6. Communication	Communicate effectively to professional, academic and non-specialist audiences about the practical and academic implications of complex, incomplete knowledge, skills and research findings from a niche within your field of study, including when you are being challenged.	Can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise.	Make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

7. Reflection	Reflect critically on gaps and biases in your knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes, and utilise these insights to improve your decision-making as a researcher and professional in unpredictable contexts, and influence others to do the same.	N/A	N/A
8. Personal development & entrepreneurship	Take full responsibility in engaging with lifelong learning opportunities in line with your development needs and aspirations to continue growing your academic research, professional practice, transferable skills, competencies and development of original solutions.	Can be expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge-based society.	Continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches. The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.