



Subject Benchmark Statement

Education Studies

April 2025



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About this Statement

This QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Education Studies defines what can be expected of a graduate in terms of what they might know, do and understand at the end of their studies. Subject Benchmark Statements are an established part of the quality assurance arrangements in UK higher education, but not a regulatory requirement. They are sector-owned reference points, developed and written by academics. Subject Benchmark Statements also describe the nature and characteristics of awards in a particular discipline or area. Subject Benchmark Statements are published in QAA's capacity as an expert quality body on behalf of the higher education sector. A summary of the Statement is also available on the QAA website.

Key changes from the previous Subject Benchmark Statement include:

- a revised structure for the Statement, which includes the introduction of cross-cutting themes of:
 - equity, diversity and inclusion
 - accessibility and the needs of disabled students
 - education for sustainable development
 - employability, entrepreneurship and enterprise education
 - generative artificial intelligence
- a comprehensive review updating the context and purposes, including course design and content, in order to inform and underpin the revised benchmark standards.

How can I use this document?

Subject Benchmark Statements are not intended to prescribe any particular approaches to teaching, learning or assessment. Rather, they provide a framework, agreed by the subject community, that forms the basis on which those responsible for curriculum design, approval and updating can reflect upon a course, and its component modules. This allows for flexibility and innovation in course design while providing a broadly accepted external reference point for that discipline.

They may also be used as a reference point by external examiners when considering whether the design of a course and the threshold standards of achievement are comparable with those of other higher education providers.

Furthermore, Statements can support professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) with their definitions and interpretations of academic standards.

You may want to read this document if you are:

- involved in the design, delivery and review of courses in Education Studies, and allied areas including teacher training
- a prospective student thinking about undertaking a course in Education Studies
- an employer, to find out about the knowledge and skills generally expected of Education Studies graduates.

Relationship to legislation

The responsibility for academic standards lies with the higher education provider which awards the degree. Higher education providers are responsible for meeting the requirements of legislation and any other regulatory requirements placed upon them by their relevant funding and regulatory bodies. This Statement does not interpret legislation, nor does it incorporate statutory or regulatory requirements.

The status of the Statement will differ depending on the educational jurisdictions of the UK. In England, Subject Benchmark Statements are not [sector-recognised standards](#) as set out under the Office for Students' [regulatory framework](#). However, Subject Benchmark Statements are part of the current quality arrangements in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Because the Statement describes outcomes and attributes expected at the threshold standard of achievement in a UK-wide context, many higher education providers will use them as an enhancement tool for course design and approval, and for subsequent monitoring and review, in addition to helping demonstrate the security of academic standards.

Additional sector reference points

Higher education providers are likely to consider other reference points in addition to this Statement when designing, delivering and reviewing courses. These may include requirements set out by PSRBs and industry or employer expectations. In 2024 QAA published an update to the [Quality Code](#), which will be helpful when using this Statement.

Explanations of unfamiliar terms used in this Subject Benchmark Statement can be found in [QAA's Glossary](#). Sources of information about other requirements and examples of guidance and good practice are signposted within the Statement where appropriate.

1 Context and purposes of an Education Studies degree

1.1 Education Studies is concerned with understanding how people develop and learn throughout their lives, the nature of knowledge, and critical engagement with ways of knowing and understanding. It offers intellectually rigorous analysis of educational processes, systems and approaches, and their cultural, societal, technological, political, philosophical, environmental, historical and economic contexts. Courses include the study of broader perspectives such as international education, economic relationships, the effects of globalisation and the role of education in human rights and environmental issues. They all include critique of current policies and practice and challenge assumptions.

Purposes and characteristics of an Education Studies degree

1.2 Education Studies has the capacity to transform the lives of those who participate in it, and to benefit society as a whole. This involves the application of theory and scholarly practice (also known as praxis) leading to diverse professional futures. It can be a force for good, leading to improved outcomes for individuals, societies and environments. It explores exciting possibilities for change, with the potential to empower students and inspire them to be agents of change.

1.3 There are differing theoretical models for Education Studies. It may be seen as a 'subject' defined by its curriculum content, or as a 'field' drawing selectively upon the methods of the contributory areas of psychology, sociology, philosophy, history, language, politics and economics. It may also be regarded as a 'discipline' with its own academic community, having its own distinctive discourses and methods of enquiry.

1.4 Ethical considerations underpin all aspects of Education Studies, including consideration of human rights and other ecological and sustainability perspectives. Like many subjects, Education Studies is in a constant state of change and development.

1.5 Education Studies students bring diverse perspectives from a range of contexts, which enrich critical debate. Learners bring insight and experience to the

learning environment. The mutuality of reciprocal learning is a distinctive feature within the Education Studies community.

1.6 Students can participate in, construct and contest discourses, exemplified by reference to debate about values, personal and social engagement, educational practices and how these relate to communities and societies. Students have opportunities to develop their critical capabilities through the selection, analysis and synthesis of various perspectives, and are able therefore to position themselves in a reasoned manner in a changing world. **Students are prepared for a broad range of careers and are equipped to engage in lifelong learning in the course of their working lives.**

Equity, diversity and inclusion

Vision

1.7 Education Studies is a transformational field, with equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) being fundamental tenets of the educational landscape. Accessibility and EDI are integral to the development of programmes and support students **and staff** to engage with EDI in their everyday scholarship, practice and decision-making.

Defining principles

1.8 Course teams provide all students with the opportunity to participate and co-construct equitable curricula and assessment, scaffolding the skills required for students to fully engage with this process in a meaningful way.

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1.10 Students are able to interrogate key concepts and terms, acknowledging the entrenchment of dominant systems of language, knowledge and thought in both historical and current contexts in both formal, informal and hidden curricula.

1.11 Students are able to engage with issues of EDI, appreciating what it is to contribute to a just society, recognising diverse standpoints, and defining their own position within and beyond the context of rights, duties, responsibilities and law.

1.12 Courses empower students and staff to understand their unique contribution within the community of Education Studies, learning from their contexts and the rich tapestry of practices and unique knowledge. They explore relationships between ideologies and communities, where experiences intersect in multifaceted and complex ways.

1.13 Courses provide students with agency to reflect, question and engage. Students are skilled in reflection and able to understand their own uniqueness, while demonstrating due respect for differing and divergent opinions from others.

1.14 Courses acknowledge that digital technologies, inclusive of artificial intelligence (AI), are ubiquitous within the field of education. The role of technology may be problematised and explored critically, including consideration of access to resources, digital literacy and issues related to cultural, social and economic capital and environmental damage. Where technology is integrated into programmes, EDI is an integral consideration.

Accessibility and the needs of disabled students

1.15 [The Equality Act 2010](#) places a legal duty on education providers to adopt a proactive rather than reactive approach, where issues of accessibility in teaching, learning and assessment are anticipated.

Vision

1.16 Education Studies is an inclusive discipline, and is open to all individuals, including students from a wide range of social, religious, economic backgrounds, students with a broad spectrum of specific learning needs, students with access requirements, and neurodivergent students. Accessibility is a moral and legal imperative, and accessibility must be considered in course design as well as in planning the wider student experience.

Defining principles

1.17 All courses, whether full-time, part-time, on campus, blended or online, are designed to reflect the mode of delivery.

1.18 Education Studies students have a diverse range of experience and pathways before beginning their course (including 'non-standard' routes). Course teams therefore devise strategies to ensure equal access to curriculum content and disciplinary expectations.

1.19 Hiring teams also make efforts to uplift diverse individuals in Education Studies and present diverse role models to students by attracting, facilitating and retaining diverse staff in all roles and ensuring a suitable working and study environment for all; for example, having an understanding of caring responsibilities for staff, which considers the timing of meetings and other practical arrangements.

1.20 Where appropriate, course design is informed by advice from relevant professionals as well as by listening carefully to student voices.

1.21 Course curriculum, content and assessment need to be accessible to all learners, including those of diverse cultures, disabilities, neurodivergencies, identities and demographics. All assessments should be characterised by clarity of both purpose and expectation.

1.22 Course teams will need to anticipate potential barriers which may be experienced by learners. Strategies for delivery can include the provision of support plans, working closely with institutional support, and signposting to relevant services.

1.23 In line with the Equality Act 2010, all courses should make anticipatory reasonable adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment in enabling all students to achieve the intended learning outcomes of the course.

1.24 Course teams should consider accessibility for all students, both in person and through digital modes of delivery, ensuring that all students have access to learning resources, including assistive technology, to support their individual learning.

1.25 Where a placement element is offered, effective practice in accessibility and student well-being should be considered. This may include the consideration of other options, a choice in assessment, and ensuring that employment and careers guidance and opportunities are cognisant of the needs of all students. Course teams should do their best to ensure students have access to equitable learning and assessment opportunities throughout their studies whether on or off campus. Within a physical venue, consideration of space for mobility aids including wheelchairs and crutches, support workers, the visibility of boards and other display equipment and audibility of session leaders and presentation material is essential. Associated enabling technology is also required to capture the live display of extended written material and ensure accurate captions.

1.26 To truly develop an understanding of how people learn and develop, rather than how a limited demographic learns or how specific systems allow people to learn, where courses are not specific to studying education within a certain time-period or geographical area, curricula should include content on education systems, learning and development from a variety of different perspectives around the world and throughout history. While content and debate on education in different times, places and cultures should remain respectful, critical analysis of all systems discussed is crucial.

Education for sustainable development

Vision

1.27 Education is a core human endeavour, with the potential to drive sustainable practice for the betterment of the world. Learning is a key force for change and, as a field, Education Studies supports individuals and communities to consider and act towards ensuring that the needs of the present can be met without compromising those of future generations.

1.28 It is important to note that sustainability is not solely about the environment. It is an ongoing process of addressing social, environmental and economic concerns to create a better world for future generations in all senses. Sustainability is interwoven into all aspects of human life, from resource use to community wellbeing, and must be addressed through a systems-thinking approach.

Defining principles

1.29 Courses encourage critical engagement with the current [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) (in particular, but not exclusively, [SDG 4 Quality Education](#) [SDG 5 Gender Equality](#) [SDG 10 Reducing Inequalities](#), [SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities](#) and [SDG 17 Partnership for the Goals](#)), and consider drawing on current resources to help shape their offer, such as the QAA and Advance HE [Education for Sustainable Development Guidance](#).

1.30 Education for sustainable practice aims to develop competencies that empower individuals to reflect on their actions and the actions of others from a local and global perspective. It provides individuals and groups with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for [navigating complex sustainability](#)

challenges and taking informed, ethical actions towards more sustainable practices in all aspects of their personal, professional, and societal lives.

1.31 Education Studies is uniquely placed to engage with interdisciplinary knowledge, processes and practices - including scientific, psychological, social, spiritual, economic, philosophical, historical and political fields of study **as well as Indigenous knowledge bases** that underpin sustainability.

1.32 Education Studies, where appropriate, actively engages with the inherent complexities and dilemmas inherent within notions of sustainability. It takes account of the need to develop students' knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding conscious sustainable practices at an individual, institutional and societal level, recognising that issues of sustainability are both local and global.

1.33 Education Studies students understand the unique and essential role of education in delivering a sustainable future through the provision of learning across the lifespan and throughout diverse contexts inclusive of formal and informal education. Although there can be discrete parts of programmes that engage with such themes, course teams should consider teaching, content and assessment within a broader context.

1.34 Education Studies students can craft their own personal sustainability from a **just environmental, social** and psychological perspective, working reflectively to monitor and manage their own well-being and that of other **organisms** in their environment.

1.35 Sustainable behaviours and teaching practices are embedded into all aspects of Education Studies degrees and modelled by all departmental staff, to expose students to and encourage them to implement such practice during teaching, demonstrations and on-campus conduct both in respect to Education Studies specifically and regular activities. Examples include:

- Teaching staff demonstrating how to balance sustainable practice with providing equality education during teaching activities.
- Incorporating examples of sustainable teaching practices and recent developments in Education Studies into curricula.
- Curriculum designers collaborating with stakeholders, including teachers and students from a range of educational and sociological backgrounds when designing the course/pedagogy, curriculum and assessment to ensure all voices are heard and the course covers the subject holistically.

- Institutions providing appropriate infrastructure for and advice on how to reduce resource and energy consumption, follow sustainable waste management and protect the local natural environment.

Employability, entrepreneurship and enterprise education

Vision

1.36 Employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship education supports behaviours, attributes and competencies that are likely to have a significant impact on the individual student in terms of choice of employment destination and future career success. It prepares students for changing environments and provides enhanced impact through placements and activities that can build links and create opportunities for knowledge exchange between academic institutions and external organisations.

1.37 Beyond employment, entrepreneurship education provides competencies to help students lead a rewarding, self-determined professional life, well placed to add **environmental**, social, cultural and economic value to society through their careers.

1.38 Education Studies promotes openness, teamwork, collaboration and effective communication, fostering qualities of leadership and mentoring. It encourages a self-reflective, innovative and adaptive mindset which is focused on solutions when approaching problems. It encourages resilience and resourcefulness in the face of complex problems, as well as taking responsibility and acting with integrity.

Defining principles

1.39 Education Studies considers education in its widest sense, extending beyond teaching and learning in formal educational establishments such as schools, colleges and universities **to include lifelong learning, community-based education, and workplace learning.**

1.40 While students of Education Studies can go on to work as educators, they also progress to a range of other UK and international destinations in the public, private and third sectors, including cultural arts, education, national/local government, charities and commerce.

1.41 Employability, entrepreneurship and enterprise education is not an add-on, but is foundational and embedded.

1.42 Education Studies shows that there is a need for students to be innovative and adaptive, for example around the emergence of new technologies and the changing landscape of work.

1.43 Education Studies programmes encourage the development of an ethical entrepreneurial disposition, allowing students to adapt to the evolving educational landscape.

1.44 Education Studies aims to:

- equip students with Education Studies knowledge, skills, pedagogical attributes and experience from across key disciplines, including sociology, psychology, philosophy, history, politics and economics, to support students and their progression to a wide range of destinations
- develop students' abilities to think entrepreneurially regarding current and future opportunities, with regard to themselves, others and their professional setting
- equip students with the ability to understand and navigate multiple professional contexts
- support students to develop an emerging sense of professional identity within a variety of employment settings.

Artificial Intelligence

Vision

1.45 Artificial intelligence (AI) is characterised as technology able to produce human-like outputs and responses. The term is inclusive of large language models (LLMs), AI chatbots, generative AI, and other related technologies. Artificial intelligence is both rapidly evolving and pervasive across all areas of society, including education and industry. There are ongoing debates over the role of AI to augment, enhance and automate human activity. Through education, it is possible to recognise the ability of AI to supplement human creativity, knowledge and expression, while also recognising the challenges with agency, choice, privacy, integrity, humanity, environmental damage, ethical working environments and human rights that AI presents. As such, there is a need to ensure an ongoing critical, ethical and conscious engagement with the use of AI across all aspects of education.

Defining principles

1.46 Programme teams consider the following principles for students' understanding of AI:

- critically, ethically and consciously engage with the use of AI in the context of education
- have a firm grounding in core AI applications, as part of their broader digital literacy
- be able to apply AI tools to deliver meaningful benefits to learners, such as customised learning, accessibility and inclusion
- acknowledge and identify the pervasive use of AI and other digital technologies in education, society and the workplace
- recognise the importance of human creativity, decision-making and understanding, acknowledging that AI is not a substitute for these abilities
- recognise when it is appropriate to use AI, with or without human collaboration, and when AI should not be used
- articulate the potential advantages and limitations of AI
- work within frameworks of legal, human and children's rights in their use of AI
- recognise that technology is not neutral, and that it reflects the values found in both the people who produce it and the data used to train it
- recognise the impact of AI on environment damage, sustainability and sustainable development
- be transparent in their use of AI.

1.47 Course teams should also engage with the above principles for the purposes of curriculum design, assessment, recruitment and research. It may be advantageous for course teams to consider sustained engagement with AI throughout their programmes, as opposed to limiting it to specific modules or stages of study. They may acknowledge that AI creates opportunities, as well as creating issues, and that there needs to be critical engagement with its potential strengths and limitations.

2 Distinctive features of the Education Studies course

2.1 Courses in Education Studies commonly:

- provide students with a broad and balanced knowledge and understanding of the principal features of education in a wide range of contexts, including formal, semi-formal, informal and alternative education settings throughout lifespan development
- allow students to draw on a wide range of academic and other pertinent resources, theoretical, practical and ethical perspectives, and other academic subjects to critically inform their understanding of education and the contexts within which it takes place
- promote a range of qualities in students, including intellectual independence and autonomous thinking, critical engagement with evidence, and the ability to construct, sustain and articulate a reasoned argument about educational issues in a clear and coherent manner
- offer curriculum content, and articulate its relevance and significance, to give students opportunities to explore their interests and abilities, and to consider their future employment and progression options
- draw on the wide-ranging professional expertise of lecturers and other contributors to inform students about the principal features of education from different viewpoints, while providing space for individual reflections and for sharing and discussing ideas that inform students' own understanding
- offer opportunities to engage with a range of employment sectors and contexts (for example, through the use of guest speakers, and placements and work experience)
- utilise a varied range of challenging, innovative and supportive assessment methods which promote learning through formative and summative feedback, focusing in particular on strengths and opportunities for future development, while also developing key employability, entrepreneurship and enterprise education skills and qualities
- provide flexible and student-oriented modes of study including full-time, part-time, online, and to-up options, as well as specialist pathways and joint honours degrees, incorporating a range of teaching and learning strategies, including active learning opportunities as well as traditional forms

- provide students with the foundations to follow well-developed progression routes into postgraduate and doctoral studies as well as teaching and education, training, coaching and mentoring, or other employment opportunities in the public, private or third sectors
- develop strong partnerships with **a wide range of stakeholders** by understanding what **students in all kinds of education need and** employers are looking for and embedding this in teaching, while also supporting staff knowledge and understanding
- **promote a community of learning among students and staff, reaching far beyond a specific course into professional careers and future developments, including self-development, personal development and the development of life skills.**

Progression

2.2 Over the course of a standard undergraduate degree with honours (FHEQ Level 6; FQHEIS Level 10) or, if available, an integrated master's degree (FHEQ Level 7; FQHEIS Level 11), Education Studies students will progress from one level of study to the next, in line with the regulations and processes for each institution. However, it is expected that each level would see the attainment of knowledge, expertise and experience that builds towards the final achievement of meeting the threshold (and, if specified, higher-level) subject-specific and generic skills listed in this Statement. This will usually include successful completion and the award of credit for the full range of learning and assessment, including any practical components.

2.3 Upon graduation from an undergraduate degree, it would be expected that a student who had achieved a second-class degree or higher would be capable of, and equipped for, undertaking postgraduate study in education or a related discipline. Entry requirements to postgraduate courses are, however, determined by individual providers and may require specified levels of achievement at undergraduate level.

2.4 Students studying Education Studies courses as part of a combined or joint degree with other subjects (including courses that specify major and minor options) will achieve core elements of the specific and generic skills outlined in this Statement and will add others according to the areas covered in the other subject(s) of their degree. Additionally, they may explore the overlap between different disciplines, creating further opportunities for interdisciplinary study.

2.5 Students enrolled in a standard undergraduate honours degree course in Education Studies may exit earlier and be eligible for a Certificate of Higher Education (FHEQ Level 4; FQHEIS Level 8), a Diploma of Higher Education (FHEQ Level 5; FQHEIS Level 9), or other awards depending upon the levels of study completed to a satisfactory standard.

Flexibility

2.6 At providers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the duration of a full-time course leading to a standard undergraduate degree is three years, or four years for an integrated master's degree. Scottish bachelor's degrees with honours are typically designed to include four years of study and integrated master's five, which relates to the structure of Scottish primary and secondary education. Students following part-time routes accumulate academic credit in proportion to the intensity of their study, and their total study time and credit value would be the equivalent to those achieved on full-time routes.

2.7 Higher education providers structure the courses they offer to support **all** students' learning and attainment. Depending on the educational mission of the provider, this may include opportunities to engage in learning on campus, online, and/or through hybrid learning, arranged in terms, by semester, year-long blocks, or other formats. These may be offered in full and/or part-time modes of study and credit may be accumulated through the completion of micro-credentials, short-accredited learning, recognition of prior learning or the accreditation of prior experiential learning. **Delivery methods (both face-to-face and digital) should be diverse and appropriate for the needs of the learner, the taught material and their assessments, using reasonable adjustments where this is not possible through inclusive design.**

2.8 **Courses need to be sufficiently flexible to respond to and anticipate change in the advancement of the subject, its interface with other disciplines, global society and the natural environment, and in the needs of its graduates and their employers, as required. Courses should also be sufficiently resilient to be able to adapt to unforeseen circumstances and other challenges that may arise in the future.**

Partnership

2.9 Degree-awarding bodies may deliver courses in partnership with other providers, **a range of employers in the education sector**, and PSRBs through

validation and franchising arrangements. Others may work with partners who deliver specific elements of the course through placement learning or as part of a degree apprenticeship. Subject Benchmark Statements, such as this one, play an important role in helping partners design provision that contributes to threshold standards being met in a specific subject area.

2.10 Collaborations with employers introduces students to the variety of opportunities available within the education sector and strengthens an Educational Studies provider's understanding of the larger local education sector's needs from their students. Partnerships with local community organisations are also beneficial by sharing the providers' successes with the local area and improving relations between the student and resident communities.

2.11 Course providers should ensure all partners utilise equality, diversity, inclusion (including financial), accessibility and sustainability in their day-to-day practice and include it in delivering education to learners. All students working with a provider partner should receive equitable opportunities to receive a sustainable education with these partners – observing, learning, and practicing in a forward-thinking workplace.

Monitoring and review

2.12 Degree-awarding bodies, and their collaborative partnerships, routinely collect and analyse information and undertake periodic course review according to their own needs. **Considering the student voice will form part of this.** They draw on a range of external reference points, including this Statement, to ensure that their provision aligns with sector norms. Monitoring and evaluation are a periodic assessment of a course, conducted internally or by external independent evaluators. Evaluation uses information from both current and historic monitoring to develop an understanding of student achievement or inform future course planning.

2.13 Externality is an essential component of the quality assurance system in the UK. Providers will use external reviewers as part of periodic review to gain an independent perspective on any proposed changes and ensure threshold standards are achieved and content is appropriate for the subject.

2.14 Courses with professional and vocational outcomes may also require evaluation and accreditation from professional and regulatory bodies. These are usually done through a combination of site visits and desk-based reviews.

2.15 The external examining system currently in use across the UK higher education sector also helps to ensure consistency in the way academic standards are secured by degree-awarding bodies. Typically, external examiners will be asked to comment on the types, principles and purposes of assessments being offered to students. They will consider the types of modules on offer to students, the outcomes of a cohort and how these compare to similar provision offered within other UK higher education providers. External examiners are asked to produce a report each year and make recommendations for changes to modules and assessments (where appropriate). Subject Benchmark Statements, such as this one, can play an important role in supporting external examiners in advising on whether threshold standards are being met in a specific subject area.

3 Content, structure and delivery

3.1 This section explores how the content of the curriculum for Education Studies shapes the likely teaching and learning strategy, and the modes of assessment that discriminate between different levels of attainment and allow students to demonstrate they have met the benchmark standards.

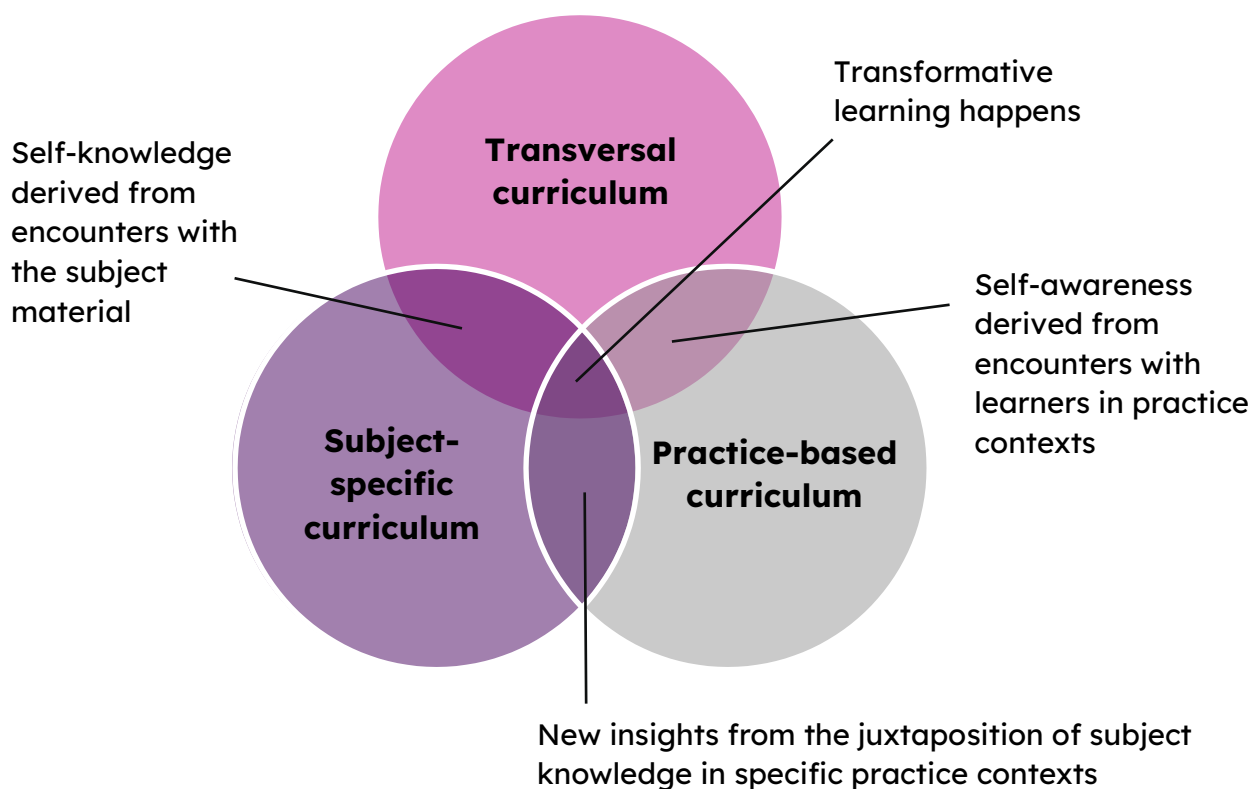


Figure 1: The knowledge areas of education studies

Content

3.2 Studying for a bachelor's degree with honours in Education Studies and related subjects provides students with a diversity of skills that prepare them not only to pursue postgraduate studies, but also to enter a variety of employment areas.

3.3 The knowledge areas outlined in this Subject Benchmark Statement are categorised under three curricular areas: subject-specific, practice-based and transversal (see Figure 1).

- The **subject-specific** curricula are closely related to subject knowledge and are an important aspect of an honours degree in Education Studies. The areas of knowledge in the subject-specific category are often theoretical in nature.
- The **practice-based** curricula relate to areas of knowledge required in educational practice. This section is particularly relevant for teaching studies, and other educational courses that have practice-based elements.
- The **transversal** curricula are formed of learned abilities that are valuable in almost any kind of work. Transversal skills, therefore, cut across various fields and industries. In this context, they are not necessarily specific to Education Studies, but can be applied in multiple contexts. Transversality is increasingly important in a rapidly changing world.

3.4 The division between subject-specific, practice-based and transversal curricula is fluid, and the interdisciplinary nature of education may blur the boundaries between the categories.

Subject-specific curriculum

3.5 Education Studies is a broad field, and individual programmes may focus on different areas of knowledge to shape their content. As such, this section contains a wide range of different knowledge areas that programme teams may consider when developing their programmes.

3.6 Course teams consider and may incorporate the following areas of conceptual or theoretical knowledge into Education Studies curricula:

- appropriate methods to collect, analyse and present data
- how to develop informed research questions relating to Education Studies
- how to engage with educational issues and policies **outside of one's own identity or experience at local, regional, national, and international scales** at local, regional, national and international scales
- **similarities between education systems which uplift all learners and assist them to become happy, engaged and valued members of their society**
- **how colonial and oppressive forces have repressed formal and informal native education systems or enforced their own or specialised education systems as a method of disconnecting colonised communities from their heritage, culture and traditional way of life and increasing the colonists' power**

- how to engage with the design of curriculum, including learning sequencing and constructive alignment
- how to keep up to date and engage critically with contemporary issues in education
- issues in education that can be explored from multiple perspectives, particularly where multiagency and multi-professional teams are involved (including social work, and social or medical care)
- issues of sustainability in the context of education, and strategies of how to deliver renewable and regenerative education
- important intersections between education, mental health and well-being inclusive of learners, colleagues and self
- relevant areas of cognitive and developmental science in relation to learning, thinking and memory
- relevant ethical guidelines related to educational research and practice learner agency as pivotal in educational practice
- the current **regulations, statutory guidance, and best practice** in relation to safeguarding and health and safety
- the current regulations, statutory guidance **and best practice** in relation to special educational needs, disabilities and inclusion
- the impact of teaching, learning and assessment within relevant contexts
- the importance of evaluation and monitoring as part of continuous improvement
- the interdisciplinary, international and intercultural dimensions of education
- the role of communication and/or language in the context of education, inclusive of non-spoken communication
- the use and application of educational technologies
- the role of education in relation to issues of social justice, recognising and addressing inequalities in society
- **the particular contribution of subjects to different ways of thinking and the development of different skills and values**
- their own teaching philosophy and pedagogical values
- skills to support attitudes and preparation for behaviours for learning.

Practice-based curriculum

3.7 Education Studies programmes may include placements and other practice-based areas of study. Practice-based curricula can provide a valuable

opportunity for learners to gain real-world experience in educational contexts. For some programmes, practice-based elements may also form a required aspect of study for professional competence, such as programmes that offer qualified teacher status. For other programmes, particularly at master's level, there may be no practice-based learning, so this section will not be directly relevant.

3.8 Course teams consider the following areas of practice-based knowledge for Education Studies students. Student practice-based curricula typically provide students with opportunities to:

- adapt practice to the environment, including formal, informal and outdoor settings
- adapt teaching and **prescribed** curricula to suit the needs of all learners and apply reasonable adjustments where required, especially for learners with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) **and additional circumstances impacting their learning and development**
- **address the environmental and ethical issues related to engagement with new technological developments, including the use of AI**
- apply key behaviour and classroom management strategies in order to design and deliver effective assessments aligned to intended learning outcomes
- **engage with the purposes of education, including the role of different subjects and assessment pathways in preparing young people for their future**
- engage with issues of ethics when working with learners, their relatives or carers, and other professionals
- engage with safeguarding, risk assessment, and health and safety in a range of educational contexts **and create a safe learning environment in which all learners can develop personally and as students**
- **engage with learners in a professional but caring manner, striving to foster relationships where learners can share their worries and trust that their educator will offer support or handle the information appropriately**
- **engage with the student voice and collaborate with learners**
- engage with the latest policy and practice in the relevant phase of education (that is, early years, compulsory education, further education, higher education, adult education)
- integrate the use of technology into teaching, learning, assessment and administration

- monitor learner engagement and/or attendance **taking learners' personal circumstances into account when setting expectations and comparing them to current performance**
- reflect and engage in formal and informal evaluations to deliver improvements, developments and enhancements to practice
- **reflect on own positionality and bias, being able to critically engage with the self in the context of education**
- serve as a learning leader in the context of their practice
- use skills of observation and analysis in relation to teaching, learning and assessment.

Transversal curriculum

3.9 Transversal knowledge and skills may not always be related to a particular job, task or discipline and can be used in a wider range of situations and work settings. As Education Studies is an interdisciplinary field, students will develop a wide range of transversal knowledge and skills that are useful for the workplace.

3.10 Course teams should consider the following areas of transversal knowledge that Education Studies students may benefit from. Transversal curricula typically provide students with opportunities to:

- apply numerical skills and work confidently with numbers, interpreting and analysing data as appropriate
- be accountable and honest, able to take responsibility for their own actions
- communicate for different purposes, including, but not limited to, description, explanation, persuasion, evaluation and summarisation
- comprehend, critically evaluate and utilise data in a range of contexts, **demonstrating strong data literacy skills**
- **critically evaluate a range of sources to determine their relevance and value and separate information from misinformation**
- demonstrate an awareness of global competence and intercultural understanding, sensitive to the needs, backgrounds and experiences of others
- **demonstrate empathy through connection and active listening**
- **engage in debate, negotiation and persuasion in a way that is respectful, helpful and appropriate**

- engage in verbal and/or non-verbal, visual and written skilled communications with others, **demonstrating awareness of their audience and mode of communication**
- engage in practices of self-care and resilience, and demonstrate the ability to look after themselves in the context of a field deeply situated within broader social contexts
- engage with reflection, reflexivity and critical self-awareness
- facilitate inclusion and accessibility
- **identify problems and develop solutions, leveraging the best of creative thinking and enterprise**
- improve their own learning performance, with the ability to identify areas for development and ways to achieve this
- maintain a professional attitude, showing respect for others in the workplace
- organise, manage and appropriately arrange information, ensuring files, notes and documents are retrievable or discoverable at a later date
- take initiative in appropriate contexts, aware of their own responsibilities and autonomy
- take responsibility, with accountability and leadership
- **use critical questions in practice, developing their own line of questioning to make critical judgements and evaluations**
- use digital and social media technologies in the appropriate contexts
- **use evidence-informed practices to develop an informed point of view**
- **utilise AI critically, in an ethical way**
- **work collaboratively with others.**

Teaching and learning

3.11 Approaches to teaching and learning in Education Studies consider inclusive, interactive and reflective knowledge-based methods drawing upon practice, theory and relevant literature/evidence. The focus of individual Education Studies courses will vary, with course teams ensuring that relevant teaching and learning practices are used for the context of their course.

3.12 Courses are designed to ensure student success by:

- **promoting independent learning, helping students take responsibility for their own learning**

- encouraging students to be aware of their own development, learning progress and achievements through self-assessment and reflection
- enabling student success by ensuring learning is as accessible as possible
- promoting higher education provider services where students need additional support to meet learning needs
- facilitating career success by helping students develop skills for employability and entrepreneurship
- helping to facilitate an inclusive environment that benefits all learners, and encouraging critical engagement with EDI in the curriculum
- being cognisant of diverse student backgrounds and journeys, meeting all students where they are, and then scaffolding experiences to get them to where they need to be.

3.13 Education Studies programmes can be designed to model a wide range of effective practices in situations associated with teaching and learning activities, exposing students to multiple approaches and experiences.

3.14 Education Studies programmes may align to the requirements of external professional bodies, enabling students to extend their professional practice or qualifications by meeting PSRB and other regulatory body requirements

3.15 Programmes engage with contemporary issues in education, especially those referred to in the cross-cutting themes (see paragraphs 1.7-1.47 in section 1).

Assessment

3.16 The assessment strategy for Education Studies programmes reflects the broad range of skills, knowledges and values reflected in this Statement. Assessment should be clearly aligned with the desired outcomes, learning objectives or competencies being assessed.

3.17 Education Studies programmes are designed to model a variety of effective practices in situations associated with assessment activities. Assessment methods in Education Studies may include, but are not limited to:

- academic posters
- assessment of placement practice or observations
- diverse communications like blogs, vlogs, magazine articles and leaflets
- authentic scenarios, simulations and virtual placement scenarios
- case studies
- class-based, conference and webinar presentation delivery
- creation of education resources and assets

- critical reflections on practice
- debates, professional discussions and podcasts
- essays and other verbal and non-verbal assessment
- extended projects or dissertations
- formal examinations (open book, seen or unseen)
- game-based outputs (including board games and card games)
- group-based and collaborative projects
- verbal and non-verbal examinations or vivas
- peer assessment
- project-based outputs
- portfolios, patchworks and synoptic assessments
- reports
- roleplay teaching practice, including PSRB requirements where external accreditation is involved
- feedback from learners the student assists on teaching placements
- videos and animations
- websites, docuslides and other digital artefacts
- work-based competency assessments.

3.18 Programme teams ensure, with the help of their institution and its student body, that the academic integrity of assessments is maintained, especially in the context of AI and, particularly, GenAI tools. Considerations about academic integrity may impact the choice of assessments.

3.19 As a part of programme design and monitoring, programme teams ensure the accessibility and inclusivity of assessments are considered. Student well-being is considered alongside this; collectively, these factors may impact the choice of assessments.

3.20 Programme teams consider staff workload and the logistical challenges of assessment, with the help of their institution. This forms an essential aspect of making courses sustainable.

3.21 Consideration can be given to authentic assessment opportunities, giving students the ability to work within real-world contexts or scenarios.

3.22 Consideration can be given to the use of assessed placements or work-based practice, providing students with the opportunity to get real-world experience of practice within various educational contexts. For some programmes, this may be required to align with external professional bodies' requirements. Where possible, such assessments are varied, offering assessment opportunities as listed above, including elements of reflection to allow students to realise their own learning in placement

3.23 Course teams may want to consider a varied assessment diet, ensuring students are given the opportunity to engage with subject-specific knowledge and multiple general skills.

3.24 Effective feedback strategies are a core part of all assessments, including

formative and summative feedback opportunities for learners, where appropriate. Feedback is always forward-facing, providing sufficient depth for students to recognise their achievements and understand what they need to develop further.

It is provided in a timely manner, allowing students to act, develop and seek clarification or support on before the next assessment. Students should always have the opportunity to discuss or challenge feedback and be made aware of how and when to do so.

4 Benchmark standards

Introduction

4.1 The following benchmark standards are defined for students studying a single honours or master's degree in Education Studies. It is understood that students may follow an Education Studies course in a wide range of academic and professional contexts, including, for example: a joint honours course; courses with 'major' and 'minor' studies; or a professionally focused honours course. No judgement is made about how much subject knowledge and understanding may be required in a joint honours course. Where students study Education Studies as a part of a degree course, higher education providers clarify the extent to which the benchmark standards should be met.

4.2 Where students undertake the study of education as part of a course of professional training, the benchmark standards are contextualised within that course. Similarly, professionals undertaking a post-experience honours degree course covered by these benchmark standards may focus on a specialist theme, such as mathematics education, inclusive education, or lifelong learning, and demonstrate a deeper awareness of this area. It would be appropriate that such students demonstrate their learning only in a specific area or areas relevant to their academic or professional context. Individual higher education providers articulate their stance in respect of the benchmark standards by considering their own student groups and perspectives. Course documentation then amplifies the connections between the benchmark standards and desired learning outcomes.

4.3 In the tables below, the threshold standards specify performance for a student successfully completing a course leading to an undergraduate honours award or master's degree. The threshold standards set the expectation that, as a minimum, all students are able to demonstrate achievement in all of these areas. The vast majority of students will perform significantly better than the minimum threshold standards. Each higher education provider has its own method of determining what appropriate evidence of this achievement will be and should refer to [Annex D in The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#). The tables also describe expected levels of typical and excellent performance at undergraduate level. Furthermore, a student in Education Studies may demonstrate achievement of these outcomes at different levels and to a greater or lesser extent.

4.4 The postgraduate standards specify performance for a student completing a course leading to a master's degree at Level 7 (in England, Northern Ireland and Wales) and Level 11 (in Scotland). However, it is recognised that courses vary at postgraduate level and not all courses might offer the opportunity for all these standards to be achieved within the course offer. It is important therefore for each institution to use these standards as a guideline only.

4.5 Please note that the minimum threshold, typical and excellent standards are not intended to specify universal competence standards for a discipline. If a provider chooses to develop competence standards (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) as part of a programme specification, these can be informed by the relevant Subject Benchmark Statement along with any PSRB requirements. In these circumstances providers should follow the most recent guidance from the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#).

Threshold level

Subject-specific skills

Knowledge and understanding	Threshold standard	Typical standard	Excellent standard	Postgraduate master's
Knowledge	The student can demonstrate a coherent understanding of significant theories, concepts and ideas relating to education in its widest sense	The student can demonstrate sound understanding of significant theories, concepts and ideas relating to education in its widest sense	The student can demonstrate deep understanding of significant theories, concepts and ideas relating to education in its widest sense, informed by the forefront of the field	The student can demonstrate systematic understanding of significant theories, concepts and ideas relating to education in its widest sense, much of which is at the forefront of the field
Critical awareness	The student can demonstrate a coherent understanding of the uncertainties, ambiguities and limits of knowledge and theory in the field	The student can demonstrate sound understanding of the uncertainties, ambiguities and limits of knowledge and theory in the field	The student can demonstrate deep understanding of the uncertainties, ambiguities and limits of knowledge and theory in the field	The student can critically evaluate knowledge and theory at the forefront of the field
Critical evaluation	The student can identify critical questions relating to education using bodies of knowledge and evidence	The student can devise critical arguments relating to education using multiple bodies of knowledge and evidence in detailed ways	The student can devise and sustain critical arguments relating to education using multiple bodies of knowledge and evidence in complex ways	The student can synthesize complex bodies of knowledge and evidence to produce new insights

Knowledge and understanding	Threshold standard	Typical standard	Excellent standard	Postgraduate master's
Application	The student can apply significant theories, concepts and ideas to real-world issues in education	The student can apply significant theories, concepts and ideas in detailed ways to real-world issues in education	The student can apply significant theories, concepts and ideas in complex ways to real-world issues in education	The student can demonstrate originality in the application of significant theories and ideas to complex real-world issues in education
Ethical awareness	The student can demonstrate a coherent understanding of ethical tensions, dilemmas and challenges surrounding education	The student can demonstrate sound understanding of ethical tensions, dilemmas and challenges surrounding education	The student can demonstrate deep understanding of ethical tensions, dilemmas and challenges surrounding education	The student can demonstrate originality in the analysis and resolution of ethical tensions, dilemmas and challenges surrounding education
Evaluate own learning skills	The student can recognise the need to assess their own skills and to reflect on them for future learning	The student can take charge of their own learning and reflect on and evaluate personal strengths and weaknesses for the purposes of future learning	The student shows sophistication in taking charge of their own learning, reflect on personal strengths and weaknesses for the purposes of future learning	The student shows sophistication in leading their own learning, evaluating and being reflexive of personal strengths and weaknesses for the purposes of future learning
Study skills	The student can demonstrate and apply knowledge of the methods required for systematic study and	The student can demonstrate and apply a sound working knowledge of the methods required for systematic	The student can demonstrate and apply a deep working knowledge of the methods required for systematic	The student can demonstrate and apply a critically reflexive evaluation of the methods required for

	research relative to education	study and research relative to education. The student can evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses.	study and research relative to education. The student can demonstrate improvement resulting from their self-evaluation of such skills	systematic study, research and application relative to education
Creativity	The student can demonstrate the use of creative approaches in the study of education	The student can demonstrate the effective use of creative approaches in the study of education	The student can demonstrate the use of highly creative approaches to the study of education	The student can demonstrate the use of highly creative and original approaches in the study of education
Planning for collaboration	The student can demonstrate the ability to plan for, and implement, suitable collaborations with students, staff and other stakeholders	The student can demonstrate a well-developed ability to plan for and implement effective collaborations with diverse groups of students, staff and other stakeholders	The student can demonstrate a highly developed ability to plan for and implement effective collaborations with diverse groups of students, staff and other stakeholders	The student can demonstrate an excellent ability to plan for and implement effective collaborations with diverse groups of students, staff and other stakeholders inside and outside an organisation

Knowledge and understanding	Threshold standard	Typical standard	Excellent standard	Postgraduate master's
Solution focus	The student can identify challenges and identify appropriate approaches to resolve them	The student can identify challenges, and suggest and apply appropriate sustainable approaches to resolve them	The student can identify challenges, and suggest and lead in applying appropriate sustainable approaches to resolve them	The student can demonstrate a deep understanding of challenges and suggest and apply original, sustainable means to resolve them

Practical and practice-based skills

Practical skills	Threshold standard	Typical standard	Excellent	Postgraduate master's
Information retrieval and application	The student can demonstrate the skills needed to search for, identify and use a range of information, including written, numerical, visual and verbal and/or non-verbal outputs, emanating from digital, analogue and empirical sources	The student consistently demonstrates the skills needed to critically search for, identify and use a range of information, including written, numerical, visual and verbal and/or non-verbal outputs, emanating from digital, analogue and empirical sources	The student consistently and insightfully demonstrates the skills needed to critically search for, identify and use a range of information, including written, numerical, visual and verbal and/or non-verbal outputs, emanating from digital, analogue and empirical sources	The student can use advanced search techniques to identify and use a wide range of information sources critically and with insight, including from written, numerical, visual and verbal and/or non-verbal outputs, emanating from digital, analogue and empirical sources

Practical skills	Threshold standard	Typical standard	Excellent	Postgraduate master's
Communication and presentation	The student can organise and articulate information, opinions and arguments in a manner accessible to the target audience through speech, writing, visual and other appropriate means, with evidence of relevant specialist vocabulary and expression	The student can organise and articulate information, opinions, and arguments in a manner accessible to the target audience through speech, writing, visual and other appropriate means, with consistent use of relevant specialist vocabulary and expression	The student can organise and articulate information, opinions, and arguments in a manner accessible to the target audience through speech, writing, visual and other appropriate means, with evidence of the sophisticated use of relevant specialist vocabulary and expression	The student can organise and articulate information, opinions and arguments in speech, writing, visual and other appropriate means, with evidence of the sophisticated use of relevant specialist vocabulary and expression. They can critically justify the reasons for the choice of such means of communication and presentation a manner accessible to the target audience through
Application of theory	The student can present a range of theoretical positions and demonstrate how they might impact on educational practice	The student can present a wide range of theoretical positions and offer and justify a well-informed argument as to how they might impact on educational practice	The student can present a wide range of theoretical positions and offer and justify a critically well-informed argument as to how they might impact on educational practice	The student can demonstrate detailed and accurate knowledge of a wide range of theoretical positions and be able to articulate and justify a well-informed, critical and insightful point of view with elements of originality

Practical skills	Threshold standard	Typical standard	Excellent	Postgraduate master's
Use of digital technologies, including AI	The student can use digital technologies effectively and ethically to enhance a variety of approaches to the study of education	The student can demonstrate confident, ethical and effective use of digital technologies to systematically enhance a variety of approaches to the study of education	The student can demonstrate sophisticated, ethical , critically informed and effective use of digital technologies to enhance a variety of approaches to the study of education	The student can demonstrate sophisticated, ethical , self-directed, critically informed and effective use of digital technologies to enhance critical and reflective study

Transversal skills

Transferable competences	Threshold standard	Typical standard	Excellent standard	Postgraduate master's
Analytical and creative competence	A student can demonstrate how to process, organise and articulate opinions and arguments to create, present and justify a chosen position, having drawn on relevant perspectives	A student can demonstrate a sound understanding of how to process, synthesise, organise and articulate opinions and arguments using a range of sources to present and justify a chosen position, having drawn on theory-relevant perspectives	A student can demonstrate a deep understanding of how to process, synthesise, organise and articulate opinions and arguments using a range of sources to create new syntheses and to present and justify a chosen position, having drawn on relevant perspectives	A student can demonstrate a critical understanding of how to process, synthesise, organise and articulate opinions and arguments using a range of sources to create new syntheses and to present and justify a chosen position, having drawn on relevant perspectives

Transferable competences	Threshold standard	Typical standard	Excellent standard	Postgraduate master's
Collaboration	A student can demonstrate how to effectively communicate through respectful interactions with diverse groups of people and be able to plan work within a specified role, helping to build trust within a team, to fulfil agreed responsibilities	A student can demonstrate a sound understanding of how to effectively communicate through respectful interactions with diverse groups of people and be able to plan work within a specified role, helping to build trust within a team, to fulfil agreed responsibilities	A student can demonstrate a deep understanding of how to effectively communicate through respectful interactions with diverse groups of people and be able to plan work within a specified role, helping to build trust within a team, to fulfil agreed responsibilities	A student can demonstrate a critical understanding of how to effectively communicate through respectful interactions with diverse groups of people and be able to plan work within a specified role, helping to build trust within a team, to fulfil agreed responsibilities
Data access skills (analogue and digital)	A student can demonstrate how to access information from appropriate sources, a critical awareness of those information sources, how to use digital tools and software appropriately, an ethical awareness and understanding of online safety	A student can demonstrate a sound understanding of how to access information from appropriate sources, a critical awareness of those information sources, how to use digital tools and software appropriately, an ethical awareness and understanding of online safety	A student can demonstrate a deep understanding of how to access information from appropriate sources, a critical awareness of those information sources, how to use digital tools and software appropriately, an ethical awareness and understanding of online safety	A student can demonstrate a systematic understanding of how to access information from appropriate sources, a critical awareness of those information sources, how to use digital tools and software appropriately, an ethical awareness and understanding of online safety

Transferable competences	Threshold standard	Typical standard	Excellent standard	Postgraduate master's
Hybrid literacies	A student can demonstrate how to collect, analyse, interpret, apply and present data in a variety of verbal and non-verbal formats, both appropriately and ethically for the task and the audience	A student can demonstrate a sound understanding of how to analyse, interpret, apply and present data in a variety of verbal and non-verbal formats, both appropriately and ethically for the task and the audience	A student can demonstrate a deep understanding of how to analyse, interpret, apply and present data in a variety of verbal and non-verbal formats, both appropriately and ethically for the task and the audience	A student can demonstrate a critical understanding of how to analyse, interpret, apply and present data in a variety of verbal and non-verbal formats, both appropriately and ethically for the task and the audience
Personal competences	A student can demonstrate flexibility, adaptability and personal responsibility to engage in ongoing self-reflection, lifelong learning, understanding the importance of empathy, active listening and action	A student can demonstrate a sound understanding of flexibility, adaptability and personal responsibility to engage in ongoing self-reflection, lifelong learning, understanding the importance of empathy, active listening and action	A student can demonstrate a deep understanding of flexibility, adaptability and personal responsibility to engage in ongoing self-reflection, lifelong learning, understanding the importance of empathy, active listening and action	A student can demonstrate a systematic understanding of flexibility, adaptability and personal responsibility to engage in ongoing self-reflection, lifelong learning, understanding the importance of empathy, active listening and action

Transferable competences	Threshold standard	Typical standard	Excellent standard	Postgraduate master's
Transformative competences	A student can demonstrate engagement in change processes, being able to anticipate and reconcile tensions, dilemmas and complexity, and understand the concept of futures thinking	A student can demonstrate a sound understanding of how to engage in change processes, being able to anticipate and reconcile or tackle inequalities , tensions, dilemmas and complexity, and understand the concept of futures thinking	A student can demonstrate a deep understanding of how to engage in change processes, being able to anticipate and reconcile or tackle inequalities , tensions, dilemmas and complexity, and understand the concept of futures thinking	A student can demonstrate a systematic understanding of how to engage in change processes, being able to anticipate and reconcile or tackle inequalities , tensions, dilemmas and complexity, and understand the concept of futures thinking

4.6 Professional competences (to the extent that they are expressed by the course learning outcomes).

4.7 The specific professional requirements and learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature. Where a degree award requires an assessment of professional competencies, a PSRB-accredited award will not be made if the student does not meet them.

Not successful	Successful
The student has not demonstrated achievement of professional competence when assessed against the requirements of a professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB).	The student has demonstrated achievement of professional competence when assessed against the requirements of a PSRB.
The student has failed to adhere to the appropriate rules and/or conventions set by regulators or the industry.	The student has adhered to the appropriate rules and/or conventions set by regulators or the industry.

5 Membership of the Advisory Group

Membership of the Advisory Group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Education Studies 2025

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