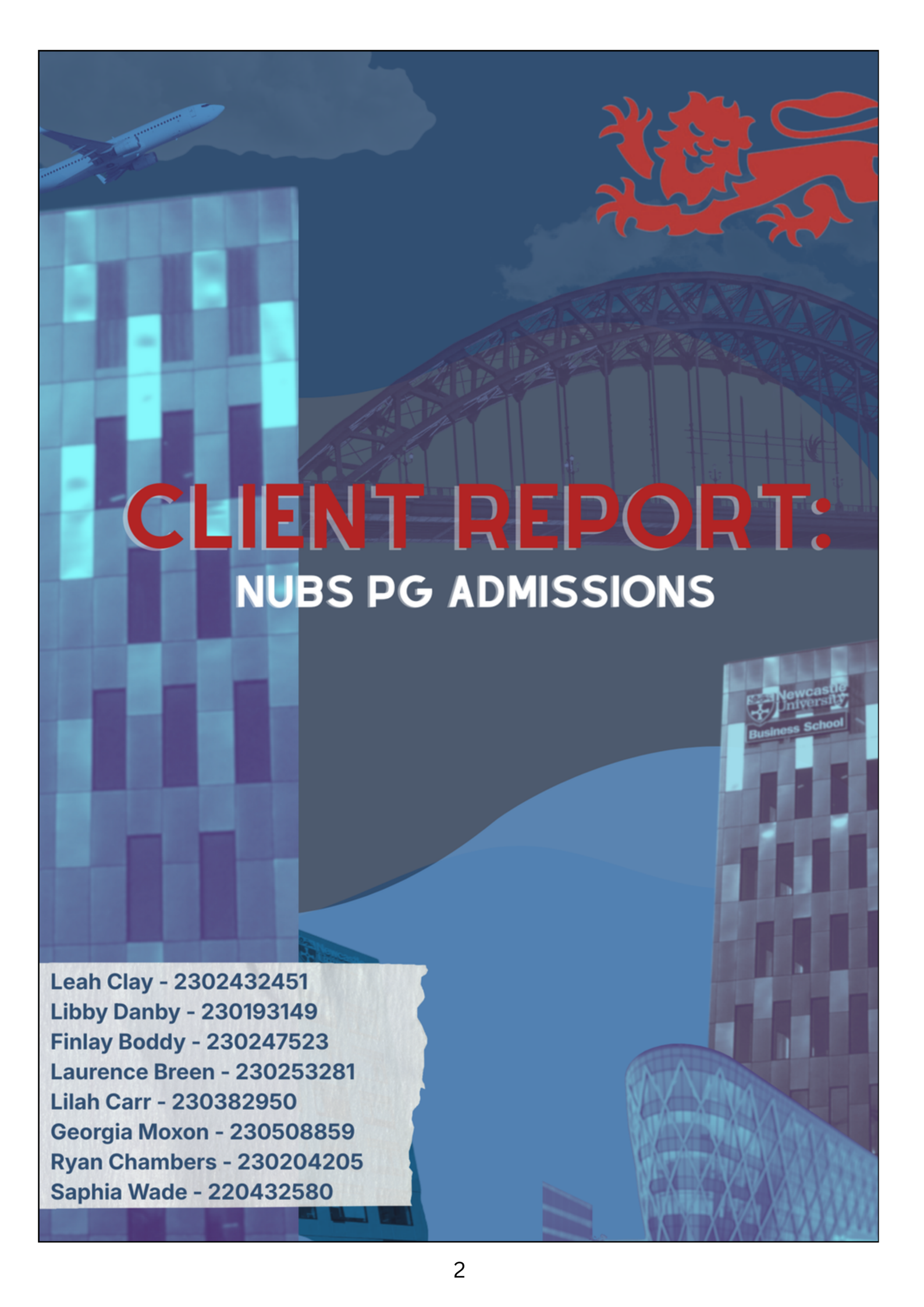


NUBS PG Admissions Client Report

By Finlay Boddy

Word Count: 8245



CLIENT REPORT:

NUBS PG ADMISSIONS

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i. Executive Summary

The postgraduate study (PGT) market has faced recent volatility, characterised by international fluctuations, policy changes and evolving labour market expectations. As a result, universities are facing decreased postgraduate applications and increased barriers to acquisition across domestic and international markets. Newcastle University Business School (NUBS) has faced the repercussions of this, particularly due to the collapse of key international markets such as China. These markets previously provided financial stability to UK universities, and without them, postgraduate numbers have plummeted following the pandemic. Therefore, the overarching aim of this project is to restore numbers to those pre-pandemic whilst establishing a sustainable growth strategy. The following four research aims were developed in line with the provided brief:

Investigate student awareness of NUBS current PG portfolio and competitors equivalent course offerings

Understand how NUBS PG portfolio can be optimised in order to ensure growth and optimal conversion levels

To explore and identify effective channels of communication and marketing techniques that resonate with prospective PG students

To establish how NUBS can effectively expand into key geographic market segments



A mixed-method research approach was adopted, using both primary and secondary research, to gain a wide scope of information, and a balance between student responses and pre-existing literature. Extensive secondary research included a literature review and a situational analysis, providing foundational insight into the macroenvironmental pressures, influencing postgraduate recruitment. Finding revealed that students are becoming increasingly informed, seeking the best ROI on their postgraduate degree, as a result of financial strain and labour market competition. There was strong evidence to suggest student demand for employability-driven education and flexible learning models. Furthermore, when Elevate dove deeper into market segments, international-specific online platforms and QS rankings emerged as key opportunities for advancement.

Elevate Consultancy's primary research combined both qualitative and quantitative methods, including student focus groups, an online quantitative questionnaire, and in-depth interviews with NU staff members. One of the strongest emerging themes was the student demand for peer-led, authentic content and word-of-mouth, rather than institutional messaging. Other key themes consisted of: limited awareness of PG offerings and conversion courses, perceived ineffectiveness in current digital strategies, finance acting as a segment-dependent decision-factor, poor timing alignment of PG communications and demand for employability-driven assessments and course content.

These findings informed the development of 4 key recommendations spanning from short-term, medium-term and long-term implementation. Each recommendation is supported by tactical actions, example mock-ups and underpinned by SMART objectives to ensure measurability and feasibility. Collectively these recommendations aim to strengthen postgraduate recruitment, enhance programme relevance, increase student awareness and maintain competitive positioning.



ii. Acknowledgements

Elevate Consultancy would like to extend our sincere thanks to Fiona, our project supervisor, for her continued guidance and support throughout the duration of this project. Her academic expertise, insightful feedback, and consistent encouragement have been instrumental in shaping both the direction and quality of this work, as well as strengthening our development as a team. We are truly grateful for her ongoing support.



The team would also like to thank Jo Clark, our client and NUBS representative for her commitment to the project. Her passion for post graduate study and student experience is evidenced through her persistent cooperation and engagement throughout the project. Jo has made valuable time for us, and in return we hope our teams' insights make impact of post graduate study at NUBS.



Further appreciation is extended to the staff at NUBS and the wider Newcastle University workforce, who contributed to our research and nurtured out academic progression throughout this monumental year of education. Their openness and willingness to engage has provided us with a newfound depth within our research.



iii. Meet the Team



Elevate Consultancy

Figure 83: Meet The Team

Who are we?

Elevate Consultancy is a team of eight students, forming a collaborative group throughout the capstone consultancy project. Having a variety of individual skills, we have become close, encouraging each others strengths to create impactful solutions.

Our mission:

Elevate Consultancy aims to generate evidence-based, strategically grounded recommendations that promote sustained growth and competitive agility for organisations.

iv. Glossary

A/B Testing – A method of comparing two versions of marketing content to determine which performs better.

AACSB - Association to Advance College Schools of Business: An international accreditation organisation that evaluates the quality of Business Schools.

AMBA - Association of MBAs: Global accreditation organisation of postgraduate business and MBA programmes.

Conversion Attribution – The process of identifying which marketing activities or touchpoints contributed to a user completing a desired action (e.g., application submission).

Conversion Rate / Conversion Levels – The proportion of prospective students who move from interest to enrolment.

Conversion Tracking – Monitoring how users move from awareness to desired actions such as applications or enrolments.

Credential Inflation – A labour market phenomenon where higher levels of education become required for jobs that previously required lower qualifications.

CRM Analytics – The analysis of customer data within Customer Relationship Management systems to track engagement and behaviour.

Digital Saturation – A situation where audiences are exposed to excessive digital messaging, reducing attention and engagement.

Drop-off Points – Stages in a customer journey where individuals disengage before completing a desired action.

Email Fatigue – A decline in engagement caused by excessive or repetitive marketing emails.

Email Segmentation – The practice of dividing an email audience into smaller groups based on characteristics or behaviours to deliver more relevant messages.

Employability Outcomes – Measures of graduates' employment or further study after completing a degree.

Engagement Metrics – Quantitative indicators such as views, clicks, likes or shares used to measure audience interaction with content

EQUIS - European Quality Improvement System: International accreditation awarded to high-quality business schools.

Integrated Multi-Channel Strategy – A coordinated marketing approach that uses multiple communication channels (e.g., email, social media, website) to reinforce messaging.

Macroenvironment Analysis – Assessment of external environmental forces affecting an organisation or market.

Microenvironment Analysis – Evaluation of internal organisational factors that influence strategy and performance.

Omnichannel Marketing – A strategy that integrates multiple communication channels (e.g., social media, email, events, website) to create a consistent and coordinated user experience.

PESTLE Analysis – A framework used to analyse Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental external factors.

Porter's Five Forces – A model used to analyse industry competitiveness through supplier power, buyer power, competitive rivalry, threat of substitutes and threat of new entrants.

Primary Research – Data collected directly for the purpose of the study, such as surveys, interviews, or focus groups.

Return on Investment (ROI) – A measure comparing the benefits of an investment to its costs.

Russell Group – An association of 24 leading UK research-intensive universities.

Secondary Research – Analysis of existing data sources such as reports, academic journals, and market databases.

Sentiment Analysis – The evaluation of audience attitudes or emotions expressed in online interactions or comments.

SMART Objectives – Goals designed to be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound.

SWOT Analysis – A strategic framework evaluating an organisation's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

Triple Accreditation – Recognition achieved when a business school holds AACSB, AMBA, and EQUIS accreditations simultaneously.

Value Proposition – The perceived benefits or value an organisation offers to its target audience.

v. List of Acronyms

- AI** - Artificial Intelligence
- CRM** - Customer Relationship Manager
- CTR** - Click-Through Rate
- DPD** - Degree Programme Director
- EU** - European Union
- GDPR** - General Data Protection Regulation
- Gen Z** - Generation Z, 1997-2012
- HESA** - Higher Education Statistics Agency
- MSc** - Masters
- NUBS** - Newcastle University Business School
- PESTLE** - Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental
- PG** - Post Graduate
- PGT** - Post Graduate Taught
- Q+A** - Question and Answer
- QS** - Quacquarelli Symonds
- RA** - Research Assistant
- ROI** - Return On Investment
- STEM** - Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics
- SWOT** - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
- UCAS** - Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
- UG** - Under Graduate
- UK** - United Kingdom

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Section 1 : Introduction



1.1. The Client

Newcastle University Business School (NUBS) is a constituent school of Newcastle University, a UK Russell Group institution recognised for its research-led ethos and prestigious triple accreditation (AACSB, AMBA and EQUIS). Aligned with the University's mission to advance knowledge, share insight and drive responsible, inclusive transformation, NUBS has established a distinct and reputable position since its formation in 2002, building upon more than a century of business education heritage.

The Business School is recognised for strong graduate employability outcomes and extensive global industry partnerships, positioning it at the forefront of academic excellence and student experience. Situated in the centre of Newcastle upon Tyne, NUBS benefits from the city's strong appeal to both domestic and international students. Newcastle is consistently ranked among the UK's leading student cities, offering a vibrant social environment alongside a comparatively low cost of living, contributing to positive student and alumni experience.

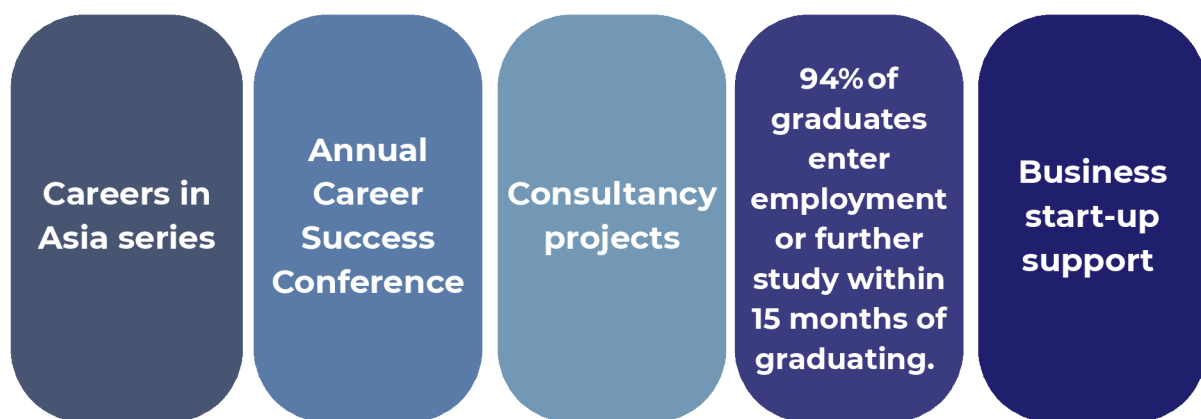


Figure 1: Client Attributes

NUBS' postgraduate taught programmes are designed to accelerate career progression by enhancing employability and advancing academic capability. These Master's programmes emphasise real-world application and industry relevance, reflected in strong postgraduate outcomes and positive alumni feedback.

NUBS' postgraduate portfolio spans a wide range of disciplines, from established courses such as Banking and Finance to innovative and emerging programmes including Artificial Intelligence in Business. This breadth enables NUBS to appeal to diverse geographic markets, demographic groups and academic backgrounds.

1.2 The Project

As undergraduate marketing students, we undertook this Marketing Consultancy Project as part of our Capstone module in collaboration with Newcastle University Business School and the Postgraduate Study Recruitment Team at Newcastle University.

The project focuses on postgraduate study, providing NUBS with student-led insight into perceptions, intentions, priority markets and curriculum value to inform strategic decision-making. The overarching objective is to develop short-, medium- and long-term recommendations aimed at restoring postgraduate enrolment to pre-pandemic (2020) levels.

This report presents the research, analysis and strategic recommendations developed over a six-month period, drawing on both primary and secondary data supported by visual infographics.

Client Challenges:

After receiving the brief and speaking with our Client, our team outlined four main challenges currently creating barriers to enrolment, business growth and expansion for NUBS

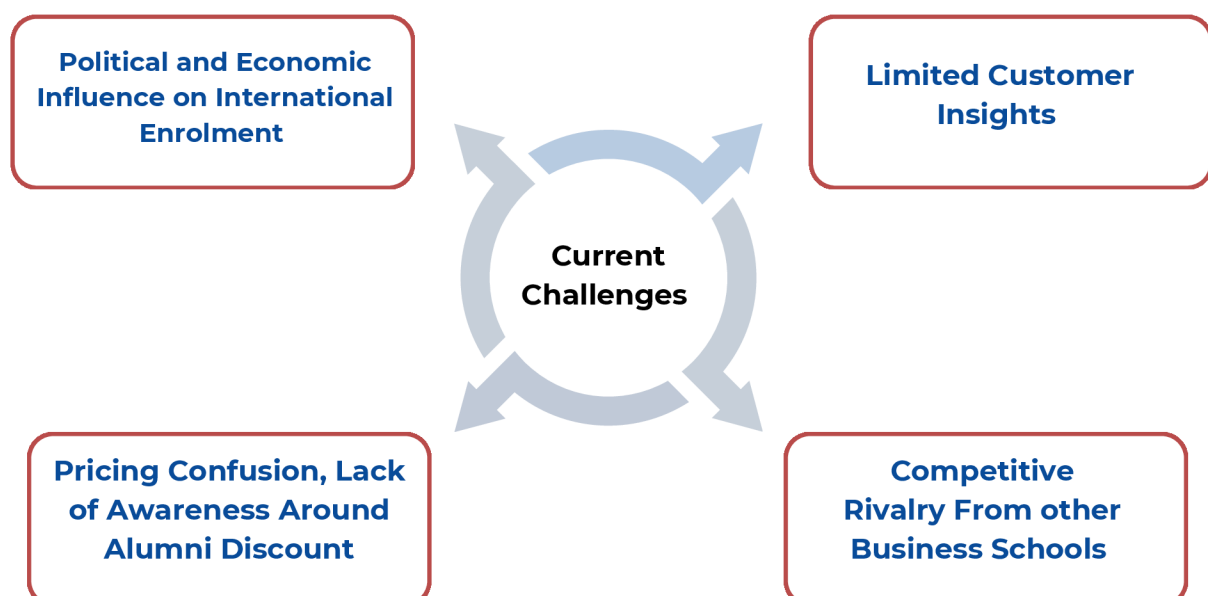


Figure 2: Current Challenges

1.3 Aims and Objectives

The following four research objectives were developed by Elevate Consultancy and confirmed by in collaboration with a NUBS's representative:

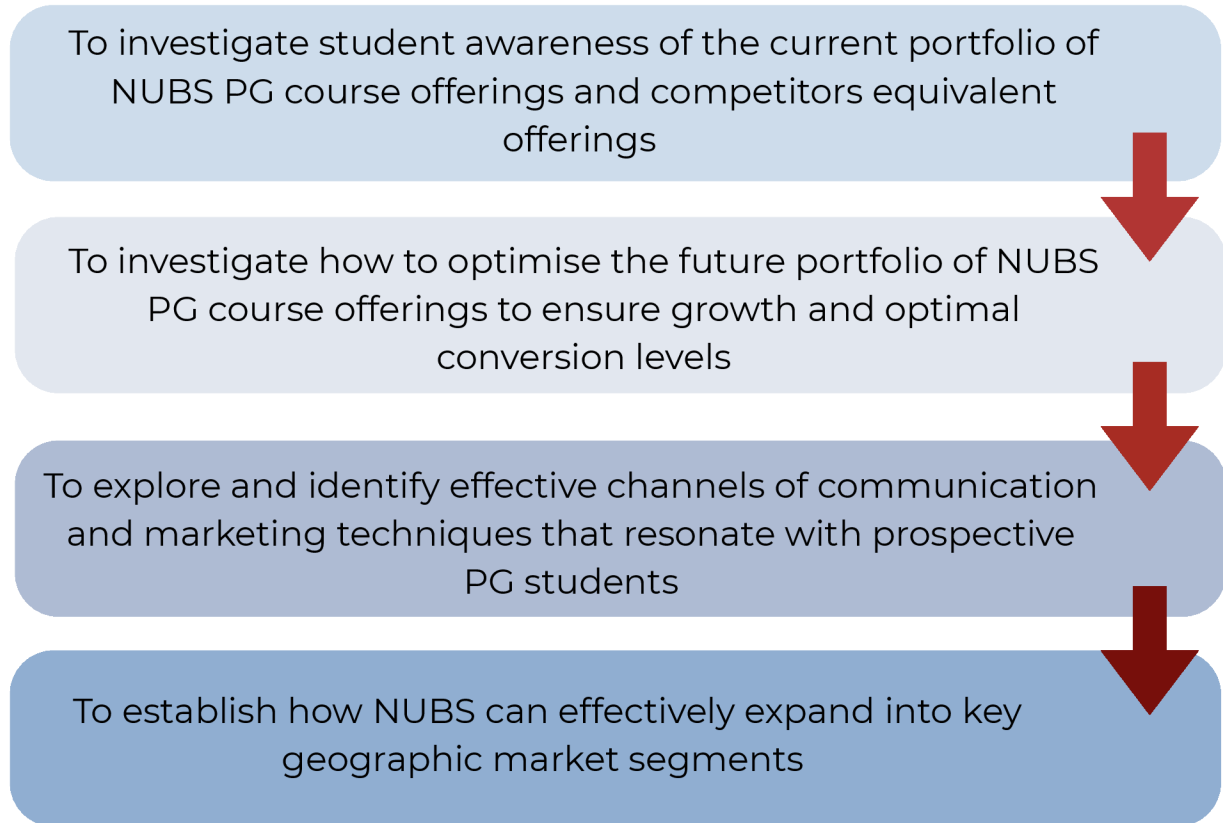


Figure 3: Research Aims

1.4 Summary

This report presents strategic marketing recommendations for Newcastle University Business School (NUBS), developed through primary and secondary research into the postgraduate taught (PGT) market. The findings address the key internal and external challenges affecting PGT recruitment and provide actionable solutions to support enrolment growth and long-term competitiveness.

Through our research, we identified significant opportunities to strengthen NUBS' market position by enhancing value communication, refining targeted marketing strategies, and aligning programme offerings with evolving student motivations and global demand. Our proposed strategies build on NUBS' existing strengths; including its Russell Group affiliation, triple accreditation and strong employability outcomes. By implementing these recommendations, NUBS can effectively enhance student experience, and strengthen its presence in both domestic and international markets.



Section 2: Research Methodology



2.0 Research Methodology

2.1 Introduction

To analyse the post-graduate market effectively we used both primary and secondary research to gather reliable and relevant data. Within our secondary research, we used a range of analytical tools and scholarly resources to explore NUBS' current position within the evolving market. Statista and Mintel were key resources enabling us to gain deeper market insights, identifying student trends and strengthening or strategic recommendations. Our primary data collection was conducted using three methods: an online quantitative questionnaire, two focus groups, and in-depth interviews. Diverse methodologies created a strong foundation of knowledge through opinions and student preferences around post-graduate study. Collectively, these approaches enabled us to address our research objectives and develop four detailed, evidence-based recommendations grounded in both quantitative and qualitative findings. A more detailed account of the research methodology can be found in the Research Portfolio (Section 2).

2.2 Secondary Research Methodology

To generate strong foundational insights and provide context about our client, the wider postgraduate sector and market changes, secondary research was conducted. This identified existing trends and potential opportunities or challenges.

2.2.1 Secondary Research Objectives



To examine the external and competitive forces shaping the UK postgraduate education market.



To analyse financial factors influencing postgraduate decision making, including price sensitivity and student loans.



To assess the growing importance of employability outcomes and industry alignment in student choice.



To evaluate the impact of alternative credentials and flexible learning models on postgraduate provision.



To identify effective digital communication strategies that engage prospective postgraduate students.

Figure 4: Secondary Research Objectives

2.2.2 Stages of Secondary Research

Secondary data collection was conducted across four stages, progressing from a broad industry overview to focused thematic analysis. This structured approach informed subsequent primary research and strategic recommendations.



Figure 5: Stages of Secondary Research

2.2.3 Sources of Secondary Research

To ensure a balanced perspective, a range of academic and industry sources were used to conduct our secondary research. Market research databases such as Mintel, WONKHE and Statista provided sector insights and relevant statistical data. Newcastle University's online library and ResearchGate were used to access peer-reviewed journals exploring our key themes.

This combination of academic theory and contemporary industry data ensured the recommendations were grounded in both scholarly research and current sector practice.

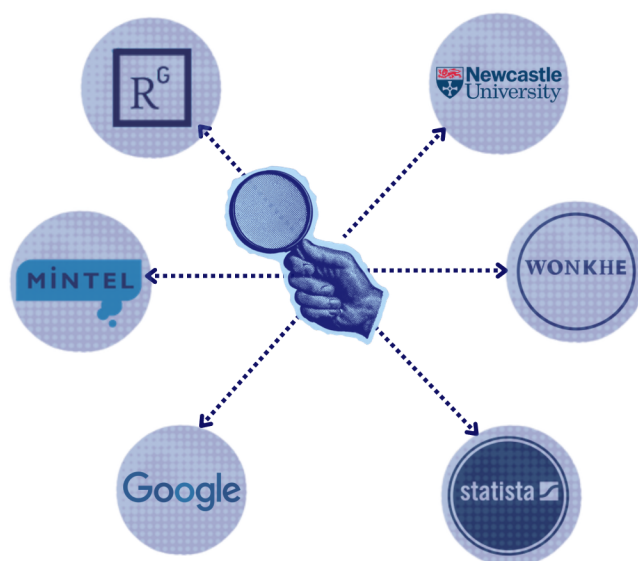


Figure 6: Sources of Secondary Research

2.3 Primary Research Methods

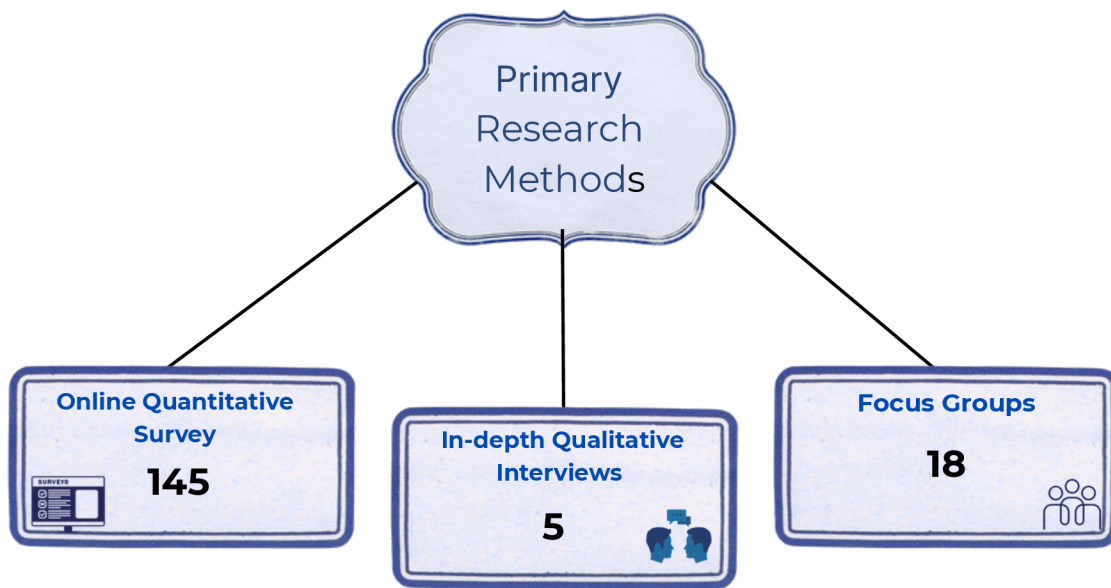


Figure 7: Primary Research Methods

2.3.1 Primary Research Objectives



Assess the awareness of NUBS postgraduate offerings



Measure the recognition of specific NUBS postgraduate programmes



Evaluate the awareness of competitor institutions offering equivalent courses



Identify the sources of information influencing awareness of NUBS's offerings



Determine the effective communication channels and marketing techniques for engaging prospective students



Explore opportunities to optimise the future NUBS postgraduate offerings portfolio



Assess strategic approaches for expanding NUBS presence

Figure 8: Primary Research Objectives

2.4 Online Questionnaire Methodology

Online Questionnaires
are useful because:

Reducing Bias

By removing interviewer effects, participants are more resistant to social desirability bias (Ha, 2022).

Efficient and Scalable

Ability to reach large volumes of participants, with minimal time and/or budget spent (Ha, 2022).

Convenience

Convenient for participants, not bound to time constraints or transport arrangements (Ha, 2022).

Figure 9: Online Questionnaire Methodology

2.4.1 Online Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was developed to produce quantitative insight into student awareness of postgraduate opportunities at NUBS. The questionnaire aimed to assess levels of recognition, perceptions of competitiveness between institutions, and the influencing factors on postgraduate decision making. For further details, refer to the Research Portfolio (Section 2.3.3)

Distribution

Qualtrics was used to build and manage the questionnaire. A web link was circulated via peer networks and social-media platforms, including LinkedIn and Instagram. To broaden reach with the intended audience, QR codes were displayed in high-traffic student areas, directing participants to the online questionnaire.

Sampling

Non-probability convenience sampling approach was used to distribute the questionnaire digitally through peer networks, specifically via Instagram and LinkedIn. Additional responses were generated through voluntary participation, with scannable QR codes placed in high student footfall areas, to increase relevance to the target population. This approach aimed to balance participant motivation and response quality with the practical need to achieve sufficient scale.

Question Structure

The questionnaire was organised into three stages in a funnel-based structure:

1. Respondent background and eligibility
2. Postgraduate intentions and general awareness
3. Detailed evaluation of NUBS and alternative institutions

Closed ended formats, including multiple choice items, Likert scales, ranking questions, and select-all options were used. There was minimal usage of open-ended questions in order to provide optimal qualitative context.

Measures to Encourage Participation

Steps taken to maximise engagement and minimise drop-off:

- Clear/concise question wording
- Structured progression from general to specific topics (Jenn, 2006)
- Use of display logic to remove irrelevant questions
- Balanced survey length to reduce fatigue (Fass-Holmes, 2022)
- Combination of question formats to sustain interest.

2.4.2 Online Questionnaire Limitations

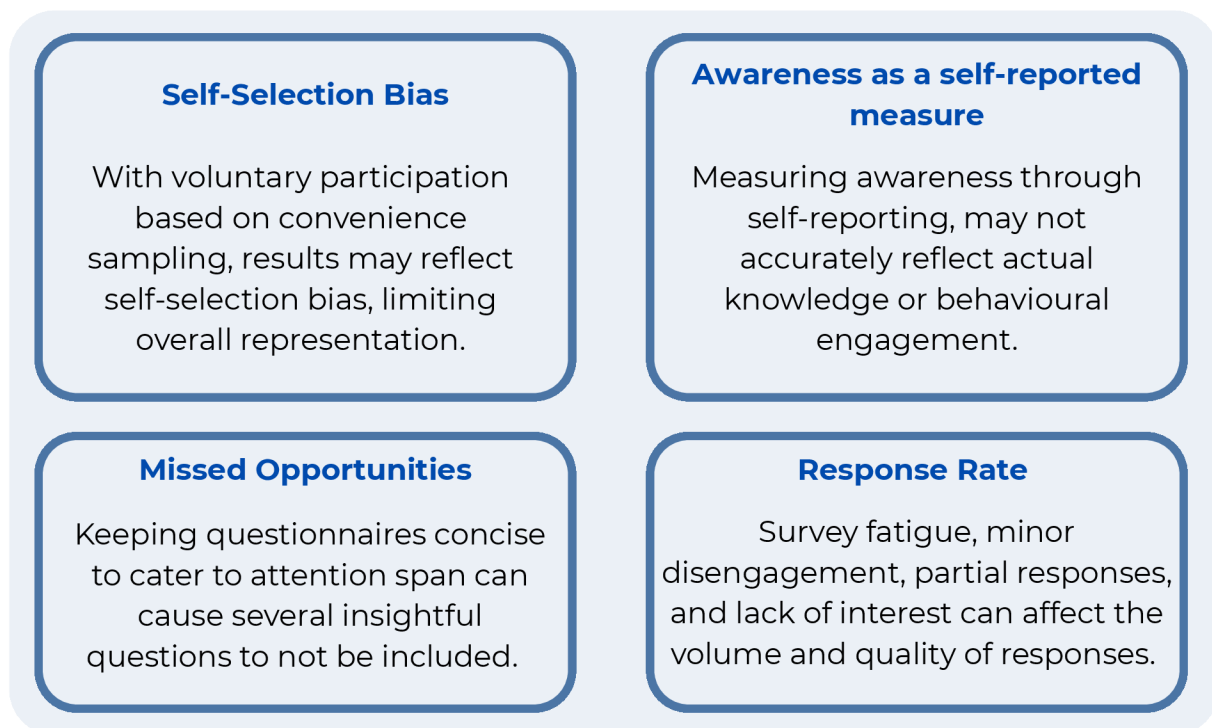


Figure 10: Online Questionnaire Limitations

2.5 In-depth Interview Methodology

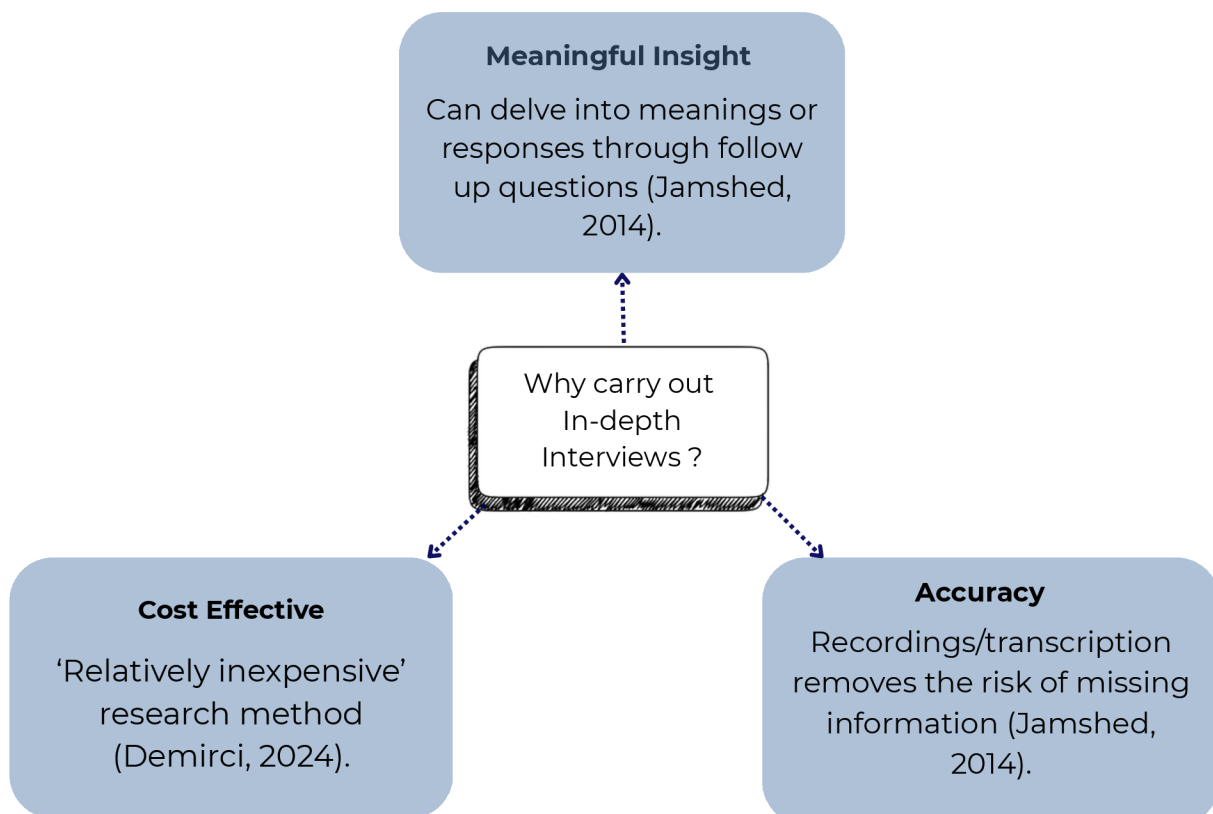


Figure 11: In-depth Interview Methodology

2.5.1 In-depth Interview Design

For a more detailed methodology, refer to the Research Portfolio (Section 2.3.4)

Research Aims and Objectives

The in-depth interviews were conducted to gain detailed insight into the internal operations, postgraduate portfolio and strategic direction of NUBS. Interviews with academic and recruitment staff aimed to gather expert perspectives to inform realistic, actionable recommendations aligned with institutional capabilities.

Sampling

A purposive (judgemental) sampling approach was used, selecting five participants based on their professional relevance and ability to provide informed insights (Lune and Berg, 2017). Interviewees included Degree Programme Directors, Postgraduate Leaders, Co-Directors, and Student Recruitment staff from NUBS and the wider university.

Interview Structure

The interviews followed a semi-structured format, combining pre-prepared questions with flexibility to probe and follow up discussions. A discussion guide ensured coverage of key themes, including: course development, employability, alumni engagement, competition, marketing strategy, and future programme trends.

Question Wording

Questions were carefully reviewed to avoid leading language and minimise bias (Alshenqeeti, 2014). An open-ended approach was used to encourage depth and elaboration, while tone and delivery were managed to ensure credibility, clarity, and reliability of responses.

Figure 12: In-depth Interview Design



2.5.2 In-Depth Interview Limitations

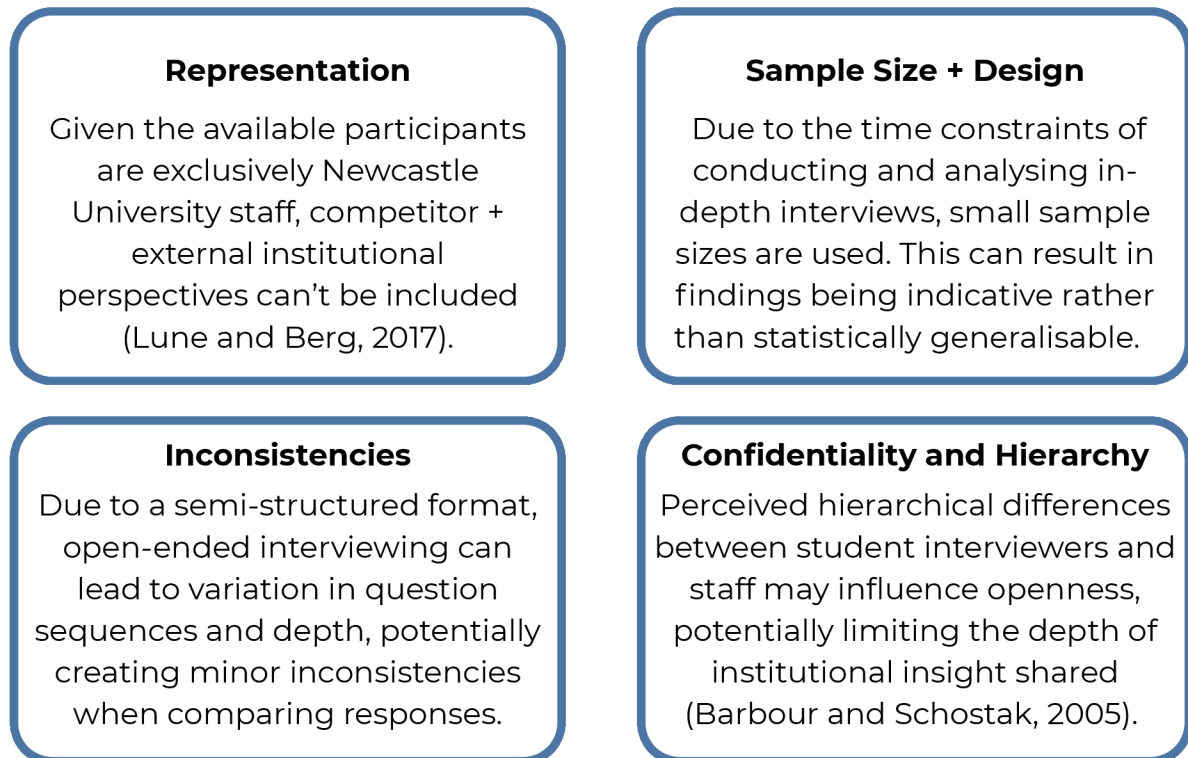


Figure 13: In-depth Interview Limitations

2.6 Focus Group Methodology

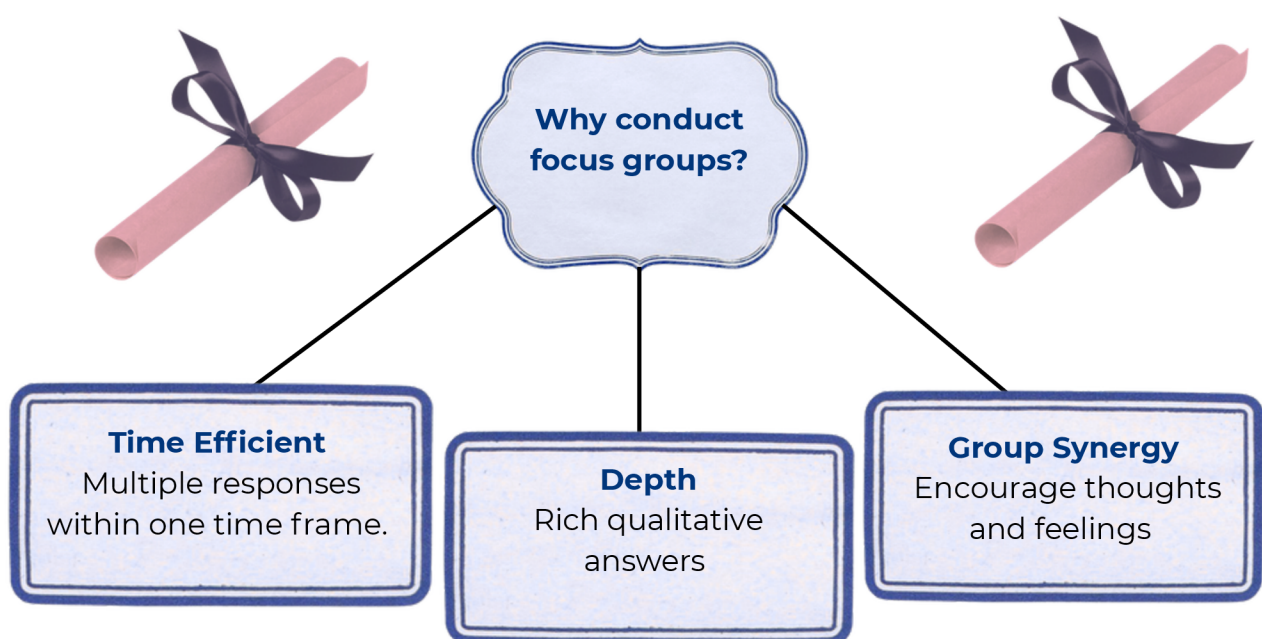


Figure 14: Focus Group Methodology

2.6.1 Focus Group Design

For a more detailed methodology, refer to the Research Portfolio (Section 2.3.5)

Research Aims and Objectives

The focus groups were conducted to explore students' perceptions of NUBS and identify the most effective communication channels for postgraduate marketing (RA2). They also examined undergraduate awareness and opinions of NUBS' services and opportunities, and how these influence postgraduate consideration (RA4).

Sampling

Convenience sampling was primarily used, drawing participants from existing university networks. Some snowball sampling was also applied to increase international student representation. Sessions were conducted mainly in person, with Microsoft Teams access provided when necessary.

Structure

The focus groups followed a semi structure format, combining prepared questions with follow up probes to encourage open discussion (Ruslin et al, 2022). This flexible approach allowed new themes to emerge and be explored, while ensuring core research topics were covered.

Question Wording

Questions were designed to be clear, neutral, and non-leading to encourage honest discussion. Careful phrasing minimised researcher bias and supported the collection of credible insights.

Figure 15: Focus Group Design

2.6.2 Focus Group Limitations

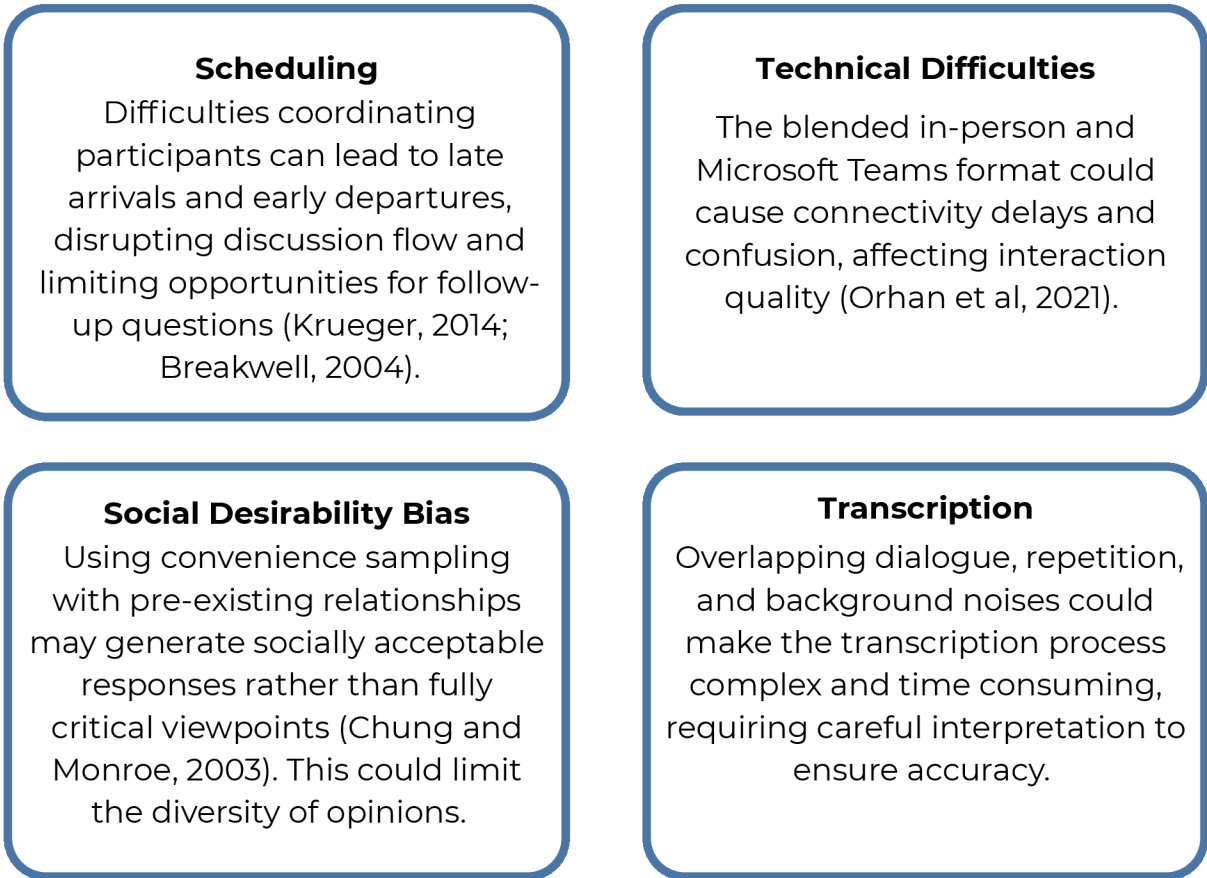


Figure 16: Focus Group Limitations

2.7 Ethical Considerations

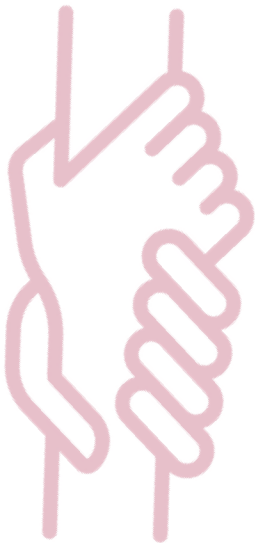
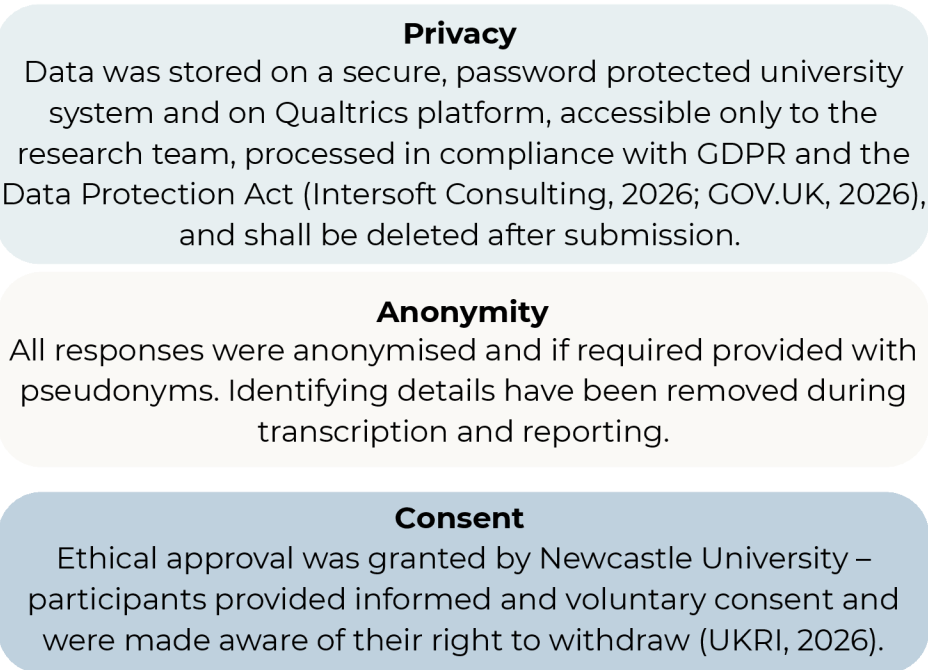
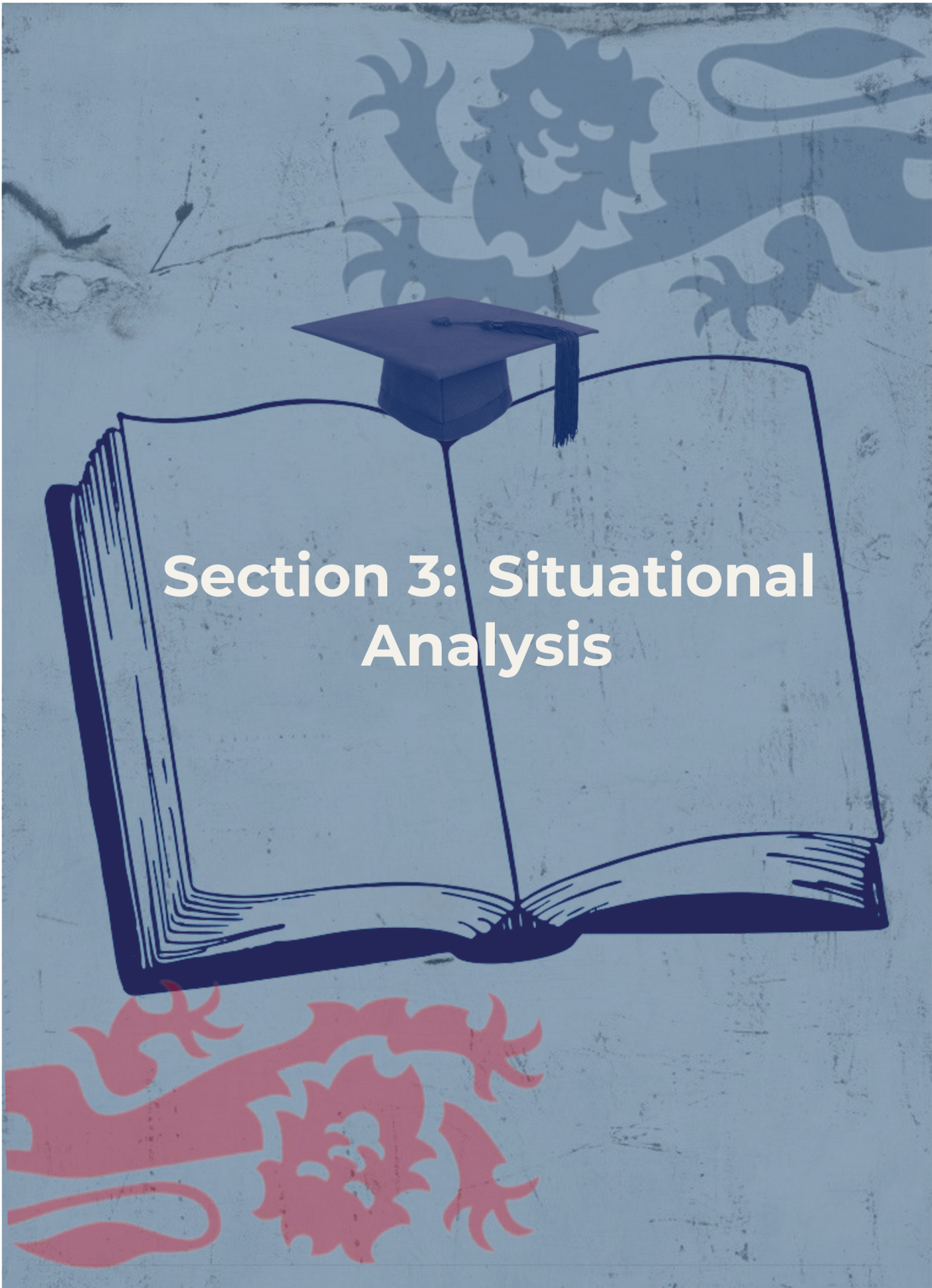


Figure 17: Ethical Considerations

2.8 Summary

At Elevate Consultancy, we have used a mixed method approach to curate both primary (online questionnaire, in depth interviews, focus groups) and secondary research regarding NUBS postgraduate recruitment. Limitations of each method have been addressed, and ethical guidelines have been followed throughout, allowing for reliable information to influence our recommendations.



Section 3: Situational Analysis

3. Situational Analysis

3.1 Introduction

This situational analysis critically evaluates the internal and external forces shaping Newcastle University Business School's position within the increasingly competitive postgraduate education market. Drawing on PESTLE and Porter's Five Forces frameworks, it examines the impact of shifting international mobility patterns, financial pressures, rapid technological advancement, and intensifying global competition. While NUBS benefits from strong accreditation, graduate employability outcomes, and an established institutional reputation, it remains vulnerable to policy uncertainty and fluctuating international student demand. These findings highlight the strategic importance of targeted marketing, programme innovation, and clearer communication of postgraduate value to enhance recruitment outcomes and sustain long-term competitiveness. A more detailed Situational Analysis can be found in the Research Portfolio (Section 3)

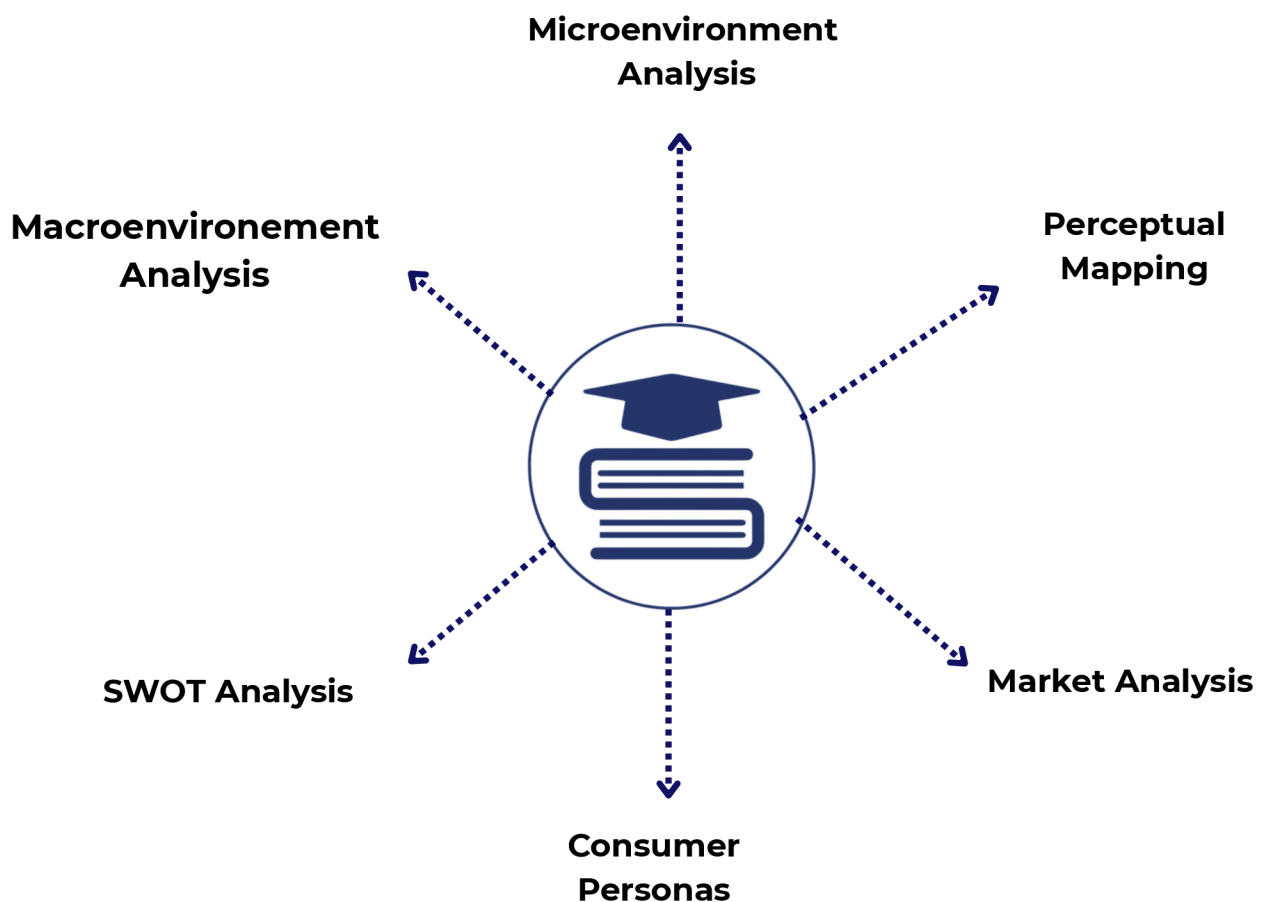


Figure 18: Situational Analysis

3.2 Macroevironment Analysis - PESTLE

Political

- Global politics– Brexit and Chinese internal immigration laws see plummeting applicant numbers - (Kreier, 2023; Bolton, Gower & Lewis, 2025)
- Visa oversubscription cases (e.g., UCL) raising reputational and trust concerns for UK universities (Dickinson, 2025).

Economic

- Cost of living limiting postgraduate progression (Office for National Statistics, 2025).
- Currency: GBP fell 1.1% against USD (Sept–Oct 2025) heightening affordability concerns (Webb, 2026).
- Affordability advantage: Newcastle among UK's most affordable student cities (Muskan, 2025).

Social

- Level 6/7 apprenticeships increased by 20.4% (2023–24) (Department for Education, 2025).
- Declining international students reducing diversity (Owen, 2025), leading to lower learning gains for underrepresented groups (The White House, 2016; Holford & Sen, 2025).

Technological

- Online learning growth: Participation up from 4% to 17% post-COVID (Statista, 2024).
- AI integration essential in business education to remain relevant (Cremer & Chan, 2025).
- Rising demand for business-technology interdisciplinary programmes (Bobek, Zimmermannova, and Zabukovsek, 2023; Leckrone, 2025).

Legal

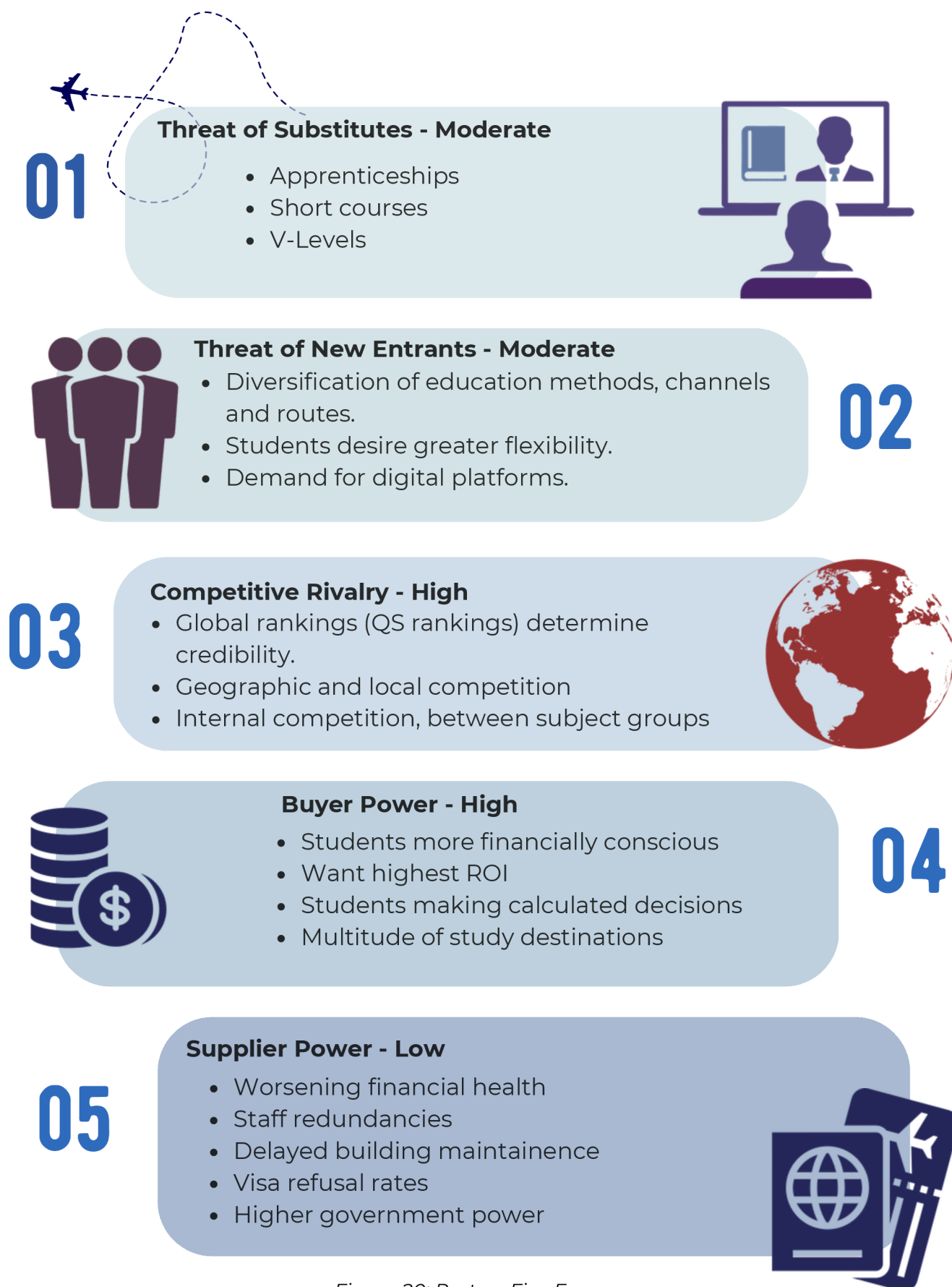
- UK postgraduate enrolment down 57% (2020–2024) due to strict visa rules (Cuibus, 2025).
- UK & US account for 71% of Chinese outbound students (Statista, 2025).
- Students increasingly choosing destinations with more lenient visa policies (e.g., Canada) (Neville, 2025).

Ecological

- Sustainable job listings up 68% since 2023 (University of Reading, 2025).
- Green roles now occupy 3.3% of UK job adverts (double 2021) (PwC, 2024).
- Sustainability skills increasingly relevant across varied disciplines, not just STEM.

Figure 19: PESTLE Analysis

3.3 Competitor Analysis - Porters Five Forces



3.4 Target Market

By identifying the key target audiences that Newcastle Business School currently attracts, particularly in relation to demographic and psychographic characteristics, a clearer understanding of its existing market position can be developed. Secondary research informed the potential customer profiles, reflecting both characteristics and underlying motivations for post-graduate study. These profiles can then be used to inform targeting and positioning strategies, ensuring that marketing communications, course offerings, and student support services are tailored to the needs and expectations of prospective students. For further details, a complete analysis can be found in the Research Portfolio (Section 2.3.3).

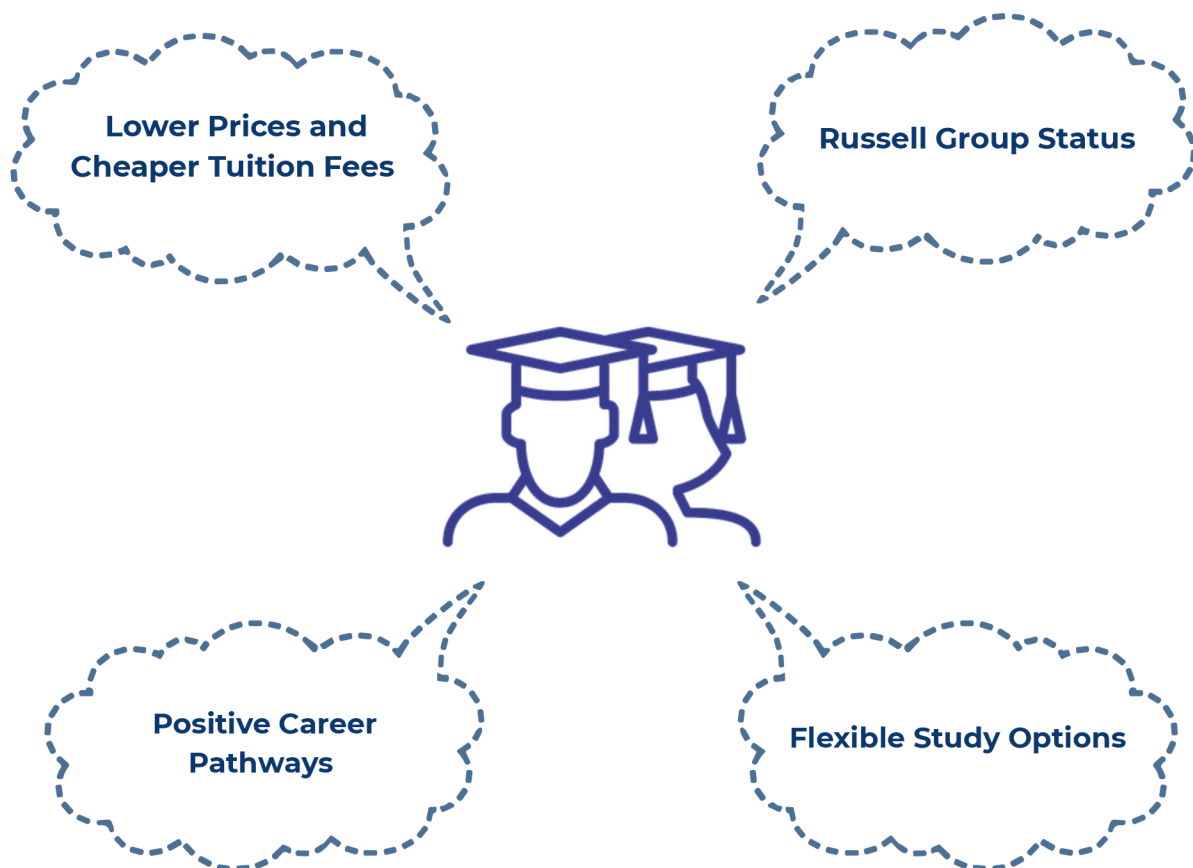


Figure 21: Target Market

3.4.1 Customer Personas

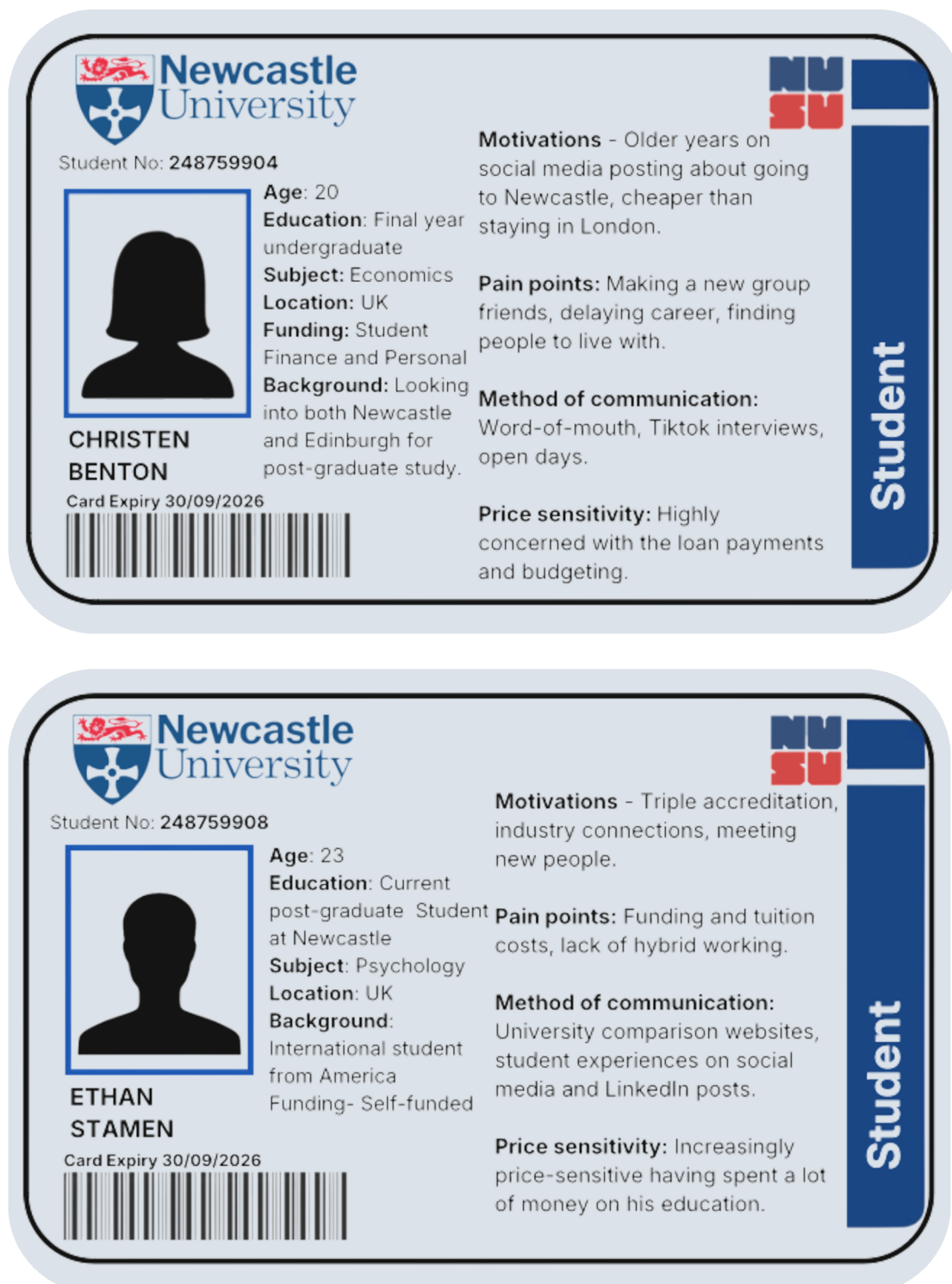


Figure 22: Consumer Profiles

3.4.2 Competitor Analysis: Perceptual Maps

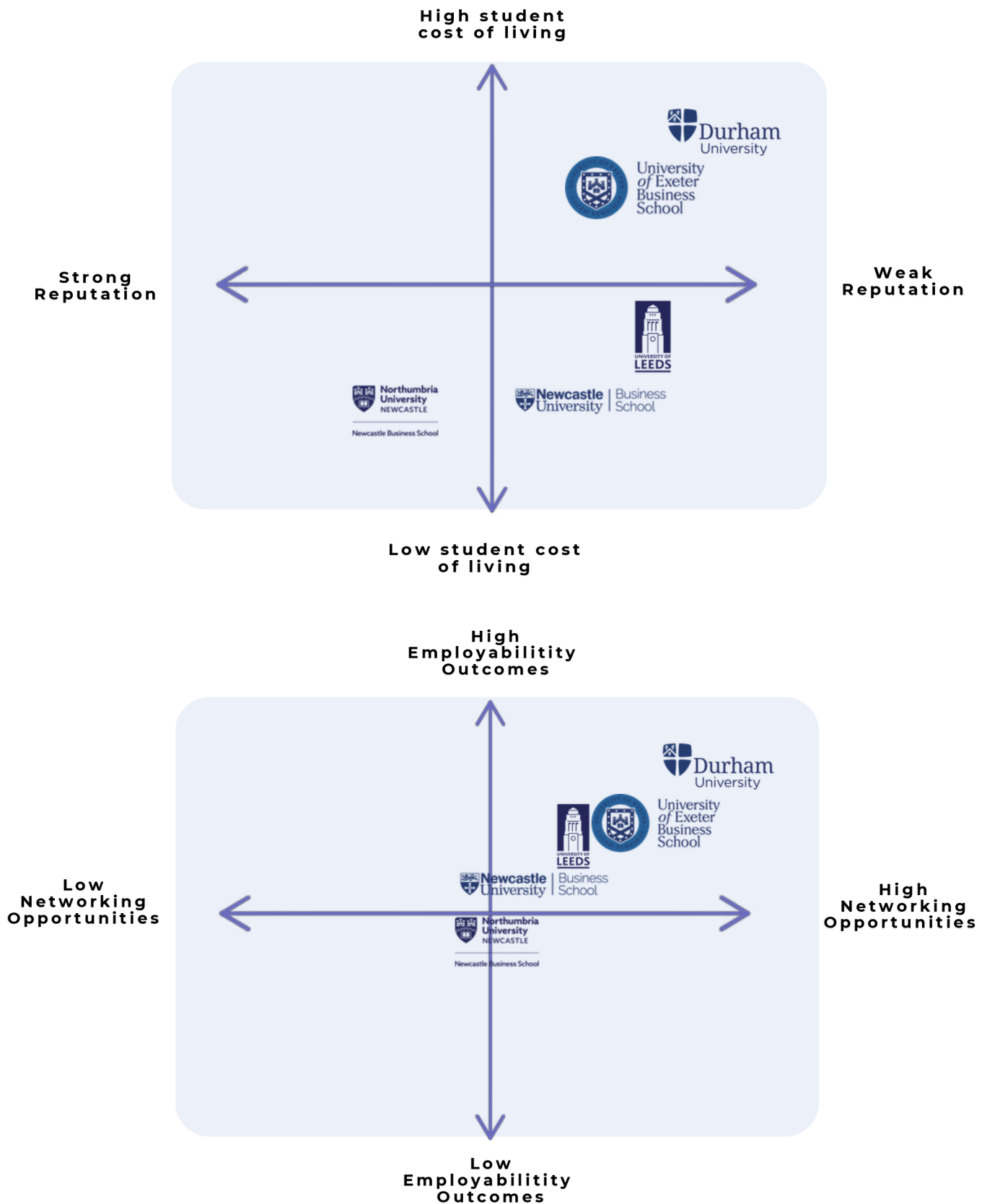


Figure 23: Perceptual Maps

3.5 Micro Analysis

Current Situation



Figure 23: Micro Analysis



3.6 SWOT Analysis

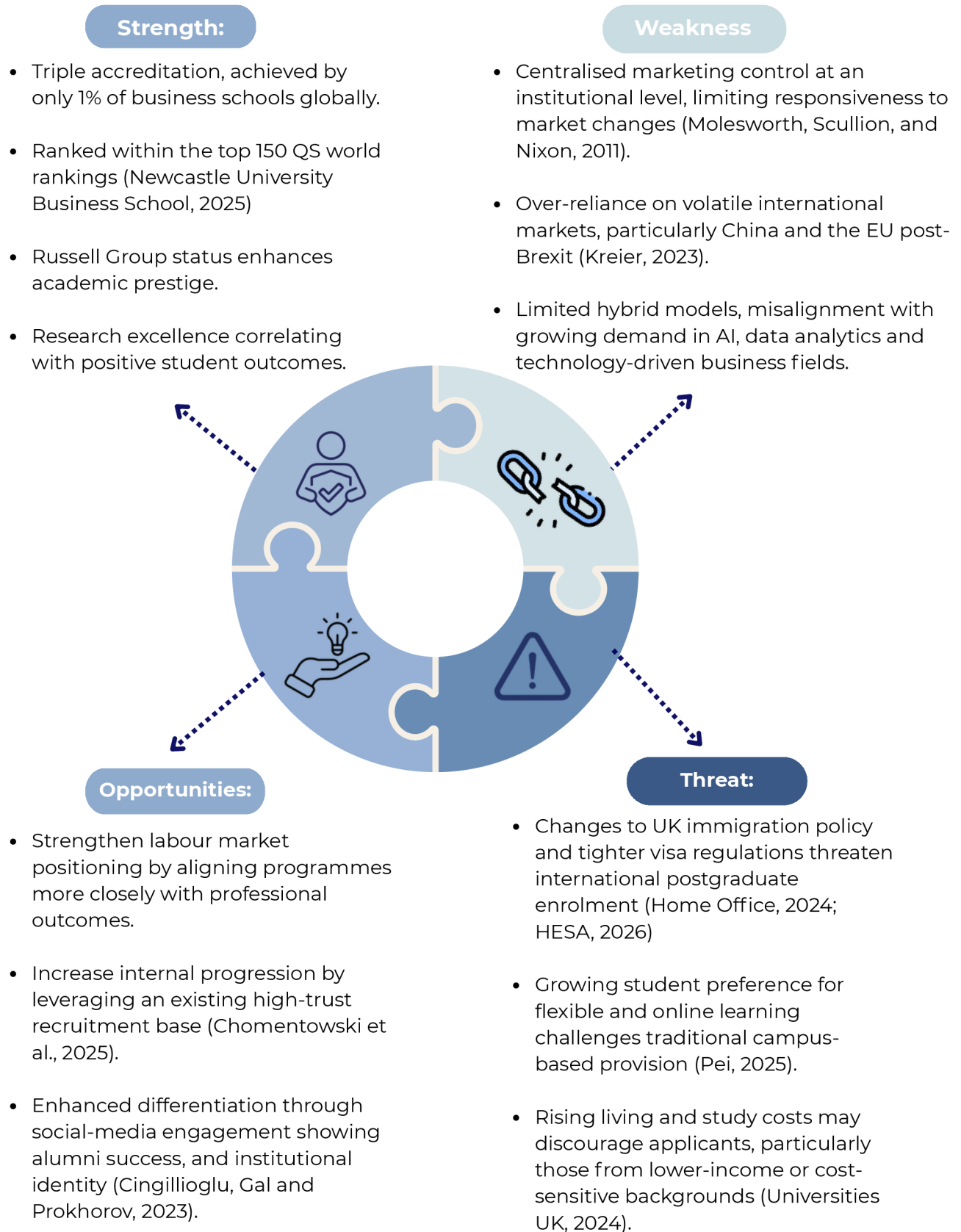


Figure 24: SWOT Analysis

3.6.1 SWOT Analysis Summary

Drawing on the SWOT Analysis it has been summarised that NUBS' strong competitive foundations, shaped by triple accreditation, Russell Group affiliation and global rankings collectively contribute to positive student outcomes. Externally, Brexit, tighter immigration policy and rising costs have increased price sensitivity, creating demand for lower-cost hybrid learning opportunities (Statista, 2024). However, both internal and external pressures restrict growth, with centralised marketing structures reducing agility and slowing responsiveness to evolving market conditions. Competitive intensity also remains high, with global rankings and employability outcomes majorly influencing student choice of university (QS, 2026). Despite this, opportunities exist for NUBS to strengthen its market position through flexible learning opportunities and targeted social media messaging, tailored towards prospective students.

Literature Review



Newcastle University | Business School

4.0 Literature Review

4.1 Introduction

This literature review uses existing literature to examine the significant transformation of the contemporary job market and the increasingly complex conditions faced by graduate students. Understanding these interrelated factors is essential for developing an effective push-pull strategy to engage prospective students throughout the enrolment funnel. Each theme reflects this dynamic environment and underpins the focus of the primary research that follows. A full review is presented in the Research Portfolio (Section 4).

4.2 Contemporary Graduate Labour Market

The graduate labour market has become increasingly competitive, with declining entry-level vacancies and rising application volumes reducing employment prospects for new graduates (Surguy, 2025). At the same time, credential inflation has weakened the signalling value of undergraduate degrees, making additional qualifications and experience essential for differentiation (Spence, 1978).

Graduate employment outcomes are shaped not only by individual capability but by wider structural factors, including economic instability, employer preferences and a persistent mismatch between academic provision and industry expectations (Husin et al., 2021; Yahui and Dagogo, 2025). As a result, many graduates are turning to postgraduate study as a strategic response to limited opportunities and heightened competition (Surguy, 2025).

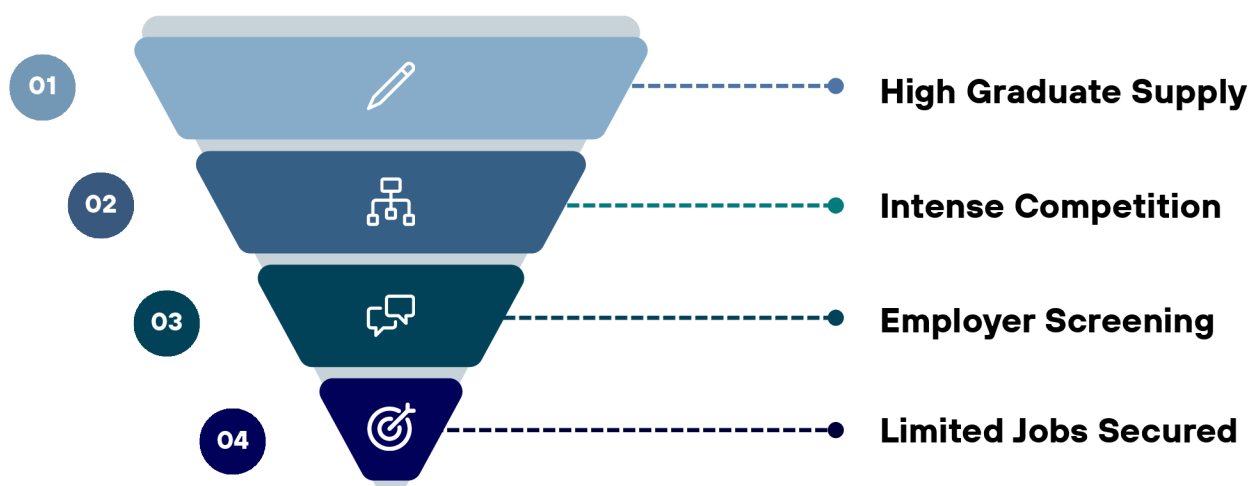


Figure 26: Graduate Labour Market Funnel

4.3 Return on Investment and Postgraduate Value Perceptions

Perceptions of postgraduate study are increasingly shaped by return-on-investment (ROI) considerations, with students assessing programmes based on employability, salary potential and institutional reputation (Mellors-Bourne, Hooley and Marriott., 2014; Ives and Seymour, 2023). Rising tuition fees and living costs mean improved career outcomes no longer offset financial investment, particularly for domestic students facing funding gaps (Hordósy, Clark and Vickers, 2018).

As higher education becomes more marketised, students act as informed consumers, comparing institutions based on value for money and career advantage (Tholen, 2020). Where clear employability outcomes are not communicated, confidence in postgraduate study weakens, reinforcing the need for transparent ROI messaging within recruitment strategies.

4.4 Customer Journey and Digital Touchpoints

Postgraduate recruitment operates within a highly complex and saturated environment, whereby digital touchpoints play a central role in shaping prospective students' information searches and decision-making process (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006; Bennett and Ali-Choudhury, 2009). The postgraduate customer journey is increasingly non-linear, with students engaging across multiple channels and revisiting information as they evaluate options (Towers and Towers, 2021; McNicholas and Marcella, 2022).

As a high-cost, high-risk decision, postgraduate study involves information-intensive evaluation, making credible touchpoints such as university websites, rankings and student-generated content particularly influential in shaping perceptions and institutional trust (Moogan, Baron and Harris, 1999; Karakus et al., 2026). Strategically aligned touchpoints that provide consistent information, reassurance and clear employability value are therefore essential for strengthening engagement and supporting postgraduate recruitment outcomes (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).



4.5 Student Recruitment vs Retention

Strong brand awareness enhances perceptions of quality, trust and value, shaping decision-making and long-term brand performance (Keller, 1993; Erdem and Swait, 2001). Pricing strategies further influence perceived value, as students evaluate whether programmes are financially worthwhile relative to expected outcomes (Ali and Anwar, 2021).

Effective customer acquisition therefore relies on clear value communication, competitive positioning and targeted digital engagement. Data-driven targeting and coordinated communication across channels enable institutions to attract prospective students while ensuring acquisition efforts remain cost-effective and aligned with long-term retention and lifetime value (Ang and Buttle, 2006; Melinevskyi et al., 2023).

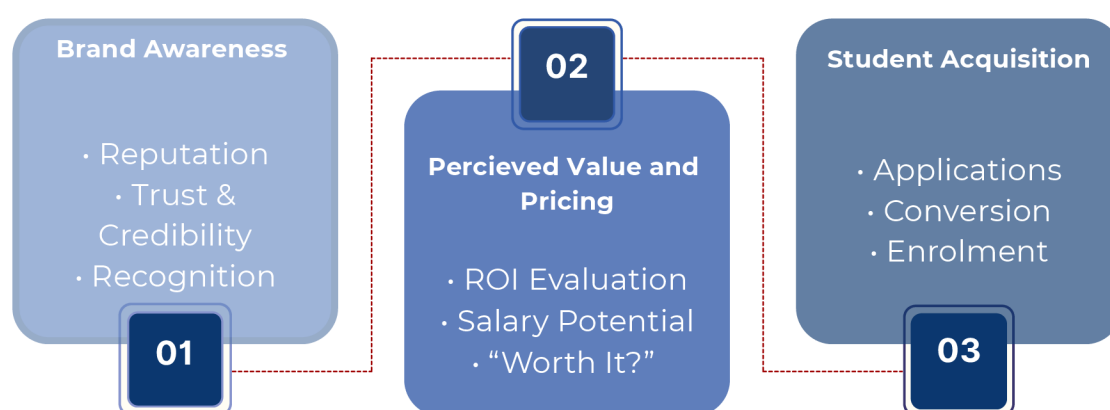
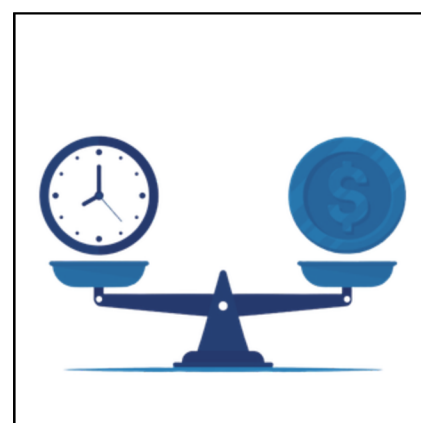


Figure 27: Student Retention vs Recruitment

4.6 Summary

The literature discussed highlights the increasingly complex landscape shaping postgraduate decision-making, where labour market pressures and return-on-investment considerations encourage students to approach further study as a strategic choice. Perceptions of employability, value for money and institutional credibility therefore play a central role in progression decisions.

Together, these insights demonstrate that postgraduate enrolment is shaped by the interaction of structural conditions.





Research Findings

 **Newcastle** University | Business School

5.0 Research Findings and Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This section presents the key findings from both primary and secondary research, bringing together the most relevant insights shaping postgraduate decision-making and institutional strategy. Primary research further explores student motivations, decision-making behaviours and progression intentions, offering deeper insight into the factors shaping same-institution continuation and course choice.

Together, these findings provide a clear understanding of internal perceptions of NUBS and competitors and identify the most significant themes emerging from the research. These themes will later inform the strategic direction of the include recommendations.

For more in depth research findings, refer to the Research Portfolio (Section 5)

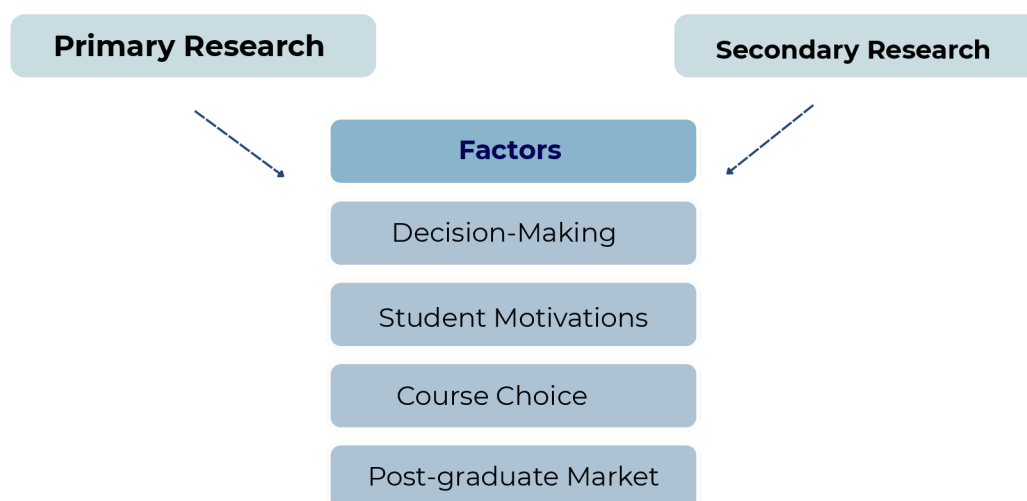


Figure 28: Research Findings



5.2 Secondary Research Findings

Core insights from the secondary research are summarised below, outlining the main factors shaping postgraduate demand and competition. See the Research Portfolio (4.2) for full analysis.

International Market

International students remain a vital financial contributor to UK universities, supporting tuition income and institutional sustainability (HESA, 2025; Universities UK, 2023).

However, reliance on this market increases exposure to political, economic and policy shifts that influence recruitment patterns and long-term financial stability (British Council, 2025).

Price Sensitivity & Student Loans



Financial considerations play a central role in postgraduate decision-making as rising tuition fees and loan structures result in increased price sensitivity.

Research shows 68% of UK respondents consider £9,000 tuition too expensive, reinforcing the need for universities to clearly communicate return on investment and employability outcomes (Smith, 2026).

Employability-Driven Education



Employability outcomes are increasingly influential in postgraduate decision-making, with students prioritising career progression and industry relevance.

Median earnings for postgraduate graduates reach £38,000 compared to £31,400 for undergraduates, reinforcing the financial value of advanced study (Department for Education, 2025).

Competition & Rankings

The UK postgraduate market is highly competitive, with over 160 universities operating nationally and global rankings shaping perceptions of institutional prestige and quality (Hunter, 2023; QS, 2026).

Ranking visibility strongly influences applicant choice, particularly among international students (Harahap et al., 2023).



Figure 29: Secondary Research Findings

5.2 Secondary Research Findings

Alternative & Flexible Learning

Flexible learning models, including micro-credentials and online provision, are reshaping postgraduate education.

87% of online learners reported career benefits, thus highlighting the demand for accessible, career-focused and modular learning pathways (Farias-Gayton, Ramirez-Montoya and Aguaded., 2023).

Email Marketing

Email marketing remains a cost-effective recruitment channel, with 81% of organisations using email within their marketing strategy and reports of strong engagement across campaigns (Haan and Watts, 2026; Statista, 2025).

Personalised and segmented messaging further strengthens engagement but must be carefully managed in order to avoid email fatigue (Optinmonster, 2026).

WeChat



China remains a key UK postgraduate source market (HESA, 2025). With western platforms restricted, WeChat dominates digital communication. Chinese students prefer visual, interactive and home language content, making culturally aligned, platform specific recruitment strategies essential for resonance (Zhou, Hentschel and Kumar, 2017; Meng and Hunter, 2025)

Figure 30: Secondary Research Findings

5.3 Primary Research Findings

Following our primary data collection, the findings were statistically or thematically analysed depending on the data type. Detailed findings can be found in the Research Portfolio Section 4.3. Our key findings are outlined below:

5.3.1 Online questionnaire Findings

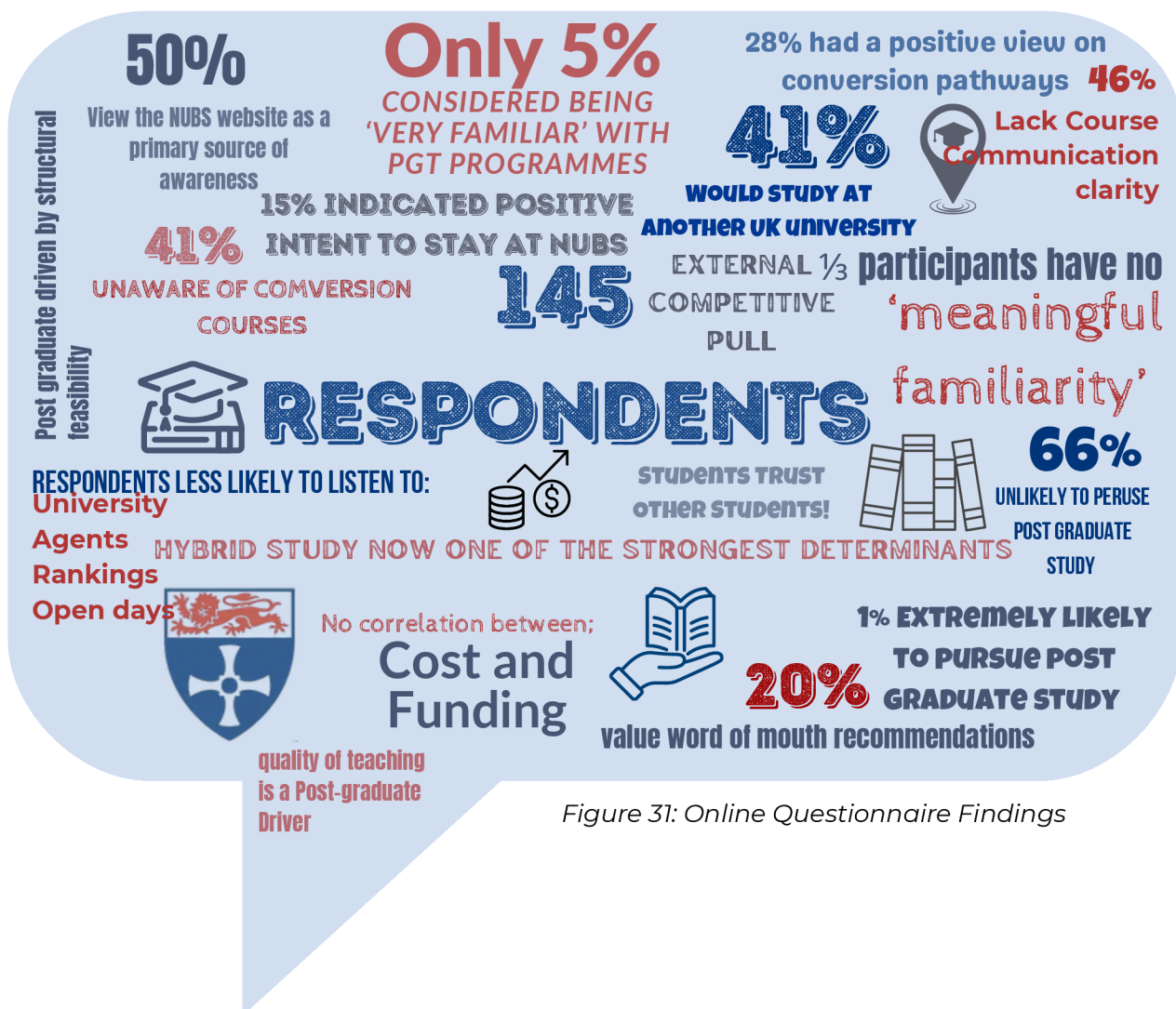


Figure 31: Online Questionnaire Findings

5.3.2 Focus Group Findings

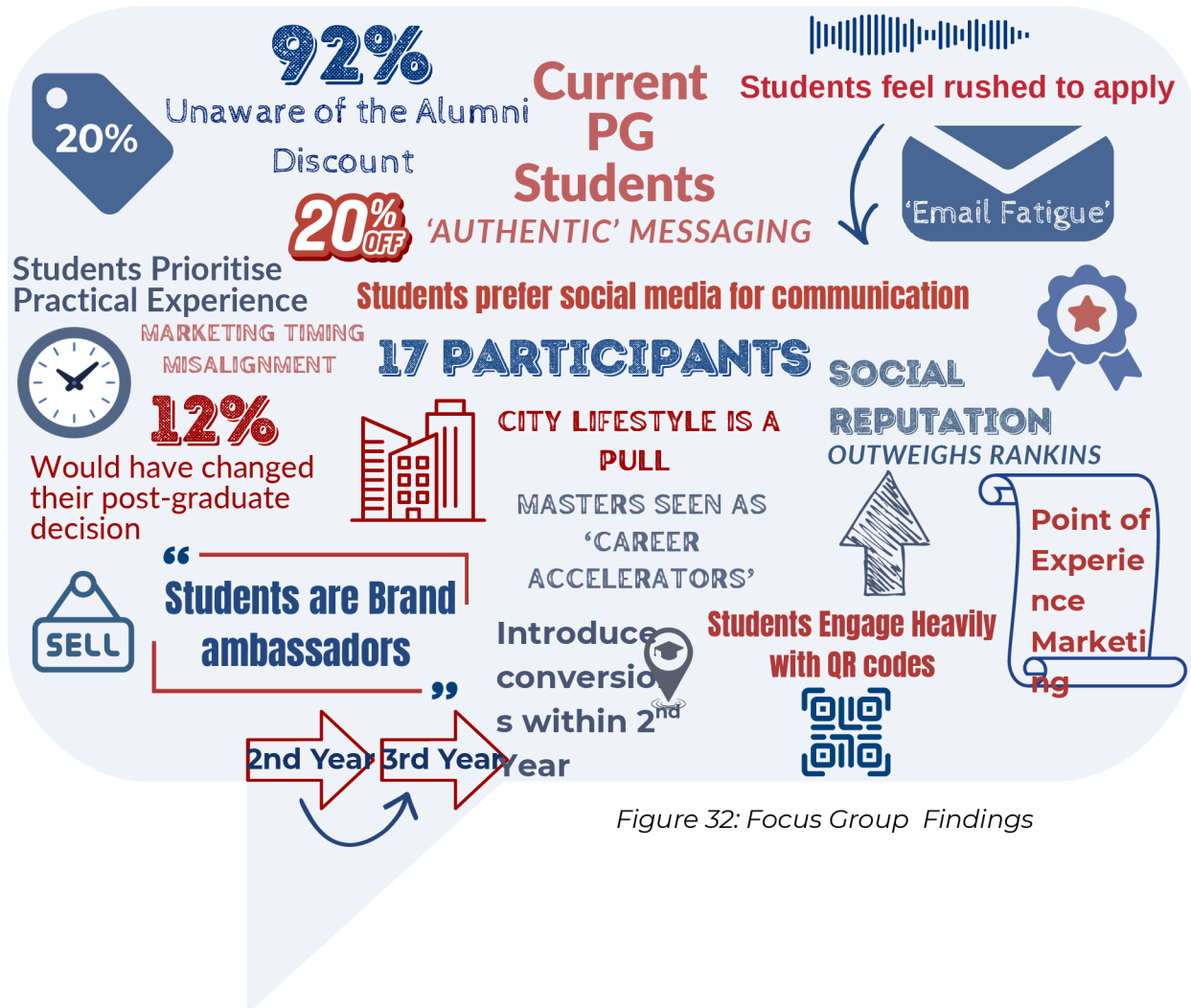


Figure 32: Focus Group Findings

5.3.3 In-Depth Interview Findings

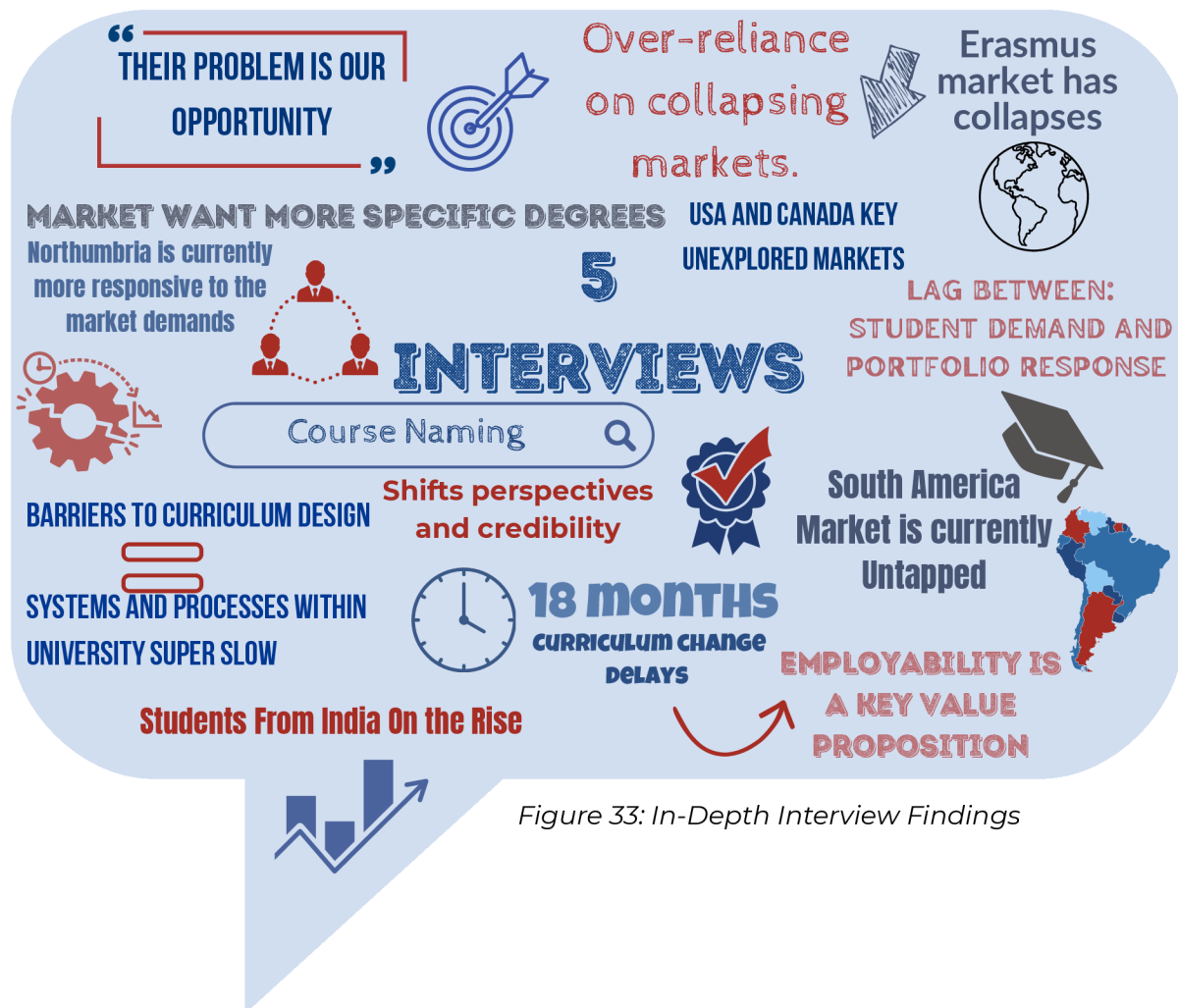


Figure 33: In-Depth Interview Findings

Recommendation One

Short Term:

Expansion of Digital Marketing
Communications

6.0 Recommendation One: Short Term, Expansion of Digital Marketing Communications

6.1 Introduction

Expanding digital marketing communications is a strategically appropriate short-term recommendation for NUBS. As current and prospective students increasingly rely on digital touchpoints to inform their decisions, personalised and engaging digital marketing communications are critical for shaping perceptions and relationships, ultimately with the goal of influencing application and enrolment decisions.

This recommendation's purpose is to enhance both student retention via internal communications, and student acquisition through external communications. This is to be achieved using targeted, personalised, and platform-specific strategies. By optimising NUBS' current digital channels and infrastructure, this recommendation remains cost effective while delivering impact in the short term.

This recommendation aligns with both the aims set out by NUBS, and the research objectives generated by Elevate Consultancy:



Optimise the digital marketing communications delivered by NUBS

By addressing missing opportunities and improving current digital strategy, this recommendation supports both current student progression and student recruitment.

Where is NUBS now?



At this time, NUBS has an established internal email network, basic social media platforms (Instagram and LinkedIn), online student study spaces, and a functioning website. Despite this, missed opportunities and optimisation potential has been identified. This recommendation therefore aims to build on the existing infrastructure NUBS has already built.

6.2 Research Insights: Internal Digital Marketing Communications

Secondary Research

- Segmented and personalised digital communication improves engagement, with higher open and click-throughs (Haan and Watts, 2026; HubSpot, 2026), meanwhile reducing decision effort in high-involvement contexts (Weidig, Weippert and Kuehn, 2024).
- Email fatigue- 37% feeling overwhelmed and 70% unsubscribing from brand emails (Optimove, 2026), shows need for intention-based targeting.
- Peer-led, student-generated content is more influential than institutional messaging in high-risk higher education decisions (Pareek and Goncalves, 2024; McNicholas, 2020).
- Postgraduate journeys are non-linear and uncertainty-driven, requiring multiple reassuring digital touchpoints (McNicholas and Marcella, 2022; Brashers, 2001).
- Postgraduate study is evaluated through employability and ROI lenses (Mellors-Bourne, Hooley and Marriott, 2014; Tholen, 2020), with qualifications acting as employability signals (Spence, 1978).



Primary Research

- Postgraduate awareness is critically low, with less than 5% being very familiar, and the majority being unfamiliar with NUBS' offerings. Alongside this, 46% reported neutral clarity, indicating low visibility and communication.
- Internal retention risk is substantial, as 66% were unlikely to pursue postgraduate study at NUBS, suggesting familiarity does not translate into progression.
- Social media (30%), and word of mouth (20%) were found to be the key awareness sources for postgraduate information, reinforcing the importance of combined peer-led and digital touchpoints.
- Conversion pathways suffer from informational opacity, with 41% of students being unaware of the concept, and say that perceived accessibility and eligibility shape their interests.
- Employability dominates value perception- around 90% of respondents regard employment outcomes as a deciding factor, and repeated emphasis that students prioritise "subject-specific, employability-linked skills."

Figure 34: Internal Research Insights

6.3 Research Insights: External Digital Marketing Communications



Secondary Research

- Higher education recruitment is shifting toward a market-oriented, consumer-driven model, requiring targeted and differentiated communication strategies (Bennett & Ali-Choudhury, 2009; Tholen, 2020).
- Generation Z frequently turns to social media platforms when researching and evaluating options. Engagement is higher with authentic, peer-created and interactive content, while traditional brand messaging is often perceived as less credible or influential (Prasanna, 2024; Wang, 2025; Zinn & Johansson, 2015).
- Email remains a high-ROI digital channel, with segmentation and personalisation significantly increasing open and click-through rates (Haan & Watts, 2026; HubSpot, 2026).
- China remains a key UK postgraduate market, where platforms such as WeChat dominate digital communication, requiring culturally aligned, platform-specific engagement strategies (HESA, 2025; Meng & Hunter, 2025). Chinese users show a preference for visual cues over text heavy messaging, showing the need for visually engaging, culturally aligned content (Zhou, Hentschel and Kumar, 2017).

Primary Research

These responses come from a mixture of focus groups, questionnaires and in-depth interviews

Perceived value communication gap
Students reported limited visibility of postgraduate benefits and incentives:

- "The business school didn't mention postgraduate study often"
- "Undergraduate don't get talked much about postgraduate opportunities"
- "I didn't even know about the 20% discount"

Strong preference for peer led authenticity:

- "I would prefer other students' perspectives...it feels more realistic"
- "it's not just them selling it to you"
- "The university page feels quite formal and boring"

Peer influence outweighs institutional messaging:

- "Everyone from my school seemed to come here"
- "I'd love to speak to someone who has done the course"

Relatable lecture content increases trust with international students:

- "Videos are powerful. Students want to see who they'll be taught by"
- "I. did videos walking my dog on the beach.. It humanised the programme"
- "Promotion videos help them understand where they're going and who they'll meet"

Figure 35: External Research Insights

6.4 Online Questionnaire Data To Support Recommendation 1

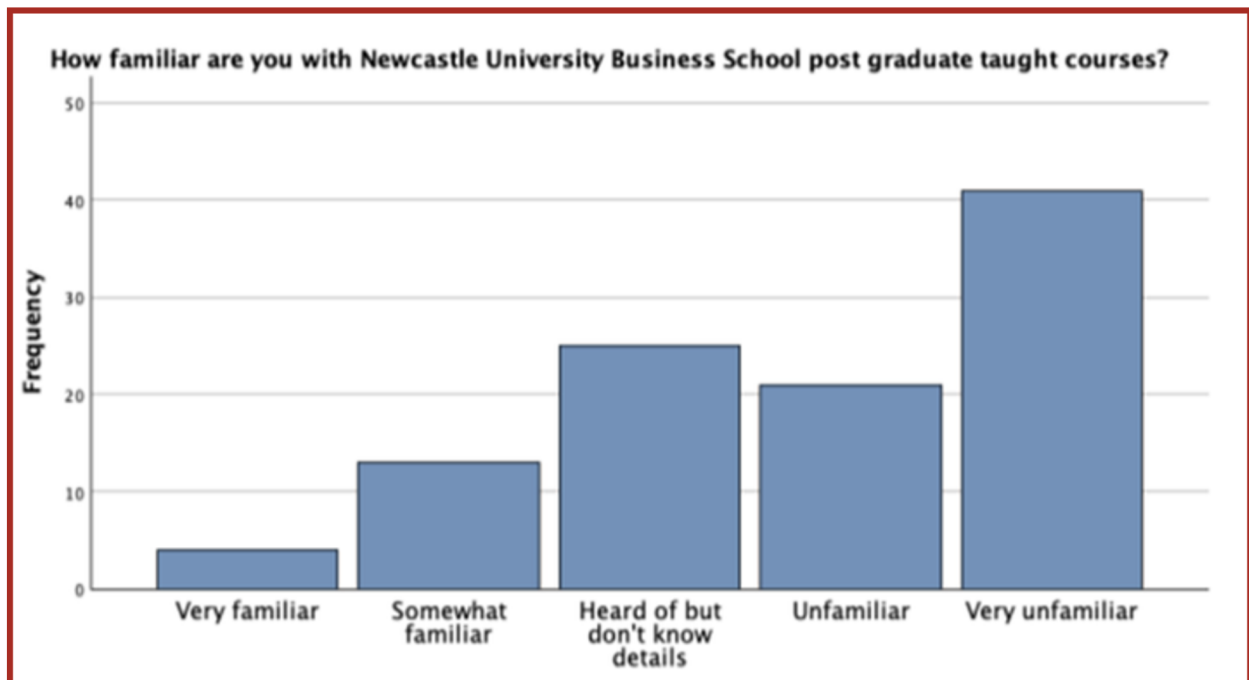


Figure 36 - Data exported IBM SPSS Statistics

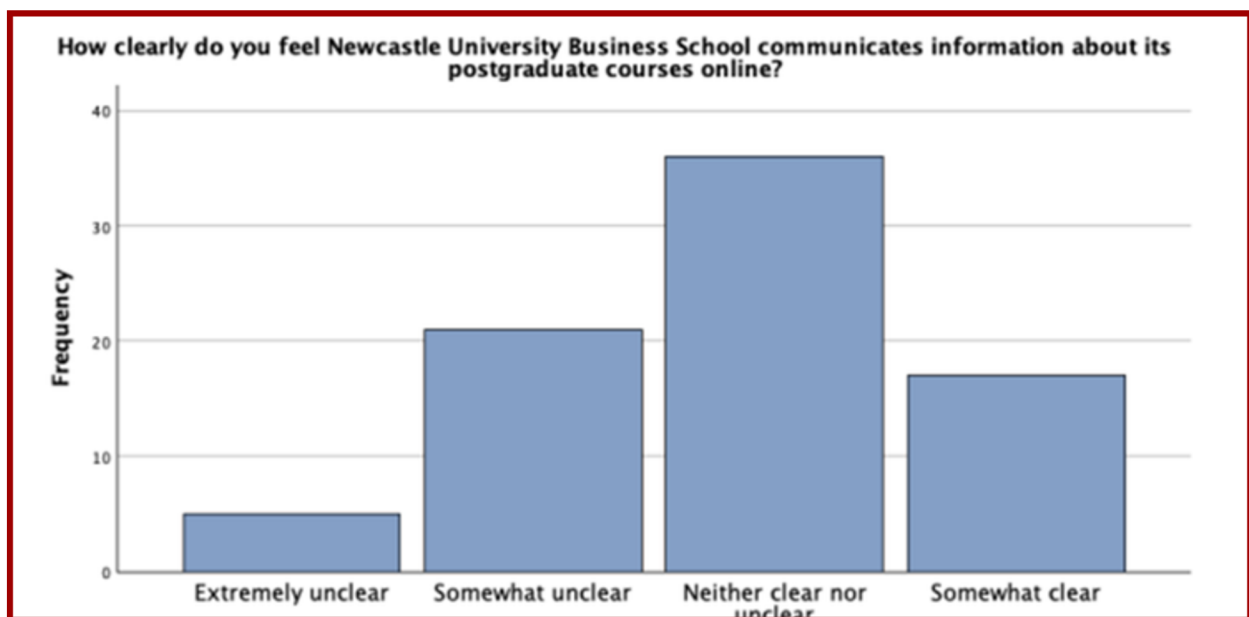


Figure 37 - Data exported IBM SPSS Statistics

The primary research findings support recommendation 1 by highlighting low awareness of NUBS PG taught courses among respondents and limited clarity in how these programmes are communication online. Many participants showed low familiarity with NUBS PG courses and perceived current communication as unclear. This suggests that existing communication efforts may not be effectively reaching or engaging prospective students, reinforcing the need to expand and strengthen NUBS digital marketing communications across both external and internal channels.

6.5 Recommendations

Built upon the aforementioned research findings, the strategy to expand NUBS's digital marketing communications is listed below. For more thorough coverage, this recommendation has been split into two parts.

6.5.1 Internal Digital Marketing Communications (Retention)

6.5.1.1 Intention Based Email Segmentation Strategy

Elevate Consultancy recommend that NUBS release a short digital questionnaire, that is distributed to second and final year undergraduates, to capture postgraduate intentions through a simple 'yes, no, maybe' framework. From this, respondents should then be segmented into tailored mailing lists aligned to their level of interest.



Students indicating strong intent should receive targeted communications about application timelines, funding guidance, alumni outcomes and employability data. Those expressing uncertainty should receive exploratory content, including progression pathway mapping and conversion course opportunities and explanations. Students not currently considering postgraduate study should receive low frequency, value-oriented content designed to maintain awareness without overwhelming engagement.

This segmentation strategy reduces email overload and fatigue by increasing message relevance. This initiative will therefore strengthen relationships with current undergraduate students, improving funnel progression and transforming internal audiences from passive recipients into intention-responsive ones.

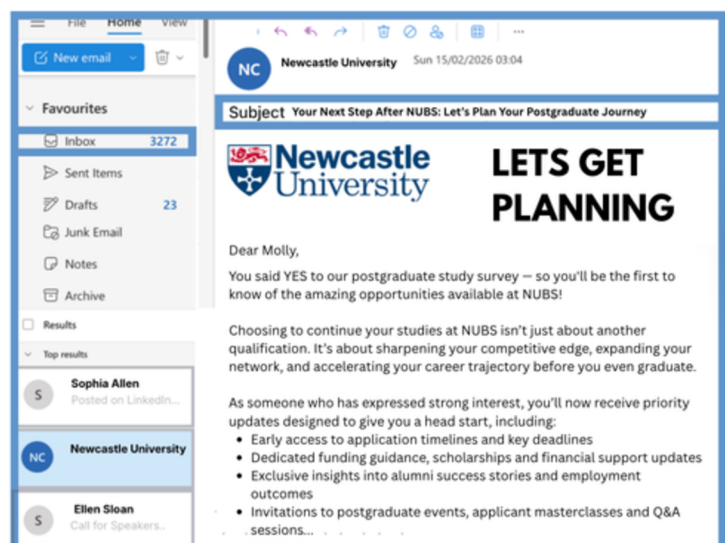


Figure 38: Example Optimised Email

6.5.1.2. Society Led Social Media Outreach

We recommend that NUBS collaborate with relevant Newcastle University societies, including business, subject specific, and high visibility campus groups. The aim of this is to promote postgraduate events and study through society managed Instagram and TikTok accounts. Rather than relying only on official NUBS channels, postgraduate messaging should be embedded within peer-led digital spaces.



Current postgraduate students within societies should be positioned as micro-ambassadors, hosting interactive Q+A sessions, Instagram story takeovers, and informal discussions about their decision to remain at, or convert to, NUBS.

This strategy leverages peer-to-peer signalling and social proof mechanisms identified in digital customer journey literature. By humanising postgraduate study through relatable voices, perceived risk is reduced and trust is enhanced. This method of marketing will strengthen internal community identity, counter competitive displacement from other institutions, and enhance engagement through authentic communication.



Figure 39: Example Instagram Post

6.5.1.3 Student Ambassador Blog Series

NUBS should implement a student ambassador blog series on the Business School website. Each installment should focus on a postgraduate student's story who studied their undergraduate degree at Newcastle, outlining their motivations for staying, career progression outcomes, and if relevant their course conversion experience.

Featuring well-recognised campus personalities, such as popular society committee members, will enhance engagement through familiarity and social influence dynamics. These narratives should be integrated across the previously mentioned segmented email campaigns and society social media promotions to ensure cross-channel reinforcement.



Narrative storytelling increases emotional resonance while simultaneously delivering hard employability signals, aligning with literature on risk reduction in high-cost educational decisions. This strategy will therefore strengthen transparency, improve website engagement metrics, and reinforce NUBS' positioning as a career acceleration tool rather than just an academic provider.

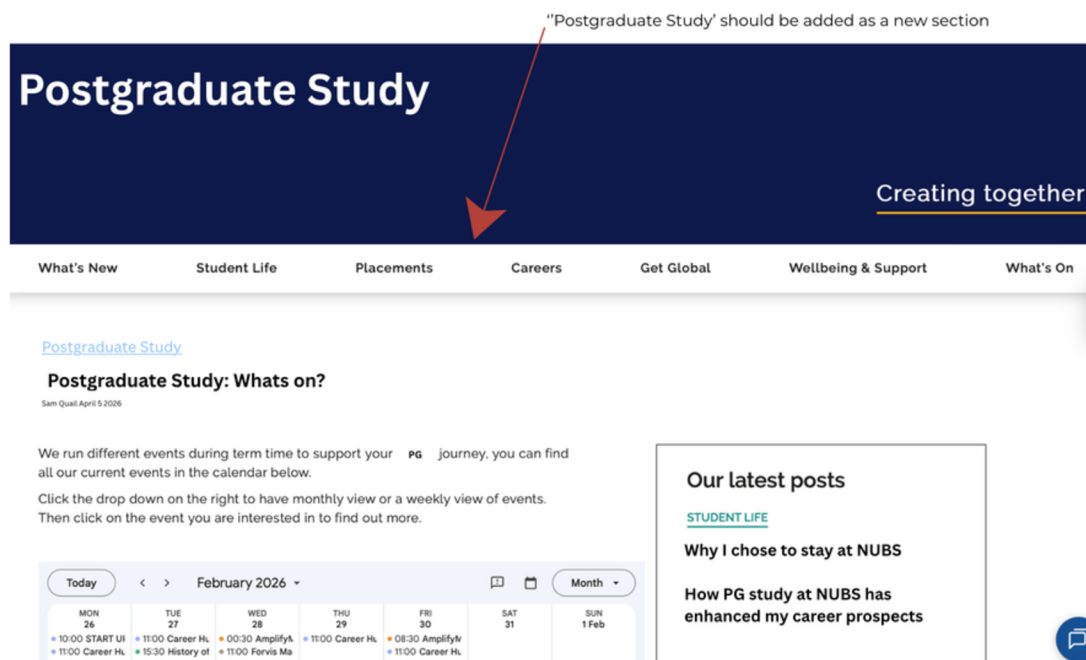


Figure 40: Optimised Landing Page

6.5.1.4 Canvas Banner Integration

Elevate Consultancy recommends that NUBS integrate targeted postgraduate messaging directly within the university's virtual learning platform, Canvas. Rather than relying solely on email communications, which are often subject to fatigue, postgraduate promotion should be positioned within a digital space students access daily as part of their academic routine.

This would involve dynamic dashboard banners targeted at second and final year business students. Instead of static advertisements, these prompts would be tailored to academic stage. For example, final year students could receive time-sensitive messages such as "Considering your next step? Explore your postgraduate options at NUBS," linking directly to progression information or upcoming events.

Embedding messaging within Canvas increases visibility through frequent, low-friction touchpoints while reducing dependence on overcrowded email channels. As students regularly log in to access academic materials, Canvas represents a strategically valuable communication asset.

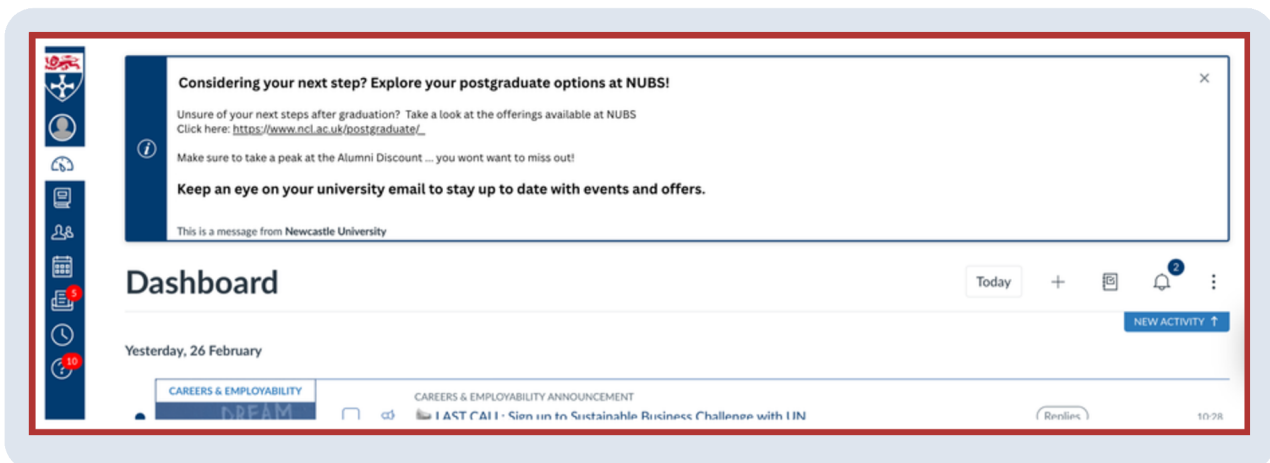
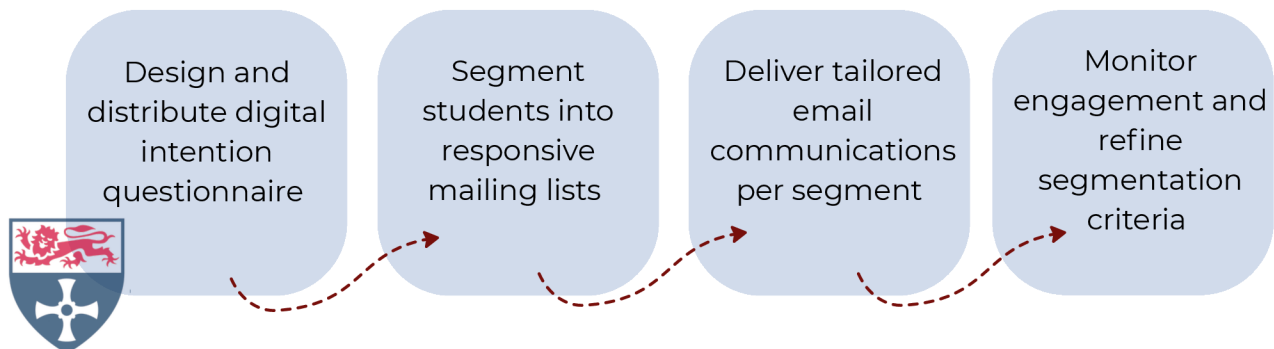


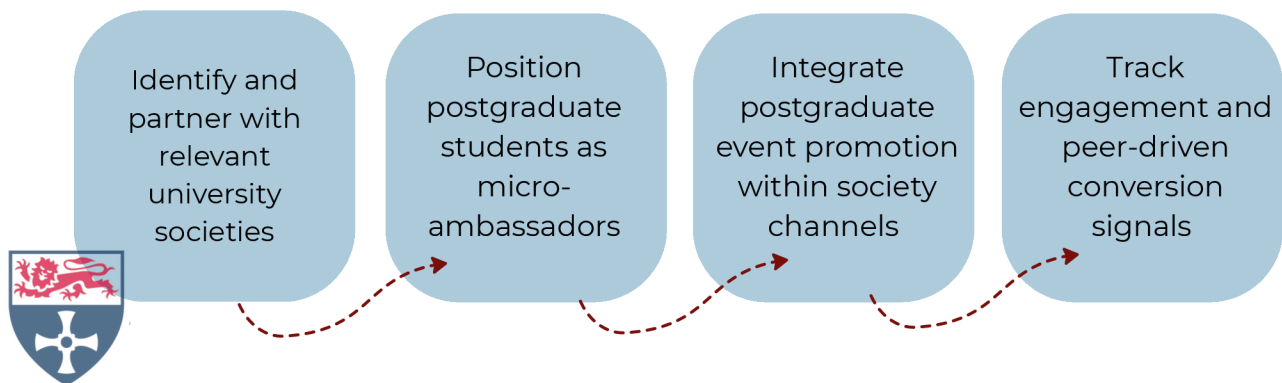
Figure 41: Canvas Banner Example

6.5.1.5 Implementation

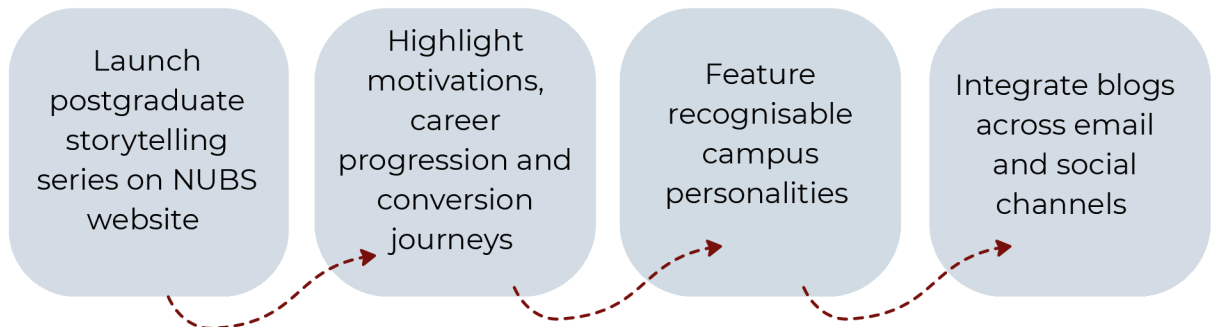
Intention Based Email Segmentation Strategy



Society Led Social Media Outreach



Student Ambassador Blog Series



Canvas Banner Integration

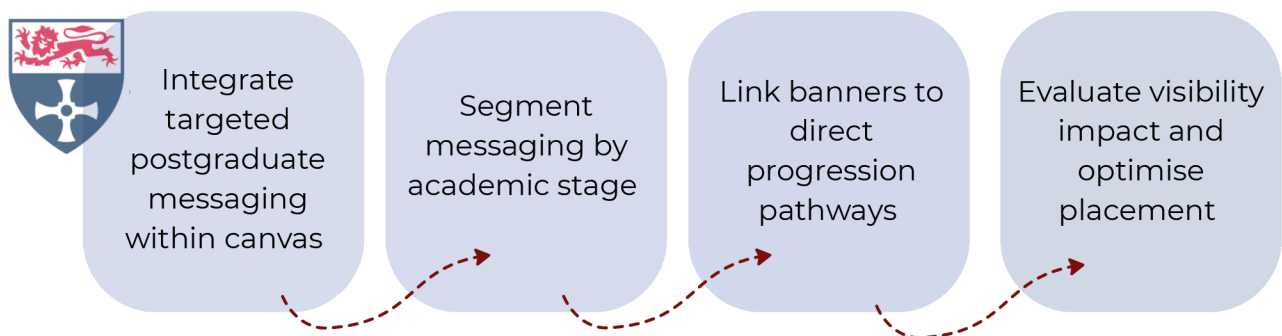


Figure 42: Recommendation One Implementation

6.5.2 External Digital Marketing Communications (Aquisition)

6.5.2.1 UCAS Re-engagement email campaign

We recommend that Newcastle University implement a targeted re-engagement email campaign aimed at students who previously applied to NU for undergraduate study but ultimately enrolled elsewhere. These individuals have already demonstrated prior interest in the institution, representing a high potential acquisition segment for PG recruitment.

Using UCAS data, NUBS can identify and track this audience. Personalised emails should be triggered strategically in late-second-year and early-third-year, when students begin actively considering postgraduate options. The messaging should be centred around employability outcomes and outline the positives of doing a postgraduate at Newcastle, framed within a clear 'Reconsider Newcastle' narrative. Emphasis should be placed on graduate career progression, industry links and programme flexibility to strengthen perceived return on investment.

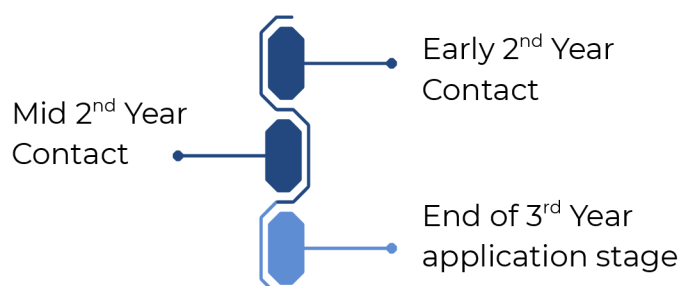


Figure 43: Re-engagement Timeline



This strategy leverages data driven personalisation to increase relevance, reduce email fatigue and reposition Newcastle as a credible postgraduate destination. By targeting a warm audience with tailored value communication at the appropriate decision stage, NUBS can improve engagement, enhance conversion potential and strengthen external postgraduate acquisition. See Figure 30 for an example.



Personalised email

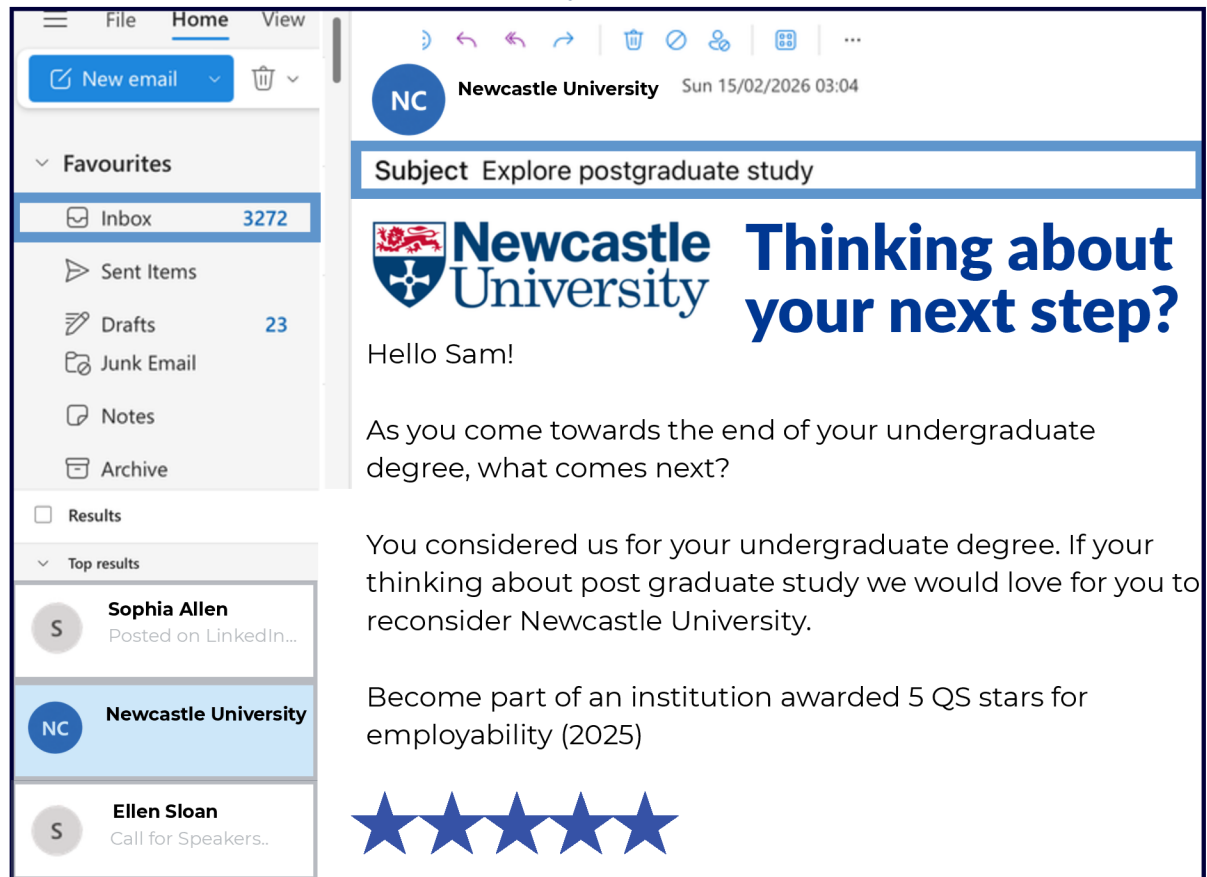


Figure 44: Postgraduate Acquisition Email

Keeping the option open with
'Reconsider messaging'

Timing alignment

6.5.2.2 Expanding NUBS' Social-media strategy

As illustrated in the TikTok mock-up (Figure 31), NUBS should introduce a dedicated NUBS TikTok account to increase visibility among undergraduate and international audiences. A platform specific presence enables trend participation, algorithmic reach and informal storytelling compared to the central university account.



We recommend that NUBS reposition its social media strategy to better align with student content preferences and platform behaviours identified in primary research. Participants described current institutional content as overly formal and static, with stronger engagement driven peer-led and relatable video content.

Instagram content should prioritise reel-style videos. The instagram mock-up (Figure 27) demonstrates a postgraduate focused “day in the life” reel titled “Day in the life of a NUBS postgraduate working in marketing at Arla”. This format links postgraduate study to tangible career outcomes, strengthening perceived employability value and supporting ROI focused decision making identified in secondary research.

Content pillars should include:

- Postgraduate career progression stories
- “Day in the life” employability features
- Conversion journeys
- Informal campus and city lifestyle content

Figure 45: SM Content Pillars

Postgraduate students should act as digital ambassadors, producing first person content to increase relatability and reduce perceived risk. A structured content calendar and performance tracking should support continuous optimisation.

NUBS own TikTok

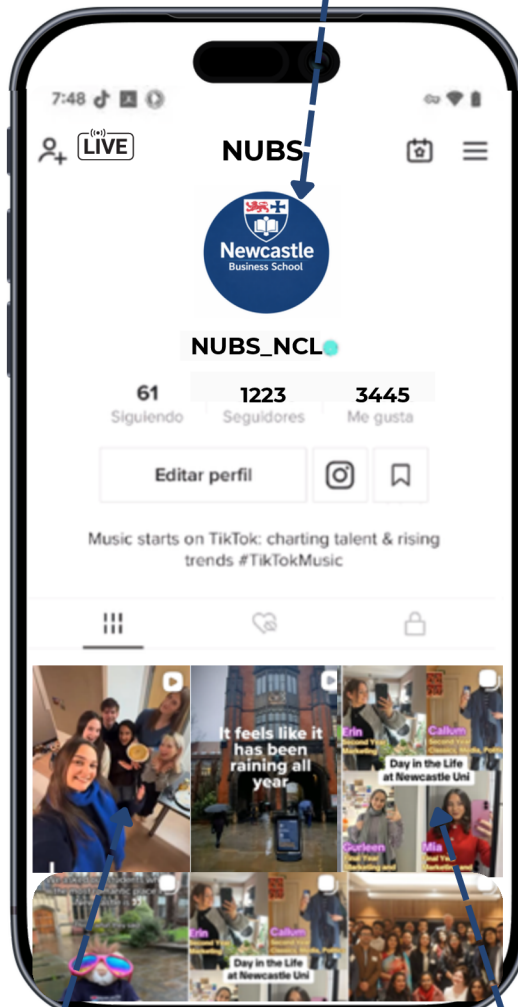


Figure 46: NUBS TikTok Mock-up

Daily uploads

Authentic and peer-led content

Career progression

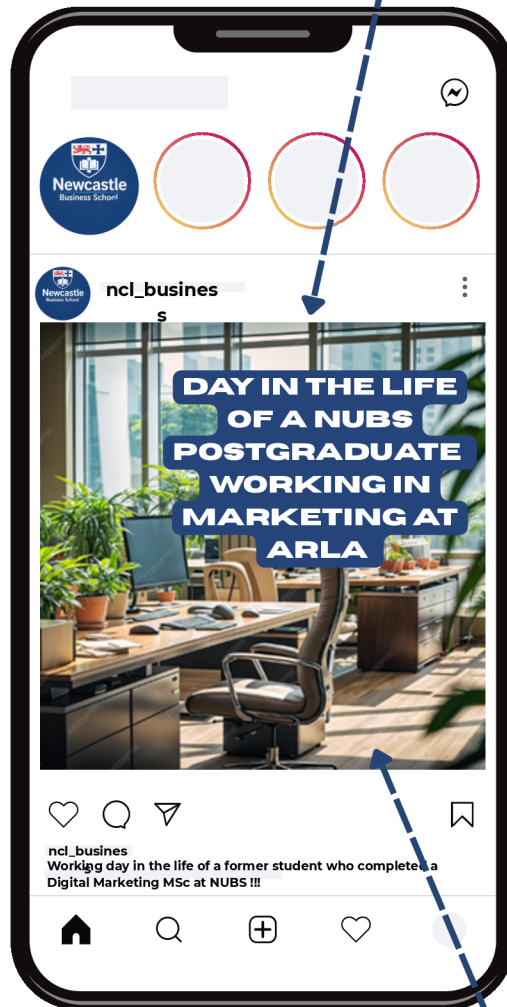


Figure 47: NUBS Instagram DITL Mock-up

Student ambassador content

6.5.2.2 WeChat Strategy (International markets - China)

Given China's continued importance within the UK postgraduate market, NUBS should strengthen its existing WeChat presence. WeChat is central to overseas study information exchange among Chinese students. Our secondary research also indicated a stronger preference for visual cues and interactive features over text-heavy messaging.



NUBS should utilise its verified WeChat account to:

- Share short form postgraduate student stories and academic introductions
- Deliver home – language communication where appropriate
- Host interactive Q+A sessions within WeChat groups
- Promote employability outcomes and programme clarity

Figure 48: WeChat Benefits

In line with the social media mock ups, visual and video-led storytelling should be prioritised over long text based updates. Embedding short academic introductions and postgraduate testimonial clips will humanise the institution and increase familiarity for International audiences. By localising messaging, prioritising visual engagement and facilitating direct interaction, NUBS can strengthen credibility, increase engagement and improve postgraduate acquisition in key Asian markets.



6.5.2.3 Digital Humanisation of Postgraduate Course Pages



We recommend that NUBS enhance postgraduate taught webpages by embedding short form video content prominently within course landing pages, as illustrated in the mock up (Figure 32). Beneath the main call to action section, three video-led areas titled 'Meet Your Programme Leader', 'Meet the Lecturers' and 'Postgraduate Student Stories' would provide immediate and accessible insight into the postgraduate experience.



The programme leader videos would offer concise introductions covering course structure, assessment style, industry relevance and career outcomes. The lecturer section would feature short informal clips introducing teaching approach, research interests and personality, helping to humanise academic staff and reduce perceived institutional distance. Postgraduate student stories, including testimonial and day in the life content, would highlight lived experience and career progression.

This structure strengthens clarity and emotional engagement at a key decision stage. Primary interview findings revealed strong positive reactions, particularly from international students, to informal and relatable video content, suggesting that human centred storytelling enhances familiarity, trust and confidence. Overall, these enhancements aim to reduce uncertainty and improve website to application conversion rates.

Informal meet the lecturer clips

Newcastle University Business School

About Us Study with us Research For Business Alumni Our People

Newcastle University > Newcastle University Business School > Study with us > Our Programmes > Postgraduate Taught

Postgraduate Taught (Master's) Degrees

Advance your career. Develop valuable employability skills. Discover your academic potential. Study your Master's degree at Newcastle University Business School.

Download a prospectus > Register your interest > Attend an Open Day >

AMBA ACCREDITED EQUIS ACCREDITED AACSB ACCREDITED PRME SIGNATORY MEMBER PRME CHAMPION 2026 - 2027 RUSSELL GROUP

Meet Your Programme Leader >
Watch short introduction videos from Programme Leaders covering course structure, assessment styles, industry relevance and career pathways - so you know exactly what you'll study and where it can take you.

Meet the lecturers >
Explore bite-sized videos introducing our lecturers beyond the lecture theatre. Learn about their teaching styles, industry experiences and research interests as well as personal interests.

Postgraduate Student Stories >
Discover real stories from NUBS postgraduates and explore how their degrees shaped their careers. See where a masters at NUBS can take you, from graduation to global opportunities.

Figure 49: Humanisation of course landing page

Short introduction videos from programme leaders

Ex student testimonial videos

6.6 Marketing Mix

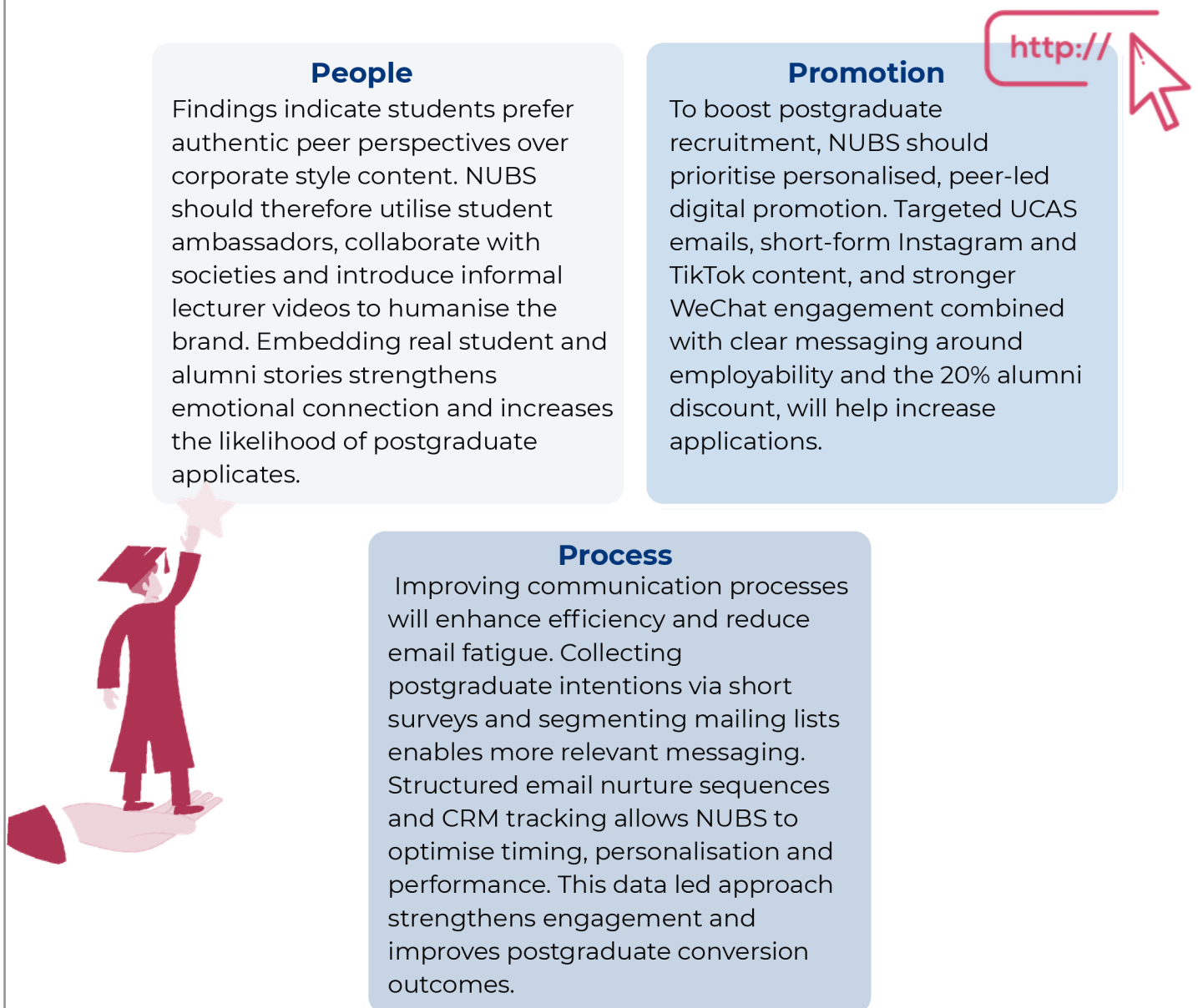
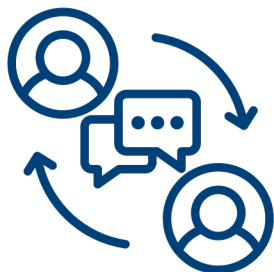


Figure 50: Recommendation One Marketing Mix



Figure 51: Communication Methods

6.7 Testing



Social Listening and Engagement Analysis

The effectiveness of communications should be evaluated via engagement monitoring and sentiment analysis. As postgraduate study is a high involvement decision, peer validation is critical. Therefore, likes, shares, saves, comments, direct messages and Q+A participation across all platforms should be tracked. High engagement levels will indicate stronger peer resonance and trust-building, whereas low interaction levels suggest overly formal messaging or less relevance. By assessing which themes generate the most engagement, NUBS can prioritise the most effective content. This ensures that digital communication remains strategically aligned with postgraduate recruitment objectives.

Conversion Tracking and CRM Analytics

Structured funnel tracking via CRM systems and website analytics should be implemented to monitor student progression from awareness to enrolment, providing a clearer understanding of where students disengage in the postgraduate consideration journey. Key stages should include email/social media exposure, website visits, prospectus downloads, event registrations, application starts/completions. By analysing drop-off points, NUBS can refine timing and content of follow up communications, strengthening the process element of the marketing mix by improving communication efficiency, reducing unnecessary repetition and optimising conversions.



A/B Testing

NUBS should test variations of digital communications to determine what messaging is most effective. This will allow for evidence-based decisions instead of relying on assumptions. Two versions of email subject lines and Canvas banners should be distributed to equal audience segments. Performance can then be measured through open rates, CTR and website visits. If one version consistently outperforms the other, this should become the primary method. Testing should be continuous to ensure messaging evolves with changing student preferences. A/B testing will reduce risk, increase efficiency and ensure promotion remains optimised and data-driven.

6.8 Budget

For the internal university digital marketing communications, NUBS can use their existing infrastructure to fulfil this recommendation. Budget considerations are listed below, but fortunatley most required tools are free to use.



Task	Platform	Price
Email Marketing	Microsoft Office	Free- already in use at NUBS
Social Media Marketing	Instagram/Tiktok/ WeChat	Free to use, with option for paid ads/boosts
Marketing Team Staff Costs	Newcastle University Business School	£13.88 per hour (based off average freelance marketer hourly rate (Payscale, 2026))
Infographic Creation	Canva	Free to use, with option for Pro version (£100 per year (Canva, 2025))



Table 1: Recommendation One Budget



6.9 Time Frame

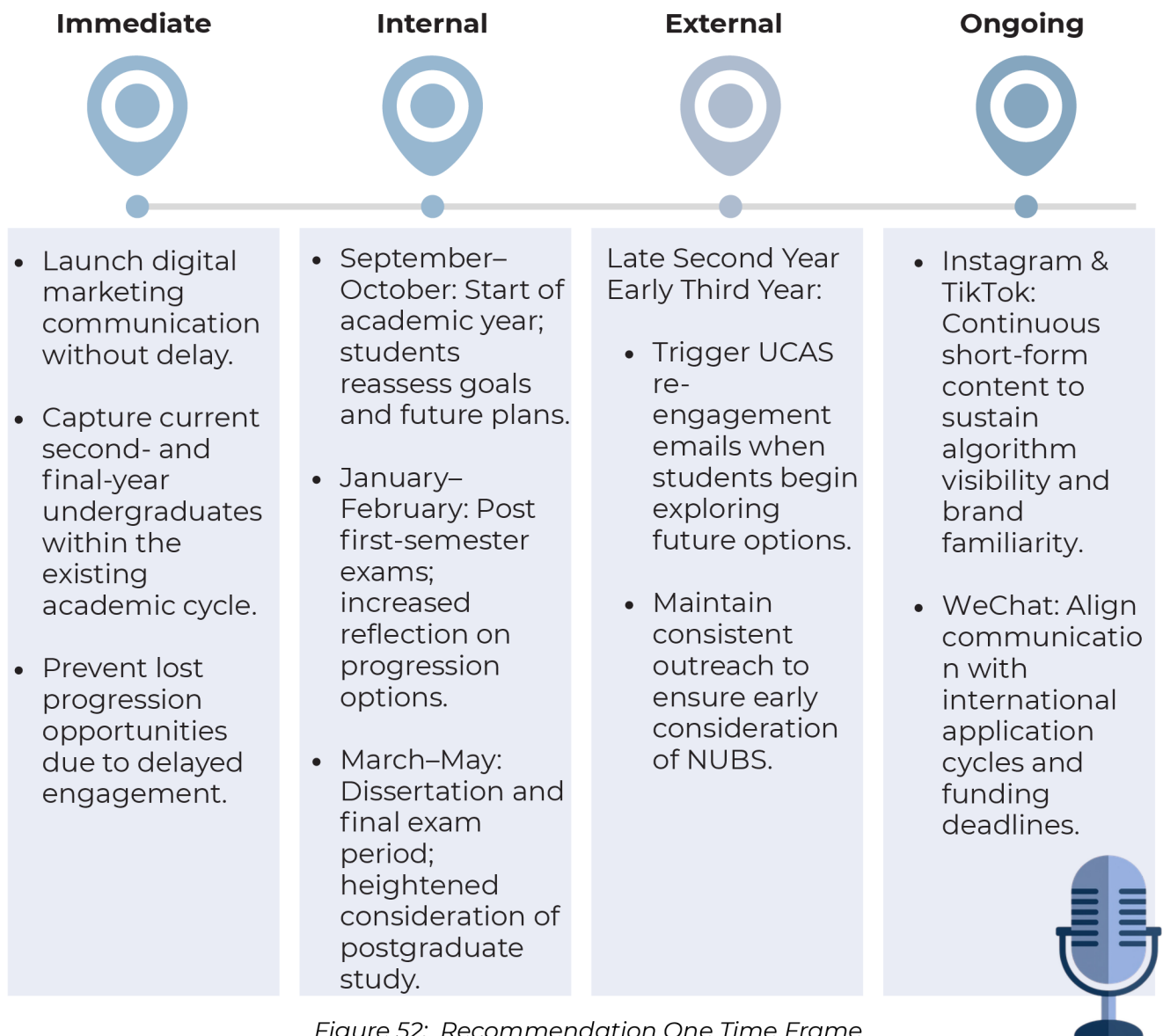


Figure 52: Recommendation One Time Frame

6.10 Internal SMART Objectives

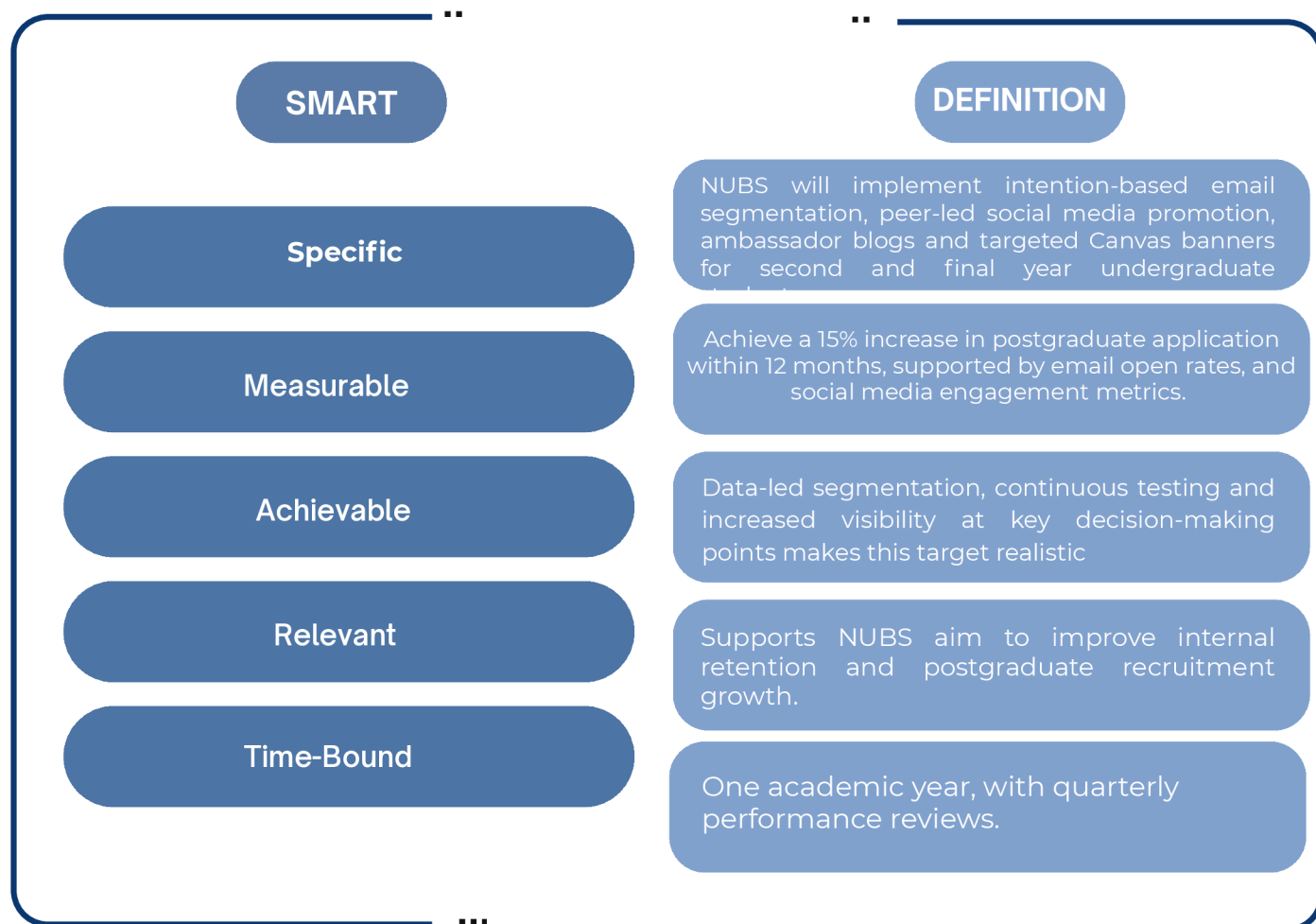


Figure 53: Recommendation One Internal SMART Objectives

6.11 External SMART Objectives

SMART	SMART
Specific	Increase postgraduate applications by optimising external digital communication channels; targeted UCAS email re-engagement and enhanced short form social media content.
Measurable	Increase postgraduate applicants generated through external digital channels by 10% within one academic recruitment cycle.
Achievable	Email marketing already delivers strong ROI when segmented, short form videos aligns with primary research preferences.
Relevant	Helps improve postgraduate recruitment, strengthen value communication and increase external acquisition beyond the current undergraduate cohort.
Time-Bound	To be achieved within one academic recruitment cycle with performance reviewed quarterly

Figure 54: Recommendation One External SMART Objectives



Integrated multi-channel strategy

Combines email, social media, website and Canvas touchpoints to increase visibility across the full postgraduate decision journey and reduce reliance on a single channel.



Strong targeting and segmentation

Use of UCAS data, CRM tracking and intention-based segmentation increases message relevance, reduces email fatigue and improves conversion potential.



Peer-led authenticity and trust

Student ambassadors, society collaboration and testimonial videos enhance credibility, aligning with research that peer influence is more persuasive than institutional messaging.



Improved perceived Return On Investment

Clear communication of employability outcomes, industry relevance and career progression strengthens postgraduate value perception in a cost-sensitive market.

Figure 55: Recommendation One Benefits

6.13 Limitations



Conversion Attribution Complexity

Engagement metrics like views, likes and clicks don't always directly translate into application submissions, making precise ROI measurement challenging.



Digital saturation risk

Increased activity across multiple channels may contribute to content overload if message frequency and coordination are not carefully managed.



Resource and coordination demands

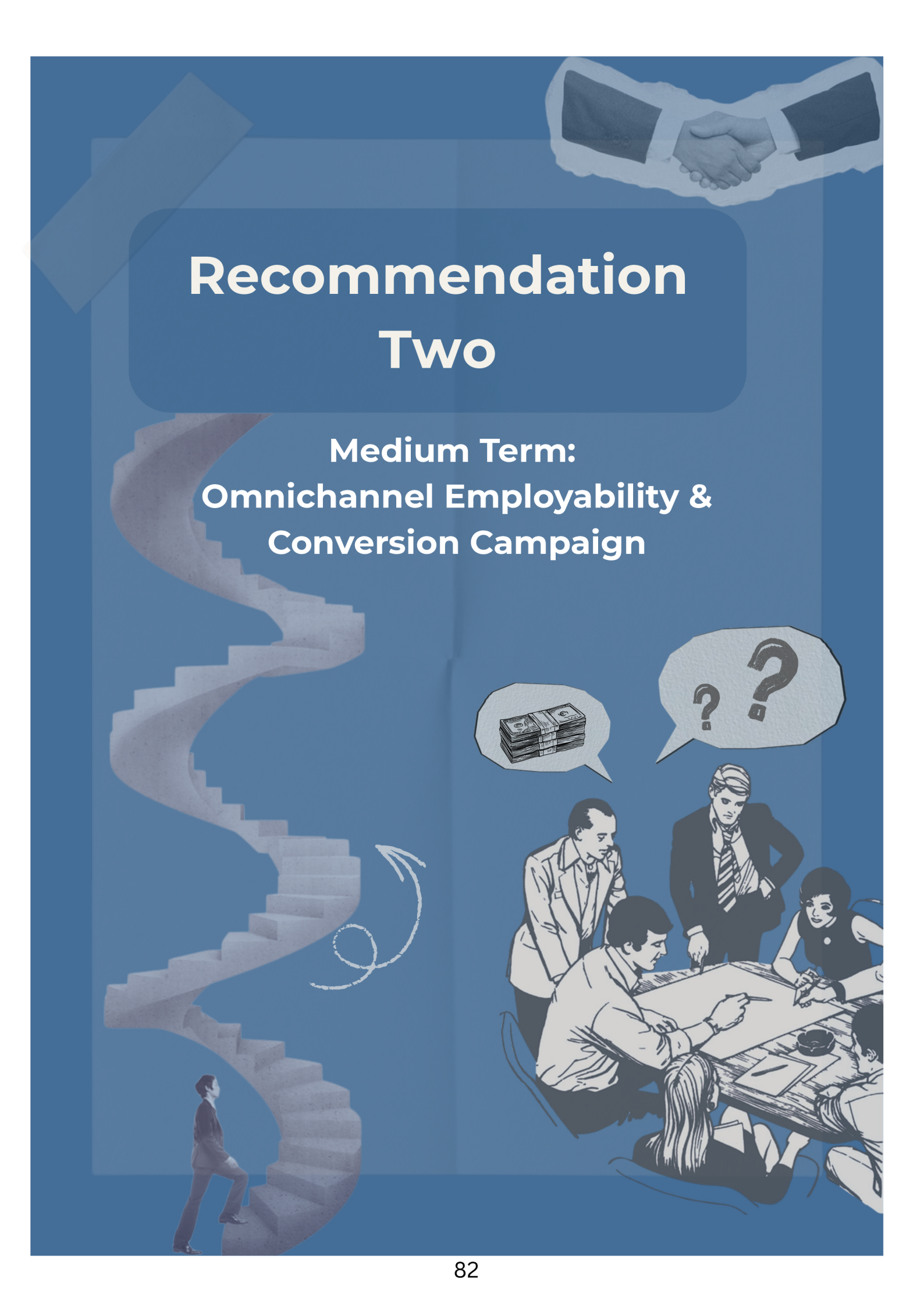
Sustaining student ambassador participation and cross channel integration requires ongoing staffing time and oversight.



External market constraints

Digital marketing enhancements cant fully overcome structural barriers such as tuition costs, visa policy uncertainty or labour market volatility.

Figure 56: Recommendation One Limitations



Recommendation Two

**Medium Term:
Omnichannel Employability &
Conversion Campaign**

Recommendation 2: Medium Term, Omnichannel Employability & Conversion Campaign

7.1 Introduction

A SWOT analysis, based on credible consumer research and secondary data, suggested that NUBS admissions should utilise their employability capabilities in response to the graduate labour market ‘crisis’ (Surguy, 2025). Doing so would propose a higher ROI for prospective students, as PGT study in business fields gives applicants an opportunity to differentiate themselves from other candidates, in a competitively saturated environment. The abundant increase in literature and research into the graduate job market and student employability, positions this theme at the forefront of university considerations and priorities (Wahab et al., 2024), and consequently accentuates the long-term rewards of PG business qualifications.

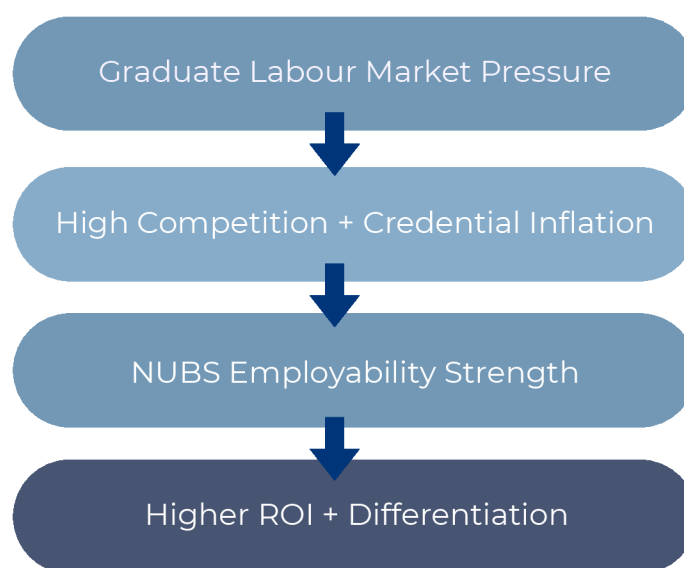


Figure 57: Leveraging employability as a competitive advantage

7.2 Research Insights

Employability Research

When interviewing NU staff members, NUBS's employability resources and extracurricular activities were highlighted as a 'competitive advantage' of NUBS.

More specifically, for those pursuing a conversion Business PG course, their master's degree is said to boost employability and 'add another string to their bow'.

Furthermore, students shared that their motivations to study PG were based around 'professional progression'. While quantitative data revealed that employability and enhanced career prospects are commonly perceived as a baseline in comparison to other decision-making factors when considering PGT study.

Despite these varying perspectives, they synthesize to depict employability as a central consideration, at a baseline level or as a driving motivator.



Conversion Awareness Research

Historical data revealed that most students intending to study a business conversion course at a PG level came from Engineering, Social Sciences or Media and Communications UG backgrounds, followed by Law, Languages and Humanities, making students from these cohort's important target segments (Savanta, 2025), as shown in Consumer Profiles in Section 3.

However, quantitative data revealed that a combined 66% of respondents were unaware of the concept of conversion courses, but upon explanation 28% said they would be interested in conversion pathways. This highlights a major knowledge gap, presumably caused by a lack of resonating communications or not receiving communications from NUBS.

Similarly, open-ended questions within Elevate Consultancy's questionnaire reported thoughts that there was a lack of information shared to those outside of the business school, and suggestions were made to increase communications with other schools.

Figure 58: Recommendation Two Research Insights

7.3 Data From Questionnaire To Support Recommendation 2

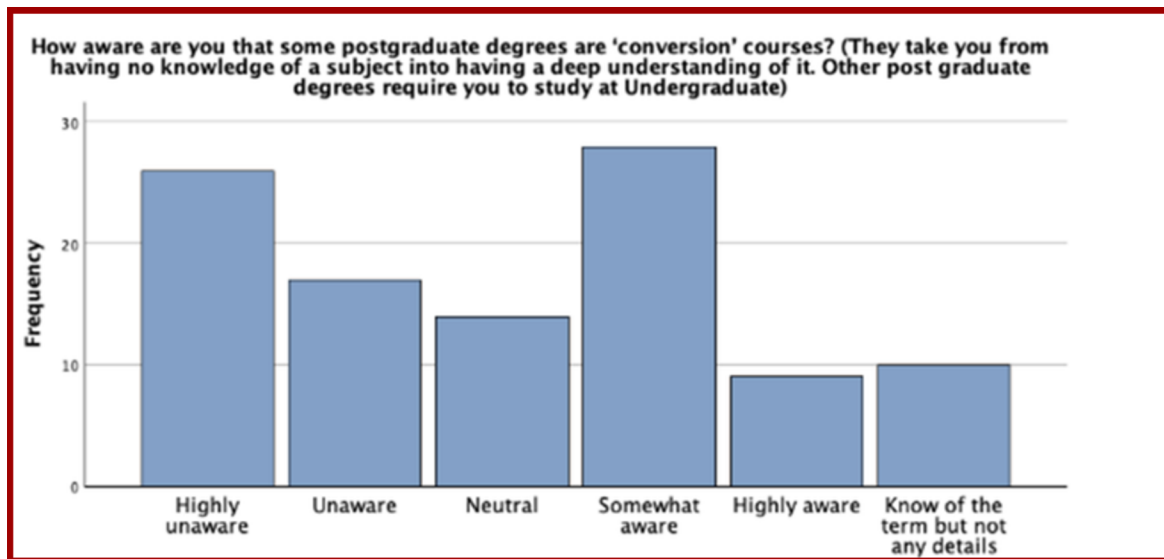


Figure 59 - Data exported IBM SPSS Statistics

This primary research finding support Recommendation 2 by demonstrating low awareness of postgraduate conversion courses among respondents. This highlighting a knowledge gap that NUBS should address through omnichannel employability and conversion campaign to attract students from diverse undergraduate backgrounds.

7.4 Recommendation Outline

A proactive and recommended response to this research is to launch a medium-term employability campaign, targeting students outside of the NUBS school, educating students of the benefits of a business PG conversion course. Whilst supporting the wider aim of raising awareness, this recommendation utilises NUBS existing employability resources and capabilities, making the campaign a cost-effective response as it builds on existing value propositions.

This recommendation targets preexisting undergraduate students specifically, using a retention strategy. Retention strategies have been identified as favourable by internal staff, and supported by secondary research as optimal, as students have already entered the enrolment funnel by expressing interest at UG level. The crucial aspect of encouraging further funnel progression, and ultimately enrolment, is 'targeted communication' with 'detailed' information (Merritt, Francomano and Garcia, 2020).

Targeting communication within Elevate Consultancy's recommendation consists of:

- Q&A with current conversion students, explaining what a conversion is and the application processes from a student perspective.
- Alumni outcome talks: 'Hall of Fame' series. Transparency regarding salary and career progression where able.
- Collaborative workshops and events between opportunistic key subject groups. For example, 'Business After Engineering'
- Displays of graduate outcomes, employer partnerships and career pathway visual content.

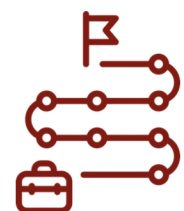


Figure 60: Recommendation 2 Details

7.4.1 Visual Content and Display Ads: Mock-up

Using student-friendly terminology

**Not a 'panic masters'.
A strategic one.**

Study PG Conversion courses with
Newcastle University Business School and
work alongside our business partners.

pwc EldonSq. HSBC

Newcastle University Business School

Logos from reputable employer partnerships

Place NUBS business partners at the forefront

Figure 61: Recommendation 2 Display Ad Mock-up

7.4.2 Phase 1: Awareness and Comprehension

7.4.2.1 Visual content marketing



The mock-ups provided, seen in the following pages, are examples of visual content that can be used as display ads around campus or alternatively on social media platforms. Students outside of the business school expressed uncertainty surrounding NUBS' available courses, and conversion courses as a whole. Ultimately, this means that students can't visualise the employment outcomes of Business PG conversion courses or perceive a return on investment, in turn deterring applicants. While research shows that NUBS' employability is a strong differentiator, their outcomes, partnerships, and statistics aren't explicitly advertised. The following mock-ups transparently state the salary percentage increase, partnership opportunities and career trajectories whilst simultaneously addressing common student concerns.

7.4.2.2 Q&As with current conversion students

Focus groups with current internal students showed that students prefer other student perspectives as it felt 'more personal and realistic', as opposed to from a university perspective where it feels 'as if they are trying to sell something to you'. This is reiterated in secondary research, whereby student-generated content is considered more credible, due to its 'lower perceived persuasive content' (Pareek and Goncalves, 2024). Hosting Q&As with current conversion students would create student awareness and understanding of conversion courses in a unpressurised and informal environment. Giving students a casual space to ask questions and raise concerns reduces informational opacity and strengthens perceived authenticity. These sessions should be positioned as informal and discussion-based, rather than sales presentations and encourage the leading student to speak with transparency and anecdotally.

7.4.3 Visual Content and Display Ads: Mock-up 1

Concise value proposition aligned with employability narrative

Newcastle University | Business School

**Different degree.
Broader career.**

Thinking about your next move?
Hear from current students who made the
switch in our student-led Q&A session.
Scan below to register your interest:

Call to action- behavioural prompt

Uses QR codes a direct digital touchpoint, supports measurable engagement

Figure 62: Recommendation 2 Display Ad Mock-up 2

7.4.4 Visual Content and Display Ads: Mock-up

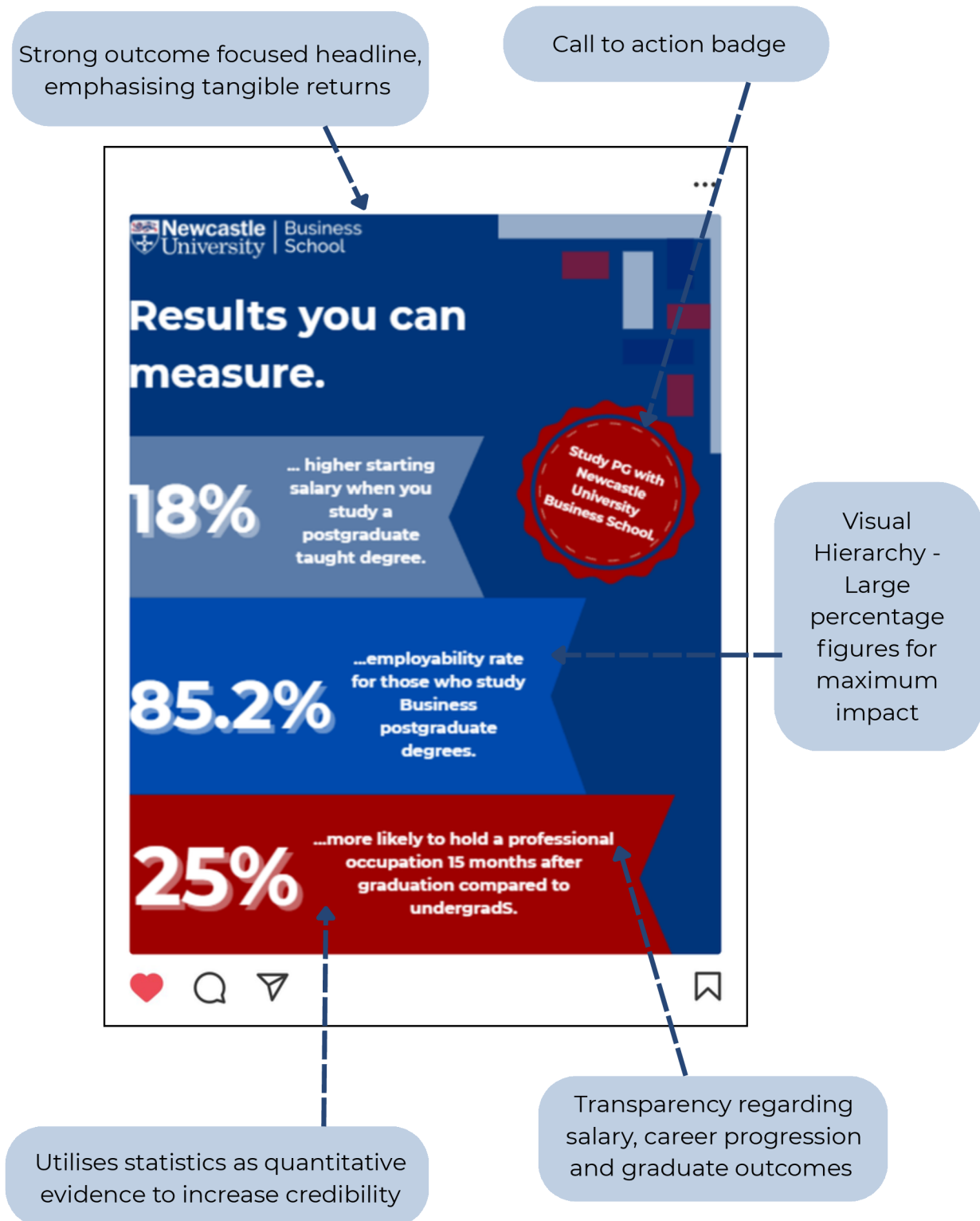


Figure 63: Recommendation 2 Display Ad Mock-up 3

7.4.5 Phase 2: Generating Interest

Embedded Faculty Outreach

Embedding timetabled, discipline-specific employability sessions within programmes such as Social Sciences, Engineering and Humanities would allow NUBS to allocate resources strategically while reducing participation barriers. Integrating workshops into academic schedules increases attendance among target audiences and supports efficient internal progression.

Targeted Progression Communication

Sessions should be tailored to disciplinary knowledge and career pathways, clearly outlining eligibility and course prerequisites while addressing common misconceptions. Research suggests that personalised and detailed communication reduces decision effort, increases attention and builds institutional trust (Weidig, Weippert and Kuehnl, 2024).

Industry-Led Engagement & Community

Involving industry partners would further enhance credibility and aspirational appeal, demonstrating how postgraduate business study translates into sector-specific career outcomes. Bringing together like-minded students also supports postgraduate-oriented social engagement, which has been shown to strengthen retention and progression intentions (Humphrey and McCarthy, 1999; Tight, 2020).



7.4.6 Phase 3: Conversion

Panel Structure and Representation

Panels should feature alumni from a range of academic and professional backgrounds to reflect the diverse nature of conversion courses. Participants should hold industry-specific roles to demonstrate tangible postgraduate outcomes. A recommended structure is to feature three alumni per session, each delivering a 15-minute presentation outlining their personal journey, followed by an informal Q&A session to encourage student engagement.

Discussion Themes and Content

Alumni should discuss their undergraduate background, the postgraduate business course they converted to, and the motivations behind their decision. Additional discussion points should include initial concerns, financial considerations, skills and acumen gained, career progression, and current professional roles. Participants should be encouraged to adopt an honest and transparent approach, offering anecdotal insights and practical advice to prospective students.

Promotion and Communication Strategy

These sessions should be promoted through a multichannel approach, including Instagram, LinkedIn, and website communications, to maximise reach and engagement. See following pages for mock-up examples.

7.4.7 Phase 3: Mock-up

'Where It Leads'- Forward-looking, aspirational framing

Newcastle University Business School

27 SEPTEMBER

**WHERE IT LEADS:
NUBS PG ALUMNI INSIGHTS**

LEAH CLAY
Financial Analyst @
HSBC

FINLAY BODDY
Communications
Consultant @ Amazon

LAURENCE BREEN
Senior Consultant @
Deloitte

Alumni profiles demonstrate diverse UG and PG backgrounds

Employment at globally recognised organisations

Figure 64: Recommendation 2 Display Ad Mock-up 4

7.4.8 KPIs

Elevate Consultancy suggests that the following KPIs are used to measure and monitor the success of the Conversion X Employability campaign. This ensures that resources are being applied efficiently and not wasted.

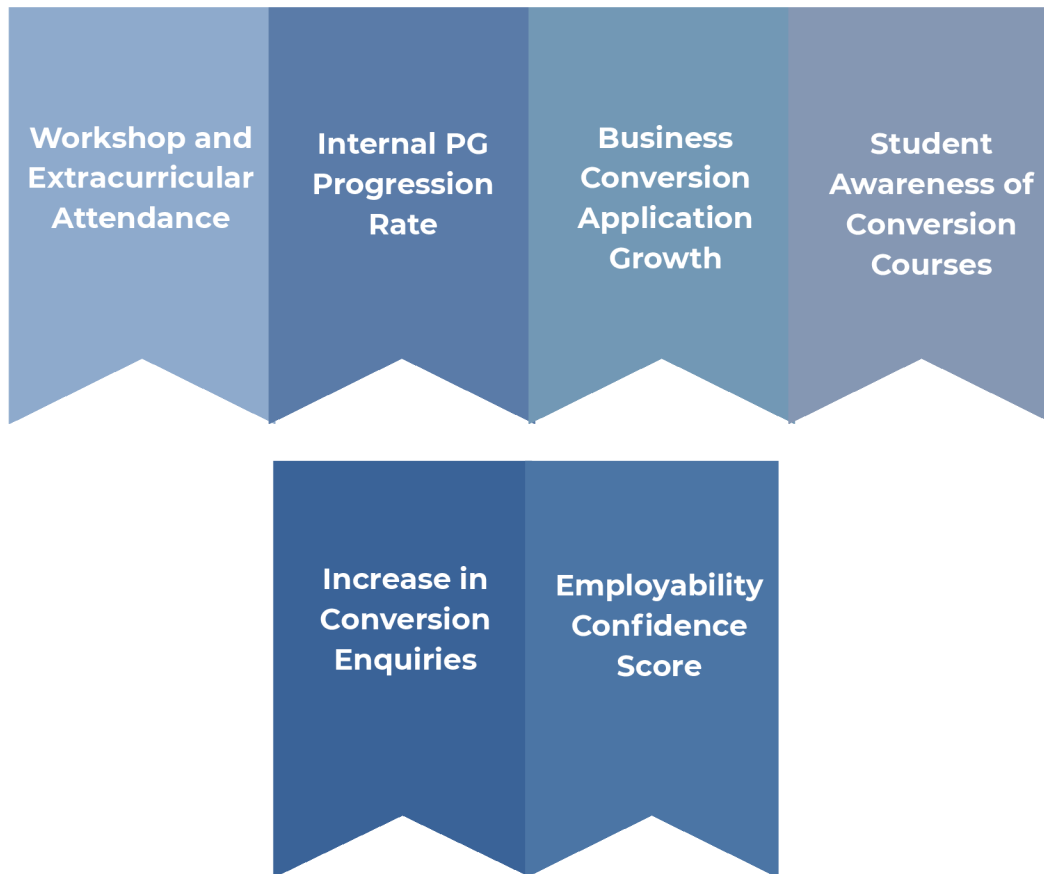


Figure 65: Recommendation 2 KPIs

7.4.9 Budgeting

The costs outlines below are estimates and assume the utilisation of existing university resources and infrastructure.

Task	Platform	Price
Collaborative Workshops & Events	In-person	Staff-led - Free Student Ambassador Led - £14.12/hr (Newcastle University, 2026)
Visual Content & Display Ads	Canva (Free/Pro) Meta Ads	Canva Free - Free Canva Pro - £100/pppy (Canva, 2025) Boosted Posts - £0.50-£1.00 per click (Social Rails, 2026)
Alumni Hall of Fame Series	LinkedIn/Virtual/In-person	LinkedIn - Free (LinkedIn Plus, already subscribed) Virtual - Free (Teams, Zoom etc.) In-person - £50pppd (Based on average travel and food costs)
Engagement Tracking (QR Codes / Physical Touchpoints)	FlowCode	Growth Plus Subscription - £750/yr (Dynamic Redirects, Geolocation Heatmaps, and FlowID Tracking) (FlowCode, 2026)

Table 2: Recommendation 2 Budget

Recommendation Three

**Medium Term:
Enhancing Awareness and
Access to Information**



9.0 Recommendation Three Medium Term: Enhancing Awareness and Access to Information

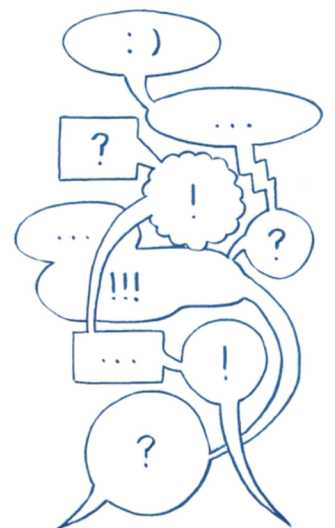
8.1 Introduction

NUBS must ensure that postgraduate information is delivered at the appropriate stage of the student customer journey to maximise awareness and support informed decision-making. By aligning communications with key decision points, such as the final year of undergraduate study, NUBS can increase consideration and improve the quality of applications. Positioning postgraduate study as a natural progression from undergraduate education will also strengthen NUBS' strategic positioning by reinforcing brand continuity. More effective targeting in physical student hotspots (e.g., Philip Robinson Library Cafe, Jesmond bars) will ensure messaging is more relevant, improving awareness of internal progression incentives, such as alumni discounts, while reinforcing the University's strategic values.

This recommendation directly addresses our outlined research objective of:



To explore and identify effective channels of communication and marketing techniques that resonate with prospective PG students.



8.2 Research Insights

Secondary Research

According to Romdhane et. al. (2025), Since "hyper(dis)connected" students are often disengaged by formal mass messaging, institutional credibility is best established through interactive, peer-led storytelling (ambassadors and alumni) which significantly strengthens emotional trust and sense of belonging.

Disadvantaged students are less likely to view postgraduate study as a "strategic financial investment." To prevent the "qualification ladder" from being reserved for privileged cohorts, universities must act as an "information bridge" regarding financial practicalities and discounts (Social Mobility Commission, 2023; Russell Group, 2025; Lowe, 2023).

Effective recruitment relies on "signal strength" (clarity and prominence) and "channel width" (reach and variety of platforms). This suggests that high-value messages, such as the 20% alumni discount, must move beyond over-saturated traditional channels like email inboxes to be successfully received by the target audience (Nasirov and Joshi, 2023).

Primary Research

Primary research indicates that students find physical point-of-experience marketing more engaging, such as QR codes and posters around the business school, as opposed to 'over-saturated' email marketing.

A timing misalignment is prevalent between communication from the University and its students regarding postgraduate programmes-information shared is often perceived as 'too little too late' as students believe they are 'out of time' or already know their postgraduate intentions, such as employment.

Students find physical "point-of-experience" marketing, such as QR codes on posters within the Business School building, significantly more engaging and effective than digital communication.

There is a critical lack of awareness regarding the 20% alumni discount; only 8% of current Newcastle University students interviewed were aware of the Alumni Discount beforehand. This acts as a deterrent to student's facing financial barriers to postgraduate study.

Figure 66: Recommendation 3 Research Insights

8.3 Data From Online Questionnaire to Support Recommendation 3

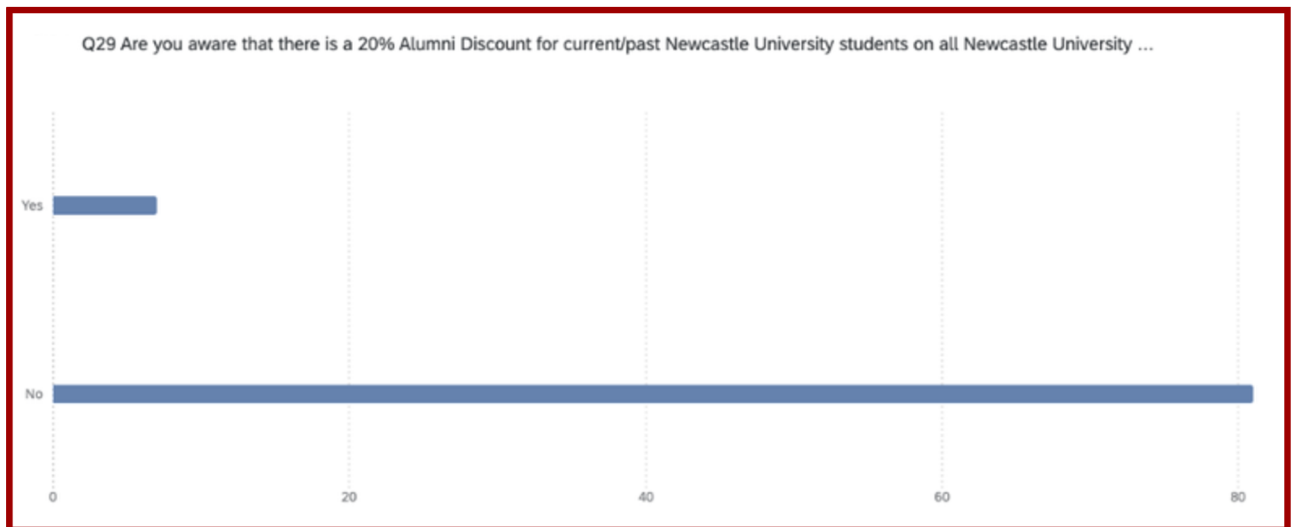


Figure 67 - Data exported IBM SPSS Statistics

The primary research findings support Recommendation 3 by highlighting the lack of awareness of Newcastle University's 20% alumni discount among respondents. The majority of participants reported that they were unaware of this incentive, indicating a clear information gap. This suggests that NUBS should strengthen communication and visibility of the alumni discount to encourage undergraduate students to remain at Newcastle for postgraduate study.

8.4 Current Physical Marketing Channels at NUBS

NUBS currently offers Education agents, offering prospective students support throughout the application process through assistance and counselling (Newcastle University, 2024). However, timing of communications for postgraduate study is currently misaligned with the application process, considered 'too little too late' for UG students. This directly impacts the application process, leaving students unaware of key support mechanisms, including alumni discounts and available guidance.

NUBS are yet to capitalise on the importance of peer influence throughout the decision-making process. Prospective postgraduate students often place greater trust in the experiences and recommendations of other students than in institutional marketing 'selling it to you'.

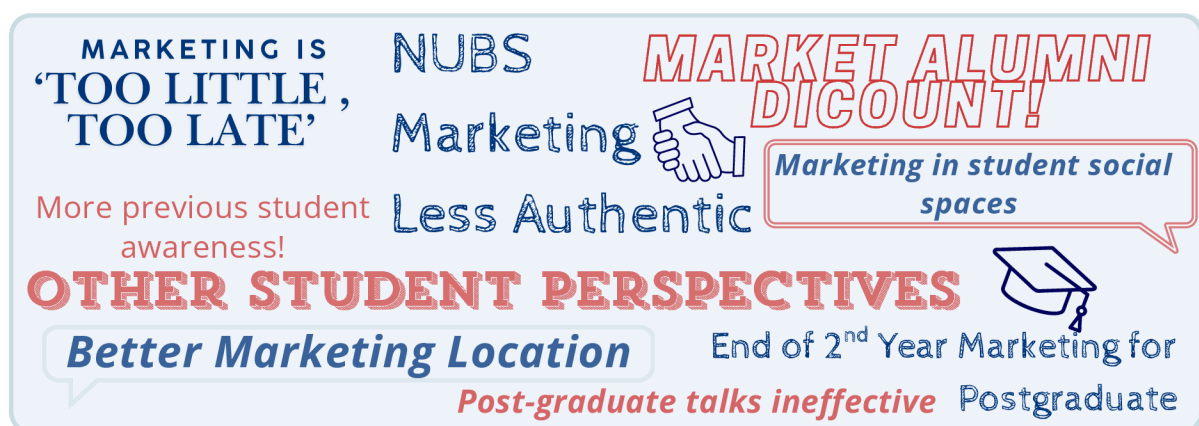


Figure 68: NUBS Current Marketing Channels

8.5 Recommendation

Drawing on both primary and secondary research findings, this recommendation has been structured into two sections to allow for a more in-depth analysis of strategies to enhance information awareness and bridge the gap between awareness and application.

1 Short-Term

2 Medium-Term

8.5.1 Short-Term Objectives

8.5.1.1 Target Marketing to specific student locations and environments.



Beyond the internal university campus, attractive student-populated areas that could encourage internal progression to postgraduate study remain underutilised and are not currently targeted by NUBS. When contextualised among our quantitative research (online questionnaire), less than five percent of students reported being 'very familiar' with NUBS PGT programmes.

NUBS must therefore engage the student population through high-visibility imagery in prime student locations to increase awareness and strengthen consideration of postgraduate study. Jesmond, Heaton and Sandyford are prime areas to capture attention within cafes, sparking conversations with other students which is a core mentor influencing student post-graduate intentions.

Other schools within the university should also be positioned as prime channels for promoting internal progression, particularly where conversion rates are high, such as the School of Psychology, the School of Natural and Environmental Sciences, and the School of Law. Marketing efforts should be tailored specifically to each school to make the messaging more engaging and have greater impact.

8.5.1.2 Improve Awareness of Alumni Discount

In order to increase student awareness surrounding the alumni discount programme, Elevate Consultancy have recommended the following short-term objectives:



Interactive Pop-up Events

Host interactive post-grad study events in high-traffic areas like the Philip Robinson Library or Jesmond, breaking through "email fatigue" by providing funding information via physical, face-to-face interactions that modern "hyper(dis)connected" students value over mass digital messaging.



Digital Information Architecture

Relocate the information surrounding the 20% alumni discount from deep sub-pages to the primary 'Fees & Funding' landing page and course headers, reducing the click-depth to find financial support. Given primary research has indicated that a discount is influential in post-graduate progression, this implementation may increase the number of students investigating postgraduate study options further.



Incentivised Awareness Building

To break through digital noise, student ambassadors should facilitate a brief, interactive quiz at physical pop-ups. Students who correctly answer questions-such as those regarding the 20% alumni discount-earn a NUBS café voucher, transforming a passive topic into an active learning experience.



Figure 69: Mock up voucher for quiz winners

8.5.2 Medium Term Objectives

8.5.2.1 Align Postgraduate Communications with the Application Cycle

Elevate consultancy recommend to improve the timing of postgraduate engagement, NUBS must:

Introduce early awareness campaigns during second year, focused on postgraduate pathways and benefits. This should include targeted email marketing to current Newcastle second-year students, highlighting the alumni discount and postgraduate success stories. Engaging students at the initial awareness stage increases the influence of the decision-making process, before decisions become finalised.

To improve communication, NUBS must offer personalised guidance from academic staff and study agents to help inform students on scholarships and funding. By maintaining a structured network of contacts; including alumni and current postgraduate students, peer-to-peer engagement with prospective applicants will be improved. An opt-in Alumni Contact Programme would also enable past students to support outreach efforts, showcasing authentic student experiences.



Figure 70: Alumni Chat Mock-Up

8.5.2.2 Mock-up

Timing of communications: Focusing on second-year students will better align marketing with postgraduate decision-making and application cycles.



Specific to the University School to promote internal progression.

Alumni discount marketing is currently ineffective, limiting awareness.

Student testimonials are a highly effective persuasion tool.

Figure 71: Mock up of Law School Direct Marketing Poster

8.6 Implementation

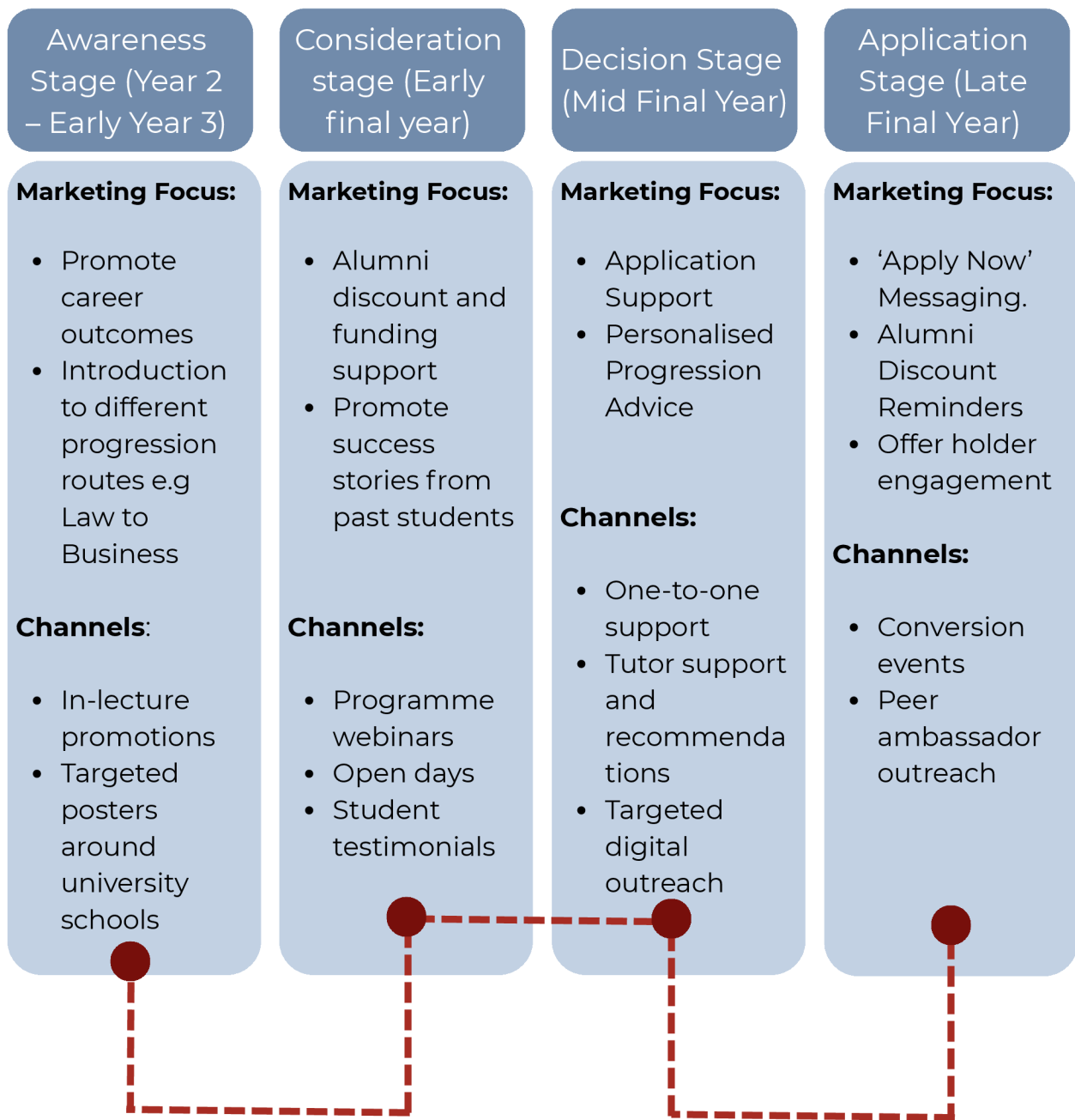


Figure 72: Recommendation 3 Implementation

8.7 Marketing Mix



Physical Evidence

Promotional materials should be tailored to individual subjects across the university campus to create more relevant touchpoints. Aligning messaging with students' undergraduate disciplines is likely to strengthen engagement and relevance (see Figure 71). High-visibility student social spaces beyond academic settings are valuable to enable outreach to a broader student population.

Promotion

The student population is highly responsive to promotional activity. Raising awareness of the 20% alumni tuition fee discount is critical to supporting undergraduates to postgraduate progression. Showcasing alumni experiences and outcomes is also a key promotional resource particularly for students who value peer insight when making study decisions.

Price

Elevate Consultancy found that students are more willing to consider postgraduate study when the alumni discount is clearly presented to them. This 20% loyalty discount significantly reduces tuition fees and makes further study more financially accessible. However, this discounted pricing strategy is currently underutilised in NUBS' marketing, with many students unaware of the benefits of remaining loyal to their UG university for PG study.

Figure 73: Recommendation 3 Marketing Mix

8.8 SMART Objectives

SMART	SMART
Specific	Attract students by physically promoting the Alumni discount incentive through targeted engagement across student social spaces beyond NUBS.
Measurable	Launch an Alumni contact programme to increase post-graduate opportunity engagement by 20% within 16 months.
Achievable	Physical poster and flyer development with QR code, tailored towards different academic schools and distributed accordingly.
Relevant	Aligns with encouraging business conversions, gaining students from different undergraduate schools, improving undergraduate progression rates.
Time-Bound	Allow four months to generate sign-ups and build contact lists, followed by additional months focused on promotion and encouraging engagement.

Figure 74: Recommendation 3 SMART Objectives

8.9 Testing

Testing must be implemented prior to launch to monitor engagement levels and gather baseline statistics.

Trialling events and feedback

Trial the introduction of the Alumni Contact Programme through study agents and assess the number of students willing to participate.



Testing Poster Locations

At first, keep the posters the same across locations for around 2 weeks to gather a baseline of QR engagement, then tailor the poster to specific schools around the campus to compare results.



Figure 75: Recommendation 3 Testing



Strong Targeting Approach

Increases the relevance around NUBS and their post-graduate offerings potential to increase conversion pathways.



Early awareness builds long-term interest

Second-year engagement increases familiarity with post-graduate options before decisions are finalised.



Strengthens Internal Progression

Helps position post-graduate study as a natural progression, rather than a 'panic', last-minute choice.



Credibility of Alumni influence

Builds trust in the messaging and is often more influential than institution-led marketing.

Figure 76: Recommendation 3 Benefits

8.11 Limitations



Over-reliance on Physical Promotion

Can be easily ignored and lost in busy campus environments. Digital engagement is preferred for student demographics.



Timing Risks

Early promotions for second-year students may cause message fatigue if they are not yet considering post-graduate options.



Alumni Engagement Challenges

Requires thorough relationship management to reduce misinformation and encourage informative relationship exchanges.



Resource Intensity

Requires collaboration between study agents, alumni and marketing teams to tailor individual posters/flyers.

Figure 77: Recommendation 3 Limitations

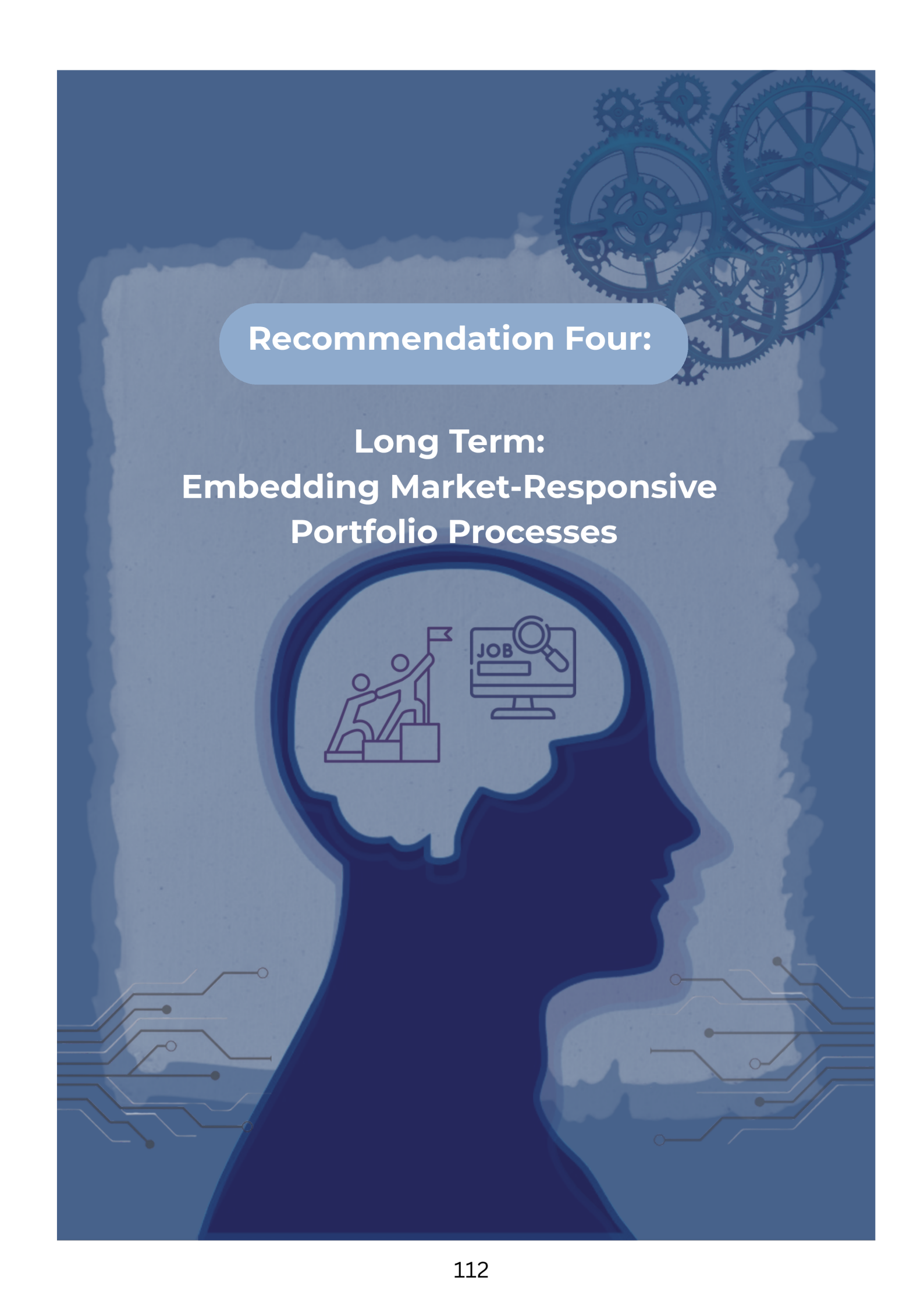
8.12 Budget

Physical Marketing

Elevate Consultancy supports the use of Canva graphic design software to produce visually appealing and professional posters and flyers. To ensure each design is coherent and meets the standards required for distribution across Newcastle University campus, a standard marketing wage has been incorporated to outline the staff costs associated with developing these materials. Once the designs have been produced to an appropriate quality, Elevate Consultancy suggest placing high-volume print orders to benefit from economies of scale and reduce overall production costs.

Task	Detail	Price
Canva Software	Canva Pro: unlimited templates, 100M+ photos, videos, graphics & 1000 brand kits	£100 / year (Canva, 2024)
Flyers	1000 Recycled A5 Flyers	£31.49 - £0.04 each / 1000 units (Vistaprint, 2026)
Posters	100 Glossy A3 Posters	£59.99 - £0.60 each / 100 units (Vistaprint, 2026)
Marketing Wage	Marketing Assistant, employed by Newcastle University	£12.21/hr (average) in Newcastle-upon-tyne (Indeed, 2026)
Study Agent Wage	Education Consultant roles, including UK and Hong Kong	Hong Kong: \$12.00 to \$17.95/hr (Jobsdb, 2026) UK: £12.21/hr (Indeed, 2026)

Table 3: Recommendation Three Budget



Recommendation Four:

Long Term: Embedding Market-Responsive Portfolio Processes

9.0 Recommendation 4: Long Term, Embedding Market-Responsive Portfolio Processes

9.1 Introduction

Primary research gathered from internal staff members and current market data suggests a need for long-term strategy within NUBS in order to generate a culture of innovation and alignment with market demand. Furthermore, the competitor review and benchmarks suggest that in order to maintain industry advantage, NUBS must develop a more dynamic approach to course development, rather than the current 'slow' and 'rigid' process of programme implementation.

This recommendation dominantly fulfils the initial research objective of:

To investigate how best to optimise the future portfolio of NUBS PG course offerings to ensure growth and optimal conversion levels.

What is NUBS current approach to portfolio development?



NUBS currently operates under systems and processes that have been deemed 'slow' and 'rigid', having to submit desired changes a year in advance and at busy times of teaching. This hinders creative innovation and prevents NUBS from being able to compete with more progressive and dynamic universities where a 'plug-in' module approach is used.

What Next?

Institutionalise a culture of continuous, data-informed portfolio progression that ensures postgraduate programmes align with:

- Labour market demand and industry expectations
- Skill shortages
- Student demand
- Emerging contemporary advancements



9.2 Strategic Rationale and Research Insights



Secondary Research & Literature

- AI is redefining how we educate the next generation, programmes must integrate AI education otherwise they risk becoming obsolete (Cremer and Chan, 2025).
- Technology-focused enterprise topics are now a top priority for business schools (Leckrone, 2025)
- Industry forecasts indicate employment demand is likely to be concentrated in digital and technology sectors between now and 2030.
- Identified growing relevance of artificial-intelligence related industries. For business schools, alignment with these high-growth sectors is attractive, as they will strengthen graduate employability.
- Exeter offers a narrower range of specialist programmes, particularly in high-growth areas such as data analytics, digital marketing and fintech.
- Employers favour skills in artificial intelligence, analytics, and green industries (Cremer & Chan, 2025; PwC, 2024)

Primary Research

- Themes regarding institutional barriers to progression emerged mainly from in-depth, on-to-one interviews with staff members. The following quotes support the suggested implications:

‘One of the barriers that we have to curriculum design and being innovative is that the systems and processes in the university are super slow.’

‘It takes anywhere from 18 months to a year..... So it’s very slow.’

‘Going forward, AI—big things’

‘The data that we get from the insights team is probably a little bit out of date by the time it gets to us.’

- Responses from open-ended questions within the questionnaire also revealed that a barrier to study was ‘exposure of options available course and subject wise.’



Figure 78: Recommendation 4 Research Insights

9.3 Recommendations and Key Features

Elevate Consultancy's primary and secondary research findings indicate that there are institutional barriers to innovative portfolio progression within NUBS and NU as a whole. In order to attract domestic and international students, it is essential that NUBS bridges the gap between current student demand and postgraduate programmes. It can be recommended that this can be achieved through revisiting the naming of courses to be more industry relevant and specialised. Furthermore, bi-annual reviews of current offerings and development of new programmes that align with employer expectations. The key features listed below show a tactical approach to the recommendation:

Strategic Course Repositioning through Industry-Relevant Naming



Programme titles should clearly signal contemporary specialisation and employability from both a student and employer perspective. For example, MSc Electric Commerce should be renamed MSc Digital Commerce & Analytics. Clear signalling such as this enhances students perceived ROI and strengthens their position among the competitive job market.

Adaptation of Current Course Content and Re-Designing of Assessments



Employability appeared as a dominant theme among Elevate Consultancy's research, more specifically there was primary research that evidenced a demand for employability-centred assessments for both UG and PG students. This could involve more consultancy opportunities and use of industry platforms. Additionally, modular content should be regularly updated in line with the wider business environment referencing topics such as Digital Finance e.g. Fintech and Generative AI.

Bi-annual Internal Portfolio Reviews



A formalised introduction of bi-annual portfolio reviews, in collaboration with the student insights team, would enable staff from different faculties to come together and share their own experiences and findings. Looking at graduate outcomes, market trends and forecast reports would create a well-rounded view of areas for improvement. Furthermore, this collaboration would assist in fostering a culture of continuous innovation and critical thinking.

Introduction of New Postgraduate Programmes



NUBS can use a 'plug-in' approach to creating and launching new programmes, this would allow them to be more responsive and dynamic in terms of market changes. NUBS can use existing modules from different programmes and combine them to create new, attractive programmes. New programmes should be in high-growth areas, such as AI & Business Integration, Data Analytics, Digital Marketing Technologies and Sustainable Business.

9.4 SMART Objectives

SMART	SMART
Specific	Create formal processes that facilitate continuous innovation regarding course content, naming, and development.
Measurable	To launch 2 new, industry-relevant postgraduate programmes within 12-18 months.
Achievable	Using existing modules and course content means that the development of new programmes is simple and time-efficient.
Relevant	The shift in employer demand towards digital, analytical skills and the emergence of new technologies, such as AI and blockchain, means there are current skill shortages. Consequently students have a desire to pursue education in these fields.
Time-Bound	Allow for 6 months to conduct market audits and bi-annual review, 6 months to develop, and 6 months to approve and launch.

Figure 79: Recommendation 4 SMART Insights

9.5 Benefits and Outcomes

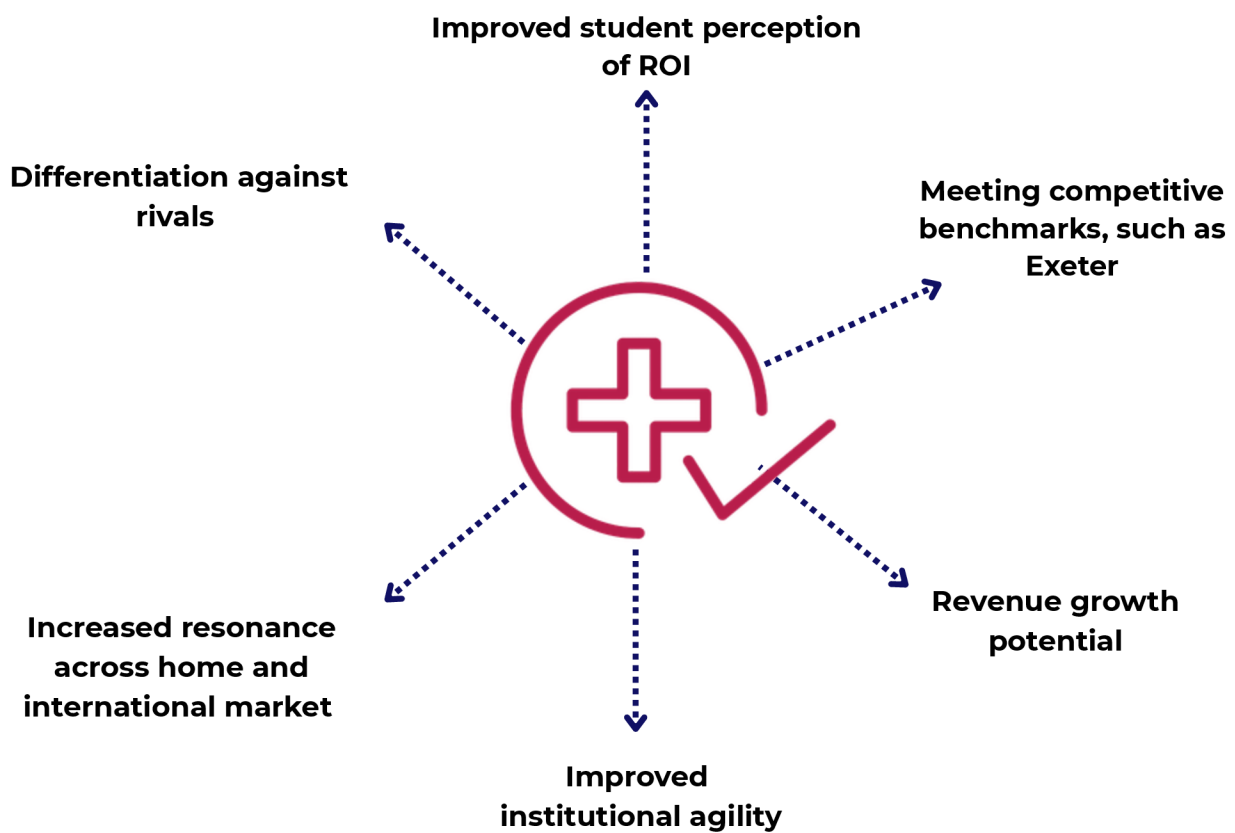


Figure 80: Recommendation 4 Benefits and Outcomes

9.6 Implementation Timeline

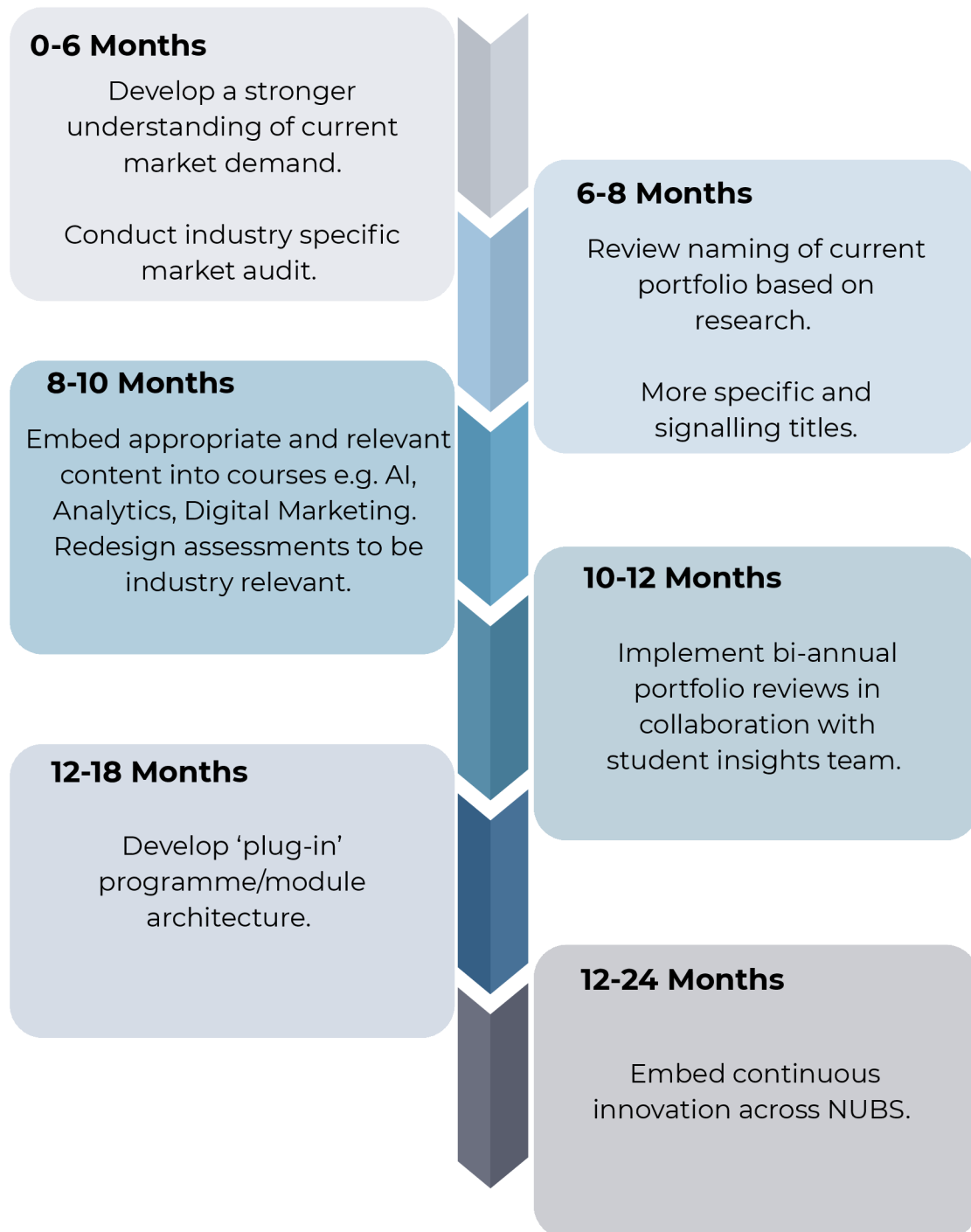


Figure 81: Recommendation 4 Implementation

9.7 Limitations

Rigid University Wide Structures



Institutional structures may be hard to uproot as they are applicable across the university.

Risk of Creating New Programmes in Underexplored Subjects



While embedding current themes such as AI and digital analytics enhances relevance, they are highly dynamic and often have short-lived lifecycles. Therefore, NUBS risks appearing solely trend-driven, rather than grounded in academic integrity.

Conflict of Interest between Subject Groups



Programme reviewing and development may cause tensions between subject groups due to overlapping academic territories and resource allocation. Certain staff members may feel that their programme doesn't need developing, or be passionate about its current status. This could be counter-productive when trying to create a culture of continuous innovation and co-creation.

Increase of Staff Workload



The implications of this recommendation are likely to increase administrative workload, yet simultaneously take pressure off DPDs to review their programme off their own accord. Without additional administrative resources, staff may have resistance to change.

Figure 82: Recommendation 4 Limitations

9.8 Indicative Budget

NUBS Specific Secondary Market Audit, using Student Insights Staff

Task	Detail	Price
Staff	Student Insights Analyst	25hrs- £400 (25 hours at £16 per hour) - (Studysmarter, 2026)
Staff	NUBS Project Leader	15hrs - £180 (15 hours at £12 per hour) - (Indeed, 2026)

Table 4: Recommendation 4 Budget 1



Renaming of Programmes and Changes to Course content

Task	Detail	Price
Academic Content Review	Internal Development (Faculty Workshops)	Free - Utilising academic development time
Digital Infrastructure Update	University Website & CRM - Updating CMS/SITS databases and redirecting old SEO links	Digital Content Editor - £16.04/hr (Indeed, 2026)
Amend Course Titles and Entry Requirements	UCAS / Newcastle University Prospectus	Staff Consultations - Free UCAS/Programme Website - Administrative Fees (est. £30-£50) Prospectus Printing - £227.57 (100 Books, 40 pages per book (Tradeprint, 2026))

Table 5: Recommendation 4 Budget 2

Trademarking & Legal	UK Intellectual Property Office - Ensuring new course titles don't infringe on competitors and filing for trademark protection if unique	£170 per trademark (Intellectual Property Office, 2026) - online application
Curriculum Committee & Quality Review	Faculty Operations Administrator - arrange and organise committee meetings	£11.44 - £12.71/hr (GOV.UK, 2026) - New position, alternatively free if already employed by University

Table 5: Recommendation Four Budget 2

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