



Nottingham
Business School
Nottingham Trent University

Creating a flexible framework: working with business and microcredentials

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Overview

- Market changes and the role of a Business School
- Microcredentials
- Nottingham Business School (NBS) approach
- NBS Flexible Framework – trials and tribulations!
- Short courses and microcredentials online
- Next steps for Business Schools and Universities

Market Changes and the Role of the Business School

- Need for business schools to review their current approach to working with businesses and learners to think about education in a different way
- Work with clients to co-create learning that is aligned with organisational need remains key
- Examples of where stackable microcredentials carrying University credit can lead to a university award are still difficult to find, despite emerging evidence that this is still an important motivator for learners (Carrington Crisp, 2021).
- Quality assurance landscape has been somewhat slow to catch up, QAA (2021) discuss the need for quality assurance and robust ways for checking quality

Microcredentials

- Carrington Crisp's (2021) *'Future of Lifelong and Executive Education'* research suggested there needed to be more flexibility and personalisation, with 79% of employers anticipating online learning to be the approach taken for developing employees and 78% of employers agreeing that short bursts of accredited learning delivered flexibly and providing microcredentials would meet their leadership development needs.
- There remains a need for the learning to be accredited but taken in a more bitesize and stackable format, and in Executive Education these developments appear to have accelerated further post-pandemic.
- Many University Business Schools have mobilised to offer a range of online short courses / micro-credentials in the last five years.
- The AACSB (2021) briefing paper on micro-credentials notes that organisations are increasingly using micro-credentials in their skills development strategies and that almost half (47%) of AACSB Business Schools now offer non-degree certificates, addressing the demand for digital badges, digital certificates and other 'non-traditional' degree awards.
- Competitors in the executive or professional education marketplace have increased, companies such as Google, Apple and IBM taking on employees without a degree and developing relevant courses to suit their needs, offering internal certification such as the Google Career Certificate (Diaz and Halkias, 2021).
- Kohler et al (2021) also highlight the disruptive potential of microcredential-focused education to offer individuals and organisations the opportunity to engage with different providers to meet a personal need.

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- Deliver funded programmes for SMEs in the region (D2N2)
 - Women in Leadership for SME leaders (20 Level 7 credits)
 - Effective Change Management (20 Level 7 credits)
 - Diverse Leadership Development (20 Level 7 credits)
 - All these programmes can either have the 20 credits on successful completion of assessment OR they can just be taken as a course and receive digital certificate. Delivered as F2F or blended.
- Delivering bespoke education for business – with a focus on co-creation
 - For example: delivering a programme with Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service, Nottinghamshire Police and the Integrated Care Board – Nottingham Leadership Transformation Programme (20 credits at Level 7)
- Creation of an online offer through FutureLearn:
 - There will be a total of 11 short courses and 9 microcredentials by Jan 2025
- Delivering a postgraduate certificate in Leadership and Management Practice as a flexible framework
 - Long term aim is to create a full flexible MSc in Leadership and Management Practice in due course

Women in Leadership



Narinder Riyat • 1st
Contracting Professional
4mo • Edited •

Honoured and humbled to have spent the last 6 months studying the "Women In Leadership" course, at Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University (where I got my first degree many moons ago) with fellow women in business and in the corporate community - great team and inspirational lecturers 🌟👍👏

#certificateofcompletion
#leadershipdevelopment #personaldevelopment
#leadership #business #learning #womeninleadership #ladieswholead

Ruth Sacks Dr Mel Bull FCMI, SFHEA, CIWFM Helen Whitehall Jadey Ryan



Natalie Bamford • 2nd
CEO Colleague Box | Delivering Happiness via Corporate ...
7mo •

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I'm a student again! 😊

Thanks to [Linsey Hardy](#), [Eileen Perry \(Richards\) MBE DL](#) and [Jean Mountain](#) from Enterprising Women, I have enrolled on a Level 7 Women in Leadership course at [Nottingham Trent University](#).

My reason for signing up was having found myself thrust into leadership when starting [Colleague Box](#) in 2020 I am always looking for ways I can improve, get better, learn and grow.

After my brain trauma I'm keen to take care of my old noggin' and I do feel like the more I work it out the more it's capable of. I suppose it is a muscle after all.

According to my teen I'm a 'neek' (which is cross between a nerd and geek apparently!) because I love learning! 😊 It's a new accolade I'm proud of!

I'd like to think I'm a lifelong learner and I'm really looking forward to becoming a better leader that our awesome team deserve. The course has been fantastic so far - thank you [Dr Mel Bull FCMI](#), [SFHEA](#), [CIWFM](#), [Helen Whitehall](#) and all others involved the organisation of it.

Are we ever too old or experienced to learn something new or improve ourselves?



Ruby Birks RITTech • 2nd
Project Manager at Purpose Media (UK) Ltd | Apprenticeshi...
1w •

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Throwback to last Thursday 😊

Last week was the first in-person session for the Women in Leadership Level 7 course that [Nottingham Trent University](#) are running 📍

As much as I've enjoyed the online sessions ... wow was it good to be in person 😊

I'm the youngest person on the [#womeninleadership](#) course and the newest in my career, it was so inspiring to hear from women who are directors and business owners and I definitely feel like I've got plenty to take away from it 📄

Thanks to [Ruth Sacks](#) and [Dr Mel Bull FCMI, SFHEA, CIWFM](#) for leading the sessions 😊

[#level7](#) [#womeninbusiness](#) [#womenempowerment](#) [#nottinghamtrentuniversity](#)
[#ntu](#) [#shortcourse](#)

Our Flexible Framework

- The development of a flexible framework has reframed the concept of constructive alignment to allow for multiple credentials as well as online microcredentials to be stacked towards the award of Postgraduate Certificate in Leadership and Management Practice (this includes using credits from other microcredentials from other universities).
- Our microcredentials include online only, blended and face to face along with bespoke options.
- The journey taken with the internal University quality team to rethink the more traditional approaches has been a challenge!
- The creation of the framework has also allowed for greater freedom for the co-creation of microcredentials with organisations.
- The framework is focused on having broad overarching learning aims for the PG Cert and aligning new microcredentials to them.
- The programme will build 'bottom up' (currently have 10 microcredentials (F2F/Blended and online) aligned with framework)
- Allows students up to 8 years to achieve the PG Certificate (resulting in change of regulations for microcredentials)
- Flexible and stackable learning with options to just do one micro credential or to complete the PG Certificate. Gives an opportunity to study at own pace to work around work/family commitments
- Gives consideration to a different type of learner who prefers to learn online, seeks flexibility, and wishes to engage in peer-to-peer learning through online exercises, getting a global perspective due to the nature of the learners.

Our Flexible Framework- broad learning outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

1. Engage with the advanced foundational theories and conceptual frameworks used in leadership and management practice in organisations both nationally and internationally.
2. Apply knowledge, tools and techniques to resolve issues within leadership and management practice.
3. Analyse data in relation to the practice of leadership and management.
4. Demonstrate creativity in the application of knowledge.

Skills, Qualities and Attributes

5. Communicate key issues and arguments in an appropriate format to a technologically professional standard.
6. Analyse a variety of relevant data used in diverse contexts to support effective decision making in leadership and management practice



Challenges (some ongoing!)

- Building the course in this way does not align with process
- No start and end date for the PG Cert course
- Direct admission from online partner or direct admission through business (but same enrolment form used!)
- Flexible timeframes for award completion (not the microcredentials – these are fixed)
- Change to regs to focus on different requirements e.g. extensions, RPL, compensation etc.
- Bringing professional services up to speed
- Minimal engagement with wider University for online learners through partner platform
- Getting academics to buy in to a new approach
- Agreement of a 50/50 split in terms of NBS and other institution credits

Current Non-Accredited FREE Short Courses (We have had 2018 learners on (or completed) the short courses as of 12th June)

Courses 7 Courses

Learn new skills, pursue your interests or advance your career with our short online courses.



Nottingham Trent University & Nottingham Business School ☆

Leadership tools for ethical problem-solving

🕒 3 weeks ⌚ 2 hrs per week

♻️ Included in Unlimited

[Go to course](#)



Nottingham Business School ☆

NEW

Digital Marketing: New Trends and Technologies

🕒 3 weeks ⌚ 2 hrs per week

♻️ Included in Unlimited

[Find out more](#)



Nottingham Business School ☆

NEW

Inspiring Women Leaders: An Introduction to Purpose-Driven Leadership

🕒 3 weeks ⌚ 2 hrs per week

♻️ Included in Unlimited

[Find out more](#)



Nottingham Business School ☆

NEW

Introduction to FinTech and Financial Innovation

🕒 3 weeks ⌚ 2 hrs per week

♻️ Included in Unlimited

[Go to course](#)



Nottingham Trent University & Nottingham Business School ☆

Climate Literacy and Action for All

🕒 3 weeks ⌚ 2 hrs per week

♻️ Included in Unlimited

[Go to course](#)



Nottingham Trent University & Nottingham Business School ☆

How to Build Leadership Resilience

🕒 3 weeks ⌚ 2 hrs per week

♻️ Included in Unlimited

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Nottingham Trent University & Nottingham Business School ☆

SMART Tourism and Responsible Travel

🕒 3 weeks ⌚ 2 hrs per week

♻️ Included in Unlimited

[Go to course](#)



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Current Microcredentials: Next start date is 18th September

Microcredentials 3 Microcredentials

Our online microcredentials are designed to upskill you for work in rapidly-growing industries, without the time and cost commitment of a full degree. They can be used as an independent certification, and some even offer academic credit to use towards a degree. Each microcredential also includes a formal online assessment.



Nottingham Business School co-created
by Nottingham Trent University

Climate Solutions for a Net Zero Future

Gain expertise in high impact climate solutions to transform society and organisations.

 1 course  10 weeks  Postgraduate

[Find out more](#)



Nottingham Business School co-created
by Nottingham Trent University

Leadership Resilience and Thriving During Turbulent Times

Want to progress in your leadership career? Gain the essential skills to adapt, recover, and thrive during challenging times.

 1 course  10 weeks  Postgraduate

[Find out more](#)



Nottingham Business School co-created
by Nottingham Trent University

Values-driven Problem Solving in Organisational Systems

Become a better and more ethical leader by learning how to leverage your values and solve problems through systems thinking.

 1 course  10 weeks  Postgraduate

[Find out more](#)

Next steps/thoughts...

- We have decided to offer a truly flexible and stackable approach to allow learners to bring credits from varying institutions
- We will continue to develop our online, open and bespoke microcredentials and free online short courses to give learners different options.
- If Universities want to exist in this space.. Is there a need for a more open approach to RPL aligned with award learning outcomes across the sector and does there need to be policy guidelines from UK Government/QAA etc.



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