MARKET INSIGHTS BRIEF

Postgraduate Portfolio Health Check

Completed for a Partner Institution
July 2025

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I. Recommendations and Considerations

Research Challenge

A partner institution requested a Portfolio Health Check to evaluate the institution's existing portfolio and assess growth opportunities.

A full list of courses evaluated appears in Appendix A.

Region

The region for this analysis included:

- The United Kingdom

Recommended Next Steps

- Request an Existing Course Assessment to examine potential for growth for an existing course
- Request a market opportunity scan for help identifying promising new course subjects

Market-Aligned Courses

EAB's market scoring analyses identified the following courses as best poised for growth among the partner institution's postgraduate portfolio when considering external market factors. These courses demonstrate high and/or growing labour market demand:

- **Artificial Intelligence:** A high number of job postings (22,026 on average across quarters) paired with the highest average quarterly growth (2.41%) amongst all profiled courses signals favourable opportunities for relevant professionals.
- **Sustainable Development:** A moderate number of average quarterly job postings (5,645) paired with stable employer demand (0.30% average quarterly growth) indicates a steady labour market for graduates. While actual job postings declined by a net of three job postings on average quarterly, the overall labour market score (3.72) suggests that opportunities remain consistent for professionals in this field.
- **Art History:** A moderate number of average quarterly job postings (6,995) and a slight decline in employer demand (0.62% on average quarterly) suggest a stable but competitive labour market; however, projected occupation growth over the next decade (6.77%) signals promising opportunities for graduates.
- **Neuroscience[1]:** Although job postings remain low (1,193 on average quarterly), and employer demand experienced a slight net decline of three postings on average quarterly), employer demand has remained relatively steady overall. This, paired with strong projected occupational growth (5.77%) over the next decade, suggests encouraging employment prospects for relevant professionals.
- **Digital Education:** A low-to-moderate number of job postings (3,136 on average quarterly) combined with employer demand growth (1.86% on average quarterly) suggests a favourable job market for relevant professionals.

1) When interpreting the data, it is important to note that courses with a lower n-value may exhibit a higher labour market score due to the low n-value inflating the growth percentages; a lower n-value does not inherently indicate fewer or worse opportunities but rather may reflect a more specialised or competitive field, which can still offer attractive prospects for graduates.

Methodology Overview

EAB evaluated the partner institution's existing postgraduate course portfolio based on labour market demand variables (i.e., United Kingdom job growth over time, United Kingdom projected job growth). EAB assigned each course a quantitative score for labour market demand.

All courses received scores relative to each other. Thus, a course described with low regional labour demand does not necessarily represent low opportunity for growth in absolute terms, but rather lower opportunity for growth when compared to other courses in the portfolio.

See Appendix A for a detailed explanation of the methodology used in this analysis.

Research Limitations:

- The analysis only considers course potential in terms of labour demand and does not account for student demand, courses' operational costs or potential capacity limitations (e.g., instructor shortages).
- Job postings in the United Kingdom do not typically specify or require a minimum degree level but rather focus on recruiting applicants that possess desired and necessary skills to fulfill a role. As such, this analysis reviewed job postings for professionals at all degree levels and not just postgraduate.

Project Analysis

Labour Market Trends for Market-Aligned Courses

Many of the analysed fields experienced an overall decline in employer demand across the profiled period; This aligns with broader labour market trends as many fields experienced above average hiring in the initial months following the Covid-19 pandemic and a subsequent decline in more recent years. For additional insight into the market for an individual course, consider requesting an Existing Course Assessment.

Labour Market Intelligence Data

United Kingdom Data

Course	Average Quarterly Job Postings, 2022 Q3-2025 Q2	Average Quarterly Per Cent Growth in Job Postings, 2022 Q3-2025 Q2	Average Quarterly Actual Growth in Job Postings, 2022 Q3-2025 Q2	Projected Occupation Per Cent Growth, 2024-2034	Projected Occupation Actual Growth, 2024-2034	Labour Market Score
Artificial Intelligence	22,026	2.41%	311	5.96%	24,014	**4.34**
Sustainable Development[1]	5,645	0.30%	-3	N/A	N/A	**3.72**
Art History	6,995	-0.62%	-97	6.77%	4,934	**3.47**
Neuroscience	1,193	0.39%	-3	5.77%	6,208	**3.46**
Digital Education	3,136	1.86%	-11	2.55%	26,081	**2.99**
Entrepreneurship	221	-2.77%	-10	5.66%	5,193	**2.76**
International Education	339	1.85%	-3	2.55%	26,081	**2.72**
Computer Science	95,137	-9.62%	-12,193	5.76%	36,091	**2.71**
Finance	140,061	-6.22%	-10,235	5.49%	47,273	**2.59**
Statistics	43,827	-5.70%	-2,951	5.59%	7,117	**2.59**
Software Engineering	62,404	-10.94%	-9,296	5.96%	24,014	**2.57**
Management	165,572	-5.05%	-9,922	5.00%	35,745	**2.57**
Museum Studies	682	-1.38%	-14	6.58%	951	**2.57**
Geochemistry	1,249	-0.38%	-17	5.58%	3,078	**2.52**
Statistical Ecology	896	-3.42%	-32	5.62%	3,781	**2.47**
Mathematics	3,345	-4.60%	-180	5.62%	3,781	**2.47**

1) Occupational projections are not provided for these courses, as they do not align with specific occupations.

Source: EAB analysis. Emsi Analyst.

Labour Market Intelligence Data (cont.)

United Kingdom Data

Course	Average Quarterly Job Postings, 2022 Q3-2025 Q2	Average Quarterly Per Cent Growth in Job Postings, 2022 Q3-2025 Q2	Average Quarterly Actual Growth in Job Postings, 2022 Q3-2025 Q2	Projected Occupation Per Cent Growth, 2024-2034	Projected Occupation Actual Growth, 2024-2034	Labour Market Score
Environmental Science	24,269	-1.09%	-349	5.19%	3,177	**2.44**
International Relations	2,931	-4.60%	-137	6.10%	1,965	**2.40**
Marine Biology	865	-3.19%	-33	5.95%	2,583	**2.37**
Computing and Information Technology	65,443	-9.47%	-8,055	5.17%	28,788	**2.31**
Economics	3,866	-5.52%	-271	5.62%	3,781	**2.30**
TESOL	1,697	1.14%	-3	3.59%	627	**2.27**
Digital Humanities[1]	8,646	-5.09%	-571	N/A	N/A	**2.22**
Astrophysics	797	0.69%	-5	5.04%	1,590	**2.19**
Film Studies	3,282	-4.17%	-169	4.72%	4,484	**2.15**
Data Science	52,235	-6.17%	-4,343	5.55%	3,336	**2.02**
Chemistry	8,314	-6.29%	-610	5.58%	3,078	**1.82**
Animal Behaviour	670	-2.67%	-19	4.56%	3,053	**1.72**
Energy Policy and Finance	2,816	-5.85%	-189	5.07%	3,661	**1.71**
Health Data Science	606	-6.78%	-50	5.55%	3,336	**1.55**
Human Computer Interaction	14,410	-10.51%	-2,180	5.30%	888	**1.36**

Occupational Projections

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Administrators should note, due to the broad occupational categories set by the Office for National Statistics, several courses in this analysis relied upon the same occupations for projected employment growth.

1) Occupational projections are not provided for these courses, as they do not align with specific occupations.

Source: EAB analysis. Emsi Analyst.

Appendix A: Research Parameters and Sources

Research Methodology

EAB's market insights research guides strategic programmatic decisions at partner institutions. The Market Insights Service combines qualitative and quantitative data to help administrators identify opportunities for new course development, assess job market trends and align curriculum with employer and student demand.

EAB employed a quantitative scoring system to assess labour market demand for each course. To score each course, EAB distilled the most fundamental external signals of market demand in terms of labour market intelligence, outlined below. Each course was assigned a score (zero through five) based on available data across five metrics, synthesised to the Labour Market Demand score.

Quantitative scores were calculated using benchmark scores based on labour market demand for all courses in the portfolio; therefore, **course performance scores are relative to performance against the reviewed portfolio**.

Data Analysed

Labour Market Demand

Data Point	Time Period Used	Rationale
Average number of jobs posted quarterly	2022 Q3-2025 Q2	Measures the actual number of jobs posted per quarter, during the most recent period of data available.
Average quarterly growth in proportion of job postings (percent change)	2022 Q3-2025 Q2	Measures the quarterly change in job postings. EAB analysed job posting growth in terms of proportion to identify occupations growing faster than the labour market as a whole and to account for economic fluctuations.
Average quarterly growth in job postings (actual change)	2022 Q3-2025 Q2	Measures the quarterly change in job postings. EAB analysed actual change in addition to percent change to account for volume of job posting growth.
Projected occupational growth (percent change)	2024-2034	Indicates potential future growth in labour market demand nationwide.
Projected occupational growth (actual change)	2024-2034	Indicates potential future growth in labour market demand nationwide.

Labour Market Intelligence Partner: Lightcast

This report includes data made available through EAB's partnership with Lightcast (formerly Emsi), a labour market analytics firm serving higher education, economic development, and industry leaders in the U.S., Canada and the United Kingdom.

Lightcast curates and maintains the most comprehensive labour market data sets available for academic course planning, providing real-time job posting data, workforce and alumni outcomes data, and traditional government sources of data. Under this partnership, EAB may use Lightcast's proprietary Analyst™ and Alumni Insight™ tools to answer partner questions about employer demand, the competitive landscape, in-demand skills, postings versus actual hires, and skills gaps between job postings and professionals in the workforce. The Lightcast tools also provide EAB with in-depth access to unsuppressed, zip-code-level government data for occupations, industries, courses, and demographics. For more complete descriptions of the Lightcast tools, visit:

- https://lightcast.io/solutions/education/analyst
- https://lightcast.io/solutions/education/alumni-pathways

To learn more about Lightcast and its software and services, please contact Bob Hieronymus, Vice President of Business Development at bob.hieronymus@economicmodeling.com or (208) 883-3500.

Appendix B: Using the Portfolio Health Check to Identify Growth Opportunities

Evaluating course viability using labour market trends is most effective for courses where students are motivated to enroll by a degree's career impact.

Use the data in this report (external growth metrics) paired with institutional metrics to identify which academic courses in a portfolio have the greatest potential for growth.

External Growth Metrics

This Portfolio Health Check assesses the following labour market factors:

- Historic employer demand, both in relevant job postings' volume and growth
- Projected employment for typical job outcomes

Where possible, supplement the labour market analysis in this report with student trends data (e.g., enrolment trends from HESA) to help determine a course's competitive opportunity:

- Historic student enrolments, both in volume and growth, and
- Competition, including the number of similar courses offered at competitor institutions, as well as the change in competitors over time.

In addition to external metrics, evaluate a course's past academic achievements as an indicator of its potential for future growth.

Institutional metrics to inform course growth potential:

Enrolment and conferral metrics

- Total enrolment
- Student credit hours taught
- Degrees conferred

Pipeline metrics

- Average number of inquiries
- Conversion rate from inquiry to application
- Average number of applications and growth in applications
- Yield rate from acceptance to enrolment

Additional research such as EAB's **Existing Courses Assessment**, can diagnose what factors may be limiting a course with favourable external metrics from reaching its full potential.

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