Getting the Blend Right in Blended Learning:

Lessons Learned from a Postgraduate Taught Programme

Grazyna Grace Lipowska-Bhalla
Division of Cancer Sciences, SMS, FBMH
PD MSc Molecular Pathology of Cancer

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The Digital Shift

Traditional Education

Digital Technology

Blended Teaching and Learning

From Crisis to Innovation

Traditiona
Educatio

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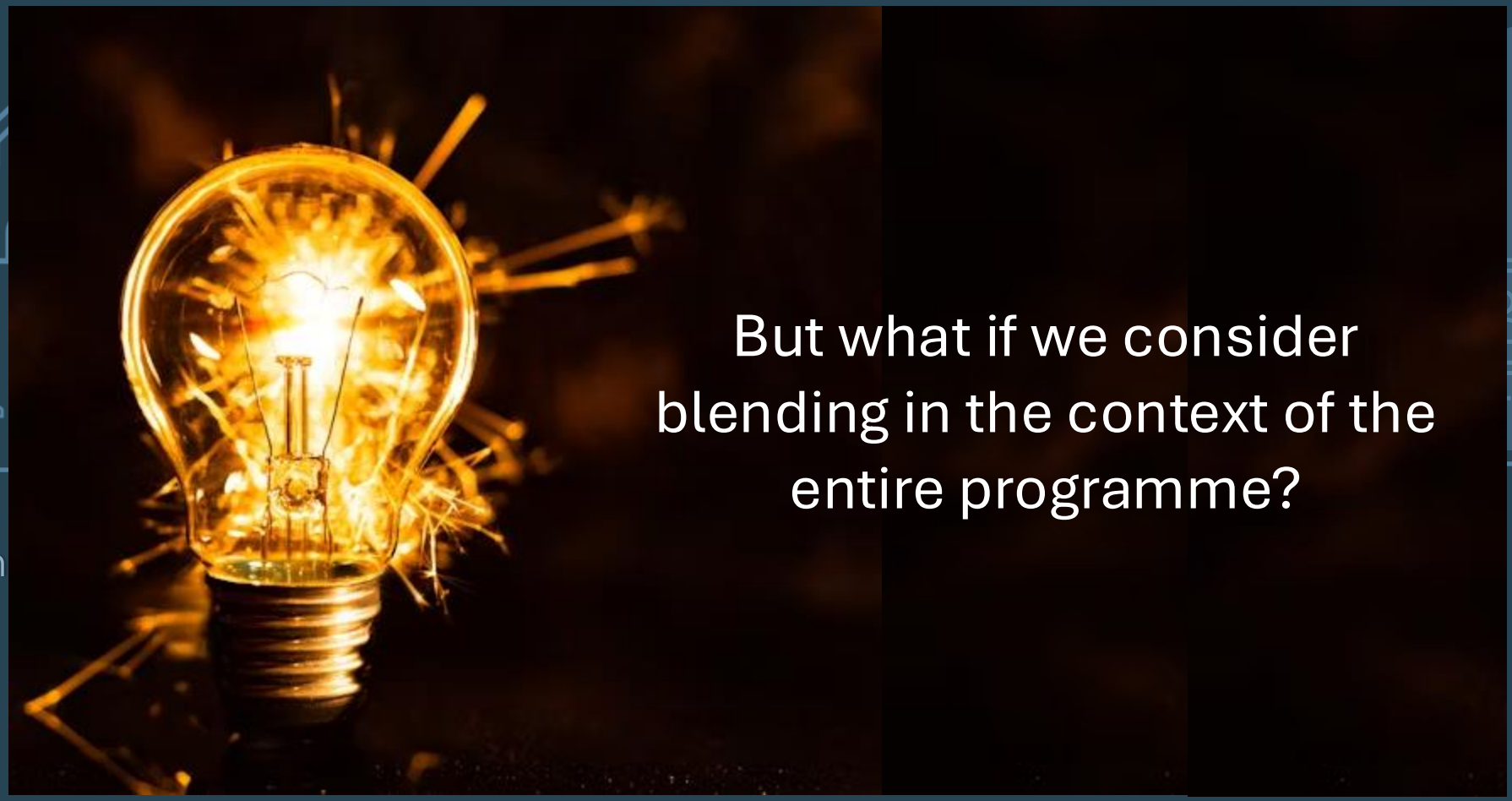
Online Learning

Opportunity for Exploring



MSc Molecular Pathology of Cancer

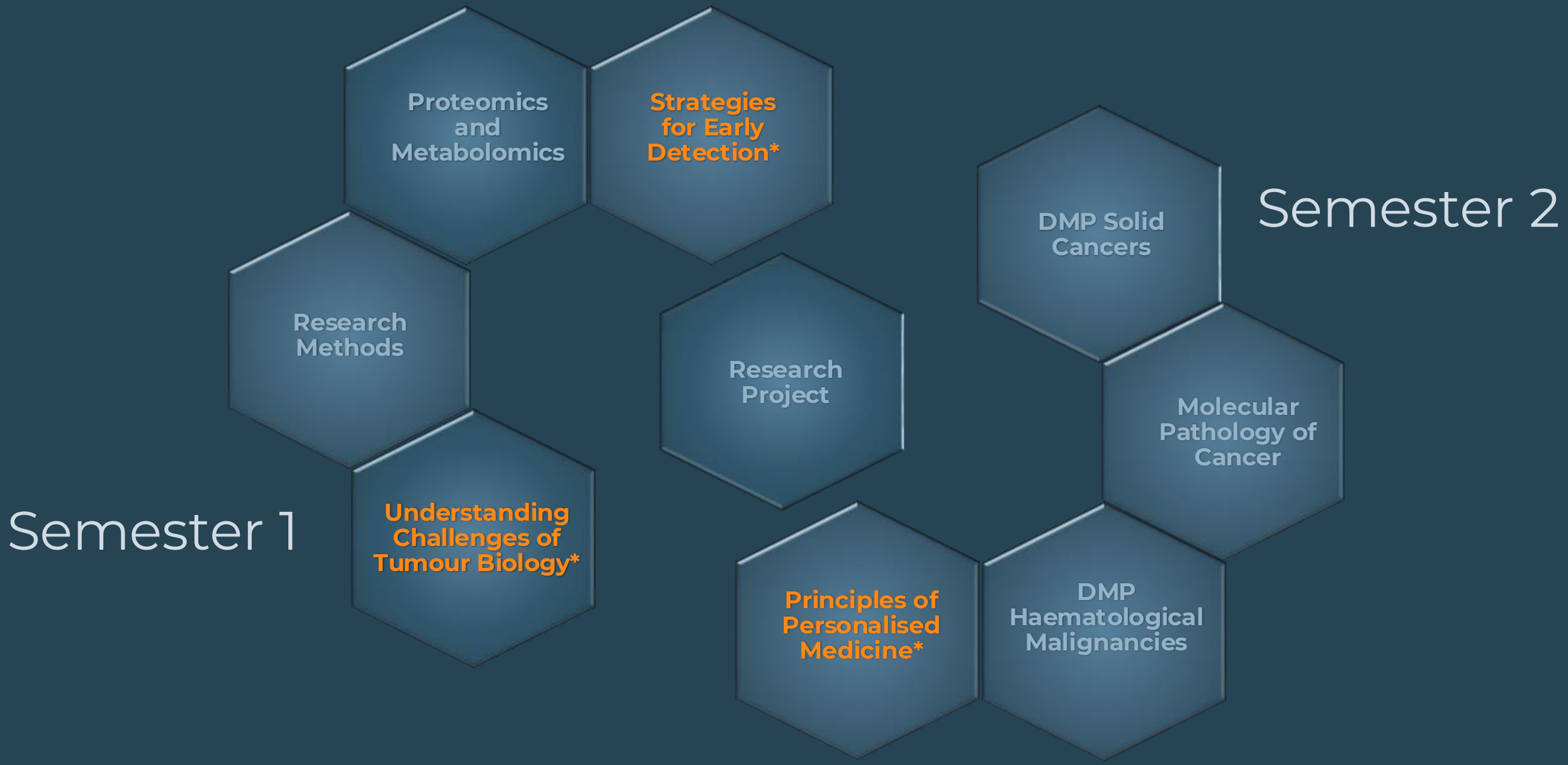
1-year, full-time, on campus programme

To equip students with the knowledge, skills, and mindset to drive innovation in cancer detection and research

Graduates and professionals with background in biology, medicine, pathology trainees, clinical and biomedical scientists

Over 70% of international students

Blending Online and On-Campus Modules



Online Units

- 6-week content + 2 weeks
- Videos, podcasts, recorded mini-lectures, presentations
- Synchronous sessions – three live tutorials
- Asynchronous collaborative activities – discussion boards
- Reflective practice
- Flexible assessment

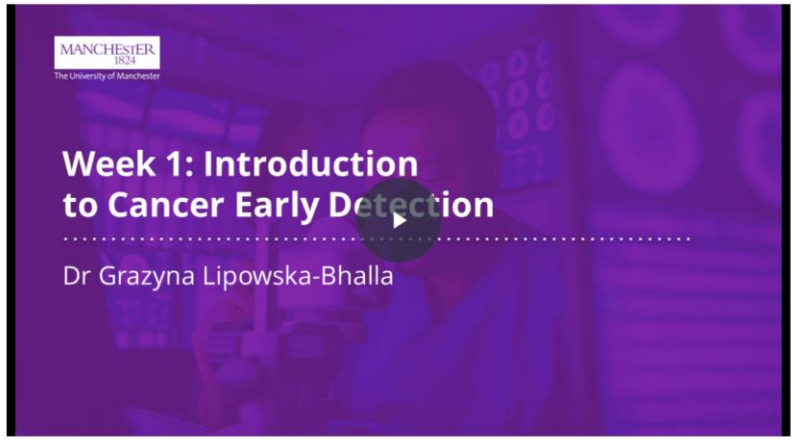
Online Un

1 2 3 4 5 6 Progress

Contents

1.1 Introduction to Cancer Early Detection

Please watch the introductory video, which highlights the main aims of this week and contextualises the learning outcor



Transcript

Padlet

UoM • 14 • 5mo

MEDN62651: Importance of Early Detection Examples

Select a specific cancer type and explore the significance of early detection for this cancer. Discuss its influence your research findings (max 250 words) and remember to add your name to the title of your post. As an additiona understanding of the distinctive benefits of early detection across various cancer types in diverse geographic reg

Pinned

Model Answer

Cancer: Lung cancer
Survival: When diagnosed at an early, localised stage, 60% of patients survive for 5 years or longer after the diagnosis. As cancer is detected at more advanced stages, the survival rate signifi cantly declines, with only 5% of patients diagnosed with metastatic disease achieving a 5-year survival milestone.
Treatment options: In early-stage disease surgery is an effective treatment with good prognosis for recovery, frequently with a curative outcome. In more advanced stag radiotherapy (with less favou recovery. Also targeting PD-

Early Detection in Glioblastoma

Skye Bernthal

Glioblastoma is an aggressive brain cancer, with over 20,000 cases diagnosed annually in the UK. Patients lose ~20 years of their life to the disease, with the UK ranking 21st out of 27 EU nations for brain tumour survival rates (NCRI, 2023). Delays in diagnosis significantly impact patient survival, treatment, and quality of life.

Early detection improves survival rates by implementing timely

Megan Greenwood 11478219

Breast cancer

Survival: When breast cancer is detected early in its localised stage the five-year relative survival rate is 99%. Early detection includes doing monthly breast self-exams and scheduling regular clinical breast exams and mammograms. The goal of early detection is to diagnose and treat breast cancer patients in an early stage when the prognosis for long-term survival is best. Prognosis is generally more favourable for women with early-

Quiz: Methodology of Screening Knowledge Check

Please use the *Methodology of Screening Knowledge Check* to test your understanding of this first topic. You can f within the *Quizzes* section on Blackboard.

This quiz will help you prepare for the summative Multiple Choice Questions test, worth 30% of the final mark, which can be found in the *Assessments* section on Blackboard.

Summative Assessment: Effectiveness of Screening Programmes (5%)

Select one of the population screening programmes. Using the library catalogue identify and review one or two pivotal articles concerning the programme's efficacy.

Summarise the key findings in no more than 250 words and ensure you address the following points:

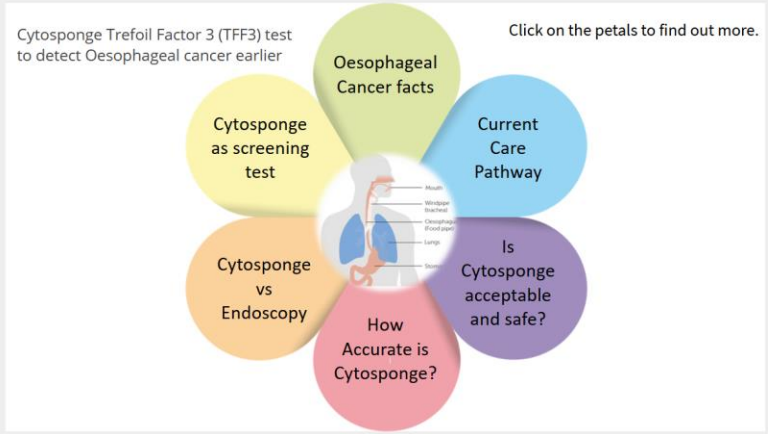
- Programme effectiveness at improving patient outcomes.
- Type of evidence used to measure the effectiveness, such as 5-year survival rates, mortality rates, or other relevant metrics.
- Research methodology employed to assess the effectiveness, whether it was a randomised controlled trial, modelling study, systematic review, or another approach.

ss of Screening Programmes. It meets ILOs

your *Key Dates*.

Additional activities: Interactive diagram

Click on each category of the diagram to explore and learn more about oesophageal cancer and the novel Cytosponge TFF3 test.



Transcript

Further Reading

If you are interested in finding out more about this trial you can read the following article:

- Muldrew, B. et al. Cytosponge-trefoil factor 3 versus usual care to identify Barrett's oesophagus in a primary care setting: a multicentre, pragmatic, randomised controlled trial *The Lancet* (2020) 396(10247), 333-344

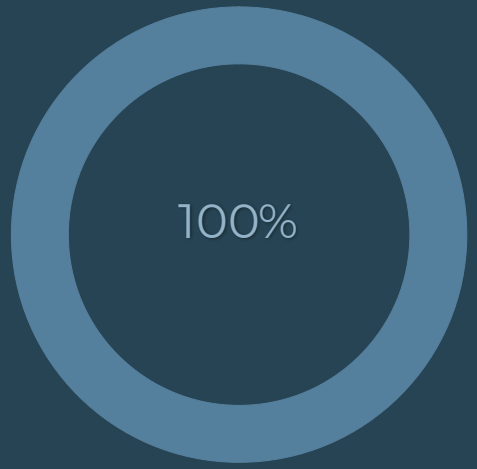
Further Reading & Resources

- Information about Galleri test and ongoing UK trial: NHS-Galleri Trial | Detecting cancer early
- Insight into the validation process and trial design: Neal, R. D. et al. Cell-Free DNA-Based Multi-Cancer Early Detection Test in an Asymptomatic Screening Population (NHS-Galleri): Design of a Pragmatic, Prospective Randomised Controlled Trial, *Cancers* (2022) 14(19) pp109-113

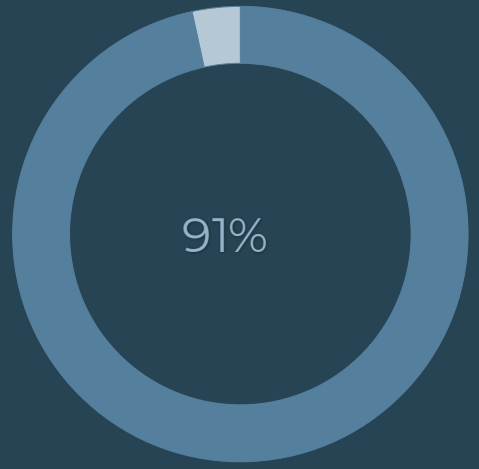
The online modules provide greater flexibility...

The time of learning

The place of learning



The pace of learning



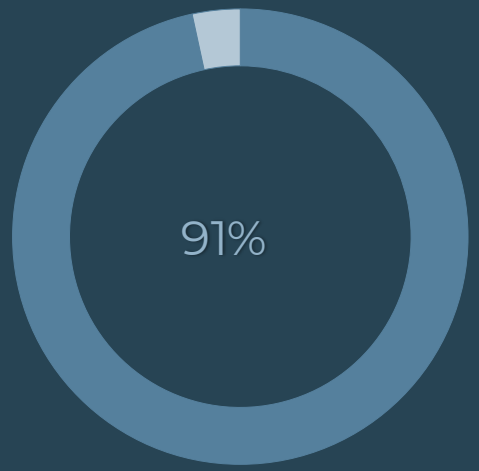
Yes

No

Not sure

The new format of the programme provides...

Inclusive Learning Environment

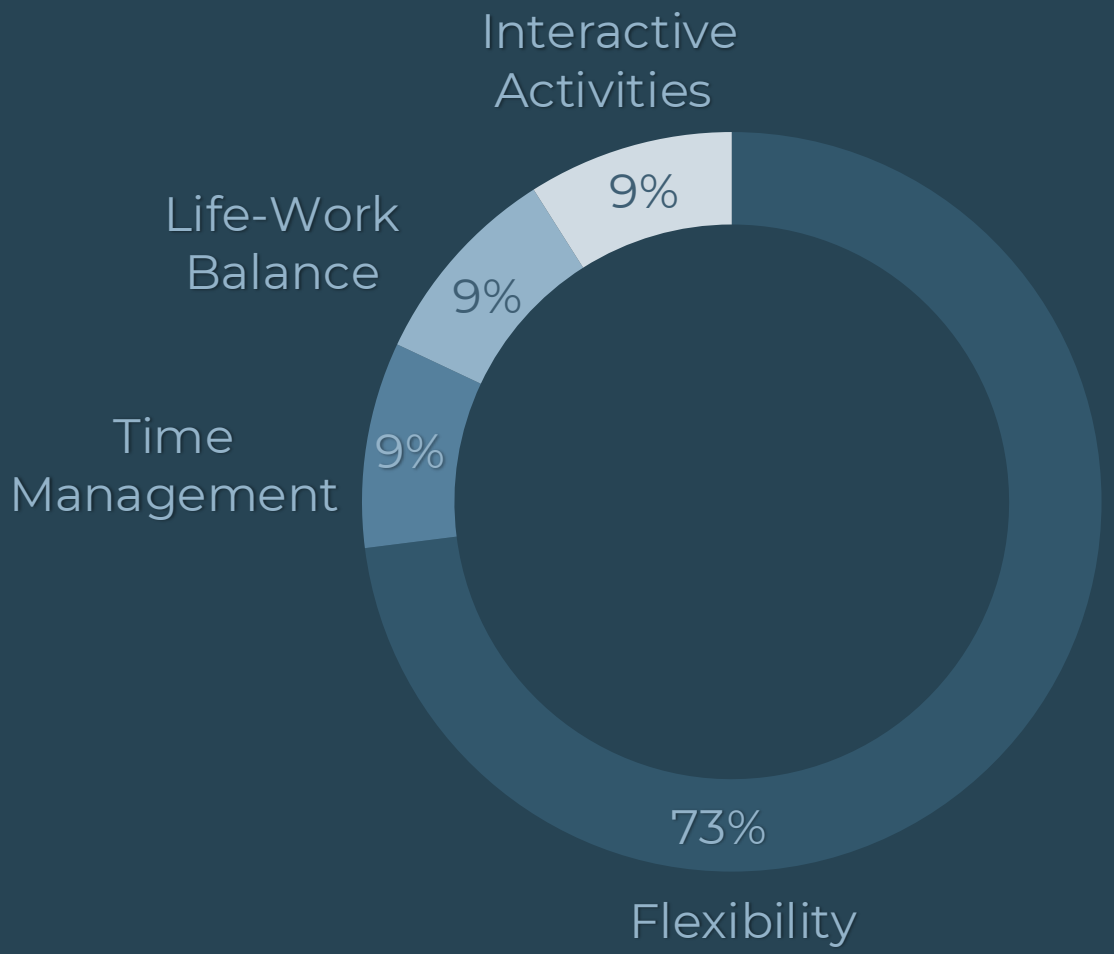


Positive Impact on Overall Learning Experience

Sufficient Overall Flexibility

Yes No Not sure

Most beneficial aspects of the online units



- I enjoyed the interactive activities

- It helped me with work/life balance
- I could balance my studies with other commitments

- Allows me to manage my time better
- I could use more time for learning rather than going to campus

- Flexible learning time
- I could learn at my own pace with hours to suit
- Really enjoyed the flexibility

Challenges encountered with the new format

- Difficult to get in touch with teachers or get a response

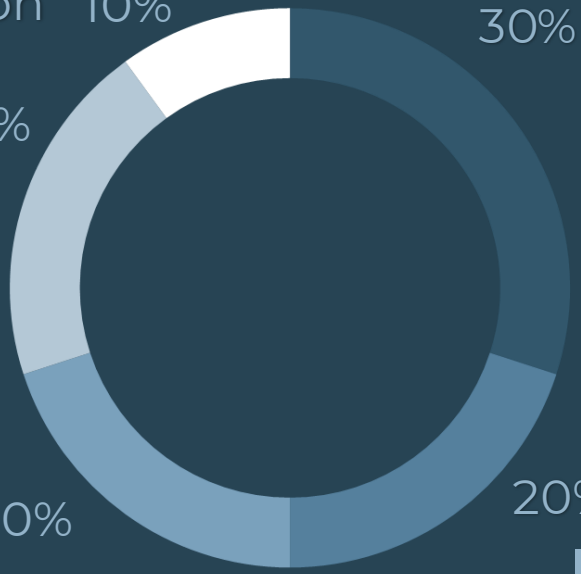
Communication 10%

Engagement 20%

- Difficult to engage, I didn't engage as much
- Flexibility was a little overwhelming and open to procrastination

Assessments 20%

- Weekly deadlines /activities to adhere to
- Better consideration of deadline overlap between online and in-person units



30% Overlap with Other Units

- Overlap with other classroom style units
- Hard to prioritise due to overlap with face-to-face sessions
- Under pressure when in person units and online units overlapped

20% Lack of Social Interactions

- Loneliness particularly in the first semester. I struggled to gain social interactions
- Lack of social interaction with peers made it difficult to form close interpersonal relationships and networks with classmates and foster teamwork and camaraderie

Improvements suggested by students

Aspect	Improvements
Synchronous sessions	• Perhaps the tutorial can be made compulsory, which can produce some binding force that must be attended
In person sessions	• Tutorials should be on campus • Include guest lectures in-person • Having a mixture of in-person and online lectures would be helpful
Assessments	• Better coordination of deadline overlap between online and in-person units • Online assessments should be different in each unit
Online learning	• Maybe some guidance on online learning and how to best learn from online resources provided and how to plan your time with each week

Refining Our Blended Approach

- Inclusive learning environment
- Flexibility over the time, place and pace of learning
- Positive impact on overall learning experience
- Further improvements:
  - More opportunities for social interactions
  - Better scheduling of assessments
  - Better communication
  - Support for students who struggle to engage

Flexible Blended Delivery Model

	23/09/2024	30/09/2024	07/10/2024	14/10/2024	21/10/2024	28/10/2024	04/11/2024	11/11/2024	18/11/2024	25/11/2024	02/12/2024	09/12/2024	16/12/2024	23/12/2024	30/12/2024	06/01/2025	13/01/2025	20/01/2025	27/01/2025	03/02/2025	10/02/2025	17/02/2025	24/02/2025	03/03/2025	10/03/2025	17/03/2025	24/03/2025	31/03/2025	07/04/2025	14/04/2025	21/04/2025	28/04/2025	05/05/2025	12/05/2025	19/05/2025	26/05/2025	02/06/2025	09/06/2025	16/06/2025	23/06/2025	30/06/2025	07/07/2025	14/07/2025	21/07/2025	28/07/2025	04/08/2025	11/08/2025	18/08/2025	25/08/2025	01/09/2025	08/09/2025
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Challenges of Tum Biology													Christmas Break																Easter Break																						
Strategies for Early Detection																																																			
Principles of Personalised Medicine																																																			
Research Methods																																																			
Proteomics and Metabolomics																																																			
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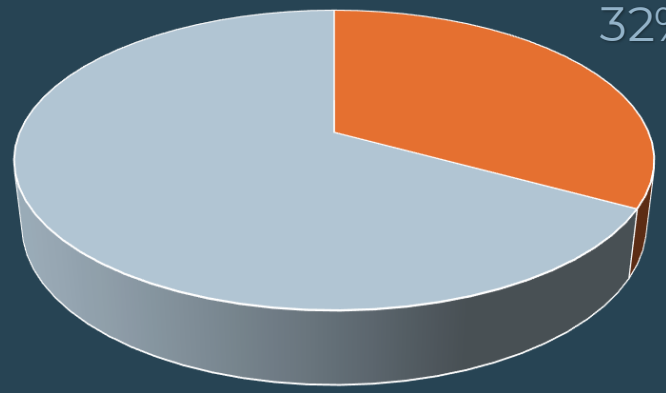
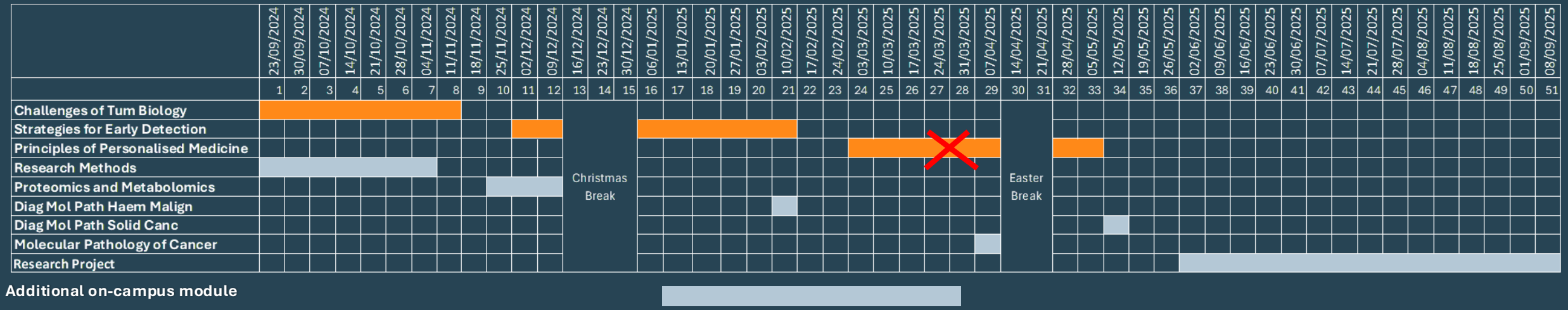
Molecular Pathology of Cancer																																																			
Research Project																																																			



32%

Full-time or part-time job or career commitments

Navigating Contradictions in Flexible & Blended Learning



The programme requires adjustments to align with UKVI expectations for on-campus study:

- UKVI attendance monitoring requirements and SEAtS
- 20% limit on online component in on-campus programmes

Lessons Learned

- Innovation is iterative: it requires ongoing refinement based on experience, feedback, and evaluation
- Student cohorts differ: what works for one year may need adjustment for the next
- Balance is key: balancing pedagogical ambition with student needs, and workload realities
- Agility is essential: being flexible and responsive to evolving needs and feedback
- Institutional alignment matters: it’s not all about academic vision but also about alignment with policies, support structures, and compliance

Reflection

- While our institution continue to champion flexible and blended learning, it also face growing regulatory and operational pressures that often pull in the opposite direction
- Educators are increasingly caught in the middle: expected to deliver inclusive, student-centred learning while navigating inflexible requirements around attendance, presence, and delivery modes
- Students, too, face mixed messages. On one hand, they are encouraged to engage flexibly; on the other, they are told they must attend physically - even when the same learning might be more effectively or accessibly delivered online

Where Do We Go From Here?

How can we design blended learning that is both inclusive and compliant?