
CODE OF PRACTICE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF JOINT DEGREES AND SHARED TEACHING

Preface

This Code of Practice sets out guidance on the management of joint degrees and degree programmes with shared teaching and was approved by the Academic Policy Committee in November 2013. It applies to all taught programmes that can be described as a joint degree or a degree with shared teaching as per the definitions below. This Code is based on discussions and feedback conducted by the Joint Degrees and Shared Teaching Task and Finish Group, comprising academic and administrative staff and the Students' Union.

This Code is reviewed and re-issued annually with any significant amendments being approved by the Academic Policy Committee. Reports on the management of joint degrees and degree programmes with shared teaching are made through departments' annual developmental review reports.

1. Introduction

The University recognises the intellectual value for students in broadening the subject content of degrees but understands that the involvement of two or more departments in the running of programmes presents challenges in ensuring a coherent and smooth student experience. Building upon student feedback received throughout the University, as well as existing good practice within departments, this Code aims to provide guidance on areas for consideration and enhancement in the designing, managing and review of joint degree programmes and degrees with shared teaching.

The principle underlying this Code is that joint degrees and degrees with shared teaching should demonstrate intellectual and organisational coherence as programmes of study.

1.1 Definitions used within this Code

1.1.1 Joint degree

A degree programme delivered by two or more departments with one 'the host department' providing at least 50% of the core modules.

1.1.2 Shared teaching

A degree programme offered by one department in which one or more core modules are delivered by one or more contributing departments, constituting a maximum of 25% of the core modules.

1.2 Qualification Titles

1.2.1 The title of a joint degree may reflect the subject disciplines as follows:

BA Hons *Subject A* and *Subject B* where there is an approximately equal balance between two components.

BA Hons Subject A with Subject B for a major/minor combination where the minor subject accounts for at least 25% of the programme.

- 1.2.2 The subject component delivered by the host department should be named first.
- 1.2.3 Qualification titles should not normally reflect more than three subject components.

2. Using this Code

- 2.1 This Code is designed to be used by departments who deliver joint degrees or degrees with shared teaching by both academic and administrative staff and should be used to inform the design and on-going management of such programmes.
- 2.2 This Code should also be used as a guide for those involved in approving, reviewing and monitoring joint degrees and degrees with shared teaching, including:
- Programme Approval Panels
 - Staff completing Annual Developmental Review reports
 - Committees charged with the oversight of these programmes (including SSCs)
 - Periodic Developmental Review panels
- 2.3 This Code is aimed at both 'host' departments and those who contribute modules. The University expects all departments involved in a joint degree or degree with shared teaching to actively contribute to the enhancement of the student experience; it is not just the responsibility of the 'host' department.

3. Principles

3.1 Programme approval and monitoring

- 3.1.1 Programmes should be designed to ensure that appropriate teaching and support is in place for both single and joint honours students.
- 3.1.2 Boards of Examiners should be provided with management information that enables them to monitor the comparative achievements of joint and single honours students where possible, plus any programmes with shared teaching.
- 3.1.3 In line with the Code of Practice on Annual and Periodic Developmental Review, joint programmes, joint degrees should be specifically addressed within the Annual Developmental Review process (ADR). In the case of a joint degree as defined under 1.1.1 above, all contributing departments should work together to produce the ADR. As part of the process for grouping programmes together for the preparation of ADRs, departments are required to identify ADRs for joint provision. A single ADR can be prepared where there are several joint programmes in cognate subject areas and where there is sufficient overlap. Annual Developmental Reviews (ADR) for joint programmes) should address all of the standard components of the ADR process, as well as focussing in particular on any issues relating to the management of these programmes.
- 3.1.4 Issues arising from joint degrees and degrees with shared teaching should be standard agenda items at boards of study and other academic meetings in collaborating departments. Minutes of these meetings should be shared with collaborating departments where appropriate. Boards of Study should also receive module reviews from collaborating departments, where there are shared teaching arrangements.

3.2 Curriculum development

- 3.2.1 Collaborating departments should work together to enhance the links between disciplines, to align curriculum content and assessment and to share learning and teaching practices

where appropriate. Information should also be shared on changes to individual modules. They should also aim to create opportunities for students to undertake work which brings together the knowledge acquired across the component disciplines (e.g. through the dissertation or project work)

3.2.2 Departments delivering joint degrees should ensure that the employability and placement opportunities available to students on these programmes are appropriate for the specific skills that the programme sought to develop. It may be appropriate to offer a similar range of employability and placement opportunities to single and joint honours students within a department, however provision may be more tailored for each group where there is a clear difference in the focus of each programme.

3.2.3 Joint students should, where possible, have similar module and project choices to single honours students.

3.3 Marketing and communication with students

3.3.1 Course information for prospective students (e.g. website, brochures) should provide clear and unambiguous information about course content.

3.3.2 Clear information and guidance on options and module choices should be available in course handbooks and on blackboard sites.

3.3.3 Information on student support and points of contact should be clearly communicated to students.

3.4 Interdepartmental communication

3.4.1 Induction arrangements should be negotiated between departments, to ensure that students receive an induction **to the programme** and to avoid duplication and unnecessary differences in disciplinary practice. Presence of staff members from both departments is a good way of establishing early relationships with joint students and those on programmes with shared teaching.

3.4.2 Induction should include approaches to academic writing and referencing. Where there is merit in having different referencing systems, students need clear information and need to understand the reasons for different approaches.

3.4.3 Consistency of practice between collaborating departments in how courses are administered is likely to enhance the student experience.

3.4.4 Regular meetings (at the beginning of the year and then at least twice a year) between departments are recommended to review administrative and teaching arrangements.

3.4.5 Departments should have a designated joint degree tutor for each programme, to provide a known point of contact for students and avoid issues of exclusion or isolation. This should be an academic member of staff.

3.5 Timetabling and management of assessment

3.5.1 Departments should work together (in liaison with central timetabling) to ensure that timetabling arrangements do not disadvantage joint students or those on programmes with shared teaching, to avoid unusual distribution of contact hours and to provide clear and timely information for students.

- 3.5.2 Departments should collaborate to ensure that assessment deadlines are organised in order to take account of joint students and those on programmes with shared teaching, and to avoid competing deadlines wherever possible.

3.6 Student support and personal tutor arrangements

- 3.6.1 Information and advice about academic progress should be equivalent to that offered to single honours students, in accordance with the 'University Code of Practice for Personal Support'. Agreement should be reached between the two departments as to the most effective way of providing personal tutors (i.e. whether there should be a personal tutor in each department) and arrangements should be clearly communicated to students. As a minimum there should be a personal tutor in the main department and a named contact in the other department.

- 3.6.2 Arrangements should be made in order that students can access academic feedback from either personal tutors, joint degree tutors or other nominated individuals. This should be clearly communicated to students

3.7 Student feedback and representation

- 3.7.1 Joint students and students on programmes with shared teaching should be appropriately represented on student/staff committees and involved in other student feedback processes.

- 3.7.2 Feedback from joint students and students on programmes with shared teaching should be monitored to ensure that issues are picked up at an early stage.

- 3.7.3 Feedback from joint students and those on programmes with shared teaching should be shared between collaborating departments.