

Explaining Programme Governance and Student Representation

The guidance and scenarios below are designed to offer practical advice to departments on managing and enhancing programmes, and particularly combined programmes, following the introduction of new and revised policies and guidance for the 2018-19 academic year.

The examples provided draw on and offer references to the following documents:

- Ordinances 1 and 2;
- The Standard Terms of Reference of Boards of Studies;
- The Policy Statement and Guidance on the Operation of Departmental Teaching Committees;
- The Role and Responsibilities of a Programme Leader and Associate Programme Leader;
- The Policy for Student Representation in Learning and Teaching Activities in Academic Departments.

Any questions arising from these documents or this guidance document should be referred to your departmental [Academic Quality Team](#) contact.

The Standard Terms of Reference of Boards of Studies (section 4) includes specific provision for combined programmes that ensures that, where changes are proposed by the Board of Studies responsible for the programme that will affect a Partner Department involved in the programme, appropriate notice, discussion and approval is sought from the Partner Department before any proposal is approved. It is intended that this 'double-lock' process is applied with a common-sense, collaborative approach that safeguards students' interests and the Partner Department, but without constraining the responsible Board of Studies' ability to make decisions about programmes for which it is responsible. The 'double-lock', consultative approach may also apply to other situations where a department proposes changes with an impact on other departments.

[Table 1](#) is intended to aid in the interpretation of this 'double-lock' protocol, by summarising possible circumstances when one or both Boards of Studies involved in the delivery of a combined programme might need to formally agree a modification proposal. [Table 1](#) is supplemented by the examples of different scenarios related to requirements of the policies and practical tasks concerning programme governance:

- [1. What do we need to do if we want to make a modification to our programmes which will also affect a combined programme governed by our departmental BoS?](#)
- [2. What do we need to do if we want to modify something on a combined programme governed by our departmental BoS?](#)
- [3. What do we need to do if we want to modify something on a combined programme not governed by our departmental BoS?](#)
- [4. What will happen if our partner BoS in the delivery of a combined programme does not agree with our modification proposal?](#)
- [5. What do we need to do to ensure students on combined programmes are represented on departmental committees?](#)
- [6. What do we do if students provide feedback about modules on a combined programme provided by a Partner Department?](#)

Table 1: Guidance on the Likely Need to Obtain Board of Studies Approval from a Partner Department in the Delivery of a Combined Programme According to the Potential Impact of a Proposed Modification

Nature of a Modification Affecting/ To a Combined Programme (CP)						
Likely Approval Needed	1. Proposal to amend modules on a single honours programme in the Programme Leader's (PL) Dept (eg. assessment tasks).		2. Proposal to amend modules on single honours programme in the Partner Dept (eg. assessment tasks).		3. Proposal specific to a combined programme. No impact on other programmes (eg. a modification to a Programme Learning Outcome (PLO), progression statements or the programme structure)	
	Affects the CP	Does not affect the CP	Affects the CP	Does not affect the CP		
BoS of the Partner Dept	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
BoS of the Dept to which the Programme Leader belongs	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓

Departments are expected to communicate their planned modifications to partner departments, for information or consultation to obtain their agreement, based on their assessment of the potential impacts on the other department. The likelihood of modification proposals requiring a partner's approval will be influenced by the scale of the change and the perceived impact on their provision. That is, a distinction can be made between those modifications that might **affect** another department's provision, particularly combined programmes, and modifications specifically **to** combined programmes.

The following scenarios offer examples of how the situations summarised above might be managed. The scenarios make the distinction between those changes proposed to other programmes that would **affect** a combined programme and those changes specifically **to** a combined programme proposed by one of the partners involved in its delivery.

1. What do we need to do if we want to make a modification to our single honours programmes which will also affect a combined programme governed by our departmental BoS?

What is the minimum requirement?

- Combined programmes will be governed by the BoS of the Department in which the Programme Leader is based;
- Each combined programme will have an Associate Programme Leader in the Partner Department;
- Modifications *affecting* combined programmes should involve suitable discussion with the Partner Department;
- Modifications *to* combined programmes will require consultation with, and normally agreement from, the Partner Department;
- Modifications to programmes should be made in accordance with the Modifications Policy;
- Students on combined programmes will be represented on the BoS, DTC and SSF of the Department in which the Programme Leader is based.

What else should we consider?

- The requirements within the Modifications Policy for appropriate student consultation of all those to be affected by a modification, including combined programme students;
- The extent to which the modification of a Department's provision will affect combined programmes and other programmes.

Illustrative Example

The Department of Photography wants to re-balance the assessment on its core first year modules, moving from one 100% end of year exam to a January CAP portfolio and an end of year exam. This would *affect* the combined programme BA Photography and Journalism delivered with the Department of Journalism. The Programme Leader for the combined programme is based in Photography:

- Responsibility for the modification is with the Department of Photography;
- The modification *affects* core module assessment and so is a major modification for FLTG approval;
- The modification *affects* a combined programme and so the Associate Programme Leader in Journalism should be informed and the Journalism BoS given the opportunity to raise any concern with Photography (eg. On the wider implications of altered assessment timings for the combined programme);
- The majority impact of the modification is on Photography's programmes and the Photography BoS alone could approve the proposal;
- Students on the combined programme should have an opportunity to feed into student consultation through their representative on the Photography Board of Studies.

Reference Points

- Standard Terms of Reference of Board of Studies and Policy for the Operation of Boards of Studies, Section 4;
- Approval of Modifications to Existing Taught Programmes of Study (Modifications Policy);
- Role and Responsibilities of a Programme Leader and Associate Programme Leader;
- Policy for Student Representation in Learning and Teaching Activities in Academic Departments.

2. What do we need to do if we want to modify something on a combined programme governed by our departmental BoS?

What is the minimum requirement?

- Combined programmes will be governed by the BoS of the Department in which the Programme Leader is based;
- Each combined programme will have an Associate Programme Leader in the Partner Department;
- Modifications *affecting* combined programmes should involve suitable discussion with the Partner Department;
- Modifications *to* combined programmes will require consultation with, and normally agreement from, the Partner Department;
- Modifications to programmes should be made in accordance with the Modifications Policy;
- Students on combined programmes will be represented on the BoS, DTC and SSF of the Department in which the Programme Leader is based.

What else should we consider?

- The requirements within the Modifications Policy for appropriate student consultation of all those to be affected by a modification, including combined programme students;
- The extent to which the modification of a Department's provision will affect combined programmes and other programmes.

Illustrative Example

The Programme Leader of the BA Photography and Journalism, based in the Dept of Photography, proposes removing a core shared bridging module in stage 3 of this combined programme delivered with the Department of Journalism, replacing it with additional option modules to be chosen from either Photography or Journalism.

- Responsibility for the modification is with the Department of Photography;
- The modification affects the structure of the programme and so is a major modification for FLTG approval;
- The modification changes the nature of the combined programme and Journalism's contribution to the programme, so the Photography BoS is required to gain the agreement of the Associate Programme Leader and the (Chair of) BoS in the Department of Journalism;
- Students on the combined programme should have an opportunity to feed into student consultation through the Photography Staff-Student Forum and their Photography Board of Studies rep.

Reference Points

- Standard Terms of Reference of Board of Studies and Policy for the Operation of Boards of Studies, Section 4;
- Approval of Modifications to Existing Taught Programmes of Study (Modifications Policy);
- Role and Responsibilities of a Programme Leader and Associate Programme Leader;
- Policy for Student Representation in Learning and Teaching Activities in Academic Departments.

3. What do we need to do if we want to modify something on a combined programme not governed by our departmental BoS?

What is the minimum requirement?

- Combined programmes will be governed by the BoS of the Department in which the Programme Leader is based;
- Each combined programme will have an Associate Programme Leader in the Partner Department;
- Modifications *affecting* combined programmes should involve suitable discussion with the Partner Department;
- Modifications *to* combined programmes will require consultation with, and normally agreement from, the Partner Department;
- Modifications to programmes should be made in accordance with the Modifications Policy;
- Students on combined programmes will be represented on the BoS, DTC and SSF of the Department in which the Programme Leader is based.

What else should we consider?

- The requirements within the Modifications Policy for appropriate student consultation of all those to be affected by a modification, including combined programme students;
- The extent to which the modification of a Department's provision will affect combined programmes and other programmes.

Illustrative Example

The Department of Theology runs a combined MA in Religious Art programme with the Department of Fine Art. The Programme Leader is based in Theology. Fine Art want to replace their two 10 credit core module contribution to the programme with a new 20 credit core module.

- Responsibility for the modification to the combined programme is with the Department of Theology;
- The modification affects the programme structure and so is a major modification for FLTG approval;
- The Associate Programme Leader (Fine Art) should discuss the proposal with the Programme Leader;
- The modification changes the nature of the combined programme and Fine Art's contribution to it, so its BoS needs to approve the modules it will own and then propose them to the Theology BoS to replace their current contribution to MA in Religious Art;
- Students on the combined programme could be invited to feed into student consultation through discussion with the Associate Programme Leader and through the Fine Art Staff-Student Forum;
- The students also have the opportunity to voice their opinions about the proposal through the Theology Staff-Student Forum, DTC and BoS on which the students have formal representation.

Reference Points

- Standard Terms of Reference of Board of Studies and Policy for the Operation of Boards of Studies, Section 4;
- Approval of Modifications to Existing Taught Programmes of Study (Modifications Policy);
- Role and Responsibilities of a Programme Leader and Associate Programme Leader;
- Policy for Student Representation in Learning and Teaching Activities in Academic Departments.

4. What will happen if our partner BoS in the delivery of a combined programme does not agree with our modification proposal?

What is the minimum requirement?

- Combined programmes will be governed by the BoS of the Department in which the Programme Leader is based;
- Each combined programme will have an Associate Programme Leader in the Partner Department;
- Modifications *affecting* combined programmes should involve suitable discussion with the Partner Department;
- Modifications *to* combined programmes will require consultation with, and normally agreement from, the Partner Department;
- Modifications to programmes should be made in accordance with the Modifications Policy;
- Where departments cannot agree on a combined programme modification the Dean of Faculty will make the decision;
- Students on combined programmes will be represented on the BoS, DTC and SSF of the Department in which the Programme Leader is based.

What else should we consider?

- The requirements within the Modifications Policy for appropriate student consultation of all those to be affected by a modification, including combined programme students;
- The extent to which the modification of a Department's provision will affect combined programmes and other programmes;
- Where agreement cannot be reached and where combined programmes involve departments from other faculties, the Deans of the other faculty may be consulted in order to reach an informed decision.

Illustrative Example

The Departments of Sports Science and Engineering run a combined BSc in Innovative Sports Technologies. The Programme Leader in Sports Sciences proposes replacing the Innovative Sports Technologies dissertation module with the option for students to take either the dissertation module of Sports Science or that of Engineering, reducing the number of different dissertation modules with different rules Sports Science staff need to supervise. The Associate Programme Leader and Engineering Chair of BoS do not support the loss of the specific dissertation.

- Responsibility for the modification is with the Department of Sports Science;
- The modification affects the programme structure and so is a major modification for FLTG approval;
- The modification changes the combined programme and Engineering's contribution to it. Sports Science must gain the Engineering Associate Programme Leader's and (Chair of) BoS' agreement;
- Students on the combined programme should have an opportunity to feed into student consultation through the Sports Science Staff-Student Forum and their Engineering Board of Studies rep;
- If the two Boards of Studies cannot reach agreement the Sports Science BoS will need to refer the issue to the Dean of Faculty for them to make a decision on the modification.

Reference Points

- Standard Terms of Reference of Board of Studies and Policy for the Operation of Boards of Studies, Section 4;
- Approval of Modifications to Existing Taught Programmes of Study (Modifications Policy);
- Role and Responsibilities of a Programme Leader and Associate Programme Leader;
- Policy for Student Representation in Learning and Teaching Activities in Academic Departments.

5. What do we need to do to ensure students on combined programmes are represented on departmental committees?

What is the minimum requirement?

- Boards of Studies will have at least one undergraduate and postgraduate student representative for programmes they govern;
- Department Teaching Committees will have at least one undergraduate and one postgraduate rep for the respective cohorts the DTC covers;
- There will be a Staff-Student Forum in each Department;
- SSF will have a majority student membership;
- Combined programmes will be governed by the BoS of the Department in which the Programme Leader is based;
- Students on combined programmes will be represented on the BoS, DTC and SSF of the Department in which the Programme Leader is based.

What else should we consider?

- How many reps you need on the BoS for the effective representation of students on all programmes and in all year groups;
- Whether the model for student reps means the effective representation of all groups, such as distance learning students or those on courses for professional qualifications;
- Whether a single UG/PGT student rep on the DTC is sufficient for the effective representation of all UG/PGT students;
- If students on combined programmes should be invited to the SSF of the department in which the Associate Programme Leader, ie. the Partner Department is based.

Illustrative Example

The Department of Theology BoS governs one single subject undergraduate programme of 50 students per year and 5 combined programmes with between 5 and 20 students per year. The BoS is discussing how best to organise undergraduate representatives on the BoS. The options could include:

1. 1 rep for each year of each of the 6 programmes;
2. 1 rep for each of the 6 programmes;
3. 1 rep for each year of the single honours and 1 rep per combined programme;
4. 1 rep for each year of the single honours and 1 rep for all combined programmes collectively.

On the DTC, the options could include the minimum single undergraduate rep, a rep for each year group, a rep for single honours and one for the combined students collectively.

Reference Points

- Ordinances 1.4 and 2.2;
- Standard Terms of Reference of Board of Studies and Policy for the Operation of Boards of Studies;
- Policy Statement and Guidance on the Operation of Departmental Teaching Committees sections 2.5.4, 2.15, 3.2;
- Policy for Student Representation in Learning and Teaching Activities in Academic Departments.

6. What do we do if students provide feedback about modules on a combined programme provided by a Partner Department?

What is the minimum requirement?

- Combined programmes will be governed by the BoS of the Department in which the Programme Leader is based;
- Each combined programme will have an Associate Programme Leader in the Partner Department;
- Students on combined programmes will be represented on the BoS, DTC and SSF of the Department in which the Programme Leader is based;
- Programme Leaders have a responsibility to raise concerns with the Associate Programme Leader in the Partner Department;
- Associate Programme Leaders have a responsibility for ensuring their department acts upon feedback received and reports outcomes to the Programme Leader (and the Programme Leader's BoS) for feedback to students.

What else should we consider?

- The Associate Programme Leader manages the aspects of the combined programme provided by their department and for the students on the combined programme within that department and will be a crucial person for addressing such issues;
- Though the students on the combined programme are formally represented through the committees in the Programme Leader's department the Partner Department can consult them on elements of the programme it delivers;
- The Programme Leader and Associate Programme Leader should lead/coordinate and collaborate with a group of staff involved in the delivery of the programme through regular communication.

Illustrative Example

The Department of Theology runs a combined MA in Religious Art programme with the Dept of Fine Art. The Programme Leader is based in Theology. Students on the programme have told the Theology DTC postgraduate rep they are unhappy that on a couple of Fine Art modules feedback has been returned later than University policy.

- Responsibility for the programme lies with the Programme Leader in Theology, but they will work collaboratively with the Associate Programme Leader in Fine Art to manage the programme;
- Students on the combined programme are formally represented in Theology via its Staff-Student Forum, DTC and BoS;
- Following receipt of the concerns raised at DTC by the Postgraduate Rep, the Programme Leader should establish the facts of the students' concerns and raise them with the Associate Programme Leader;
- The Associate Programme Leader, and their DTC/BoS should respond to the concerns, reporting them back to the Programme Leader with the response and outcome being reported back to the students.

Reference Points

- Standard Terms of Reference of Board of Studies and Policy for the Operation of Boards of Studies, Section 4;
- Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback, Section 15.1.3;
- Role and Responsibilities of a Programme Leader and Associate Programme Leader, Section 3.d, 4.b;
- Policy for Student Representation in Learning and Teaching Activities in Academic Departments, Section 2(h), 2(i).