Policy Statement and Guidance on the Operation of Departmental Teaching Committees

Guidance on DTCs can be viewed at: https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/contacts/department-committees/

Preamble

All academic departments of the University are required to have a Departmental Teaching Committee (DTC) as a sub-committee of the Board of Studies. Other Schools and Teaching Centres are not required to have a DTC but may choose to have one if they so wish. This policy statement sets out the requirements on academic departments as to how the DTC is to be constituted. Senate approved such recommendation of UTC with effect from the start of the 2017/18 academic year. However, the requirements for transition arrangements and confirmation of related policies and procedures necessitated postponing this requirement until the start of the 2018/19 academic year. Many departments had already established a separate Teaching Committee to ensure that proper consideration can be given to curriculum development and other aspects of quality enhancement, where the BoS has a busy agenda of more formal business. This statement implements the recommendations of University Teaching Committee (M16-17/125, M17-18/28 refer) as approved by Senate (M17-18/30 refers) requiring all departments to have a DTC.

1 Introduction

1.1 Where Departments do not already have a Departmental Teaching Committee (DTC) they are required to instigate one (or equivalent body - see section 2.1) in line with this policy. Where DTCs or similar bodies are in operation their constituency and terms of reference are to be aligned with those detailed here.

1.2 This policy facilitates a consistent practice across the University. However, implementation of the policy allows for some flexibility so that DTCs meet the needs and contexts of the individual Department and discipline.

1.3 Additional Guidance following the Policy Statement provides advice to Departments to inform their decision-making with regard to the composition and role of their DTC.

2 The Establishment of Departmental Teaching Committees

2.1 In establishing a DTC Departments shall either institute:

   2.1.1 A single DTC covering all Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught programmes, or;

   2.1.2 Separate Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught DTCs, or;

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1 The Definition of academic department as requiring a DTC shall include the York Law School and The York Management School but not the School of Politics, Economics and Philosophy or the School of Social and Political Sciences, both of which may institute a DTC if they so require. Similarly, the IPC and Centres with a BoS such as Lifelong Learning and Women’s Studies may institute a DTC if they so require.

2 For the International Pathway College undergraduate is taken to include foundation students and postgraduate pre-masters students.
2.1.3 An Undergraduate DTC with provision for Postgraduate Taught Provision being made as part of a Graduate Board/Committee, on the proviso that this forum has as its formal Terms of Reference the oversight of Postgraduate Taught programmes and not solely Postgraduate Research programmes.

2.2 Regardless of the decisions taken under section 2.1 to establish a DTC Departments are required to meet the standard provisions for membership and to operate according to the expected remit.

2.3 The DTC will be responsible for all single subject taught provision in the Department and have primary responsibility for combined programmes where the Programme Leader is a member of academic staff within the Department. The Partner Department of a combined programme is also expected to discuss combined programme issues as they affect that Department’s provision and with due consideration for the views of the Associate Programme Leader, though the expectation is that the Programme Leader’s Department’s DTC will take primary responsibility under the BoS for overseeing the combined programme.

2.4 Programme Leaders (and Associate Programme Leaders in relation to combined programmes) shall ensure that issues, and particularly as pertain to combined programmes, raised in the DTC meeting are followed-up. This will include, where appropriate, the (Associate) Programme Leader raising issues with the other department concerning the partner’s contributions to the combined programme.

Membership

2.5 Membership of the DTC shall include:

2.5.1 Members of the Department Management Team as agreed by the Board of Studies;

2.5.2 Programme Leaders (including for combined programmes the Programme Leader on the DTC of their own Department, and the Associate Programme Leader on the DTC of their own, that is the Partner Department) as ex officio members;

2.5.3 Other members of staff as are determined necessary to meet the needs of the Department;

2.5.4 At least one Undergraduate student representative and at least one Postgraduate Taught student representative (reflecting the DTC’s remit and the Department’s programme portfolio)\(^3\),\(^4\),\(^5\);

2.5.5 An administrator (in attendance) to minute the meetings.

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3 Where a Board of Studies covers programmes of only undergraduate or postgraduate provision, membership only of representatives of students on such programmes will be expected.

4 Student representatives will normally represent both single subject programmes and combined programmes of the DTC in which the Programme Leader is a member of the department’s academic staff unless the BoS has agreed that additional student representatives should be members of the DTC, such as a representative for students on combined programmes. (See Additional Guidance, section 3.2).

5 Where the terms of reference of the DTC provide for the consideration of reserved business, that is, items pertaining to individual students or staff matters (where there are legitimate reasons for preserving individuals’ anonymity), student representatives will not be present in accordance with normal University practice. (See also section 2.9).
2.6 The Chair of the DTC should be appointed by the Head of Department and normally for a period of three years, with research or sabbatical leave being the expected reason for any exceptions. The Chair of Board of Studies will not normally also be appointed Chair of the DTC.

2.7 Departments should ensure that new DTC Chairs receive an appropriate handover/induction.

**Terms of Reference**

2.8 Boards of Studies’ Terms of Reference should articulate clearly the relationship between the Board and the DTC as a supporting sub-committee.

2.9 Likewise, the DTC Terms of Reference should explain clearly the remit of this sub-committee and the areas of business for which recommendations must be made to the Board for approval before actions can proceed.

2.10 Departmental Teaching Committees should inform and support the work of the BoS. Their terms of reference should make clear the areas of business relating to, such issues as:

- Curriculum, programme and module developments and updates;
- Teaching;
- Marking;
- Assessments;
- Specific issues pertaining to combined programmes;
- Student support and engagement;
- Student evaluation;
- Projects commissioned by DTC or BoS;
- Learning enhancement plans arising from implementation of the York Pedagogy;
- The embedding of Technology Enhanced Learning;
- Staff development and support for sharing good practice;
- University strategy and policy responses.

2.11 Departments may determine that it is appropriate for the DTC Terms of Reference to provide for the consideration of reserved business, that is, items pertaining to individual students or staff matters (where there are legitimate reasons for preserving individuals’ anonymity). In accordance with normal University practice, where such provision is made, student representatives will not be present.

2.12 Both Chairs of BoS and DTC should have a productive working relationship to enable the department’s business to run smoothly, delegated powers to be effectively discharged and relevant business to be forwarded to BoS when necessary, in line with university policy.

**Meetings**

2.13 The DTC should meet with sufficient frequency (most likely once a term) to make an active impact on the quality of teaching, learning and the student experience and at such interval to allow effective reporting to meetings of the BoS.
2.14 The DTC meetings should follow an agenda appropriate to the Department’s needs and that
gives sufficient opportunity for issues relating to all programmes, including combined programmes,
to be discussed.

2.15 The student representatives will be full members of the DTC and be given sufficient opportunity
to raise concerns or ideas emanating from the student body. Where such student concerns or ideas
relate to combined programmes and particularly to elements of the programme concerning a
partner department, the (Associate) Programme Leader is responsible for ensuring that the item is
brought to the attention of the other department.

2.16 Meetings of the DTC should be minuted by an administrator and reported to the BoS.

2.17 The DTC should discharge its duties taking note of any relevant university policy.

3 Additional Guidance

3.1 Section 2.3 of the policy outlines the minimum required membership of a DTC.

3.1.1 In relation to 2.5.1 departments, through agreement of the BoS, shall determine the most
appropriate members of the Department Management Team to be members of the DTC.
For example the Chair of BoS or a Deputy Head of Department with responsibility for
teaching.

3.1.2 In relation to 2.5.2 it is expected that all Programme Leaders and Associate Programme
Leaders will be members of their respective DTCs reflecting the role they play in the
management and delivery of the programmes for which they are responsible. Where a
department has a large number of individual (Associate) Programme Leaders the BoS may
decide to include on the DTC a representative group of (Associate) Programme Leaders. For
example a single person could represent a group of similar programmes or those falling
within the remit of a research group or cluster. This is with the expectation that the
representative will consult colleagues prior to the DTC about issues of concern to them and
will feedback on the outcome of discussions so that all (Associate) Programmes Leaders
have a voice at the DTC.

3.1.3 In relation to 2.5.3 Departments are able to add to this membership those staff members/
roles deemed beneficial to fulfilling the purpose of the Committee and mindful of the
particular departmental context. For example, Departments might wish to include the staff
chair or a staff representative of the Staff Student Forum on their DTC or to allow
(Associate) Programme Leaders of combined programmes from partner departments to
attend their DTC.

3.2 With regard to section 2.5.4 the policy states the minimum student membership required on a
DTC. Where the minimum number of student representatives are part of the DTC membership, the
representatives will represent their full undergraduate/ taught postgraduate cohorts, that is, all
students on single subject and combined programmes. Departments might wish to include

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6 For example, a Programme Team’s new programme proposal may be considered by the DTC but must be recommended
for approval by BoS prior to consideration by the Faculty Learning and Teaching Group and University Teaching Committee.
Decisions on academic matters which have financial or resource implications should be subject to approval by BoS (and
FLTG/ Planning Committee where necessary).
additional student representatives to ensure an effective and proportionate student voice on the Committee, to be most beneficial to fulfilling the purpose of the Committee and mindful of the particular departmental context. For example, where a department is a partner in a number of combined programmes it could be beneficial to include an additional representative for students on those programmes. Also, if a department has a mixed portfolio of provision including a specific programme with professional registration or accreditation (for example PGCE students) consideration could be given to including a representative from that cohort. If the membership is extended beyond this minimum, the Department should be clear about the expected constituency represented by the student representatives.

3.3 In setting the agenda of a DTC meeting consideration might be given to including standing items, for example with regard to combined programme provision and issues tabled by student representatives. Scheduling such standing items early on the agenda could maximise the likelihood of them receiving sufficient time and space for discussion.