

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION**



<b>1</b>	<b>Awarding Institution</b>	Newcastle University
<b>2</b>	<b>Teaching Institution</b>	Newcastle University
<b>3</b>	<b>Final Award</b>	BA (Hons)
<b>4</b>	<b>Programme Title</b>	Combined Studies
<b>5</b>	<b>UCAS/Programme Code</b>	Y001
<b>6</b>	<b>Programme Accreditation</b>	N/A
<b>7</b>	<b>QAA Subject Benchmark(s)</b>	N/A
<b>8</b>	<b>FHEQ Level</b>	Honours level
<b>9</b>	<b>Date written/revised</b>	October 2008

**10 Programme Aims**

1. to provide students with the opportunity to study two or three subjects (three at Certificate level and either three or two at Intermediate and Honours level) from a broad range of academic subjects in arts, humanities, social science, and science disciplines
2. to enable students to choose combinations within this range in accordance with their interests and abilities, including both established and new areas (subject to certain entry requirements\*)
3. to provide both curricular breadth and opportunities for students to undertake advanced study in subjects not generally studied at pre-degree level
4. to facilitate the study in depth of more than one subject and in some cases to provide a wider range of skills-related outcomes than for single honours students
5. to enable those students studying two subjects to take either Joint or Major/Minor combinations
6. to develop subject-specific knowledge and understanding in cognate or contrasting academic subjects and appropriate cognitive and subject-related skills
7. to attract and recruit high-quality students who wish to study in more than one academic discipline

\* *Additional entry requirements:*

	<b>A level</b>	<b>GCSE</b>
Accounting		Grade B Mathematics & English (or equivalent)
Economics		Grade B Mathematics & English (or equivalent)
English Literature	Grade A or B English Literature (or equivalent)	
Geography	Grade B in Geography (or equivalent)	Grade B in Mathematics (or equivalent)
History of Art	A Levels in Art, Art History, English or a Language are desirable	
Information Systems		Grade C Mathematics (or equivalent)
Management		Grade B Mathematics & English (or equivalent)
Maths & Statistics	Good grade in Mathematics	Good pass in Maths (or equivalent)
Music	Music (or equivalent) plus students are also strongly	

		advised to gain competence in music theory to at least Associated Board Grade V level before starting Music within Combined Studies	
	Psychology		Grade B in Mathematics (or equivalent) (Grade C for September 2008 entry will be considered)

## 11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes relating to the core areas of the subject. Since it is possible for Combined Studies students to construct a variety of individual programmes, learning outcomes will vary according to the subjects taken and can only be listed in broad terms. However, teaching Schools providing 'Major' routes or the 'halves' of joint honours programmes will need to ensure that the modules students are required to take meet the relevant sections of the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s).

### Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should have:

A1	gained knowledge and understanding of at least 3 subjects, at least two of them to final degree level
A2	gained an understanding of what distinguishes one discipline from another
A3	gained an understanding of key humanities, social sciences and/or scientific terms and vocabulary
A4	learned the skills of working independently
A5	formulated a clear view of what makes your personal programme coherent and relevant
A6	learned the skills of designing and negotiating their personal academic programme
A7	* focused on the skills and attributes required in order to be successful in both an academic and employment context
A8	* engaged in professional and personal development
A9	* engaged with appropriate concepts required to be more reflective and critical

\* A7-A9 are developed in the Stage 1 module HSS1000 'Academic Skills for Combined Studies Students'

### Teaching and Learning Methods

In most subject areas the primary means of imparting knowledge and understanding (A1-A4 & A7-A9) is the lecture. In the case of A2 and A3, these are often supplemented by seminars and tutorials which enable students to check their learning. A1-A9 additionally utilise directed reading and independent study. In certain subject areas lectures are supplemented by workshops, language laboratory work, and practicals. Formative assessment (both formal and informal) is also used to develop knowledge and understanding. A5 and A6 are developed and supported through discussion with staff offering academic support (the Director of the Combined Studies Centre, Subject Advisers and Personal Tutors).

### Assessment Strategy

Knowledge and understanding of the subject is primarily assessed by unseen written examinations. However, the strategies to develop knowledge and understanding have been developed for single honours students within the chosen specialisms, although the Combined Studies degree allows students, in most cases, to choose their modules according to preferred assessment methods.

### Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to demonstrate:

B1	enhanced cognitive skills development by the requirement to understand key issues (e.g. the evaluation of evidence) in more than one subject specialism
B2	the core subject-specific skills pertaining to the subjects studied
B3	skills in reasoning analysis, synthesis, evaluation, problem solving

### Teaching and Learning Methods

Cognitive skills (B1) are developed through seminars and, where relevant, tutorials and supervisions. Various resources are used, including case studies, gobbets, problem-solving exercises, mathematical and statistical formulae. Students are encouraged to acquire the skills listed in B3 through large and small group work and through independent reading and research.

### Assessment Strategy

The strategies to assess intellectual skills have been developed for single honours students within the chosen specialisms, although the Combined Studies degree allows students, in most cases, to choose their modules according to preferred assessment methods.

### Practical Skills

On completing the programme, students:

C1	who have studied Music and in certain cases Fine Art (Drawing) should be able to demonstrate public performance and presentation skills
C2	who have studied a Modern Language should be able to demonstrate a high degree of competence in a foreign language
C3	should be able to demonstrate skills in personal time management, the ability to make strategic and effective choices, problem-solving, organisation, the weighing of evidence and the evaluation of arguments
C4	should be able to demonstrate independent learning and self-motivated study
C5	should be able to demonstrate the practical and professional skills relevant to the subjects studied e.g. fieldwork techniques (including locating and evaluating data, ethical considerations if using human participants), laboratory skills and protocol, design skills

The accumulation of skills from more than one subject area provides the student with more breadth of acquisition and the opportunity to reflect on the diversity/complementarities of acquired skills.

### Teaching and Learning Methods

The methods to ensure that students are learning in ways that promote and produce skills C1-C5 have been largely developed for single honours students, though C3 is developed in the Stage 1 module HSS1000 'Academic Skills for Combined Studies Students' which uses lectures, tutorials, private study, and the recording of skills on a e-Portfolio learning log.

### Assessment Strategy

The strategies to assess intellectual skills have been developed for single honours students within the chosen specialisms, although the Combined Studies degree allows students, in most cases, to choose their modules according to preferred assessment methods.

### Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

D1	* demonstrate skills in oral, written and visual presentation
D2	* demonstrate the ability to evaluate and analyse different forms of information and to choose the most effective method to communicate key ideas
D3	* gain an understanding of how they learn best, and of the skills and attributes required to enhance learning, development and achievement at University and in professional work
D4	* gain an understanding of continuous professional and personal development
D5	demonstrate competency in IT skills and in the ability to appropriately use web-based materials and other electronic resources

\* D1-D4 are developed in the Stage 1 module HSS1000 'Academic Skills for Combined Studies Students'

### Teaching and Learning Methods

Expertise in communication skills and teamwork is modelled in lectures (D1) and supported by study skills sessions in HSS1000. Presentation skills are developed in seminars and tutorials, while teamwork is enhanced by surgery sessions (D3) and workshops. Student learning is supported by various means including problem-solving exercises, formative assessment, and tutorial work in progress feedback (D2-D4).

### Assessment Strategy

Skills D1 and D2 are assessed through summative assessments, and by an individual reflective statement (D3 and D4). D5 is embedded in strategies to develop essay and project writing skills.

## 12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

### Basic structure of the programme

The programme normally extends to **370** credits studied full-time over three years, but if a Modern Language is included, it is a requirement that a period abroad is intercalated between Stages 2 and 3, making four years in all.

In Stage 1 students must take 3 subjects, each of 40 credits (plus the 10 credit module HSS1000 'Academic Skills for Combined Studies Students') and then progress to take either two or the same three subjects in Stages 2 and 3:

Stage	Subject A	Subject B	Subject C
1	40 credits	40 credits	40 credits
	Plus the 10 credit HSS1000 'Academic Skills for Combined Studies Students'		
2 & 3: <i>either</i>	40 credits	40 credits	40 credits
<i>or</i>	60 credits	60 credits	
<i>or</i>	80 credits	40 credits	

This structure ensures that students are faced with appropriate, but increasingly challenging demands, as they progress through the programme. At all Stages students are required to meet the same assessment standards as the single honours students.

In addition, all students are required to pass the Stage 1 module HSS1000 'Academic Skills for Combined Studies Students'. Progression into Stage 2 will be permitted without a 'pass' but progression into Stage 3 will not be permitted unless the student has passed the re-sit assessment for this module.

All other issues of progression are determined by University regulations. There are no compulsory modules, except HSS1000 'Academic Skills for Combined Studies Students', although individual subjects may require Combined Studies students to select required modules for their subject area, or may restrict the availability of some modules in line with published formal pre-requisites. In some cases, choice may be restricted by post-and co-requisites for certain modules.

The list of subjects currently available is given below. Subject Advisers from all subject areas have confirmed that at least 40 credits of their subject will be available in each year of the programme. Some subjects are offered at 60 and/or 80 credits in Stages 2 and 3.

Accounting	Ancient History
Archaeology	Chinese
Classical World Culture	Economics
English Linguistics Studies	English Literature
Film Studies	Fine Art (Drawing)
French	Geography
German	Greek
History	History of Art
Information Systems	Japanese
Latin	Management
Mathematics & Statistics	Media and Communication
Music	Philosophical Studies
Politics	Portuguese
Psychology	Sociology
Spanish & Latin American Studies	

\* no longer available at Stage 1

**Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)**

- a) Where one or more Modern Languages are included, it is a requirement that a period abroad is intercalated between Stages 2 and 3.
- b) There are no specified pathways through the programme although specific non-transferable option packages are offered by: Information Systems, Economics, Music, and Philosophical Studies. Modern Language subjects, Greek and Latin operate different levels according to prior qualifications.
- c) No subject areas offer a professional accreditation route through the Combined Studies programme
- d) The following features are innovative:
  - free choice of combinations across those listed above (subject to certain entry requirements)
  - ability to reduce subjects from three to two after Stage 1 with the opportunity to study in Joint or Major/Minor combinations
  - no core or compulsory elements (except for HSS1000 'Academic Skills for Combined Studies Students')
  - no requirement to undertake a dissertation
  - the provision of Subject Advisers to offer academic support and specialist advice to Combined Studies students

**Programme regulations (link to on-line version)**

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme>

**13 Criteria for admission**

*Entry qualifications*

**A-level subjects and grades:** AAB from 18 units including two A levels. AVCE (double award) accepted if offered in combination with an A level. Specific subjects

and grades may be required depending on the combination to be studied.

**GCSEs:** No specific requirements for programme entry though specific subjects and grades may be required depending on the combination to be studied.

**Scottish Highers:** AAABB at Higher Grade. Combinations of Highers and Advanced Highers are acceptable.

**International Baccalaureate (IB Diploma):** a minimum of 34 points to include at least 3 subjects at Higher Level grade 5 or above.

**Irish Leaving Certificate:** AAABB at the Higher Level. Specific subjects and grades may be required depending on the combination to be studied.

**BTEC National Diploma:** Distinction, Distinction, Merit

**BTEC Higher National qualifications:** considered on an individual basis

**European Baccalaureate:** a 75% pass is required

**PARTNERS applicants:** BCC from 18 units or a comparable qualification

**Access qualifications:**

**HEFC:** Distinction, Credit, Merit

**OCN:** 48 credits with minimum 36 credits at level 3

**Other Access Qualifications:** modules which include essay writing subjects are desirable. Applications are considered on an individual basis.

#### *Admissions policy/selection tools*

The current programme receives approximately 850 applications each year through the UCAS system. Offers are normally made on the basis of the information on the UCAS form including the applicant's personal statement and referee's report. Applicants to whom offers are made are invited to an Open Day to meet Combined Studies staff and, where possible, existing Combined Studies students. All Subject Advisers are available at Open Days.

#### *Non-standard Entry Requirements*

All prospective students with non-standard qualifications are invited to interview with the DPD and, where necessary, the Subject Advisers.

#### *Additional Requirements*

There are no additional requirements.

#### *Level of English Language capability*

The IELTS requirement for international applicants whose first language is not English is 6.5

## **14 Support for Student Learning**

### *Induction*

During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principle support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed module information and will be asked to check the published timetable of

lectures/practicals/labs/ tutorials/etc. to ensure that their subject and module choices can be accommodated. Most subjects run additional and specific induction sessions for Combined Studies students. Some subjects (e.g. Mathematics & Statistics) will hold small group induction sessions to establish mathematics competency and assist in the selection of appropriate modules and pathways. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students - see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/>

#### *Study skills support*

Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme.

#### *Academic support*

The initial point of contact for a student is the Degree Programme Director. Thereafter, and for subject-specific academic advice and guidance, students consult the Subject Advisers for each of their subjects. The Subject Adviser will provide information and give advice on student suitability at Open Days, support induction, provide advice on module selection and assessment, represent the subject at the Board of Studies and Examination Board. In addition, Subject Advisers act as a point of contact in the subject and School for Combined Studies students, and should assist in reducing the extent to which Combined Studies students see themselves as 'detached' from subjects and Schools. Issues relating to the programme may be raised by student representatives at the Staff-Student Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies.

#### *Pastoral support*

All students are assigned a Personal Tutor whose responsibility it is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees. In addition, the University offers a range of support services, including the Student Advice Centre, the Counselling and Wellbeing team, the Mature Student Support Officer, and a Childcare Support Officer, see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/wellbeing-service/>

#### *Support for students with disabilities*

The University's Disability Support Service provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies. For further details see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/disability-support/>

#### *Learning resources*

The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and Information Systems and Services (ISS), which supports campus-wide computing facilities. For further details see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/library/> and <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/iss/>

All new students whose first language is not English are asked to take an English Language test. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided (<http://www.into.uk.com/newcastle/home>). The Open Access Centre has a wide range of resources available to students for self-study language learning, see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/langcen/> for more information.

#### *Year Abroad*

The one-year placement abroad is supervised and supported by the School of Modern Languages in accordance with its procedures for 'language students'. Support and advice for students undertaking the Year Abroad is provided by the School of Modern Languages. During Stage 2 the SML organises a number of briefing meetings for students, including talks held by the International Office and the Careers Service. The SML organises several social events for Stage 2 students to meet with finalists who have just returned from their Year Abroad, as well as with incoming Erasmus students from our partner universities. See <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/sml/yearabroad/>

## **15 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning**

### *Module reviews*

All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Board of Studies of each subject provider. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the School Teaching and Learning Committee and at the Board of Studies for each subject provider. Student opinion is sought at the Combined Studies Staff-Student Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. Changes to overall module provision for Combined Studies students is noted and discussed at the Combined Studies Board of Studies.

### *Programme reviews*

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

### *External Assessor reports*

External Assessor reports are considered by the Board of Studies. The Board responds to these reports through Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. Substantive points from the report of the External Assessor are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Staff-Student Committee.

### *Student evaluations*

All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Staff-Student Committee, and the Board of Studies. The National Student Survey is sent out every year to final-year undergraduate students, and consists of a set of questions seeking the students' views on the quality of the learning and teaching in their HEIs. Further information is at [www.thestudentsurvey.com/](http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/) With reference to the outcomes of the NSS and institutional student satisfaction surveys actions are taken at all appropriate levels by the institution.

### *Mechanisms for gaining student feedback*

Feedback is channelled via the Staff-Student Committee and the Board of Studies.

### *Faculty and University Review Mechanisms*

The programme is subject to the University's Internal Subject Review process, see [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/aqss/qsh/internal\\_subject\\_review/index.php](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/aqss/qsh/internal_subject_review/index.php)

### *Accreditation reports*

Not applicable as no subjects offer professional accreditation.

### *Additional mechanisms*

From 2006-07 'Stage' questionnaires have been introduced for Stage 2 and 3 students and returned in registration week. Summaries of feedback are posted on Blackboard and discussed at the Combined Studies Staff-Student Committee and Board of Studies. Future Stage questionnaires will be circulated and administered electronically through Blackboard.

## **16 Regulation of assessment**

### *Pass mark*

The pass mark is 40 (Undergraduate programmes)

### *Course requirements*

Progression is subject to the University's Undergraduate Progress Regulations and Undergraduate Examination Conventions (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>). In summary, students must pass, or be deemed to have passed, 120 credits at each Stage. Limited compensation up to 40 credits and down to a mark of 35 is possible at each Stage and there are resit opportunities, with certain restrictions.



*Weighting of stages*

The marks from Stages 2 & 3 will contribute to the final classification of the degree. The weighting of marks contributing to the degree for Stages 2 & 3 is 1:2.

*Common Marking Scheme*

The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Undergraduate Examination Conventions, namely

	<b>Honours</b>	<b>Non-honours</b>
<40	Fail	Failing
40-49	Third Class	Basic
50-59	Second Class, Second Division	Good
60-69	Second Class, First Division	Very Good
70+	First Class	Excellent

*Role of the External Assessor*

An External Assessor, with substantial experience in the administration and oversight of Combined and/or Joint programmes, is appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, after recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Assessor is expected to:

- \* See and approve examination papers
  - \* Moderate examination and coursework marking
- Attend the Board of Examiners  
Report to the University on the standards of the programme

\* Only for those modules administered by the Centre and not by Schools

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/>)

The Combined Studies Brochure (contact [enquiries@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@ncl.ac.uk))

The University Regulations (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>)

The Degree Programme Handbook

The Combined Studies Centre web-page: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/combinedstudies>

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.