

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	BA (Hons)
4	Programme Title	Combined Honours
5	UCAS/Programme Code	Y001
6	Programme Accreditation	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	N/A
8	FHEQ Level	6
9	Date written/revised	May 2014

10 Programme Aims

1. to provide students with the opportunity to study at least two subjects 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 subject level 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 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
8. to provide a programme which complies with University policies and procedures
9. to provide a programme which meets the requirements of level 6 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications

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 subjects. Since it is possible for Combined Honours 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 2 subjects 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

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 Honours Centre, Subject Advisors and Personal Tutors).

Assessment Strategy

Knowledge and understanding of the subject is assessed by unseen written examinations and/or coursework. However, the strategies to develop knowledge and understanding have been developed for single honours students within the chosen specialisms, although the Combined Honours 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, 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 Honours degree allows students, to some extent, to choose their modules according to preferred assessment methods.

Practical Skills

On completing the programme, students:

C1	who have studied Music should be able to demonstrate public performance and presentation skills
C2	who have studied a foreign Modern Language(s) should be able to demonstrate a high degree of competence in that language(s)
C3	should be able to demonstrate skills in planning and organising, the ability to make strategic and effective choices, problem-solving, 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,

Assessment Strategy

The strategies to assess intellectual skills have been developed for single honours students within the chosen specialisms, although the Combined Honours 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

Teaching and Learning Methods

Expertise in communication skills and teamwork is modelled in lectures (D1). 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 individual reflection (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 **360** credits studied full-time over three years, but if a foreign Modern Language is included, it is a requirement that a period abroad is intercalated (normally) between Stages 2 and 3, making four years in all.

In Stage 1 students must normally take either 2 or 3 subjects and then progress to take two or three of these same subjects in Stages 2 and 3:

Stage	Subject A	Subject B	Subject C
1 <i>or</i>	40 credits	40 credits	40 credits
1	60 credits	60 credits	
2 & 3: <i>either</i>	60 credits	60 credits	
<i>or</i>	80 credits	40 credits	
<i>or</i>	40 credits	40 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.

All other issues of progression are determined by University regulations. There are no compulsory modules, although individual subjects may require Combined Honours 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.

Candidates will be required to take the module Combined Perspectives: Solving Issues of the 21st Century (HSS1100) unless their combination of subjects prevents this i.e. the Degree Programme Director will advise individual candidates where it is necessary for them to 'opt out' of HSS1100 at stage 1.

The list of subjects currently available is given below. Subject Advisors 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.

Archaeology
Business
Classics
English Linguistics Studies
English Literature
English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL)*
Film Studies
Geography
History
History of Art
Mathematics & Statistics
Media and Communication
Modern Languages (one only after stage 1)

- Chinese
- French
- German
- Japanese
- Portuguese
- Spanish and Latin American Studies

Music

Philosophical Studies

Politics

Psychology

Sociology

*ESOL modules are only available at Stage 1 to those students whose first language is not English – such students take 40 credits in ESOL modules as one of their three subjects and then must drop it at the end of Stage 1 as there are no Stage 2 or 3 ESOL modules available.

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

- Where one or more foreign Modern Language(s) are included, it is a requirement that a period abroad is intercalated (normally between Stages 2 and 3, except for those who begin Chinese or Japanese at Level B who spend the year abroad between Stages 1 and 2).
- No subject areas offer a professional accreditation route through the Combined Honours programme
- The following features are innovative:
 - free choice of combinations across those listed above (subject to certain subject level entry requirements)
 - the opportunity to study in Combined, Joint or Major/Minor combinations
 - no core or compulsory elements
 - no requirement to undertake a dissertation (although the option is available in some subjects and through the Combined Honours Independent Studies module HSS3500)
 - the provision of Subject Advisors to offer academic support and specialist advice to Combined Honours students
 - the opportunity to study modules specifically for Combined Honours students which have been co-designed by Combined Honours students and staff.

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 35 points to include at least 2 subjects at Higher Level grade 6 or above and 1 subject at Higher Level grade 5 or above.

Irish Leaving Certificate: A1A1A1B1B at the Higher Level. Specific subjects and grades may be required depending on the combination to be studied.

BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma (formaly BTEC National Diploma): Distinction, Distinction, Distinction.

BTEC Level 5 HND: considered on an individual basis

European Baccalaureate: a 75% pass is required

PARTNERS applicants: BBB from 18 units or a comparable qualification

Access qualifications:

HEFC: Distinctions in subjects

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.

** Additional subject level entry requirements:*

	A level	GCSE
Business		Grade B Mathematics & English (or equivalent)
English Literature	Grade A or B English Literature (or equivalent) normally required	
Geography	Grade B in Geography (or equivalent)	Mathematics (no grade specified)
History	A Level History (or equivalent) is normally required	
Maths & Statistics	Good grade in Mathematics	Good pass in Maths (or equivalent)
Modern Languages	Languages can be studied from scratch (Level A), post-GCSE or post-A level (or equivalent) standards (Level B). Please note that a maximum of two language subjects can be taken together and only one of these can be at beginner's level. It is not possible to study two language subjects on their own without a third non-language subject. Chinese and Japanese cannot be taken together.	
Music	Music (or equivalent) (those with other qualifications must satisfy the Subject Advisor of their ability to profit from their intended modules and to complete them successfully) 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 Honours	
Psychology		Previous experience in this subject is not essential but Grade B at GCSE Mathematics (or equivalent) is required and background knowledge in Biology is desirable.

Admissions policy/selection tools

The programme receives approximately 700 applications each year through the UCAS system. Offers are normally made on the basis of the information on the UCAS form. Applicants to whom offers are made are invited to an Open Day to meet Combined Honours staff, existing Combined Honours students and Subject Advisors.

Non-standard Entry Requirements

All prospective students with non-standard qualifications maybe invited to interview with the DPD (who, if necessary, will consult Subject Advisors).

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

The Student Services portal provides links to key services and other information and is available at: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/>

Induction

During the first week of the first semester students attend induction events. New students participate in social and academic induction activities and (pre-arrival) are allocated a Peer Mentor to help ease the transition into University and the Combined Honours programme. Peer Mentors play a key role during induction events and group meetings (with themed agendas) between mentor and mentees take place weekly during the first term.

New students are supported by Combined Honours Centre staff and Peer Mentors in selecting their subjects and module choices to ensure that their choices are 'clash free' in the academic timetable. Most subjects run additional subject level induction sessions for Combined Honours students. Some subjects e.g. Mathematics & Statistics and Modern Languages will hold induction sessions to establish mathematics and language competency and assist in the selection of appropriate modules and pathways. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students.

Study skills support

Students are offered the opportunity to develop a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills. Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered through the provision of an extended induction and transition support process. Graduate development modules (run by the Combined Honours Centre) are provided as an option at stages 2 and 3/4, as are the 'NCL' Career development modules (run by the Careers Service).

Academic and Pastoral support

Each undergraduate and taught postgraduate student will be assigned a personal tutor.* A personal tutor is one part of a wider network of advice and guidance available to students to support their personal and general academic development. The module leader acts as the first point of contact for subject-specific academic advice. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Student-Staff Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies. Within the academic unit, students may also receive additional academic and pastoral advice from a range of other student-facing staff including degree programme directors, dissertation/project supervisors, and administrative support staff.

*Arrangements may vary for students taking special types of provision.

The University also offers a wide range of institutional services and support upon which students can call, such as the Writing Development Centre, Careers Service and Student Wellbeing Service. This includes one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions / workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues e.g. stress and anxiety, student finance and budgeting, disability matters etc. There is specialist support available for students with dyslexia and mental health issues. Furthermore, the Student Union operates a Student Advice Centre, which can provide advocacy and support to students on a range of topics including housing, debt, legal issues etc.

Support for students with disabilities

The University's Disability Support team 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.

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, which supports campus-wide computing facilities.

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange.

Year Abroad (for students continuing a Modern Language beyond stage 1)

The intercalating year abroad is supervised and supported by the School of Modern Languages in accordance with its procedures for 'language students'. 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.

Placement Year

Students may select to spend a year on a work placement with an approved organisation (normally on completion of stage 2 and before entering stage 3). Permission to undertake a placement year or study abroad is subject to the approval of the Degree Programme Director.

Study Abroad

Students have the opportunity to take part in one of the University's exchange schemes which involves a period of study abroad for one Semester. This will substitute for one Semester of study at Newcastle either at stage 2 (Semester 1 or Semester 2), or at stage 3 (Semester 1 only).

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

Module evaluation

All modules are subject to annual review (by questionnaire); the results of which are considered by the Board of Studies of each subject provider. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the Board of Studies for the appropriate subject provider. Student opinion is sought at the Combined Honours Student-Staff Committee and through a number of other mechanisms including regular cohort meetings and stage surveys. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee. Changes to overall module provision for Combined Honours students is noted and discussed at the Combined Honours Board of Studies.

Programme reviews

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

External Assessor reports

The External Assessors' report is considered annually by the Board of Studies. The Board considers and responds to the report, and reports its response to Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee. Substantive points from the report of the External Assessor are shared with student representatives, through the Student-Staff Committee.

Student evaluations

All modules and stages* are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Student-Staff 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 students' views on the quality of the learning and teaching. The results from student surveys are considered as part of the Annual Monitoring and Review of the programme and any arising actions are captured at programme and School / institutional level and reported to the appropriate body.

*With the exception of intercalating years and the final stages of undergraduate programmes.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback

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

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms

Every six years degree programmes in each subject area undergo periodic review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a review visit by a review team (normally one day in duration) which includes an external subject specialist and a student representative. Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further six year period.

Accreditation reports

Not applicable as no subjects offer professional accreditation.

Additional mechanisms

Annual 'stage' evaluation questionnaires are administered electronically via SurveyMonkey.

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. 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

	Honours	Non-honours
<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 Learning, Teaching and Student Experience 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 Combined Honours Centre (and not by Academic Schools)

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

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

The School Brochure: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/marketing/services/print/publications/ordering/>

Degree Programme and University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>

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

The Degree Programme Handbook

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.

